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Menander

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Menander : Plays and Fragments (Penguin Classics) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Plays and Fragments (Penguin Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Dr. ViteazuGreat! 24 of 25 people found the following review helpful. The Root of All Happy-Ending Art By Volkswagen BluesWhip through a couple of these short plays and fragments by the father of Greek New Comedy, and you'll see just how much our more modern formats are indebted to him: the American sit-com, the romantic comedy, etc. Menander manages much less simplistic resolution

at the end of his plays, though, and it's too bad that this trend hasn't endured as well as the penchant for the "happily ever after" that we face at the close of every Julia Roberts movie. The plays themselves are marvelous. In "Old Cantankerous," the grumpy title character stands in the way of a love between two of the play's characters, until the plot sends him down a well. His rescuer is, of course, the man who wants the old curmudgeon's daughter's hand in marriage, and they make up and all's well. "The Girl from Samos" is funnier, with a baby mix-up that leads first to the normal questions of the father's identity, but then to far less normal questions about the mother's identity. Miller's introduction is exceptional, and I was especially appreciative of it, since I am not a classicist. She provides enough background to initiate even the casual reader, and in a manner that is both humorous and accessible. She explains what can be explained and accounted for, and freely admits to what is pure conjecture; since Menander's plays survive only in fragments, and since we don't know all of the concrete facts of his life, Miller's candor is welcome and helpful. The only thing I found off-putting was the translation. It is not only VERY contemporary, but VERY British. While I can understand the urge to place things in a more familiar setting--an easy way to remind people that great drama is always timely--some of the dialogue sounds lifted from "Chariots of Fire" or even "Goodbye Mr. Chips." That is, it sounds very early twentieth century British, and I spent a lot of time while reading trying to figure out why (I'm still stumped). Phrases such as "There's a good chap," and explicit references to "Picadilly Circus" just didn't seem to mesh with plays that are Greek and a couple thousand years old. Still, you could do a lot worse than spend \$12 on a fine collection and very readable rendition of some of the very foundations of comic form in Western literature. 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Menander's plays and fragments By Brett March I'm a Classical Civilisations student at Leeds University in England and this book is one of many that I have to read for my course. Menander was said to be "second only to Homer" and it is clear why this statement was made in this translation by Norma Miller. This book contains all but two of the fragments found of Menander. Old Cantankerous really stands out as a superb piece of literary genius, although this isn't to say that the rest of the book isn't an equally great piece of work. This book contains fragments of Menander's work as this is all that has been found of this magnificent writer's accomplishments, if you are interested in classical drama then this book is definitely worth considering.

Menander (c. 341-291 BC) was the foremost innovator of Greek New Comedy, a dramatic style that moved away from the fantastical to focus upon the problems of ordinary Athenians. This collection contains the full text of 'Old Cantankerous' (Dyskolos), the only surviving complete example of New Comedy, as well as fragments from works including 'The Girl from Samos' and 'The Rape of the Locks', all of which are concerned with domestic catastrophes, the hazards of love and the trials of family life. Written in a poetic style regarded by the ancients as second only to Homer, these polished works - profoundly influential upon both Roman playwrights such as Plautus and Terence, and the wider Western tradition - may be regarded as the first true comedies of manners.

"Balme's translation is particularly suitable for the general and undergraduate reader.... [It] is fluent and rhythmical.... Highly recommended for all libraries."--Choice Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: Greek About the Author Menander (341-290bc) was the most distinguished author of Greek New Comedy. An Athenian of good family, he wrote over a hundred plays although only one survives intact today. Norma Miller was educated at the universities of Glasgow and Cambridge and spent her life as a teacher of Greek and Latin languages and literature at the Royal Holloway College. She is now Reader Emeritus of the University of London.