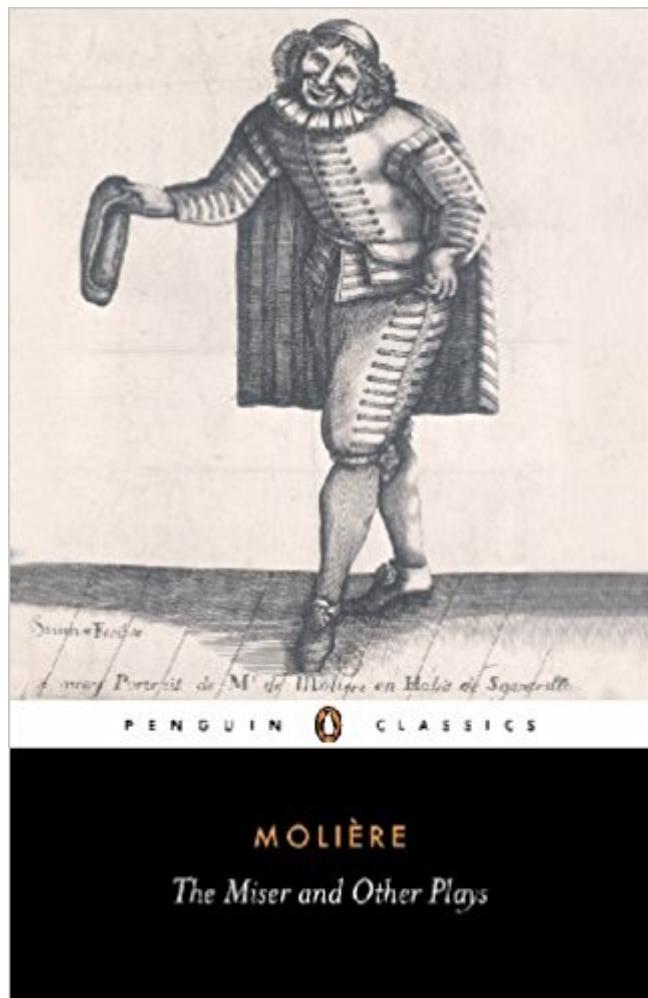


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The Miser And Other Plays (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Molière combined all the traditional elements of comedy - wit, slapstick, spectacle and satire - to create richly sophisticated and enduringly popular dramas. The Miser is the story of Harpagon, a mean-spirited old man who becomes obsessed with making money out of the marriage of his children, while The Hypochondriac, another study in obsession, is a brilliant satire on the medical profession. The School for Wives, in which an ageing domestic tyrant is foiled in his plans to marry his young ward, provoked such an outcry that Molière followed it with The School for Wives Criticized - a witty retort to those who disapproved of the play's supposed immorality. And while Don Juan is the darkest and most tragic of all the plays in this collection, it still mocks the soullessness of the skinflint with scathing irony.

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Customer Reviews

Moliere is always a treat, and his plays always seem to conceal their age. This selection is no exception. The John Wood/David Coward translations, however, do not have the lively contemporary fluidity of those of Richard Wilbur, whose elegant flair for Moliere's conversational prose is unmatched. But by all means, try both translations and decide for yourself. Don Juan This

play is a fun read, and it is a gem when performed well. The contemporary American reader lives in a land of waning religiosity, yet one in which theocracy is ironically gaining influence in national politics. It is in this context that we have to smile, if not laugh, when Don Juan says, "It's no longer shameful to be a dissembler; hypocrisy is now a fashionable vice and all the fashionable vices pass for virtues. The part of the God-fearing man is the best possible role to play nowadays, and in our present society the hypocrite's profession has extraordinary advantages. It's an art whose dishonesty always goes unchallenged...The hypocrite, by means of pious pretenses, attaches himself to the devout, and anyone who then assails him is set upon by a great phalanx of the godly...The true believers are easily hoodwinked by the false...I can't tell you how many men I know who, by means of a feigned devotion, have glossed over the sins of their youth, wrapped themselves in the cloak of religion, and in that holy disguise are now free to be the worst of scoundrels!"s rules prohibit me from disclosing the ending, though it has been known for some 331 years, but I will tell you that it leaves Don Juan's valet, Sganarelle, wondering how he'll ever get his back pay. The Hypocondriac The plot of The Hypocondriac, also translated The Imaginary Invalid, is riotously funny.

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