



Phaedra and Other Plays (Penguin Classics)

Seneca

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Living in Rome under Caligula and later a tutor to Nero, Seneca witnessed the extremes of human behaviour. His shocking and bloodthirsty plays not only reflect a brutal period of history but also show how guilt, sorrow, anger and desire lead individuals to violence. The hero of *Hercules Insane* saves his own family from slaughter, only to commit further atrocities when he goes mad. The horrifying death of Astyanax is recounted in *Trojan Women*, and *Phaedra* deals with forbidden love. In *Oedipus* a nervous man discovers himself, while Thyestes recounts the bitter family struggle for a crown. Of uncertain authorship, *Octavia* dramatizes Nero's divorce from his wife and her deportation. The only Latin tragedies to have survived complete, these plays are masterpieces of vibrant, muscular language and psychological insight.

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