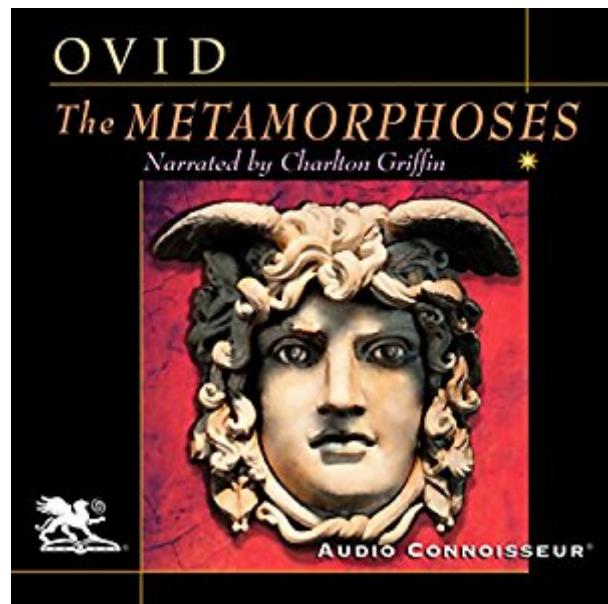


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The Metamorphoses



Synopsis

Ovid's Metamorphoses, completed around AD8, shows the presence and prevalence of change in the world. Beginning with chaos and creation, Ovid embraces a vast array of mythological tales within his theme of transformation. Phaeton, Narcissus, Pyramus and Thisbe, Daedalus and Icarus are only a few of the most famous. Passing through these to the serio-comic retellings of the Trojan War, the travels of Aeneas, and the events of Roman history down to Ovid's own times, his readers find infinite variety in a work that is, by turns, funny, pathetic and violent - always unpredictable and always engrossing. John Dryden's translations are featured in this collaborative Metamorphoses, first issued in 1717, to which eighteen translators contributed under the editorship of Sir Samuel Garth. Composed in a poetic idiom well suited to the satiric and mock-heroic aspects of this work, this is the only translation that can match Ovid's wit and stylistic sophistication. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Maidens become trees. Young hunks turn into flowers. Men become women; women become invincible warriors. And every time you blink, another poor wretch becomes a bird or turns to stone. In Ovid's Metamorphosis, nothing stays the same for long. A rich compendium of Greco-Roman mythology and history all ingeniously linked together by the theme of transformation, the Metamorphosis is a surprisingly sophisticated, erotic, and gory classic of ancient literature. Rapes, murders, wars, and all manner of perversion abound. Death is lingered over with almost forensic precision. The slaughter of arrogant Niobe's fourteen children, for example, is recounted in an

exhaustive detail that would do any contemporary slasher flick justice, as one by one they're picked off in various grisly ways. This is classical gore--Ovid sounding like the Clive Barker of ancient Rome as in this excerpt from the massacre of the centaurs:[Exadius] found a weapon, a stag's antlersHung on a pine tree...And Gryneus' eyes were pierced by those twin prongs,Eyeballs gouged out; one of them stuck to the horn,The other rolled down his beard till a blood clot caught it.This is the sort of wonderfully nauseating detail that is repeated countless times in a masterpiece that often reads like the National Enquirer. It's hard not to believe that Ovid, like Shakespeare, was aiming his work for the mass audience of his time, which just goes to show you that the product of one age's pop culture is another's venerated classic. One only has to read Ovid's over-the-top account of the love-sick Cyclops to realize that black comedy ala the B-movies of Herschel Gordon Lewis had already been mastered some two thousand years ago.

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