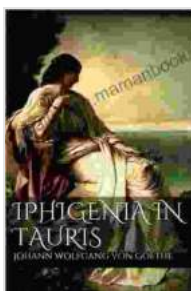


Iphigenia: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Tragic Masterpiece

Iphigenia, a powerful and moving tragedy by renowned German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, stands as a towering achievement in the annals of literature. First published in 1787, the play tells the gripping tale of Iphigenia, a young woman caught in a web of duty, sacrifice, and the relentless forces of fate.

Mythological Roots

Goethe's *Iphigenia* draws heavily upon the Greek myth of Iphigenia, the daughter of King Agamemnon and Queen Clytemnestra. As the Greek fleet prepares to set sail for Troy, it is becalmed. Oracle reveals that Agamemnon must sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to appease the goddess Artemis and ensure a favorable wind.



Iphigenia (Oberon Classics) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 130 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 79 pages



Goethe's Adaptation

While staying true to the broad outlines of the myth, Goethe's adaptation departs significantly from the original in many ways. Most notably, Goethe transforms Iphigenia from a passive victim of fate into a strong and compassionate woman who takes an active role in shaping her destiny.

Themes of the Play

Iphigenia explores a profound range of themes, including:

- **Duty versus Desire:** Iphigenia is torn between her duty to her family and her own longing for freedom and happiness.
- **Sacrifice and Redemption:** The play examines the concept of sacrifice, both as a necessary evil and as a path to redemption.
- **Fate and Free Will:** *Iphigenia* grapples with the question of whether human beings are pawns of destiny or masters of their own lives.
- **The Power of Compassion:** Despite the tragedy that unfolds, the play emphasizes the transformative power of compassion and human connection.

Characters

Iphigenia

The central figure of the play, Iphigenia is a complex and empathetic character. She is a strong-willed woman who has been forced to endure unimaginable hardships, yet she maintains her dignity, compassion, and unwavering faith.

Orestes

A young man who has been haunted by guilt for the murder of his mother, Orestes seeks refuge with Iphigenia in Tauris. He is drawn to her strength and compassion, and she in turn sees in him a glimmer of hope for redemption.

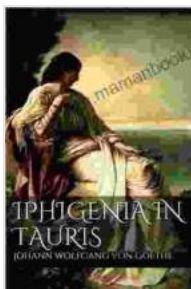
Thoas

The king of Tauris, Thoas is a just and compassionate ruler who is torn between his duty to his people and his growing admiration for Iphigenia.

Legacy and Impact

Iphigenia has had a profound impact on literature and culture since its publication. It is considered one of Goethe's greatest works and a masterpiece of German Classicism. The play has been adapted numerous times for stage, opera, and film, and its themes and characters continue to resonate with audiences today.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Iphigenia* is a timeless tragedy that explores the complexities of human nature and the enduring struggle between duty, desire, and the forces of fate. Through its powerful characters and profound themes, the play continues to captivate and move audiences around the world, leaving an indelible mark on the literary landscape.



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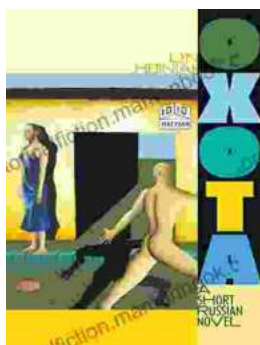
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