

Chapter 1 : Monologues and Scenes | Playscripts, Inc.

The Ultimate Scene and Monologue Sourcebook, Updated and Expanded Edition: An Actor's Reference to Over 1, Scenes and Monologues from More than Contemporary Plays Ed Hooks out of 5 stars

Early Classical Theatre I. According to Aristotle, the Athenians developed tragedy first, with comedy following a generation or so later. While this assessment is essentially correct, the truth seems to have been somewhat more complicated. Comic dramas as opposed to comedy itself—that is, humorous plays versus the formal genre of "comedy"—appear to have evolved alongside their tragic counterpart, perhaps even before it. The satyr play, in particular, a farcical rendition of myths more often treated seriously which featured a chorus of rowdy, irreverent satyrs half-human half-animal spirits of the wilderness notorious for their lust and gluttony, emerged early in the tradition of Greek theatre, though exactly how early is not clear. Nevertheless, the historical sources for theatrical performances in the Classical Age focus largely on tragedy as the hub of early dramatic activity, even if its pre-eminence probably looks clearer in hindsight than it seemed in the day. Three tragedians emerge from the fifth century BCE as the principal practitioners of classical Greek tragic drama: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Theirs are the only tragedies preserved whole. First and foremost, Aeschylus lived a generation earlier than the other two so his work provides our first hard look at Greek drama. If to modern viewers his plays seem static and slow-moving, there can be little doubt they were exciting and controversial in their day. The elder of the later pair, Sophocles is often seen as the best playwright of the three—in the general estimation of many in the scholarly community, Sophocles remains the finest exponent of tragic arts ever—and certainly his polished dramas were very well-respected in the Classical Age, as they have been for the most part ever since. It is somewhat ironic to note, then, that interest in his drama in performance seems to have waned fairly soon after his lifetime. Conversely, Euripides, while alienating his contemporaries and considered by many a distant second to Sophocles when the two of them were alive, left behind a body of drama which commanded the stage after the Classical Age. There can be little doubt why: Euripides had a knack for putting on stage eye-catching situations and creating memorable characters with extreme personality disorders. Accordingly, theatrical records show that his works were very frequently produced in later ages, outstripping both Sophocles and Aeschylus. No Greek tragedy from the fourth century or later the Post-Classical Age has been preserved intact, making it hard to determine the course of tragic drama in Greece after the lifetime of Sophocles and Euripides note. We can, however, follow the evolution of its close kin, comedy, in later Greek theatre. The presentation of humorous material has deep roots in ancient Greece, perhaps as old as tragedy itself, but because comedy was seen as a lesser art form until quite late in the evolution of Western Civilization, the evidence for this genre of drama is scant. In particular, it began to attract widespread attention during the Peloponnesian War when productions of comedy provided the Athenians much needed relief from the anxiety and sorrow of their conflict against Sparta. While the names of several exponents of this genre in the fifth century are preserved, and in some cases fragments of their work as well, the plays of only one Old Comedy playwright, Aristophanes, have come down to us complete. His drama—and presumably that of his predecessors and contemporaries, too—was primarily built around current events and issues. Indeed, all indications point to political and social satire as the hallmark of Old Comedy, especially toward the end of the Classical Age. Later, however, after the end of the Peloponnesian War, as Greece moved into the Post-Classical period, comedy underwent a major transformation. However, for reasons having nothing to do with his brilliant stagecraft, his work did not survive the Middle Ages. Fortunately, the sands of Egypt have rendered up several of his plays, albeit in "rags and patches" but well enough preserved for us to see what his drama looked like. Character-driven, highly stylized pieces with recurring characters and inclined toward subtle rather than broad humor, Menandrian New Comedy in more ways than one marks the beginning of modern drama. Most Greek theatres visible today around the Mediterranean basin were constructed after the Classical Age, while those few which belong to the earliest periods of theatre evolution have almost universally been renovated in later periods of antiquity, leaving them dubious sources of information about classical theatre. That is, they constitute "secondary

sources," for the most part. Our data concerning classical stage practices, such as acting styles, costumes, musical accompaniment and the like, are in general equally unclear. Though some historical sources seem to provide reliable information about the performance of classical tragedy, the modern appreciation of these data still relies heavily on the fifth-century dramas that happen to have survived. To make matters worse, ancient theatre was in its customs and practices a rather fluid enterprise, and what rules applied to one period—or even one decade! As a consequence, the discussion below is an attempt to review the highlights of an issue clouded by mystery and delve into a few of the better attested theatre practices of the Classical and Post-Classical period. Festivals and the Nature of Ancient Performance For some time—until the first half of the fifth century, at least ca. The figures seem to have varied over the course of the century. That tragedies would later be packaged into trilogies—that is, groups of three plays connected by plot or theme or both—with a comic satyr play appended afterwards has led some scholars to retroject this tradition back to the earliest days, but the validity of that supposition is impossible to determine given the paucity of information within our grasp. What is clear is that among the ancient Athenians interest in theatre as an art form rose precipitously from the end of the Pre-Classical Age ca. By the post-classical period after BCE, all sorts of festivals had started to incorporate drama into their festivities whether they had a natural connection with theatre or not. Clearly, the popularity of theatre made it attractive to a wide range of cults as a way of catering to the public. It comes as no surprise, then, that Greek plays began in this age to be exported all over the ancient world, laying the foundation for not only theatre as a key feature of ancient Western Civilization but also Greek as the "common" koine language of international commerce in this region. Outdoors and most often situated on steep slopes that curve around the playing area, many ancient theatres were capable of housing thousands of spectators. These theatra the plural of theatron—the Greek word originally referred only to the seating area in a theatre, as was noted in Chapter 1—call for a certain style of performance. In order to be heard, for instance, the ancient actor had to have a strong voice. Likewise, costumes, sets and movement also needed to be visible from and intelligible at great distances. Unlike modern realistic plays which for the most part call for intimate, indoor theatre spaces with controlled lighting, ancient drama had more the feel we associate with large-scale athletic events. Actually, if the ancient Greeks had compared drama to anything in their day, it would probably have been courtroom trials. Lawyers back then were seen as "actors" of a sort inasmuch as they provided some of the more sensational and theatrical moments in Greek history. Often pleading cases before thousands of people and hardly shy about dramatizing their appearance in court, orators in antiquity rarely hesitated to allude to drama during litigation, one at least even going so far as to quote tragedy at some length as if he were an actor. In fact, the ancient Athenians fairly often used their large, centrally located acting venue, the Theatre of Dionysus, as the site of important trials. So, if theatre seemed like anything to the ancient Greeks, it was most likely a lawsuit and, as such, Greek drama imports at times a distinctly litigious atmosphere where characters appear to prosecute each other, appealing on occasion to the audience as if it were a jury. Nor is this at all out of line with reality since most of the Athenian spectators would have served as jury-members at some point during their lives, some watching the play from the very same seats in which they had sat as jurors. In that light, the ancient Greeks saw little reason for maintaining an invisible "fourth wall" or building characters with interiority. Instead, presentationalism and overt grandeur typify Greek theatre and drama. Like the trials and public spectacles which Greek drama so often resembles—and which it surely shaped, in turn—ancient theatre in Greece had little choice but to meet the enormity of the arena it played in. And so it did, in high style, especially in the hands of its greatest exponents. Thus, it is safe to conclude that the ancient theatron and its close kin, the courtroom, shared a long-standing tradition of showmanship. In other words, the ancient Greeks would have felt right at home watching any of the sensational trials televised today, especially the prosecution of celebrities, and would probably have watched Senate hearings on CSPAN in far greater numbers than we do. Built into the slopes of the Acropolis where it could utilize the natural terrain to create seating, this "instrument for viewing" is, if not the actual birthplace, certainly the cradle of Western drama. But its exact structure in the Classical Age is impossible to determine. Thus, it is improbable any of the classical tragedians would recognize much of the theatre we see now other than its location. For instance, the orchestra—"dancing place" literally, "instrument

for dance" of the Theatre of Dionysus, the flat area at the bottom of the theatre where the chorus sang and danced, is today circular. In the fifth century BCE, however, it was more likely rectangular. This assertion is based on two, albeit scanty, pieces of information. First, ancient choral dances were "rectangular," which a rectangular space would suit better. Second, the only known theatre which has remained unchanged from that day, the Theatre at Thorikos—Thorikos was an Athenian deme "district, borough"—has a rectangular orchestra with only its corners rounded. Nevertheless, it is not certain that the Theatre at Thorikos was used as a space for performing drama, or just a public meeting ground. In sum, it is hard to speak definitively about the physical nature of the Theatre of Dionysus as it existed in the Classical Age, except to say that it was a large structure capable of housing crowds which were huge even by modern standards. The Skene Still, it is possible to make a few conclusions. For instance, from the very dawn of Greek drama there was probably a backstage area of some sort, into which the actors could retire during a show and change costume. There is no ancient theatre extant which does not preserve or have room for the remains of a "backstage" of some sort. The Greeks referred to this part of the theatre as the skene "tent", recalling, no doubt, its origins as a temporary structure, perhaps even an actual tent into which the first actors of antiquity withdrew during performance. The situation is not that simple, however. However, its architectural style and specific dimensions lie outside of our understanding at present. Other dramas preserved from the Classical Age shed a bit more light on the nature of the skene building in the Classical Age. For instance, they show that it must have had at least one door, because several fifth-century tragedies call for actors to enter from a building or for the chorus to pass from the orchestra into the skene building. Therefore, there was not only a backstage structure of some sort but relatively easy access between it and the area where the chorus danced. But, unfortunately, this is really all we can say with certainty about the ancient skene. That surviving classical dramas do not refer to it often or call for its extensive utilization argues it was not particularly complex in its design or application. If true, perhaps, of the Classical Age, the same did not apply to the post-classical Greek world. So, even if the skene started out as a weak presence in classical theatre, it grew later, in the fourth century BCE, into an elaborate structure and, without doubt, represents the beginnings of set design. Special Effects Other requirements of the theatre called for in classical drama shed further light on the nature of the Theatre of Dionysus in the fifth century BCE. Several classical tragedies, for instance, require that the skene building open up and reveal an interior scene. Yet other classical plays call for an even more spectacular effect, for actors to "fly" into the theatre. Ancient sources report that this was done using a device called the mechane "machine", a crane which could lift actors over the skene building and suspend them up in the air by a rope. But the history of the mechane is more problematical than that of the ekkyklema and raises several important questions which are unfortunately unanswerable. When was the mechane first used? How did the actor suspended in the air keep from twisting around on the rope? In either case, where was it placed? Finally, how was it weighted so that it was manageable? There are no clear answers to any of these questions, though we can make some educated guesses. Second, there are simple ways to keep an actor from spinning around on the rope—for instance, by tying another rope to his back—but this is pure speculation. The last two questions—could the audience see the mechane when it was not in use? That is, did the Athenian audience see the action on stage as realistic, or was it to them a stylized presentation whose art and merit were not bound up in how natural and real-looking the dramatic vision appeared? There are no immediate or easy answers to these questions, but if we had greater knowledge of the mechane, it would certainly help to illuminate this and other fundamental issues about the evolution of ancient drama. What Greek Tragedy Looked Like: Their dramas, at least, give our speculations a guiding framework and become a laboratory of sorts for our reconstructions. The finale of this tragedy shows how a master dramatist can utilize the stage tools at his disposal to create an gripping, panoramic crescendo of action in the classical theatre. Euripides gradually fills the stage with characters one level at a time, literally from bottom to top.

Chapter 2 : Scenes for Actors from Movies, Plays, Television and Books

Scenes Two and three person scenes from plays for projects and class study.

Rani Baker destroyed Nolan Moore Nolan Acting is a profession that requires a lot of versatility and willingness to test boundaries. In the act of immersion, sometimes things are done that the actor himself would never even consider, yet it must be played as natural. Sometimes, however, it results in a complete nightmare for everyone involved. Here are some particularly painful examples of the latter. Strangely enough, the only open regret from any of the actors comes from one who broke his butt a completely different way. Being literally the condensed essence of masculinity, he insisted on performing his own stunts and went down the waterfall himself, landing on rocks that shattered his tailbone. Why would you do that? She finds herself baffled by why certain members of her fanbase are so obsessed with this one particular image decades later. Taylor Lautner would like his shirt back, please Taylor Lautner played the werewolf character Jacob in the Twilight series. His lycanthropic transformations were accompanied with the removal of his clothes, giving fans of the series many opportunities to view his fit, muscular body. Many, many more opportunities than he was ever comfortable with. They wind up kissing before the former shoots the latter dead. Mendes does have one particular regret about that sequence, however. Stamp was excited at first by the idea of working alongside Portman, confessing an admiration for her. However, when he actually arrived on set, Portman was nowhere in sight, and he was directed to a piece of paper taped to the wall and told that was for all purposes the "actress" he was expected to dialog with. His disappointment was palpable. I am not ashamed of it but recent events have caused a change in my heart. She had jitters about the shoot because it was going to be her first time filming a sex scene and also felt guilty about doing so with Pratt, who was married. The character is performed as a classic noir vampy type, easily able to manipulate the men around her. She later claimed she was advised on set by director Paul Verhoeven to remove her underwear because it was distracting the shot. The director advised that the scene would be playful innuendo and nothing graphic would be seen. This, famously, turned out not to be the case, and Stone was so shocked the first time she viewed the film she said she slapped Verhoeven. In his memoir, *If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B Movie Actor*, Campbell wrote that all the fake blood made him pretty miserable and also admits it was his own fault. The visual effect was nice, but I became the object of desire for every fly in Wadesboro. Speaking with Bustle, Page said she majorly regrets this moment because her character makes a homophobic joke. Years after the film, she did a reading of the Juno script for Planned Parenthood, and when she got to that bit, she skipped the line entirely. That kickstarts a war between McCall and the mob, one that eventually escalates into a tool shop showdown. After luring the bad guys to his place of employment, McCall uses all manner of tricks and tools to pick them off one by one. Speaking with CinemaBlend, Washington admitted that after three days of shooting for 13 hours a day, he started to disagree with the whole "tough guy stands there in the rain" concept. Michael Fassbender is his own fiercest critic Michael Fassbender kills it pretty much every time he steps in front of the camera. When he was played a clip from X-Men: At one point, Magneto loses his cool, raises his voice, and starts the plane a-shaking. Maybe the poor guy should stop being so hard on himself. In the film, Jennifer Jason Leigh plays a shackled outlaw named Daisy Domergue who passes the time playing an old folk ballad. But her jam session is cut short when bounty hunter John "The Hangman" Ruth Russell yanks the guitar out of her hands and smashes it to bits. Speaking with Billboard, Leigh explained that Russell "felt terrible" when he discovered his mistake. It ended up being great for the scene, but very sad for the guitar, and for my guitar teacher, and for me. First, there was the skimpy outfit that made her feel "self-conscious. She described the liquid as "gluggy paint stuff" that got inside her ears and nose. What are we doing? The same issue came up in Thor: Speaking with Access Hollywood, Hemsworth said he was really happy that originally, he could walk around fully clothed for the whole film. But eventually, director Taika Waititi decided the movie needed some eye candy. As the filmmaker put it, "I think we need to put some bums into seats. Just ask Josh Brolin. He crushed it as Thanos in Avengers: Infinity War, and he really enjoyed crushing the Hulk as well. While the shapeshifting god of mischief does have a penchant for faking his own death, it

seems Loki is gone for good this time. And according to Brolin, that knowledge took its toll on Tom Hiddleston. Tom was so vulnerable at that moment. When *Set It Up* hit Netflix in , critics and audiences were delighted by the story of two employees Zoey Deutch and Glen Powell trying to get their respective bosses to hook up. In fact, speaking with HelloGiggles , she described the moment as "really not okay" and one with "real undertones of pain, physical pain. According to Deutch, Powell was "smart" and "careful" about nibbling on his "gluten-free pizza. The BDSM scenes in *Fifty Shades of Grey* were a nightmare for everyone involved. *Fifty Shades of Grey* is ultimately the product of a *Twilight* fanfiction session gone way out of control, becoming a series of novels and a film. Jamie Dornan plays the sadistic Christian Grey, and Dakota Johnson plays Anastasia Steele, the woman who submits to his interests and impulses. In lieu of more traditional romance and sex dynamics, a lot of the erotic tension is played out in bondage, domination and torture scenes which were apparently not a lot of fun to act out. This means Johnson spent hours tied up, blindfolded miming being struck with a whip. As she reported to *Time*, "Filming a sex scene is not a sensual or pleasurable environment.

Chapter 3 : Classical Greek Theatre, Classical Drama and Theatre

Scenes from Classic Plays by Jocelyn A. Beard, March , Smith & Kraus edition, Paperback in English - 1st ed edition.

An Overview of Classical and Post-Classical Greek Comedy Though comedy in the broadest sense of the term "any kind of humorous material" is at least as old as Greek civilization, historical evidence suggests dramatic comedy first arose in or just before the Classical Age. Like tragedy, ancient Greek komoidia, the word from which we get "comedy," eventually found a home at the Dionysia, though it achieved official status only significantly later than its close theatrical kin. The data further suggest this so-called Old Comedy was probably not the first form of comic drama performed at the Dionysia. Instead, pre-classical playwrights were composing short humorous "satyr plays" featuring boisterous bands of lusty, mischievous woodland spirits called satyrs. During the Classical Age, satyr plays followed the presentation of tragic trilogies, making them the oldest form of comic drama extant. If slower to rise than the satyr play, Old Comedy eventually gained attention and acclaim and finally pre-eminence by the end of the fifth century. Indeed, the first writer of this genre whose works are preserved entire is Aristophanes, a late classical comic poet whose plays, like Old Comedy in general, are raucous and political, closely tied to current affairs. He often satirizes Athenian politicians and public figures with ribald wit, usually proposing wild and extravagant solutions, both serious and satirical, to a wide range of problems confronting society in his day: Old Comedies must have been fairly expensive to mount—the costume budget alone has to have been extravagant—though the Athenians of the Classical Age evidently felt the visual and comic rewards were great enough to warrant such an investment. They call for fewer "special effects" and less novel and elaborate choral odes—in one play, there are virtually no original songs at all! So began a period that was later called "Middle Comedy," covering a long, murky half-century for which no ancient comic drama is preserved whole or even close to complete. While it is possible to trace some of the changes theatre underwent in this day, little is known for certain. Toward the end of the fourth century ca. Given a series of stock comic scenarios and a pat roster of clownish personas, he forged not only one of the enduring genres of theatre, "the comedy of manners," but also one of the greatest vehicles ever for reflecting upon life and society. His dramatic signature was character, and from what little we can see of the tattered remains of his work—this opinion is also confirmed by several ancient critics—the characters who people his stage are indeed among the best ever written. Often he modified or even played against their conventional caricatures, so, for instance, "managing slaves" who in other plays are predictably clever and manipulative are in Menander never incredibly ingenious. To the contrary, they find themselves sometimes in desperate straits they did not foresee, where they panic or freeze with fear like real people. First, the comic situations that drive his plays may not have looked as trite in his day as they do in ours. And, second, even if they did, in deploying what are now conventional soap-opera crises and resolutions, often based on luck, he may be making an intentional choice. In other words, predictable plots proved for him a good background against which to highlight characters and personalities, his clear intention as a playwright. More often than not, this results in what reads today as not very funny comedy—the grim facts of life often leave little room for comic byplay—thus, the thrust of Menandrian drama drives, instead, at only a snicker of recognition, if even that, and never the hysterical convulsions Aristophanes aimed for and so readily achieved. Homer paints a comical picture of other gods in his other surviving work, *The Odyssey*. How much would you give to trade places with him? Just let me lie with her! But comedy, in the sense of "humorous drama," can be traced back no further than the sixth century BCE. The word komoidia means literally in Greek "party kom-song -oid- " and, if this is any indication of its origin, then dramatic comedy stems from revels komoi; singular komos where partiers komastai sang songs oidai in which they teased, mocked and made fools of spectators or public figures. Though the historical records reveal little about the way this might have happened, somehow komoidia must have migrated from the banquet hall to the music hall, perhaps around the same time when tragedy was beginning to evolve. Early Greek vase paintings, not written texts, provide at present our best view of dramatic comedy in its primordial stages, in particular, depictions of what seem to be comic choruses. Dating to the mid-sixth century BCE, some vases show komastai dressed as horses, birds, and dolphins

prefiguring the choruses of later fifth-century Old Comedy see below in which choristers often represented animals. If indeed these paintings reflect pre-classical comic theatre, it seems safe to conclude that, just as in early tragedy, the chorus initially played an important role in Greek comedy. But there were, no doubt, differences, too. For example, choruses in Old Comedy, unlike in tragedy, addressed the audience directly in a song called the parabasis see below , meaning literally "the act of going aside," because the chorus "stepped aside" i. But the case is not so simple. Other evidence indicates that comedy, unlike tragedy, was imported into Athens from other parts of the Greek world, particularly through a genre called Dorian farce. Indeed, an early vase from Corinth depicts what seems to be a scene from a comic drama of some sort, in which thieves are stealing wine and being punished. Other sixth-century vases contain representations of the gods, heroes and daily life, all portrayed by actors wearing grotesque masks and short garments that reveal padded buttocks and huge phallos singular, phallos note. Other similar vases show characters commonly found in later comedy: Exactly how these images elucidate the evolution of comic drama is far from clear, but they prove that the presentation of humor in some sort of theatrical mode was well under way even before the dawn of the Classical Age. Evidently, comedy also got off to an early start in Sicily, another part of the Dorian world. The evidence here does not stem from vases alone, because fragments of comic dramas exist, attached to the name of an early Sicilian comic playwright, Epicharmus of Syracuse. It is too bad, then, that it is impossible to determine with any precision when this dramatist lived and wroteâ€”it may have been any time from to BCE, or even laterâ€”but any date on the early end of this range would make Epicharmus the contemporary of the earliest Athenian comic playwrights and, in that case, a crucial figure in the formulation of dramatic comedy. Unfortunately, there is nothing certain about him. The association of Epicharmus with the agon, however, may be a post-classical retrojection of later dramatic conventions, a fabrication designed to connect a shadowy, poorly attested ancestor with some concrete element of the tradition. Along the same lines, Epicharmus also purportedly invented certain comic characterizations which later became closely associated with specific mythological figures, such as the cowardly Odysseus and the gluttonous Heracles, but again this information comes from late sources. No indisputable primary evidence confirms this is true. All in all, whether or not Epicharmus and his Dorian brethren played a role in the early formulation of dramatic comedy, Thalia "good cheer" , the Muse of Comedy, eventually set up residence among their Ionian kin, in particular, the democracy-loving, free-thinking Athenians of the Classical Age who incorporated komoidia into their innovative festival, the City Dionysia. By the second half of the fifth century, it had established itself in that arena and was flourishing as never before. Satyr Plays But comedyâ€”or the type of play called thatâ€”is not the earliest form of comic drama on record. At some point before or during the early Classical Age, the custom developed that a playwright competing at the Dionysia presented a trilogy of tragedies rounded off with a light-hearted satyr play. For instance, all evidence points to their following a predictable scenario: With that, the reason why these plays became popular seems obvious; the bigger question is how and when. More than just the earliest dramatic comedy attested, satyr plays are also among the earliest plays known. Though no pre-classical satyr play has survived to our day, there is sound evidence they existed before BCE, as did the tradition of satyrs themselves, Greek mythological figures of great antiquity. Hesiod, for example, an epic poet who lived around BCE, calls these half-man, half-beast divinities "brothers of wood nymphs" and "good-for-nothing and mischievous. For instance, the satyrs had a leader named Silenus, sometimes called their "father," who can at times be wise, philosophical or ironical. Nevertheless, like his satyr kin, he more often craves drink and dance and, in general, likes to cavort and misbehave, especially sexually. His modern cultural progeny can be found on the beaches of Florida during Spring Break. Satyrs were less long-lived on stage, however. While rising quickly and early, the satyr play as a viable form of drama went extinct with comparable alacrity. History chronicles very few serious artists writing new satyr plays during or after the fourth century BCE, which is not to say that later ages did not appreciate the genreâ€”the Roman mosaic of Aeschylus directing a satyr play attests to an enduring memory of its dramatic delightsâ€”only that after the Classical Age the satyr play was no longer a vehicle for original creative expression. While some evidence exists that Romans as late as the second-century CE composed satyr plays, these were probably only antiquarian exercises, not innovative nor even intended as viable theatrical pieces. Nor was the satyr play a

species of drama which made an impact comparable to that of tragedy. Though it surely contributed in some meaningful way to the history of theatrical comedy, the satyr play early on gave way to Old Comedy as the principal vehicle of humorous drama. This is no surprise, either, since satyr plays had two obvious strikes against them. First, their humor rested largely on a limited gimmick—the satyrs intrude upon and disrupt a conventional myth—which, while giving the play a clear structure, left less than ample room for the type of genius which comic theatre at its best can foster. In essence, satyr plays constituted a good, early attempt at comic theatre, which burned its way across the stage brightly but rapidly and over time was replaced with a more successful type—or rather types—of dramatic comedy. However, the history of satyr plays is informative of more than just the evolution of an extinct theatrical genre. Aristotle, for instance, the archetypical "lumper," saw in satyric drama an early stage of tragedy, and early Greek vase-paintings of satyrs seem to support this proposition. Certainly, satyrs maintained a strong presence in the popular imagination of the classical Greeks. Still, it is not clear whether these vases depict satyrs in drama, or just satyrs in general. All in all, the remote origin of the satyr play stands, like that of tragedy, on the horizon of history, and though we hold tantalizing clues as to its birth and role in early theatre, there is little definite that can be said. The earliest known playwright of satyr plays is Pratinas—also a tragic poet as discussed above see Chapter 7—whom some scholars have suggested was, in fact, the inventor of the satyr play, at least in the form it was popularized later in the fifth century. The surviving titles of his plays indeed suggest that thirty or more were satyric. It seems natural then that, if he invented the genre, his corpus would include a disproportionate number of satyr plays. Aeschylus also was well-known as a composer of satyr plays see Chapter 7, perhaps another debt he owed to his great predecessor Pratinas. To judge from its fragmentary remains, Prometheus the Fire-Bringer involved the satyrs disrupting in typical fashion the famous tale of Prometheus delivering fire to humankind. Traditionally, the philanthropic Titan arrives as a savior on earth to give his great gift to humans but in the satyr play he lands instead amidst a band of satyrs who steal the fire, and then proceed to do what satyrs do best, that is, eat it and kiss it—perhaps worse! At some point in the play, Prometheus warns one of them, "Watch it, old man! There is evidence, too, of how widely this genre enjoyed a certain popularity even after the Classical Age. The one complete surviving satyr play written in the Classical Age comes from the hand of Euripides, who we know from his work in tragedy was quite proficient at comedy on stage. Thus, we are fortunate to have a satyr play of his, which, as it turns out, is quite entertaining. Called Cyclops, this play has a setting typical of the genre. Reading 3, below, includes a more detailed introduction to this satyr play, along with a translation of several scenes from the drama. The Origin of Old Comedy In BCE a competition began at the Dionysia among strictly comic playwrights, as opposed to tragedians appending satyr plays onto tragic trilogies. Moreover, the reason for such an innovation at this particular time is not unfathomable. Moreover, tragedy, already well under way, was there to serve as guide to the new genre of comedy, like an older sister telling a younger one what school will be like. It also suggested a general scheme on which comic drama could be formulated, and indeed early Greek comedy seems to have borrowed many features wholesale from its elder "sibling": Through another sort of borrowing, comedy also inverted features common in tragedy. Noble characters, for instance, were made base, sacred odes became bawdy ballads, and solemn dances turned into lascivious strip-teases, like the infamous kordax dance literally, "the rope" mentioned by Aristophanes in *The Clouds*. There were other important differences between comedy and tragedy in the Classical Age. Primarily, comic plots were considerably looser than those of tragedy. To wit, scenes do not necessarily follow each other logically, showing that it was more important for early comic playwrights to be funny than tell a coherent story. Even Aristophanes, who worked towards the end of the fifth century, constructed plots which are not always particularly well integrated, often taking unexpected and inexplicable turns in the story wherever and however humor was best served. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the art of comic drama was still in its infancy, and playwrights had not as yet developed ways of integrating comedy and complex plot construction. Second, because of its nature audiences and critics did not take the art of writing dramatic comedy as seriously as tragic playwriting and so did not view comic storylines with a critical eye or a sense that they should be realistic, much less logical. Aristotle himself seems to have recognized this *Poetics* 5. On the one hand, the changes of tragedy and through whom it came into being is not

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unknown, but comedy because of not being taken seriously from early on is unknown. For the archon only at a late date provided a chorus to comic playwrights; rather they i.

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the acting scenes database This is the Beverly Hills Playhouse Acting School's Acting Scenes Database, a database of over acting scenes to be performed in acting class. Under advanced search, you can search scenes by category (comedy scenes, drama scenes), era, material source, geographic region, or the relationship of the characters.

Chapter 9 : Scenes from Classic Plays (March edition) | Open Library

50 Classic Plays Every Student Should Read May 11th, by Staff Writers Even students not particularly interested in nurturing a career in the theater arts can still appreciate drama's aesthetic and literary merit.