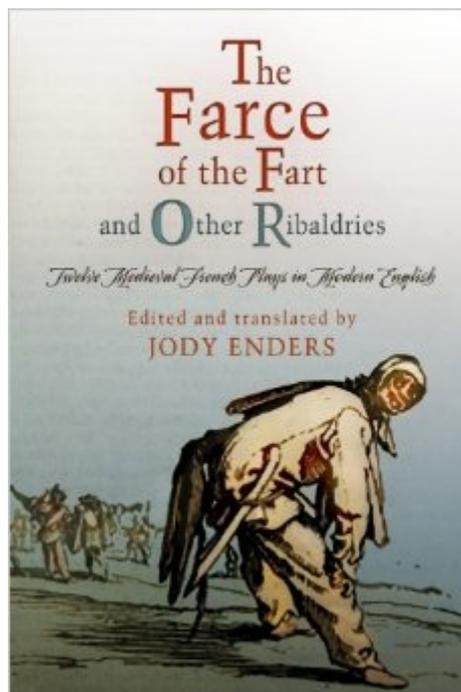


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"The Farce Of The Fart" And Other Ribaldries: Twelve Medieval French Plays In Modern English (The Middle Ages Series)



Synopsis

Was there more to medieval and Renaissance comedy than Chaucer and Shakespeare? Bien sûr. For a real taste of saucy early European humor, one must cross the Channel to France. There, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the sophisticated met the scatological in popular performances presented by roving troupes in public squares that skewered sex, politics, and religion. For centuries, the scripts for these outrageous, anonymously written shows were available only in French editions gathered from scattered print and manuscript sources. Now prize-winning theater historian Jody Enders brings twelve of the funniest of these farces to contemporary English-speaking audiences in "The Farce of the Fart" and Other Ribaldries. Enders's translation captures the full richness of the colorful characters, irreverent humor, and over-the-top plotlines, all in a refreshingly uncensored American vernacular. Those who have never heard the one about the Cobbler, the Monk, the Wife, and the Gatekeeper should prepare to be shocked and entertained. "The Farce of the Fart" and Other Ribaldries is populated by hilarious characters high and low. For medievalists, theater practitioners, and classic comedy lovers alike, Enders provides a wealth of information about the plays and their history. Helpful details abound for each play about plot, character development, sets, staging, costumes, and props. This performance-friendly collection offers in-depth guidance to actors, directors, dramaturges, teachers, and their students. "The Farce of the Fart" and Other Ribaldries puts fifteenth-century French farce in its rightful place alongside Chaucer, Shakespeare, commedia dell'arte, and Molière—not to mention Monty Python. Vive la Farce!

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Customer Reviews

Enders has wisely chosen the route of "adapted" rather than "literal" translations, preserving farce's characteristic exuberance by inserting, where appropriate, an extra line, an extra term, an extra mimed scene, an extra nonspeaking character, an extra possible musical number, or an extra name (especially for the many unnamed female characters)." Her aim throughout is to make farce a living tradition again, one that remains imbued with the precious essence of a medieval genre but that also merges gleefully and ironically with contemporary idioms and themes: sitcoms, stand-up comedy, Saturday Night Live, political gaffes, widespread litigiousness, the excesses of university life, twentieth- and twenty-first-century slang, and whatever music rises and falls on the pop charts, especially country music." As improbable and unscholarly as all this may sound, "The Farce of the Fart" manages to be both uproariously funny (I regularly disturbed people around me by laughing out loud) and intellectually rigorous (my copy is filled with marginal notes, even though I have read these plays many times). Medievalists who cannot read the original texts should certainly heed Enders's warning that her translations frequently depart from strict literalism. But these departures are not only wildly obvious; they are also nearly always flagged with an endnote. And at the end of the day, what really matters is that Enders is capable of striking a balance between farce's historical specificity and issues of contemporary relevance. I regularly marveled at her ingenious strategies for incorporating references to today's lived realities into her farces while remaining essentially true to the medieval theatrical world from which those farces emerged. A signal achievement in theatrical translation, and I can't wait to read more!

Super fun. We think of the Middle Ages as a literary black hole. Thanks to Jody Enders we have a glimpse of how vibrant the theatrical life on the street was.

Sadly I was beyond disappointed in this book. The bio of the author gave me great hope that this would be a witty and reasonably accurate rendition of the original French plays. What I found was plays translated and then butchered by what appears to be 1950's American doggerel. The resultant plays are truly awful. My only hope was that the book might have included the original plays in French so I could translate them myself. But no. The author does include a few examples of where she did a straight translation into English, then showing how she translated that into hideous

slang. I really wish I could find a redeeming feature to this book, but I am sorry, I can't. Maybe the patois the author used works in the US, but is shudderingly awful in any other English speaking country. It is so disappointing that a professor of French and Theatre produced this instead of what could have been a great book reviving these fun farces.

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