



Everyman

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Everyman. Gramercy, my frendes and kynnesmen kynde. Now shall I shewe you the grefe of my mynde: I was commaunded by a messenger, That is a hye kynges chefe offycer. He bad me go a pylgrymage, to my payne, And I knowe well I shall neuer come agayne.

Everyman Details

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From Reader Review Everyman for online ebook

Anthony Vacca says

I read this on a two-fold whim: one, I've had a growing interest of late digging into the pro- and anti-religious texts of yester-centuries, and, two, I decided to give my rusty skills at reading Middle English a tuning. *Everyman* is the medieval morality play that gave us the (surprise!) Everyman archetype that can be readily found in many books, movies, and TV shows. The play's set-up is fairly simple: God is pissed that everyone of us is sorry sack of sinning shit, so he tells Death to go down to Earth and pick on Everyman, who is, natch, the allegorical figure for everyone. Death tells Everyman his time here in the mortal grind is up, so now he has to go account for all his sins in heaven. What follows is a pretty heavy handed instructional on how to be a good Catholic - this was a play sanctioned by the Church, after all, to entertain and inform all the illiterate peasants cowering in the pits that was the late 1400's England. Here's what you need to know for the test: don't rely on friends or family because they will abandon you, and don't rely on your five wits (senses), knowledge, beauty, physical wealth, strength or discretion - all of these represented as allegorical figures, of course - because none of that will matter to you when you're dead. So what's your best bet, you worthless worm beneath God's toes? Go to confession and do nothing but good deeds. If you're lucky, then God - even though he knows better - might not throw your sorry ass into Hell for the rest of eternity.

Have a wonderful rest of the day, readers!

La Petite Princesse :-) says

Everyman is an easily understandable play. It was written in medieval era in which 2 kinds of plays were written, the morality play and the miracle play. Like miracles from the Bible and so on told by common people.

Who is it about? It's about "Everyman", every one of us. It's about virtues against vices. In this play death comes to Everyman and tells him it's time for him to leave the mundane world but Everyman says he is not ready for it and he tries to take with him all of his friends or things to the after life. All those so-called friends abolish him though and bring out a variety of vindications.

He can't take with him knowledge, goods, beauty, strength, etc. All he can take to the other world is his good deeds. They are too weak yet they do not abandon him.

So... Now you may wanna go do some random act of kindness perhaps?

Becky says

First sentence: HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE HOW THE HIGH FATHER OF HEAVEN SENDETH DEATH TO SUMMON EVERY CREATURE TO COME AND GIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR LIVES IN THIS WORLD AND IS IN MANNER OF A MORAL PLAY.

Premise/plot: Everyman is a morality play from 1485. This play has a single focus--what will happen when man comes face to face with God and his works are examined. The speaking roles include: Everyman, God:

Adonai, Death, Messenger, Fellowship, Cousin, Kindred, Goods, Good-Deeds, Strength, Discretion, Five-Wits, Beauty, Knowledge, Confession, Angel, and Doctor.

The play opens with Messenger and God having their say. God is angry with mankind--a race of sinners who have one and all forgotten him and forsaken worshipping him. Death is sent--by God--to "collect" Everyman. Everyman argues with Death. He does not want to die. He is not ready to die. He needs/wants more time. It's not fair. Can he pay Death money in exchange for more time. However, instead of taking Everyman right then and there, he does allow Everyman a little time to try to find a companion to take with him to the grave. Surprise, surprise, he doesn't find many eager takers for that one-way journey. He does, however, find some.

My thoughts: The subject matter is a sobering one. And while I'm glad that today's world offers more variety--a lot more variety--in terms of entertainment, in some ways we've lost something vital. I do think that contemplating life, death, what comes next, should have some part in our thinking lives. (If we actually have "thinking lives" today.)

Everyman is definitely an allegory, and one that predates Pilgrim's Progress by a century or two! I am hosting a reading challenge to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Reading Everyman a thoroughly medieval Catholic play gave me some background and context. For these two reasons, I am glad I read this short little play.

I will add one last thing. Theologically, Everyman is a mess. The message of Everyman seems to be that Good Works (and Strength and Knowledge and Discretion, etc.) accompany him to the judgment seat of Christ, and, because Everyman had received all seven sacraments of the church, he ultimately had nothing to fear because God found him good enough and worthy of heaven. Let's just say I wanted to yell at this book.

Sioned Raybould says

Was assigned to read this for uni in relation to Shakespeare. I have to admit that I was sceptical at first (really didn't have a clue what it was about.) But after an hour of intense reading and analysing I have found myself pleasantly surprised. Everyman is a play which tests the morals of an individual who has been faced with death. Said individual looks to his 'friends' (fellowship, kindred, cousin, knowledge, beauty, strength, good deeds, discretion and five-wits) to walk with him on his journey of redemption before he dies. All betray him but one - good deeds. Even if we look at this play from a secular point of view it speaks to us, telling us that life is short and death can greet us at every corner, even at times we don't expect. Do we should do good in the world and give back, as opposed to allowing ourselves to be absorbed by what the world has to offer us.

As a Catholic I found myself relating very much to this play and it has (in some respects) really provokes thought about my own morals and how I am currently leading my life. Am I living worthily of Christ? Could I dedicate myself more to Christ? No and absolutely.

I read this as part of The Norton Anthology of English Literature v.1 and I would really advise this short but thought-provoking play to everyone. It is a beautiful and wonderful read. I read a modern version (still medieval language but easier to understand) and I'm sure that such copies can be found online.

I'm not going to break this play apart (will save that for class!) but giving this play any less than five stars would be doing it a grave injustice. Absolutely wonderful and a must read!

Monika Singh says

Everyman is a medieval morality play. I felt that it's kind of too preachy, but that's what morality plays are. The play reminds us that at the end of our life, when we're standing for judgement, it's only "Good Deeds" that won't leave our side. What stood out is its immense contemporary relevance, even though it was written long ago. An enjoyable read.

Becky says

I read this as part of my literature course at university, and have to say that I loved it. I'll admit I was sceptical at first, but having read it I found myself pleasantly surprised.

This medieval morality play follows the final day of Everyman. In a desperate appeal not to face judgement alone, he looks to his "friends" (amongst them beauty, kin, five-wits as well as others) to accompany him. In the end, he departs only with his good deeds.

Though the play itself was a short and simple read, I found myself thinking about it at length afterwards. The meaning behind the author's beautiful, almost lyrical verse, was lacking in subtlety and mystery, yet this thinly concealed allegory was perhaps what made the play so enjoyable. The beauty of this piece lies in its simplicity.

I would strongly recommend this to anyone with an hour to spare, a must read!

Jan-Maat says

Everyman is your typical jolly medieval play - man is happy - man receives word that he is doomed to die - man desperately scrabbles around for a chance of salvation.

I'm not sure if it surfaced first in English or in Dutch (under the name of *Elckerlijc*, presumably performances predated the oldest surviving written version. It presumably might have been performed in its rhyming verse with abstract concepts like Good Deeds as it's main characters, in much the same way as the Mystery Plays in public spaces on high days and holidays, religion for the masses.

I saw a modern performance. A curious thing, a show by the National Theatre filmed and broadcast in cinemas, it was pretty tolerable, naturally in order to be modern rather than medieval, God was removed while swearing and references to drugs and alcohol were added.

Unsurprisingly, no amount of swearing or mind altering substances can make up for the lack of God, whether this was the cleverly subtle point the Director wanted to make, or if they were simply too clever for their own good I don't know, but I did spot that the entire play becomes pointless without some kind of religious superstructure (view spoiler), it became simply the anxious expression of Everyman realising that he was going to die, followed far too slowly by his death, followed not rapidly enough by my departure from the venue.

Originally, Everyman thinks he can fend off death with his wealth and then realising that money can't buy

everything desperately seeks to redeem himself, luckily Good Deeds are here to stay *Everyman, I will go with thee and be thy guide, in thy most need to go by thy side* and save the day, you've got to die, but there can still be hope (view spoiler)

Vahid says

The play was written at the end of 15th century , the lingering effects of Middle ages or interchangeably called "Dark ages" is clearly tangible both in the form and the content of the play.

Everyman stands for all men, he is summoned by death and he has to leave this universe and be judged by God . The play hails the despair of having to confront the unavoidable denouement of our lives , death. When death summons every man , he turns to his friends and asset and every possible entity to help him through this stage and to his chagrin , he is left to himself , pointing out the reality that when death comes , we must be prepared and have eliminated any kind of terrestrial attachment to the mundane world.

The play was written at the end of 15th century , an era in which the climate was completely religious . Most of the works were emanated only driven by religious motifs and that's because personal salvation was of great importance for them . I personally think these dramas help us travel back in time and see what kinds of mentalities people had back then and what milestones we human beings have gone through in order that we have reached this point .

Mario says

I'm actually quite surprised I liked this drama. I had to read it for university and I never really liked books with religious influences, but I liked this one quite a lot. It made me laugh a few times and I liked the message that the drama sends (that only your good deeds stay with you after you die). So far, in university this year we've been reading really interesting stories so I hope that this streak of interesting books will continue 'till the end of this year.

Sarah says

“When something happens to you, good or bad, consider what it means. There is a purpose to life's events, to teach you how to laugh more or not to cry too hard.

You can't make someone love you, all you can do is be someone who can be loved, the rest is up to the person to realize your worth.”

Cassandra Lê says

A morality play at best, but too didactic for my own taste. The words are, as always, very interesting considered they were written in the medieval period.

SmarterLilac says

In the end, the only thing that matters is Good Deeds. I found this work ambiguous and annoying when I first read it, but as I grow older, I've noticed that this sentiment is possibly the most enduring idea ever.

Duane says

This play reminds us that Everyman (all of us) at the end of life, when standing in judgement, will have only our "good deeds" to stand on our behalf. I personally believe that also a good heart, good intentions, showing respect and caring for others will also stand with you. Interesting, but written in a style that makes it difficult to read.

Casey says

(The date of my read for Everyman isn't accurate, but the year I read it is)

Momo says

Readers will follow the final day of Everyman after he is summoned by Death to leave the world of the living and face his ultimate judgment. Desperate not to meet this challenge alone, he seeks the companionship of all those he's held dear during life and is shocked to see which will betray him in his time of greatest need and which will stand by his side.

This play refreshes the mind and brings attention to the things that should matter most in your life, the things that will matter forever instead of just right now. There is a strong religious influence in the story, but the overall message is one that I believe can benefit both the religious and non-religious alike.

I gave this play a 4 star rating because I think that it has a great message, it was a refreshing and at times challenging read due to it being written in Middle English. Regardless on your view of life after death, wouldn't the world be a better place if all of us kept our friend Good Deeds healthy and strong?
