



# Trimalchio's Feast

*Petronius*

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*Petronius*

**Trimalchio's Feast** Petronius

'I blush to say what happened next.'

A satirical portrait of a drunken, orgiastic Roman banquet, hosted by the grossly ostentatious Trimalchio.

## Trimalchio's Feast Details

Date : Published February 26th 2015 by Penguin Classics (first published 66)

ISBN : 9780141398006

Author : Petronius

Format : Paperback 55 pages

Genre : Classics, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Trimalchio's Feast for online ebook

## Yente Meyers says

This was truly a horrible translation of a masterpiece

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## Jussi says

Lukukokemuksessa oli kuin Gogolin Kuolleiden sielujen kohdalla: tää on varmaan loistavan terävää, mehevää ja hykerryttävää satiiria, mutta oma fiilis tekstistä on lähinnä raskas ja läkähtynyt kaikesta runsaudesta. Kreiseistä ruokakuvauksista plussaa!

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## royaevereads says

A satire for which I don't know quite enough about the context to really "get"... It's funny, but a bit too exaggerated and in-your-face for my liking.

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## Peter says

What could be a wonderful book is marred by a truly horrible translation. A typical translation from 1965 with no thought for the source material, accents from cockney London through Yorkshire with a stopoff in the 17th century, spiced with jazzy sixties terms and swearing.

LISTEN UP PENGUIN IT'S TIME TO UPDATE THE TRANSLATION OF THIS CLASSIC.

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## JK says

Petronius writes the story of Trimalchio, an ex-slave whose life's ambition is to prove his wealth and exuberance. We're shown him hosting a feast of such luxury that his guests struggle to comprehend the food they're eating, the sights they're seeing, and the decadent scenes unfolding around them.

As feasts were common in Ancient Rome for displaying the host's power and wealth, Trimalchio goes to great lengths to display both. Petronius satirises this heavily, showing him to have shallowness of knowledge, taste, and morals. His vanity impacts his ability to quote mythology, and Petronius does well (perhaps blindingly so) to make us aware of his smoke and mirrors approach.

Strangely entertaining, but with no real plotline, *Trimalchio's Feast* is worthwhile for a glimpse into Ancient Rome and its societal nuances.

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## Anna says

Ik was gelukkig niet uitgenodigd.

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## Federica says

The *Satyricon* is one of the strangest and funniest output of the Latin literature. Funny, irreverent, satirical, it really is a book that can make the reader revalue the Latin world, with its memorable novels and characters. Highly recommended.

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## Ankita Arora says

*'A poor man and a rich man were enemies...' just when Trimalchio said: 'What's a poor man?'*  
*'Oh witty!' said Agamemnon,*

Trimalchio's Feast is one of the texts from *The Satyricon* by Petronius.

Petronius is a 1st century writer and *The Satyricon* is his take and humorous satire on the Roman Empire.

In this, we see Pompeious Trimalchio hosting a feast for the town (it is quite a thing for the Romans to do) with delicacies landing on the table every now and then, and people talking about slavery, freedmen and the "good old days".

Everybody has a story to tell and Trimalchio being the humble guest lets everyone talk but with an end of his own. He is shown treating slaves, women and other noblemen in distinct ways as it was in those times.

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It felt more like historical fiction to me maybe because the translation didn't do justice to the original classic text. But i did love the satirical approach Petronius brought in his tone and storytelling that was pretty evident.

I loved that the book is just about that one feast and it held so many intricate little details of the Roman culture of that time.

Definitely a worthy addition to the Penguin Little Black Classics.

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## Marjolein says

Full review to come!

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## Meg says

The translation of this is terrible AND dated.

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## Heather says

"We all know you're off your head with all that reading," says one of Trimalchio's many guests. I don't know about that, but this "bitingly comic portrait" went completely over my head. I have absolutely no clue what I just read. A story about a feast/party with no obvious plot and very little point with (I guess) some strange and ostentatious characters. Those Romans and their dinner parties, eh?

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## Joey Woolfardis says

Petronius, a first-century courtier is believed to be the author of The Satyricon of which this segment is taken from. As a whole it concerns Encolpius the narrator and his young lover Gidon as they adventure through the lowest and highest parts of Roman society. Sadly, The Satyricon does not exist as a complete novel, but as a fractured remains of a mixture of prose and poetry.

Trimalchio's Feast is a bawdy, drunken affair with men, food, slaves and a great deal of sexism. It is hilarious at points and also typical of the male kind of writing that we are used to: men being men with woman following after them with the bucket. An important piece of early writing, especially about the lower classes during the Roman Empire, but emphatically patriarchal.

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## Darwin8u says

*"O woe, woe, man is only a dot;  
Hell drags us off and that is the lot;  
So let us live a little space,  
At least while we can feed our face."  
- Petronius, The Satyricon*

**Vol 21** of my Penguin Little Black Classics Box Set. Trimalchio's Feast is a section from Petronius' famous work The Satyricon. It was hard to read this and not think of Donald Trump, but this book isn't the first time I've linked (in my mind) our current political spot with Nero's Rome.

According to Tacitus, Petronius:

*"spent his days in sleep, his nights in attending to his official duties or in amusement, that by his dissolute*

*life he had become as famous as other men by a life of energy, and that he was regarded as no ordinary profligate, but as an accomplished voluptuary. His reckless freedom of speech, being regarded as frankness, procured him popularity. Yet during his provincial government, and later when he held the office of consul, he had shown vigor and capacity for affairs. Afterwards returning to his life of vicious indulgence, he became one of the chosen circle of Nero's intimates, and was looked upon as an absolute authority on questions of taste (elegantiae arbiter; note the pun on Petronius' cognomen) in connection with the science of luxurious living."*

The Feast of Trimalchio is everything you would imagine an over-the-top Roman feast would be. Music, wine, debauchery, slaves, food nested in other foods, an over-abundance of money, satire, witicism, insults, and again lots and lots of wine and food.

If you love everything Roman, you will enjoy this. Even though it is fiction, it does give a glimpse of what the 1% in Rome during Nero might have lived like, because Gaius Petronius Arbiter WAS the elegantiae arbiter for Nero. He even died with style.

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### **Russio says**

Fairly entertaining account of an opulent feast set in the house of a by turns muificent, by other turns psychotic host. Trots along entertainingly and even has the odd laugh to titilate. Wonderful to find such ribald stuff among the classics: gives the lie to ours as the enlightened age!

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### **D says**

Even better than Satyricon, or so I thought at the time. Even now, I remember some hilarious juicy bits :).

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