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Included in this volume are the dialogues **On the Shortness of Life** and **On Tranquility of Mind**, which are eloquent classic statements of Stoic ideals of fortitude and self-reliance. This selection also features extracts from **Natural Questions**, Seneca's exploration of such phenomena as the cataracts of the Nile and earthquakes, and the **Consolation of Helvia**, in which he tenderly tries to soothe his mother's pain at their separation.

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Editorial Review

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

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About the Author

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, statesman, philosopher, advocate and man of letters, was born at Cordoba in Spain around 4 BC. He rose to prominence in Rome, pursuing a career in the courts and political life, for which he had been trained, while also acquiring celebrity as an author of tragedies and essays. Falling foul of successive emperors (Caligula in AD 39 and Claudius in AD 41), he spent eight years in exile, allegedly for an affair with Caligula's sister. Recalled in AD 49, he was made praetor and was appointed tutor to the boy who was to become, in AD 54, the emperor Nero. On Nero's succession, Seneca acted for some eight years as an unofficial chief minister. The early part of this reign was remembered as a period of sound government, for which the main credit seems due to Seneca. His control over Nero declined as enemies turned the emperor against him with representations that his popularity made him a danger, or with accusations of immorality or excessive wealth. Retiring from public life he devoted his last three years to philosophy and writing, particularly the **Letters to Lucilius**. In AD 65 following the discovery of a plot against the emperor, in which he was thought to be implicated, he and many others were compelled by Nero to commit suicide. His fame as an essayist and dramatist lasted until two or three centuries ago, when he passed into literary oblivion, from which the twentieth century has seen a considerable recovery.

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