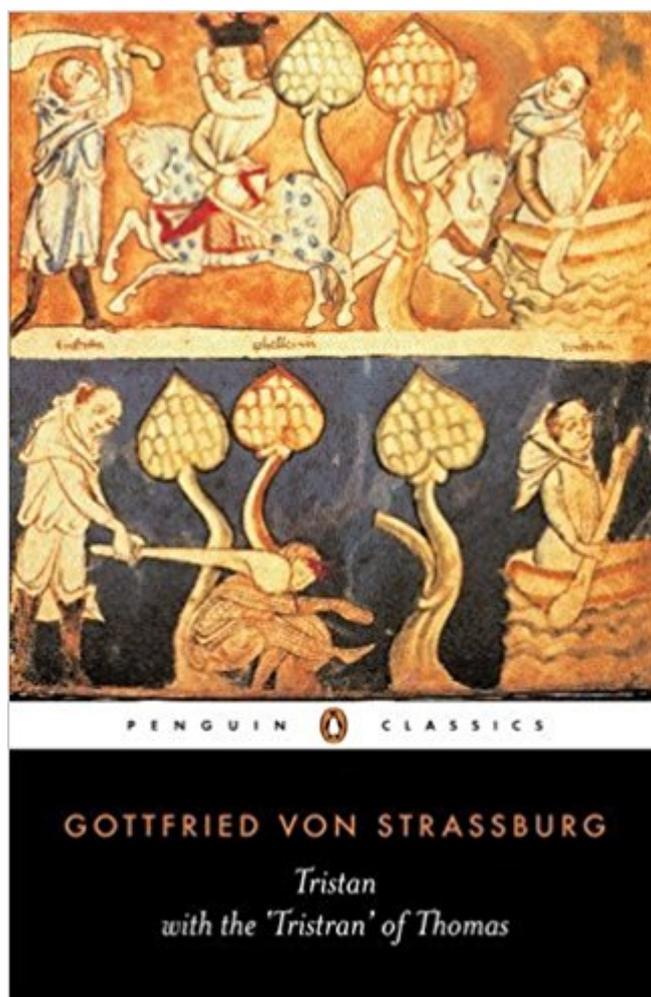


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Tristan: With The Surviving Fragments Of The 'Tristan Of Thomas' (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Gottfried's version of this legendary romance--in which Tristan and Isolde chance to drink a magic potion that causes them to fall in love--portrays Tristan in the round as an attractive and sophisticated pre-Renaissance man. While Gottfried adheres faithfully to the events as set down by Thomas, his chosen source, he is correct over questions of Christianity and religion, but no more. In fact his persona as narrator is oddly elusive and engaging. A virtuoso stylist, adept in irony and wit, he is subtle and almost unmedieval in putting across his own impressions of a love that transcends the bounds advocated by Church or society.

Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Reprint edition (July 30, 1960)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140440984

ISBN-13: 978-0140440980

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.9 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

If all the medieval scholars in the world were asked to name the definitive version of the Tristan story, it's a sure bet a majority would point to the work of Gottfried Von Strassburg. Though Gottfried certainly did not create the Tristan saga itself, working as he was from an earlier poem by Thomas of Britain (and Thomas wasn't the first storyteller to take up Tristan's tale either), Gottfried's personal touches and a surgeon's eye for the psychological underpinnings of the cursed love affair between the knight Tristan and his Queen Isolde allowed him to make the existing story his own. Grand in conception and rich in detail, Gottfried's TRISTAN has for eight centuries delighted general readers and scholars alike and has been wildly influential, inspiring countless other writers and artists to produce their own take on an immortal legend. Ironically, Gottfried's opus isn't even complete--it breaks off shortly after Tristan meets Isolde of the White Hands. Providentially, Thomas's

TRISTRAN picks up where Gottfried, for whatever reason, leaves off, so that an essentially complete story is in fact available, albeit by two writers of rather different styles. Also, it should be noted that neither Gottfried nor Thomas put Tristan at King Arthur's Round Table, as many other authors frequently do. Penguin Classics are of uniformly high quality, and this book is no exception. The translation is by renowned medieval scholar A.T. Hatto, with an excellent introduction, helpful notes, and a number of supplemental pieces including glossaries of geographical and character names from the text for enhanced readability. Is Gottfried's TRISTAN truly the best? Of course that is always going to be debatable.

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