

Epic and Romance



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Reviews

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(Mitchell Kuhn III)

EPIC AND ROMANCE



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BiblioLife. Paperback. Book Condition: New. This item is printed on demand. Paperback. 336 pages. Dimensions: 9.7in. x 7.4in. x 0.7in.Excerpt: . . . the effect of the romantic interludes in Gisli, which is perhaps the most tragic of all the Sagas, or at any rate the most self-conscious of its tragic aim. In the story of Gisli there is an introduction and preparation, but there is no very great expense of historical preliminaries. The discrepancies here between the two extant redactions of the Saga seem to show that introductory chapters of this sort were regarded as fair openings for invention and decoration by editors, who had wits enough to leave the essential part of the story very much to itself. Here, when once the action has begun, it goes on to the end without a fault. The chief characters are presented at the beginning; Gisli and Thorkell his brother; Thorgrim the Priest and Vestein, their two brothers-in-law. A speech foretelling their disunion is reported to Gisli, and leads him to propose the oath of fellowship between the four; which proposal, meant to avert the omen, brings about its fulfilment. And so the story goes on logically and inevitably to the death of Gisli, who slew Thorgrim, and the passionate agony of Thordis, Thorgrims wife and Gislis sister. Pg 198 Hrafnkels Saga is a tragic idyll, complete and rounded. It is different in its design from Njla or Laxdla, from the stories of Grettir and Gisli. It is a short story, well concentrated. For mere symmetry of design it might compete with any of the greater Icelandic works, not to speak of any modern fiction. Hrafnkel, the proud man, did a cruel thing for his oaths sake; killed his shepherd Einar for riding on Freyfaxi, the horse that belonged to Frey...



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