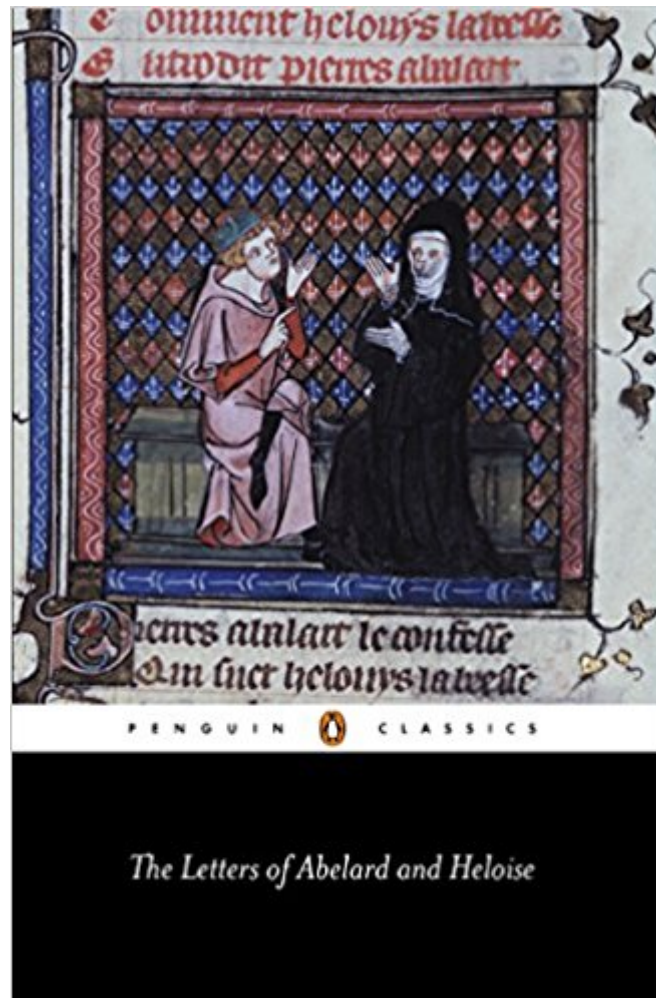


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The Letters Of Abelard And Heloise (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

One of the world's most celebrated and tragic love affairs Through the letters between Abelard and Heloise, we follow the path of their 12th-century romance, from its reckless and ecstatic beginnings when Heloise became Abelard's pupil, through the suffering of public scandal and enforced secret marriage, to their eventual separation. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Revised ed. edition (April 27, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140448993

ISBN-13: 978-0140448993

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 49 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #27,896 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > France #16 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Letters #49 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Medieval

Customer Reviews

Abelard and Heloise are nearly as famous a pair of tragic lovers as the fictional Romeo and Juliet; their shared passion for knowledge, religious faith, and one another sealed their destiny. Abelard was a well-respected, 12th-century Parisian scholar and teacher, and Heloise was his talented young student. The two relate their story through a set of letters to one another and intimate acquaintances. Their ardor is unmistakable; as Abelard writes to his love, "So intense were the fires of lust which bound me to you that I set those wretched, obscene pleasures, which we blush even to name, above God as above myself..." This forbidden lust resulted in a pregnancy and secret

marriage, and when their union could no longer withstand the challenges in its path, each lover sought refuge in the church--Abelard became a monk and Heloise an abbess. Their correspondence continued as both achieved success in their new careers but continued to struggle with their feelings for one another; the set of letters powerfully articulates the wide range of emotions they experienced. So timeless is their love story that--after eight centuries--their passion, their devotion, and their struggle still resonate with readers. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Text: English, Latin (translation) --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

It takes some time to understand the significance of the events in the lives of these two people. I read this as part of a course in Medieval History as a primary source. The castration of Peter is considered a major turning point in Medieval history. This is such a classic. The contrast between the cultural norms of the day and their behavior informs us of just how different our society is from theirs.

The Letters of Abelard and Heloise is an intense read. It is no doubt true that the staying power of these writings is owing to the soap-opera-like lives of its authors as well as the poetic and romantic language. This collection brings together Abelard's biography written to a friend, "The History of My Own Misfortunes" in which he divulges from beginning to end, all the drama surrounding his rise from philosophy student to a sort of Scholastic celebrity in Paris. The other part of this book is taken up by the personal letters between Abelard and Heloise, from which the reader discovers much about the relationship of a monk and nun who had a romance outdoing anything Shakespeare could have dreamed up for Romeo and Juliet. Their relationship became more formal for Abelard following his radical nighttime castration by Heloise's father. Heloise displays the passion with which she continues to love Abelard even though she joins a convent at his behest. Abelard's tone changes in his personal letters from what it was in his "History," yet Heloise never changes hers. She remains in love with him and lets it show in each letter to him. He takes on the role of a spiritual leader and writes to her instructions and answers to her questions, but he does not keep up with the romantic language as Heloise does. The value in this type of book, when the texts themselves are available for free download on the internet, is the translation, introduction and notes provided on the historical situation which allow the reader to enjoy it more fully. The translation and introduction done by the late Betty Radice in 1974, who succeeds in humanizing these two long dead authors so that their

writings move the reader to an emotional reaction. The updated introduction added by M.T. Clanchy provides a clear look at what scholarship has done with Abelard and Heloise since Radice's book was first published. Her translation aids the reader's enjoyment because it contemporizes the language. The internet versions available are translated archaically due to the fact that those texts are in the public domain and therefore prior to about 1926, which makes it a slower read. This is not a book of theology, though Abelard was arguably the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, but of real romance despite the star-crossed lovers' ill fated lives.

What can I say?? They shared a true love that is the stuff that legends are made of.. I feel privileged to have read the letters and am so glad that they survived.. Abelard's rejection of Heloise for the sake of her soul is really touching as is her reaching out to him not willing to let the memories of their time together go.. I give it a five and it's all for them.. Here's hoping they found each other in Heaven and have the eternity together that was denied them in life..

Never has a story gripped me from the beginning and refused to turn loose of my heart. It bled for the two lovers and what they went through in the name of love. Forever shall Abelard and Heloise reside in my heart.

What amazed me about this book, is that Heloise, a 12th century woman raised in a convent, expressed her sexuality with such openness. Her emotions come alive. Readers of the 21st century will be able to relate to her feelings.

Keep it in my minivan - our house is surrounded by many railroad tracks, and I get stopped for long periods of time when going to and fro. I now keep a 'library' in the minivan plus crossword puzzle and Sudoku books, for those times I have to wait for trains...This book is in that car library - I love the romantic story of 'A' and 'H'! Even bought the movie (on VHS tape) a million years ago...

I purchased this for use in a European History class at UCSD and wasn't expecting a medieval love story! It turned out to be a great read, and I thoroughly enjoyed that it was required reading. It definitely gave a more human feeling to the period, and at times was overly heartbreaking.

A classic in literature of a love affair gone wrong and its horrific consequences. A collection of letters of the two participants, most of them much later in their lives. Wonderful book.

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