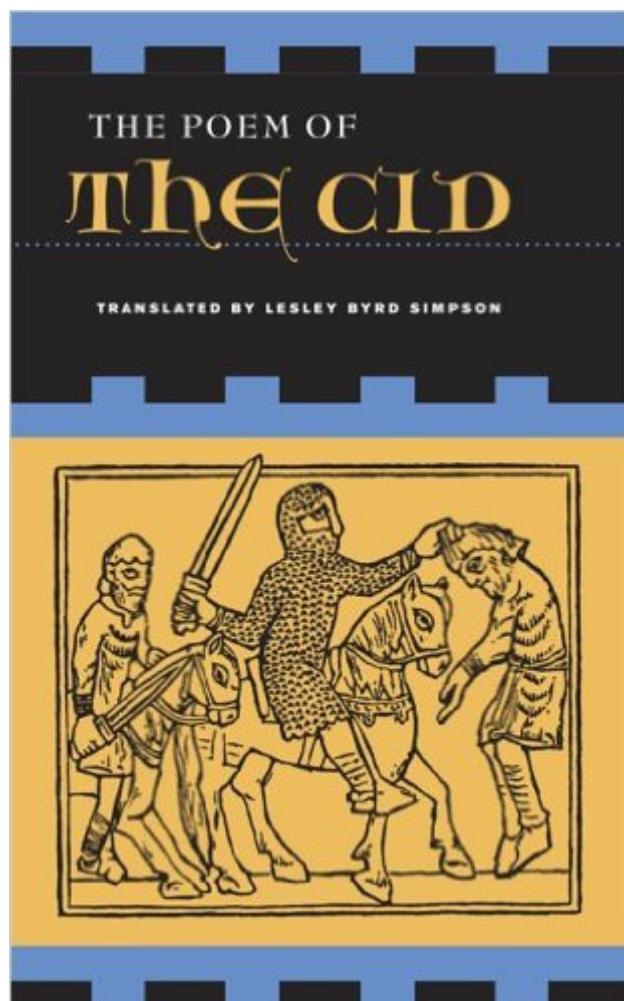


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The Poem Of The Cid



Synopsis

Students of Spanish literature have long been familiar with this eight-hundred-year-old epic detailing the legendary exploits of the soldier-adventurer Ruy Dá- az of Bivar, El Cid, and of his part in the long struggle between Christianity and Islam. The epic poem recounts the adventures of the Cid; of his peerless steed, Babieca, and of his two famous swords, Colada and Tizán; of his wife, Doña Ximena, and his two daughters, Doña Elvira and Doña Sol, who found sanctuary with Abbot Don Sancho in the monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña during the Cid's exile; and of the despicable and black-hearted princes of Carrizón, Diego and Fernando González.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book should belong to the universal, or at least Western, canon of all times. It is the foundation of Spanish literature and national myth. And, for those who think classics, especially medieval, are boring, surprise, it is not at all. Rodrigo Dá- az de Vivar, the Cid, is a great warrior who, because of political intrigue, is dismissed by his master. He leaves and continues his fight against the Moors, who are the masters of most Spain since the 9th century. He conquers Valencia and starts forging his legend, fighting not only the Moors but other traitors to the cause of unifying Spain. One of the best and most famous scenes is the marriage of his two daughters, Urraca and Ximena. The book is written in truly epic style, full of adventures, battles, duels and, especially all the Medieval flavor that makes it unforgettable. In a good translation, the grandiosity of many sentences should be neatly perceived. It's hard to stop recommending this great work of art, a true beliger to the best

classic literature the West has produced.

The Poem of the Cid (here translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson) is required reading for anyone interested in tales of high adventure, honor, and chivalry, for these things are the backbone of one of literature's greatest sagas: the tale of Ruy Diaz of Bivar, the Cid, and Spain's greatest knight. Unfairly exiled from his King's country, the Cid throws himself into Moorish Spain to battle, plunder, and rebuild his name. Eventually the Cid's heroism explodes the King's enmity, and he returns home in glory. But the Cid errs in marrying his unsuspecting daughters to the craven Princes of Carrion, unleashing such suffering and dishonor on the girls that only a colorful trial by combat can satisfy the Cid's lust for revenge and heal his family's wounded honor. Rich in medieval tapestry and flavor and a more realistic depiction of the "chivalric code" than one finds in parallel works (the Cid, for all his honor, is not above deceiving his enemies--or some of his friends!), The Poem of the Cid is highly recommended to anyone born with the spirit of a knight in their heart.

An excellent classic of Western Canon.

This jolly romp through Moorish Spain has a lot in common with the modern Hollywood blockbuster: a roguish and indestructible hero, a respectful attitude towards different cultures, and an alternating of bloody action with moments of boisterous camaraderie and farce. Spain's national epic, it's the kind of tale that kept Dark Ages audiences rapt, like England's Beowulf, sparking imaginations by the firelight. Thanks to Simpson's jovial and well-paced translation, its vigour still resonates. But where the Anglo-Saxon epic warns of the fallibility of great men, the Spanish saga exalts its hero unabashedly. It celebrates the Cid's valour and generosity of spirit; it delights in his capacity for trickery. Above all it trumpets his honour, for though the historical Cid is best known for helping drive the Muslims from central Spain, this literary hero - "he who in happy hour girded on his sword" - is much less a crusader than an adventurer. His opponents are as often fickle Spanish nobles as Moorish kings, and while he is always careful to thank God for his victories, the Cid is interested less in accruing lands for Christendom than in accumulating booty for his comrades and inches for his beard, the ever-lengthening symbol of his manhood. Some Moors are his friends, and the man he names as bishop of Valencia wields a sword more readily than a Bible. So beneath its Christian veneer, The Poem of the Cid is rather a pagan tale. Does its obsession with honour and its rank in the Spanish canon say something about Spain's national character? Perhaps. It certainly evokes values recurrent in its history, as in the conquest of the Americas and its aftermath: honour (which is

"glory" by another name), zeal for booty, Christianizing as a pretext for earthly aims, and even the privileging of fair complexions - the Cid's virtuous daughters are "white like the sun."

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