

Erec and Enide (Chretien de Troyes Romances S)

Chrétien de Troyes



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Erec and Enide, the first of five surviving Arthurian romantic poems by twelfth-century French poet Chrétien de Troyes, narrates a vivid chapter from the legend of King Arthur. Chrétien's romances became the source for Arthurian tradition and influenced countless other poets in England and on the Continent. Yet his swiftmoving style is difficult to capture in translation, and today's English-speaking audiences remain largely unfamiliar with the pleasures of reading his poems. Now an experienced translator of medieval verse who is himself a poet has translated Eric and Enide in an original three-stress metric verse form that fully captures the movement, the sense, and the spirit of the Old French original. Burton Raffel's rendition preserves the subtlety and charm of a poem that is in turn serious, dramatic, bawdy, merry, and satiric. Erec and Enide tells the story of Erec, a knight at King Arthur's court, whose retirement to domestic bliss with his beautiful new wife Enide takes him away from his chivalric duties. To regain his knightly honor, Erec sets out with Enide on a series of amazing adventures. Eric dispatches thieves and giants with prodigious strength and valor but treats his wife rather harshly for doubting his abilities. When Enide is kidnapped by a robber baron, Erec revives from near-death to perform a courageous rescue, and at length the two are reconciled.

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