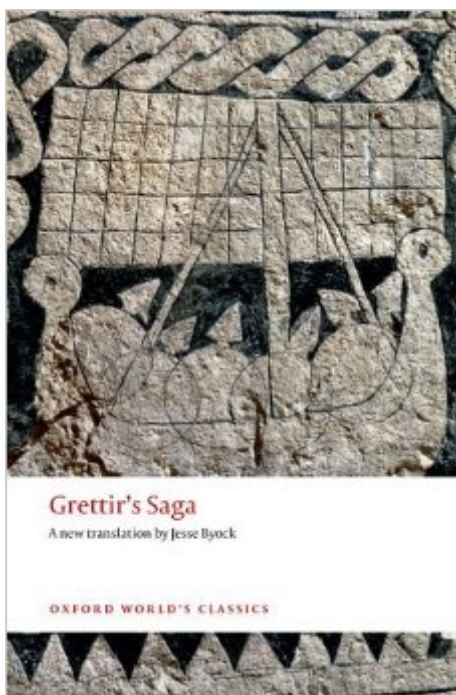


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Grettir's Saga (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

A sweeping epic of the Viking Age, *Grettir's Saga* follows the life of the outlaw Grettir the Strong as he battles against sorcery, bad luck, and the vengefulness of his enemies. Feared by many, Grettir is a warrior and also a poet and a lover. Unable to resolve the dispute that has outlawed him, he lives outside the bounds of family life and he roams the countryside, ridding Iceland and Norway of berserker warriors, trolls, and the walking dead. The saga presents a poignant story of medieval Icelandic society, combining details of everyday legal disputes with folklore and legend. With its scathing humor, explicit verses, and fantastic monsters, *Grettir's Saga* is among the most famous and widely read of Iceland's epics. In addition to Jesse Byock's lively new translation, this edition includes extensive maps, genealogies, illustrations, a chronology and glossary, as well as helpful notes, an up-to-date bibliography, and thorough introduction exploring the saga in the context of other works of Icelandic and medieval literature.

About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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Customer Reviews

This translation of Grettir's saga (*Grettir the strong*) by Jesse Byock, is utterly astounding. I had high

hopes for the translation, as Byock also translated the excellent Saga of the Volsungs (available from Penguin classics) and I was not disappointed. Byock captures the signature prose of the Icelandic sagas; terse, straightforward, violent, but oddly poetic in a stripped down sort of way. Grettir's saga is perhaps the most famous of Iceland's "outlaw sagas," and for good reason; after being exiled, Grettir roams Iceland and Norway, ridding the land of all types of creatures, including trolls and zombies. However, within this brutal warrior we also see a human, almost touching side: Grettir is also a poet, and happens to be deathly afraid of the dark, a fear that develops to the point that he will not travel at night alone. Byock's translation captures the story in all of its violent, stripped down beauty. This story is further illuminated by maps, illustrations and explanatory notes. While I can not directly compare this translation to that available from Penguin Classics (by Bernard Scudder) I can say that I have read sagas from both translators, and both are excellent. I have read Bernard Scudder's rendering of Egil's Saga, and it is everything one could wish for. I would imagine the two Grettir translations are equally excellent, and I am sure that the maps and notes are adequate in the Penguin version. The Oxford version which I am reviewing here is a few dollars more than the Penguin, but I believe it also has a better "feel" to it than the Penguin one, which seems to have flimsy binding which is not usually characteristic of Penguin. Read and enjoy. If you are new to Icelandic Sagas I would recommend "The Saga of the Volsungs," but don't miss out on Grettir.

In anticipation of a trip to Iceland a number of years ago, I went out and bought all the Icelandic sagas just for the heck of it. I've no serious background in medieval literature or history, and thus was picking this up with no historical or literary context beyond what information was given in the intro. Grettir's saga is one of the heavyweights of Iceland's sagas (the others being Egil's, Njal's, and one other I believe). If the thought of reading 1,000 year old stories seems intimidating or potentially dull, I would encourage you to read just the last segment of Grettir's saga. (It's basically a stand-alone tale for all intents and purposes). It takes place after Grettir's death and tells the tale of how his bother Thorstein avenges his death meets the woman who ultimately becomes his wife. It is pure comedy gold. You'd figure that life in that time was all misery and death - but nope - they had a sense of humor that transcends time.

My favorite book in my literature class! Well-written, definitely different from normal novel structure, but wonderful. The one book from college literature classes that I kept!

Great story and translation. This Oxford paperback is a nice binding and quality of paper.

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