

# Das Nibelungenlied: Song of the Nibelungs

*Das Nibelungenlied* is an epic poem from the Middle Ages. It tells the story of Siegfried, a legendary hero who is betrayed and murdered by his treacherous brother-in-law, Hagen. The poem is a complex and multi-layered work, and it has been interpreted in many different ways. It is considered one of the greatest works of German literature.

## History and Origin

*Das Nibelungenlied* was written in the 13th century, although the stories it tells are much older. The poem is based on a variety of sources, including oral traditions, historical events, and other literary works. The poet who wrote the poem is unknown, but it is thought that he was a professional minstrel or scribe.



## Das Nibelungenlied: Song of the Nibelungs by Burton Raffel

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2431 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 384 pages

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The poem was originally written in Middle High German, and it was later translated into other languages, including English. The first English translation was published in 1840, and it has since been translated many times.

## Plot Summary

*Das Nibelungenlied* tells the story of Siegfried, a young hero from the Netherlands. Siegfried is a skilled warrior, and he is also the possessor of a magical sword, Balmung. Siegfried travels to the kingdom of Burgundy, where he falls in love with Kriemhild, the sister of King Gunther.

Gunther agrees to let Siegfried marry Kriemhild, but only if Siegfried helps him defeat a dragon. Siegfried kills the dragon and wins Kriemhild's hand in marriage. However, Siegfried's happiness is short-lived. Hagen, Gunther's treacherous chamberlain, is jealous of Siegfried's power and influence. Hagen convinces Gunther to help him murder Siegfried.

Hagen and Gunther kill Siegfried, and they throw his body into the Rhine River. Kriemhild is grief-stricken, and she vows to avenge her husband's death. She marries Etzel, the king of the Huns, and she persuades him to help her get revenge on Hagen and Gunther.

Etzel and Kriemhild invade Burgundy, and they defeat Hagen and Gunther. Kriemhild kills Hagen with Balmung, and she beheads Gunther. She then returns to Etzel's kingdom, where she lives out the rest of her days in mourning.

## Characters

*Das Nibelungenlied* features a cast of complex and memorable characters. The main characters are:

\* **Siegfried:** A young hero from the Netherlands. Siegfried is a skilled warrior, and he is also the possessor of a magical sword, Balmung. \*

**Kriemhild:** The sister of King Gunther. Kriemhild is a beautiful and virtuous

woman, and she is deeply in love with Siegfried. \* **Gunther:** The king of Burgundy. Gunther is a weak and indecisive ruler, and he is easily manipulated by Hagen. \* **Hagen:** Gunther's treacherous chamberlain. Hagen is a cunning and ambitious man, and he is jealous of Siegfried's power and influence.

## Themes

*Das Nibelungenlied* explores a variety of themes, including:

\* **Love:** The poem is a love story, and it tells the story of two people who are deeply in love. However, their love is ultimately doomed, and it ends in tragedy. \* **Loyalty:** The poem also explores the theme of loyalty. Siegfried is a loyal friend and vassal, but he is betrayed by his brother-in-law. \* **Revenge:** The poem also deals with the theme of revenge. Kriemhild is consumed by a desire for revenge, and she eventually gets her revenge on Hagen and Gunther. \* **Fate:** The poem also explores the theme of fate. The characters in the poem are all doomed to tragedy, and they cannot escape their fate.

## Style

*Das Nibelungenlied* is written in a highly stylized and poetic language. The poem is full of vivid imagery, and it uses a variety of literary devices, such as alliteration, assonance, and meter.

The poem is also divided into a number of "adventures," each of which tells a different part of the story. The adventures are connected by a recurring refrain, which emphasizes the theme of fate.

## Legacy

*Das Nibelungenlied* has had a profound impact on German culture. The poem has been adapted into numerous operas, plays, and films. It has also been translated into many languages, and it is considered one of the great works of world literature.

The poem's legacy is not only literary. It has also had a significant impact on German history and culture. The poem has been used to promote national pride and unity, and it has been used to justify German military aggression.

*Das Nibelungenlied* is a complex and multi-layered work, and it has been interpreted in many different ways. The poem is a love story, a tragedy, and a reflection on the human condition. It is a work that has stood the test of time, and it continues to be relevant and meaningful today.



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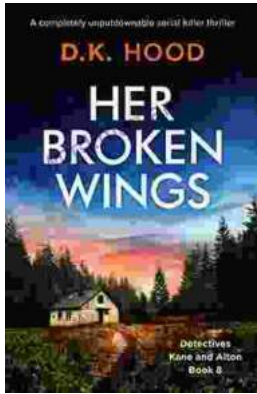
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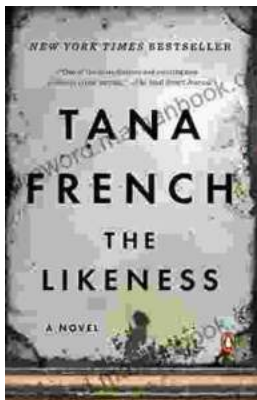
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