



The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Nibelungs

William Morris

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The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Nibelungs (1876) is an epic poem of over 10,000 lines by William Morris that tells the tragic story, drawn from the Volsunga Saga and the Elder Edda, of the Norse hero Sigmund, his son Sigurd (the equivalent of Siegfried in the Nibelungenlied and Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung) and Sigurd's wife Gudrun. It sprang from a fascination with the Volsung legend that extended back twenty years to the author's youth, and had already resulted in several other literary and scholarly treatments of the story. It was Morris's own favourite of his poems, and was enthusiastically praised both by contemporary critics and by such figures as T. E. Lawrence and George Bernard Shaw. In recent years it has been rated very highly by many William Morris scholars, but has never succeeded in finding a wide readership on account of its great length and archaic diction. It has been seen as an influence on such fantasy writers as Andrew Lang and J. R. R. Tolkien.

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