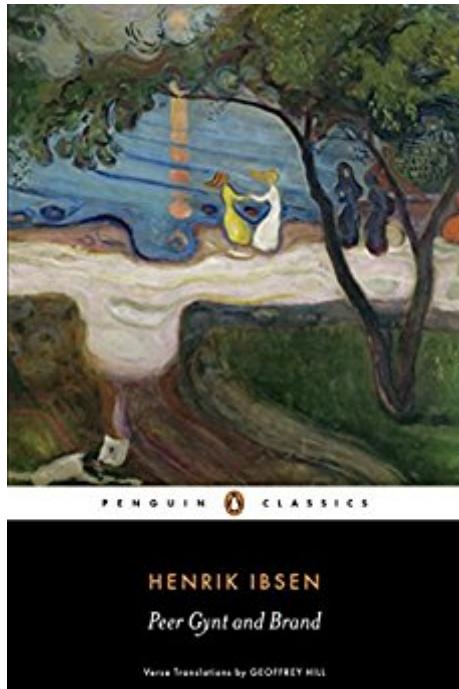


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Peer Gynt And Brand (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

A new Penguin edition of Ibsen's two great verse plays, in masterful versions by one of our greatest living poets, Geoffrey Hill. These two powerful and contrasting verse dramas by Ibsen made his reputation as a playwright. The fantastical adventures of the irrepressible Peer Gynt - poet, idler, procrastinator, seducer - draw on Norwegian folklore to conjure up mountains, kidnappings, shipwrecks and trolls in an exuberant examination of truth and the self; while Brand, an unsparing vision of an idealistic priest who lives by his steely faith, explores free will and sacrifice. This volume brings together the poet Geoffrey Hill's acclaimed stage version of Brand with a new poetic rendering of Peer Gynt, published for the first time. This Penguin edition includes an interview with Geoffrey Hill about recreating Ibsen in English, an introduction by Janet Garton and editorial materials by Tore Rem.

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Customer Reviews

Peer Gynt in particular defies expectations and narrative in a way that leaves dear reader aghast at times, and at times flummoxed, but never bored or entirely unfulfilled as the literary allusions and

bon-bons mount up on the trail. The ending is surprisingly powerful given the expectations set up in the preceding acts and even the just-preceding scenes. This is a dialogue somewhat as in The Misanthrope or as in Hamlet in some ways, as the point is to get into the mind of the protagonist to be so fully and quickly transformed in a single instant at the denouement. The Button Moulder in the final round of transformative encounters of the play have the power to self-eject from Peer all that makes him less than fully human, less than fully "Gyntian" and at the same time redeem him from all of his ideas of his enthroned Selfhood. At least that seems to have been Ibsen's intent and landing place. I suspect that, if it wasn't planned that way, that is how Ibsen ruled it would end once he saw such a compact whimsical play unravel toward its own native finale with such force as if entirely on its own. I will say that Ibsen does seem to be projecting his somewhat Christian-Romantic idealism onto the play, contrary to Harold Bloom, and even contrary to the translator who've both expressed doubts about the finality of the ending and the durability of Ibsen's Christian idealist facade. It may be useful to keep in mind the philosophical tone that Peer and other characters so often espouse and the constant self-berating that develops around Peer despite his continued uncontested basic tenets of Gyntianism. When Peer finally sees the light, it is overpoweringly transformative for him, demolishing his former self, and it is commensurately touching and powerfully transformative for the reader.

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