



Rhinegold

Stephan Grundy

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Set in the sensuous & exuberant world of North European myth & saga, this epic of heroism & betrayal, incest & tragedy breathes life into an age of unequaled grandeur, bringing intimacy & poignancy to the tumult of legend.

Rhinegold Details

Date : Published February 1st 1995 by Bantam (first published January 1st 1992)

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Author : Stephan Grundy

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From Reader Review Rhinegold for online ebook

Juan Gallardo Ivanovic says

Major pros:

- The plot. You can find vengeance, treachery, mischief, love, honor and fate, among others.
- A solid protagonist who is fated for glory and tragedy.
- A god who wants to change the fate itself, embarks on a journey to create world's greatest hero.
- Family's story that will become a legend.
- Fuses both history and fantasy in an amazing blend.
- Book design. The hardback version has frame-decorated chapters and parts.

Cons:

- Length can be a problem (700+ pages)
- By the way that is written, this novel is hard to read. I am speaking as advanced/expert english speaker. Because of this, it took me like 3 months to complete this book (well i have to be honest, i was reading it on my spare time).
- Too many characters in the beginning can confuse.

As summary, it is a solid book retelling the legend about a well-known character. Deep and fabulous story beginning with Sigfrith's origins including the fight with the dragon and our hero's fall.

The only let downs is the pages amount and language (english) is very complicated even if you are an expert on it. I am happy that I read this book, even that I struggled to end it.

Definitely worth a read if you are into Germanic Legends, if not this might be not the best book to give you a warm welcome.

Debbie says

This is dense and fascinating book. It offers a fictionalized yet entirely possible view of the legend of Sigfrith the Volsung and the Ring of the Nibelung. It is not an easy read by any means but once I finished the book I was glad I did. Grundy researched this legend and the history of the time and created a compelling, complex and captivating tale.

Lorelei Lee says

Vielleicht mein Lieblingsroman basierend auf der Edda-Version der Nibelungensage.

Francis says

One of my all time favorites

SJ Hartland says

I lived rather than read Rhinegold. It is so richly textured, its characters so compelling, it sunk into me and played out in dreams.

I groaned or screamed at characters when they frustrated me, feared for them when they were in trouble, wept when everything was hopeless.

As well as achingly real characters, Rhinegold combines history, magic and drama into a fascinating story that starts with the origins of the Walsings.

We follow Sigimund and his twin sister Sigilind on a perilous, fated journey towards destiny that forever seems to close in on characters like a vicious net.

Sigimund and Sigilind drew me into their story, into their lives so much so that I found it hard to throw off emotions churned up after reading their chapters.

We follow Sigifrith, Sigimund's son, a Norse hero indeed, who avenges his father's death and fights a dragon guarding a cursed treasure.

But no matter how much we wish Sigifrith's story ends happily, there's always that sense that he is trapped by fate, by gods, by his enemies.

You read his tale with a heavy heart, especially as he is drawn into plots by the Burgundians, Gundahari, Gundrun and Hagan (the central character in Grundy's Attila's Gold).

This is a fabulous story, a dark, rousing saga with characters who will haunt you for many, many years.

Tiffany Robbins says

As a young, quite impressionable teenager, I read Attila's Treasure by Stephan Grundy. I was in my bad-ass phase and thought that anything with barbarians in it must be cool. I'd picked it at random from the shelves of Walden Books and plopped it down at the cash register next to my sister's newest Star Wars book and Mom's newest Harlequin. I think it turned out to be one of the stories that lead me to wanting to write stories. It was one of those stories that captured me and made me want to make magic with the deceptively simple tools called a pen and paper.

Anyway, I always wondered what happened to the character Hagan, because Grundy left him somewhat miserable at the end of the story. It was a good and realistic ending, but I always felt really sad for him. Of course, this was when the internet was newish and it never occurred to me to go looking for other books the author published via Goodreads or Amazon.

So years later, while trying to input all the books I've ever read (impossible task) on Goodreads, Rhinegold pops up. Of course, the description says nothing about Hagan, but I figure I'll give it a shot since I loved Attila's Treasure so much.

Right from the beginning I was hooked even though I knew it would take me three months to read it. (Note of Stephan Grundy's books: they take me awhile to read because they need to be savored and not rushed) I fell in love with the little wars going on with gods and men. I fell in love with the families that the reader follows through the generations even though I usually hate books that kill off main characters.

I found this book very effective at making the reader cheer for the grungy, forbidden things that would make

me blush to admit out loud. The heroes and heroines are very likeable despite some serious flaws in their character. I've never found true hero types that I've loved like in this book.

The story line does wander and I often found myself wonder what the point was while reading, but for some reason, I kept reading and was satisfied through the full three months I sat engrossed in Rhinegold's pages.

Then, about half way through the book, guess who shows up...Hagan! For about two hundred pages, I'm sitting there wondering if it is the same character or not because it is taking place before the events in Attila's Treasure, and I can't quite wrap my head around it. But of course, the scope of Rhinegold is so huge that years go by and suddenly, the story is taking place after Attila's Treasure, which I am now appreciating as a character spin-off.

Stephan Grundy does not disappoint and I must admit that I am much more satisfied with Hagan's life after having read Rhinegold. I feel like a little bit of character mystery has been put to rest deep within my soul.

I couldn't be more pleased. Of course, now I'm dying to go back and read Attila's Treasure again, but I'm a really slow reader and there are so many things I want to read.

Bettie? says

Golden sunlight glittered from the Rhine's depths like a fire in the flood, brightening the dark waters into the torchlit grandeur of a river-king's hall.

In complete contrast to my other current reads - a palate cleanser. The picture is right but mine is in English (Rhinegold) and a hardcover.

This is a biggy so I had better keep track of characters as they come along...

Sigifrith - blacksmith and apprentice

Ragin - dwarf teacher and foster-father to Sigifrith

King Alapercht - instructs Ragin to teach bravery and wisdom to Sigifrith

Sean says

Rhinegold is one of those epic books that you wait to tackle until you have the energy and the time for a major project. The book gets off to a very slow start, slowly building up background information for a couple hundred pages, until Grundy introduces the main characters and the book starts to feel more like a novel than a history book reciting a litany of Norse myths.

The book takes its material from the Norse Volsunga Saga, The Ring of the Nibelung and the Eddas. We've seen the same story in a number of other places, including Wagner's famous ring cycle and even The Lord of the Rings.

Though Rhinegold feels like a Ph.D. thesis that has evolved into something more entertaining, the end result is pretty satisfying. Though filled with incredible details, it's still a very engaging and readable story. It follows Sigimund, his twin sister Sigilind, and their descendant Sigifrith, who eventually kills the dragon Fadhmir, before showing up in the court of the Burgundians with his gold horde.

If you have the patience for it, this isn't a bad story at all. And if you have even a remote interest in the Norse/Germanic myths that Rhinegold was based on, you'll find much to enjoy in this engaging re-telling of the old stories.

Patrice says

This is a VERY long book. It's over 800 pages in about size 10 font for the paperback version. In fairness, it was originally meant to be three separate novels that were all crammed into one. If you have any interest in Norse mythology, particularly the legend of Sigurd, I highly recommend this book. It covers the legend from beginning to end and really makes the characters come alive.

Lennongirl says

I read this for the first time in the early ninties, I think, and I remember being very fond of it, so I gave it a reread. It's a very compelling story, lots of action, love, drama, seduction, betrayal and what not - it is epic, it really is. And Grundy tells the story in such a nice, flawless way that you can't help it but have to read on. Basically, this book has it all - and it's actually a 5-star-read.

However, I can give it 4 stars only because of the German translation. I never noticed it the first time I read it and now only found out while reading the translators' notes after I finished the novel. Apparently, they decided to simply omit certain scenes from the original english version because they thought they were too gruesome. Err, what? I don't need translators to censor the story for me, thanks, but no thanks. This is most annoying. So, if you want to read it - and I think you should - grab the original version. It's what I'm going to do should I ever indulge in this epic a third time.

Maureen says

An excellent retelling of the Sigurð mythos (perhaps better known as Wagner's "Ring Cycle") by a scholar in the field. This book is actually three full novels published as one: each covers different generations of the Wälsungs, descendants of Wotan; the Burgunds, their sometimes allies/ sometimes enemies; and the race of Nibelungs and their stolen hoard of gold. The 3rd book even includes the story of the families' later connections with Attila. Wonderful details about ancient cultures and customs, along with top-notch writing, make this a not-to-be-missed read for any enthusiast of Northern European history or culture.

Reinhold says

Herausragendes Frühmittelalterepos

Stephan Grundy ist ein wunderbares Werk gelungen. Er hat es perfekt geschafft, die Gratwanderung zwischen Phantasyroman und Quellentreue zu bestehen. Aus einem sehr tiefen Verständnis der ursprünglichen Quellen beschreibt er die Geschichte rund um das Rheingold - also wie es zu dem Drachen kam, wie es zu Sigfrid kam und wie es den Burgundern Unglück brachte. Von einem historischen Roman unterscheidet er sich insofern, als er die nordische Götterwelt immer mitwirken lässt, wie es in den ursprünglichen Quellen ja auch der Fall ist. Von einem Phantasyroman unterscheidet er sich dadurch, dass er sehr stark an der Realität der Geschichte bleibt.

Am Besten beschreibt man diesen Roman vielleicht so: Wenn ein Schriftsteller mit den heutigen Techniken in der damaligen Zeit aufgewachsen wäre, dann würde er die Geschichte so berichten wie es der Autor in diesem Buch macht. Für Grundy werden die Götter der Germanen wieder lebendig - sie werden selbstverständlicher Teil der Geschichte; ebenso hält er es mit den Riten und der Lebensart dieser Zeit.

Wesentlich zu wissen ist vielleicht noch, dass sich der Autor an den nordischen (vor allem isländischen) Quellen orientiert und hier vor allem der Völsunga-Saga folgt. Dies ist eine deutlich umfassendere Schilderung der Sigfridsage, als sie im Nibelungenlied enthalten ist (und sie weicht auch teilweise bei den Namen ab, so heißt Kriemhild dort Gudrun). An jenen Stellen an denen der Mythos weiße Stellen hinterlässt erfindet Grundy herrliche Geschichten um die Story runder zu machen. Insofern kann man festhalten, dass jene die sich dafür interessieren, was die Originalquellen beschreiben besser zu Reiner Tetzners "Germanische Göttersagen" und "Germanische Heldensagen" greifen sollten. Wer jedoch ein phantastisches Epos des Frühmittelalters erleben will, der ist hier goldrichtig aufgehoben. Aufgrund seiner genauen Kenntnis der germanischen Mythologie gelingt es Grundy tatsächlich einen Standard in diesem Genre zu setzen.

Abschließend noch ein Tipp für all jene die sich eingehender mit dem Thema befassen wollen und nicht 'bloß' ein wunderbares Buch lesen wollen. Lesen Sie in diesem Fall zunächst die beiden Tetzner-Bücher, zuerst die Götter- und dann die Heldensagen und erst im Anschluss daran dieses Werk, der Lesegenuss wird dadurch nochmals gesteigert, weil das Gesamtbild schon zuvor bekannt ist und man sich nicht erst in die Zeit 'hineindenken' muss.

Sianeka says

First, I need to be fair and state that I'm not a fan of Germanic/Norse mythology. Rhinegold hasn't changed that. I was hoping to find a compelling story that brought these myths to life, but that's not what I found here. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with Grundy's prose, the book was a fine read. It's just that the characters weren't brought to life, their motivations remained hazy and the justifications for their actions not real to me.

The Norse gods are cruel and capricious, creating heroes only to destroy them for no good reason - why'd they even bother creating a line of heroes then? The characters I enjoyed most were the evil/misunderstood Hagan, and the brief life of the unpronounceable minor hero Sinfjotli. Hero Sigfrith is also given a short shrift and not much book time considering he's the "greatest hero of all time". At least these characters were

given some background, and a brief look at what they were thinking and feeling. The women fare little better: Brunichild's vengeance makes little sense, she seems like a spoiled brat - "If I can't have him, no one can" rather than acting like a strong and independent woman betrayed, which is what she is. Gundrun's vengeance on her husband is a bit more believable, although the "sorcery" used on her to direct her actions (and on Sigfrith's) is more of the hazy/make of it what you will storytelling.

I understand that Grundy was staying true to the ancient mythology so his story couldn't stray much from the plotline, but this book wasn't one to bring these stories to life for me. Give me Greek mythology over Nordic stories any day...

Chris says

Long time since my last re-read of this book. Nice to see that it holds up quite well. I still feel that the first 2/3 are the best. There are some really strong female characters in this book. Grundy's use of the saga is beautiful and incorporates runes and lore.

Miquela says

I can't quite give this three stars. There were parts that I really liked and others that I had to skim, so it fell into "OK" territory for me. Something I look for (read enjoy) in mythology-based novels is character motivations I can get behind or at least sympathize with. However, I wasn't able to care or root for any of the characters who had a viewpoint in this saga. I know Grundy had to stick as closely as possible to his source material, but since I've never been a fan (not opposed to it; just not into it) of that, I guess I needed more winning over than other readers in terms of character-"relatability."
