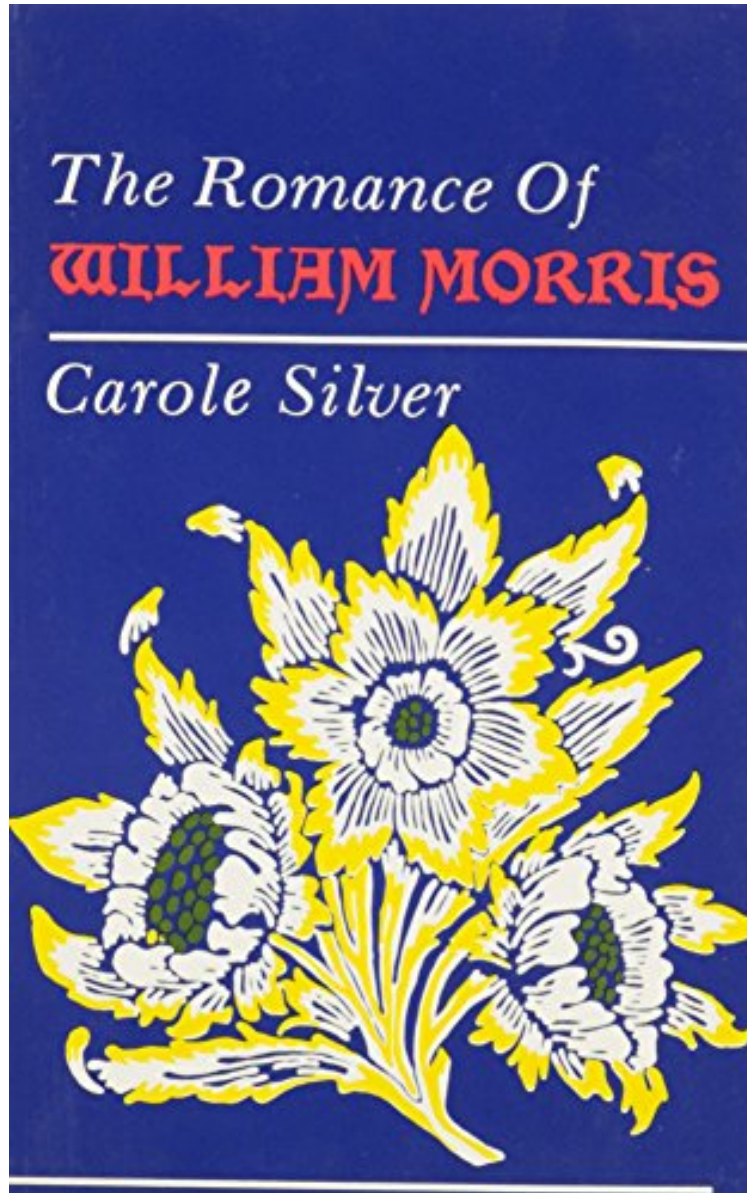


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Romance Of William Morris

Carole Silver

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Carole Silver : Romance Of William Morris before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Romance Of William Morris:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Intelligent insightful study of William Morris as mythmaker By Tim Lukeman William Morris has rightfully been recognized as one of the founders of the fantasy novel, although the brief

reflowering of his work in the later 1960s/early 1970s has faded somewhat since. That's a pity, as Morris is an exemplar of what a truly gifted writer could do with the complex stuff of myth legend, romance remembrance. In his work, from the first Arthurian poems to the final novels that provided some of the cornerstones of modern fantasy, he was clearly creating art rather than simply turning out product ... a concept that would have appalled him. Author Carole Silver gives us a sympathetic study of Morris as writer, exploring in depth his use of romance as a means of expressing the ideals that were most precious to him, exploring the complexities of love eros over a lifetime, offering cultural historical critiques of his own society, and creating the sort of art he believed should benefit that society. Silver brings a precise analytical approach to Morris, one that utilizes a wealth of academic sources -- and far more importantly, accords Morris the respect due to an important creator thinker. Of course the novels of the 1890s will be of immediate interest to the fantasy fan -- *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at the World's End*, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, *The Sundering Flood*. In these stories Morris made the leap from a medieval setting vaguely connected to historical roots, to the creation of worlds entire in themselves, the very staple of the fantasy novel. But this isn't the generic, formulaic work that came with the commercial success of mass-marketed, DD-influenced fantasy. As Silver shows us in illuminating detail, Morris was not only telling rich, entertaining stories -- a worthy goal in itself -- but he also had much to say about love, sexuality, individualism, beauty, meaning -- in short, the interests of a literary writer. Let me hasten to add that he never stops the story dead in its tracks to offer dreary lectures; he's much too good a writer for that. But his characters their moral choices do have much to say consider, as Silver makes abundantly clear. But all that comes later. Silver first takes us through Morris' entire life as a writer, delving into his poetry -- *The Defense of Guenevere*, *The Life and Death of Jason*, *The Earthly Paradise* -- to his translation/retelling of *Sigurd the Volsung*, to his Utopian novels, *A Dream of John Ball* and *News From Nowhere*. Again, Silver guides us through these works shows us both their structure their content, giving readers a deeper understanding of Morris' concerns gifts. And she does an admirable job of maintaining an objective stance toward her subject. While she clearly admires much of what Morris did, she's well aware of its occasional flaws. Her purpose is to leave us with a multi-faceted view of appreciation for Morris as a writer of both artistic worth intellectual depth. In this she succeeds wonderfully. Even for fantasy readers, this will be something of a specialized volume, appealing to those at the literary end of the genre spectrum. But I think those who do read this book, whether fantasy fans or those of more mainstream scholarly bent, will find it a rewarding experience. It's obviously written for a niche audience, but they won't be disappointed --most highly recommended!

The Romance of William Morris traces the intellectual, emotional, and literary development of Morris, a representative Victorian, as he explores the classic themes of love, fate, and death--chiefly through the genre of romance. Professor Silver points out the ways in which Morris' personal and social vision, interwoven in his literary work, contributes to his art, design, and social theory, as well as to some of the major intellectual and artistic movements of his time. Exploding the myth of Morris' escapism and demonstrating his importance as a scholar, historian, and mythmaker, the book studies Morris' uses of the past and shows how he transformed classical and medieval materials and institutions to viable positive and negative models for his own culture. For the intellectual and social historian, the book clarifies the fact that Morris was a paradigm for the Victorian imagination. For the literary historian, it reveals how Morris records in literature his movement from an idealized view of romantic love to an obsession with it, his disillusionment with eros and his final attainment of a balanced view of passion.