

The Princesse de Cleves (Penguin Classics)

By Madame de Lafayette

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Set towards the end of the reign of Henry II of France, *The Princesse de Cleves* (1678) tells of the unspoken, unrequited love between the fair, noble Mme de Cleves, who is married to a loyal and faithful man, and the Duc de Nemours, a handsome man most female courtiers find irresistible. Warned by her mother against admitting her passion, Mme de Cleves hides her feelings from her fellow courtiers, until she finally confesses to her husband - an act that brings tragic consequences for all. Described as France's first modern novel, *The Princesse de Cleves* is an exquisite and profound analysis of the human heart, and a moving depiction of the inseparability of love and anguish.

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Editorial Review

Language Notes
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About the Author
Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne was born in Paris in 1634. in 1656 she married the Comte de Lafayette, had two sons, and lived on his country estate. She then returned to Paris, and the couple remained largely separate from then on. She started a literary salon with her close friends Madame de Sevigne and the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. She also mixed in court circles and wrote a biography of her friend Henriette, wife of the Duc d'Orleans, after her death. She is mostly remembered for her novels. She died in 1693.

Robin Buss is a writer and translator who works for theIndependent on Sunday and as television critic for The Times Educational Supplement. He studied at the University of Paris, where he took a degree and a doctorate in French literature. He is part-author of the article 'French Literature' in Encyclopaedia Britannica and has published critical studies of works by Vigny and Cocteau, and three books on European cinema, The French Through Their Films (1988), Italian Films (1989) and French Film Noir (1994). He has also translated a number of volumes for Penguin Classics.

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