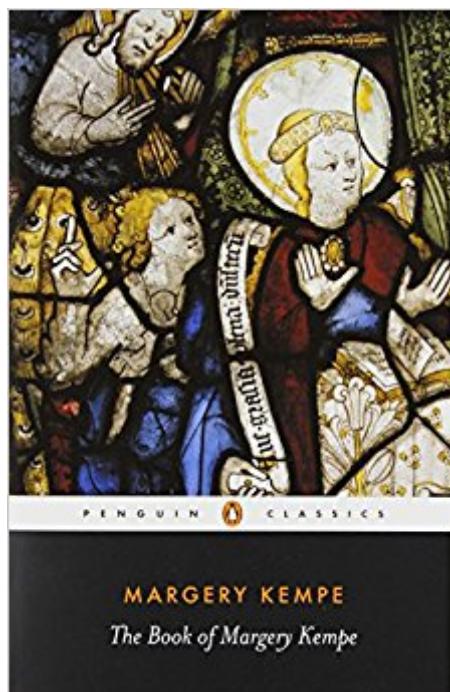


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The Book Of Margery Kempe (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

"You can boldly take me in the arms of your soul and kiss my mouth, my head, and my feet as sweetly as you want" — The story of the eventful and controversial life of Margery Kempe - wife, mother, businesswoman, pilgrim and visionary - is the earliest surviving autobiography in English. Here Kemp recounts in vivid, unembarrassed detail the madness that followed the birth of the first of her fourteen children, the failure of her brewery business, her dramatic call to the spiritual life, her visions and uncontrollable tears, the struggle to convert her husband to a vow of chastity and her pilgrimages to Europe and the Holy Land. Margery Kempe could not read or write, and dictated her remarkable story late in life. It remains an extraordinary record of human faith and a portrait of a medieval woman of unforgettable character and courage. — For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

The first autobiography written in English--by a brewery owner, Christian mystic, and mother of 14 named Margery Kempe, who died in the 15th century--is now available in a lively, modern translation by John Skinner. It begins with her stark conversion experience, heralded by a vision of Christ in her bedroom one night. The story follows Margery through pilgrimages across Europe and

to the Holy Land, through a heresy trial in England, and her burgeoning mystical life. Similar in many ways to *Showings* by Julian of Norwich and the *Confessions of Augustine*, *The Book of Margery Kempe* is a beautiful description of medieval daily life and religious experience. --Michael Joseph Gross --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This classic, one of the first English autobiographies, chronicles the spiritual life of a very unusual, and illiterate, medieval woman. Not an autobiography in the modern sense, the text?dictated between 1432 and 1436?provides sparse personal detail but does give some insight into the beliefs of this holy woman. Kempe (c. 1373-c. 1440) ran a brewery, married, and mothered 14 children before taking a vow of chastity. In her subsequent pilgrimages she learned much through pious conversations with strangers and gained important insights from her communion with God about how her manner of dress and uncontrolled tears at communion would save her from some "secret" sin. Numerous translations of these writings exist, including the *Middle English Memoirs of a Medieval Woman* (1983), but this text uses modern English and organizes the chapters chronologically, making for a better story. Recommended for popular religious collections.?Leo Kriz, West Des Moines Lib., Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I purchased this edition of the "Book of Margery Kempe" after consulting two other editions, one in the original Middle English, and one that attempted to modernize the text to make it more accessible. This edition is the best of both worlds. Lynn Staley provides an accessible, readable text while staying true to the original content. Staley's footnotes are also very helpful, providing information about people, places, and events discussed by Kempe. Also included in this volume is a selection of scholarly essays about the "Book of Margery Kempe" and examples of other writings of the early 15th Century. All in all, a lot of information in one volume, very useful, and reasonably priced. I'd recommend this for anyone interested in women in the later Middle Ages, female visionary experience in Christianity, and/or early examples of autobiography in English. I don't know if this volume will be accessible to high school students, but it's certainly appropriate for undergrads, graduate students, and anyone else interested in the fascinating figure of Margery Kempe.

Although I lived in Europe for several years, I had not read this book; now I wish I had known about Margery Kempe, and done some research. Dictated by a woman who could not read or write, she was very detailed about her experiences, and I learned quite a bit about the thinking processes,

beliefs, and lifestyle of the period. Thoroughly enjoyable, I find it remarkable that it is not on more required reading lists in America. It offers a view not shared by many religious individuals: her crying, wailing, and writhing on the floors of cathedrals and holy places would make her appear unstable, as believed by her peers. However, her conversations with Holy Beings caused beliefs in some. How true to fact is her story? Only the believer, or wannabe believer, can answer that, but the truth is she was a remarkable woman for her time, achieved her goals - if she is believed.

This lady is in my direct line of decent and it starts to explain a lot of little quirks in my family. This lady was a straight out crazy lady both in the clinical psychiatric sense and in the common usage. I will say she is the first documented woman in my family that spent some time in jail for witchcraft but not the last. That aside it is a fascinating but difficult read. Writing in 1440 did not have all the polish and structure we take for granted. Margery Kempe was the first known woman to write an autobiography in the English language or what passed for English between (c.1373 c.1440). It is worth reading about good old Auntie Marge for the history alone.

Instead of some dry book written by some theologian, this is the tale of adventure of one woman who dared to be different, when she felt that was what God required of her. While her experiences may seem fantastical to us today, it shows what life was like centuries ago. The fact that the story survives is unusual, the fact that it is from a woman is rarer still, from a time when women couldn't even read or write (it was dictated to a man), or travel freely by the primitive transportation of the time.

I like this version of her story better than some others I've read.

What a fascinating woman!

Book was in very good condition

As advertised!

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