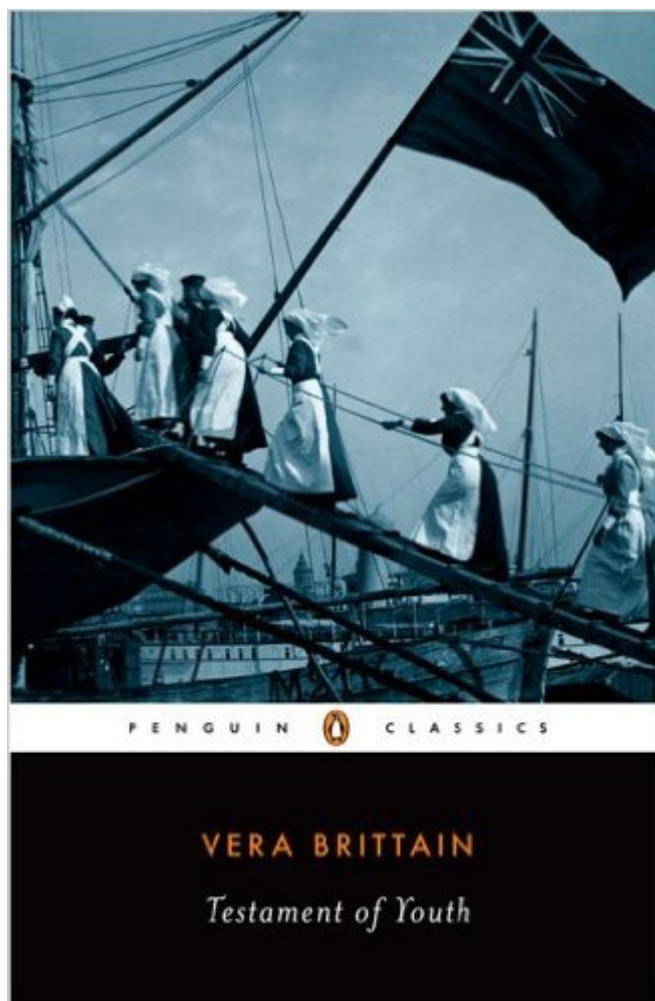


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Testament Of Youth (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Now a major motion picture starring Alicia Vikander and Kit Harington Much of what we know and feel about the First World War we owe to Vera Brittain's elegiac yet unsparing book, which set a standard for memoirists from Martha Gellhorn to Lillian Hellman. Abandoning her studies at Oxford in 1915 to enlist as a nurse in the armed services, Brittain served in London, in Malta, and on the Western Front. By war's end she had lost virtually everyone she loved. Testament of Youth is both a record of what she lived through and an elegy for a vanished generation. Hailed by the Times Literary Supplement as a book that helped "both form and define the mood of its time," it speaks to any generation that has been irrevocably changed by war. This edition features a new introduction by Brittain's biographer examining her struggles to write about her experiences and the book's reception in England and America. 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.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 688 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Reissue edition (May 31, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143039237

ISBN-13: 978-0143039235

Product Dimensions: 5 x 1.1 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (173 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I first read this book when I was not much younger than Vera Brittain was when she "viewed the outbreak of the First World War as an interruption of her plans", and I was immediately touched by

her experiences. I have read (and re-read & re-read) this book many times. While I am not of the same social class that she was, I can relate to her desire to make something of her life, first through a university education (then restricted to many women) and later through finding meaningful work. (This is something that we all seek.) She fell happily in love, only to lose first her fiancé, then her two male friends, and finally her beloved only brother in the carnage of the First World War. Her experiences as a V.A.D. (Voluntary Aide Detachment) nurse in the war--from describing what the wards were like, to the frenzy she faced during a "push", to watching the Americans arrive in 1917, to her life on the hospital ship "Britannic", that's right, the sister ship to "Titanic"--both went down, are unforgettable. When she writes, she does not spare herself, nor seek to make herself look good--and she takes an unflinching look at her own difficulties (a word which does not even begin to describe it!!) adjusting to a post-war world which did not want the survivors. She tells of the difficulties she had fitting in (again, but this time older & wiser) at Oxford, of her mental near-breakdown, and of the bright light that was Winifred Holtby. I cannot recommend this book enough. It should be required reading in colleges and universities, and not just for history, English, and women's studies majors. Perhaps those who do not understand what all the fuss over "women's lib." is all about should make this required reading as well (both male and female).

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