



# Star-Crossed Lovers

Wendy Metcalf-Roy

Boy meets girl, boy marries girl, they live happily ever after: if only it were so simple. But as the Bard so wisely point out, the course of true love never did run smooth, and most great love stories are distinguished by turmoil and tragedy, misfortune and misunderstanding. From the myths and legends of ancient times to the headlines of Hollywood, some names have been linked in romance for eternity. Their stories have been written, rewritten and often re-invented as movies. Here is a small selection of current titles about some great lovers from the North Vancouver District Library.

## HELOISE AND ABELARD

Heloise and Abelard: a new biography of history's great lovers by James Burge, is the story of the charismatic teacher and his impulsive young student. Considered one of the world's great love stories, it was until recently based on just eight surviving letters between the couple. Now Burge draws on 113 recently translated letters that have been attributed to the lovers to bring to life their passionate affair, as well as the repressive climate of the times. The couple met in 1115, when Abelard was an outspoken philosopher and Heloise was a promising student. Their affair was conducted virtually under the nose of Heloise's uncle, who was enraged when he learned the truth and eventually had Abelard castrated. The couple retreated to cloistered, religious lives, but their passion never abated.

## TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

You have a choice of styles here. If you like the full-blown, bodice-ripper style of historical romance, with a little mysticism thrown in, then Rosalind Miles is for you. The author of the popular Guenevere series begins a new trilogy with Isolde, Queen of the Western Isle: The Maid of the White Hands and The Lady of the Sea complete the story. However, for a sensitive and finely-written retelling of one of the world's greatest love stories, turn to The King in the Tree by Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Millhauser.

## LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE

Kelowna author Jack Whyte, a master of the history/fantasy genre, introduces Lancelot in Clothar the Frank, and in The Eagle he takes us into the minds and lives of three people - King Arthur of England; his best knight, Lancelot; and his Queen, Guinevere. Their complicated love triangle forms the basis for one of the most cherished legends of the Western world, and Whyte tells the story from a new and fascinating perspective.

## CHOPIN AND GEORGE SAND

*Chopin's Funeral* by Benita Eisler

The innovative pianist-composer Chopin moved in the highest circles of French society but, frail and tubercular throughout his adult life, lived in emotional solitude. His story is entwined with that of his famous lover and sometime manager, the novelist and political activist George Sand. From 1838 to 1846, the couple shared a home in the French countryside in the summer and apartments in Paris in the winter. Their relationship was sometimes idyllic but more often stormy, and it ended bitterly; Sand did not attend Chopin's funeral, which is where this flashback story begins.

## ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BROWNING

*The Love Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett*

Passion and poetry just go together, and you just can't get much more romantic than the two Brownings. Books have been written on the romance between the two poets, but the two lovers tell it best.