



The Abbess of Castro (The Art of the Novella)

Stendhal

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Brigands, convents under siege, a prince who'd do Machiavelli proud .??. This adventurous novella from a writer famous for far longer works is a singular take on love and war in Renaissance Italy.

Claiming to be translating from sixteenth-century manuscripts, Stendhal tells the story of two doomed young lovers—one the daughter of the wealthiest man in the district, the other a brigand. It's a genuinely moving tale of impossible love—with plenty of swordfights thrown in—that's unique in Stendhal's oeuvre, not least in its portrait of an intelligent woman who, ill-starred in love, turns to worldly power. There's also some sparkling analysis of the conditions that produced the great art of the Renaissance.

But *The Abbess of Castro*—first published in the same year as Stendhal's novel *The Charterhouse of Parma*—is also characterized by themes that pervade his longer novels: political and familial machinations, a profoundly unsentimental view of war, ambitious individuals undone by passion.

Never before available as a standalone edition, the novella is a powerful dose of the writer at the peak of his skills.

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