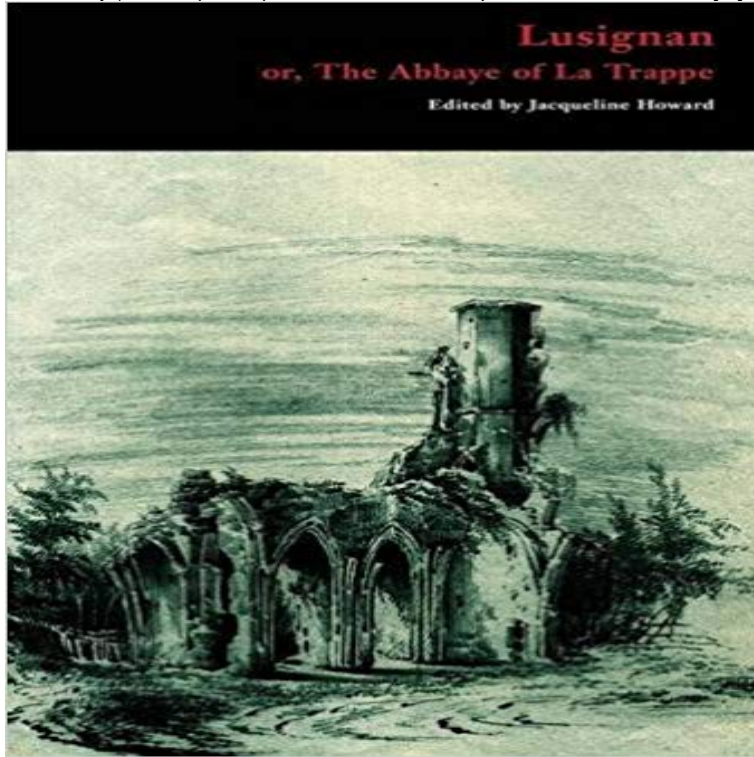


Lusignan; or, The Abbaye of La Trappe



Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) was the most popular and best-selling novelist of her time, earning a widespread readership and previously unheard-of sums of money for her Gothic novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797). But after publishing *The Italian*, at the height of her powers, she disappeared from the literary scene and never published another novel. Or did she? *Lusignan; or, The Abbaye of La Trappe*, issued anonymously in 1801 by the great purveyor of Gothic fiction, the Minerva Press, is the story of the ill-fated love between the virtuous Emily de Montalte and the handsome Lusignan, and it bears remarkable similarities in theme and style to Radcliffe's works. With a quintessentially Gothic plot that features all the trappings of the genre, including a haughty aristocrat, a scheming monk, lovers immured in dungeons and convents, and a subterranean chapel haunted by a horrible spectre, *Lusignan* will be of great interest to both scholars and fans of Gothic fiction alike, whether the book is in fact by Radcliffe or merely an unusually skilled imitator. This first-ever republication of *Lusignan*, a novel so rare that it survives in only one known copy worldwide, includes the unabridged text of the original four-volume edition as well as a substantial new scholarly introduction and extensive annotations by Dr. Jacqueline Howard, who has previously argued in a published article that *Lusignan* could be the work of Radcliffe.

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