



Valperga: Or, the Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca (Oxford World's Classics)

Mary Shelley

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Valperga (1823), the novel Mary Shelley wrote after *Frankenstein*, is based on the life of Castruccio Castracani (1281-1328), Prince of Lucca. A brilliant soldier and cruel tyrant, he successfully commanded Ghibelline forces in Tuscany against the Guelphs. Woven into the story of this factional conflict are the tragic destinies of two heroines, fictional creations of the author. Ethanasia, Countess of Valperga, finds herself increasingly torn between loyalty to her Guelph roots and her lifelong affection for Castruccio. Beatrice, whom the author's father, William Godwin, described as 'the jewel of the book', is a heretical Paterin with whom Castruccio falls in love only to abandon. This meticulously researched historical novel combines a narrative of suspense with a remarkable reconstruction of manners in the Middle Ages. Set in the period of Dante's lifetime, it is also suffused with a poetic spirit which evokes the beauties of Italy's physical environment and points to the melancholy inevitability of change. This edition provides a clear account of the circumstances in which *Valperga* was composed and published.

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