

# *The Romance of the Forest*

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*The Romance of the Forest* is a Gothic novel by Ann Radcliffe, first published in 1791. It combines an air of mystery and suspense with an examination of the tension between hedonism and morality and was her first major popular success, going through four editions in its first three years.

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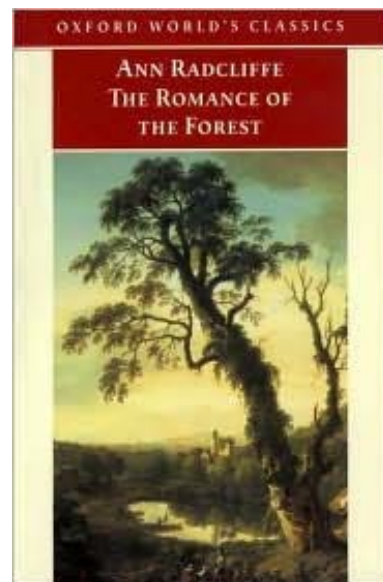
## Synopsis

Pierre La Motte and his wife are fleeing Paris in an attempt to escape his creditors when they are waylaid and captured by bandits at dusk. They are spared on condition they take into their company a beautiful young lady, Adeline, to which they agree, being moved by the girl's plight as an orphan. The new family proceed into the darkened interior of a forest, hoping to elude discovery, and find refuge in a ruined abbey. There they settle into the inhabitable rooms of the picturesque structure, with Adeline passing her days wandering through the romantic and melancholic glades. After some months, Adeline encounters a young male stranger in the woods, who is soon identified as Louis, the son of Monsieur and Madame La Motte. To him, Madame La Motte confides her jealous fears that Adeline seeks to have an affair with her husband; however, Louis refuses to believe Adeline guilty, having fallen in love with her, but departs when his army leave expires.

## Characters

- Adeline
- Pierre La Motte
- Madame La Motte
- Louis La Motte
- Peter

## *The Romance of the Forest*



Front cover of 1999 Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Romance of the Forest*.

<b>Author</b>	Ann Radcliffe
<b>Country</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United Kingdom
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Genre(s)</b>	Gothic fiction Romance Sentimental fiction Terror
<b>Publisher</b>	T Hookham & Carpenter
<b>Publication date</b>	1791
<b>Media type</b>	Print
<b>Pages</b>	3 vols. ( <i>first edition</i> )

- Theodore
- Marquis de Montalt
- Arnaud La Luc
- Clara

## Background

In 1765 Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*, widely regarded by modern literary historians to be the first occasion of Gothic fiction.<sup>[1]</sup> A decade later, Clara Reeve wrote *The Old English Baron*, the first "Gothic" novel to be penned by a woman, and in 1783 Sophia Lee produced *The Recess*, a story set in the time of Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>[2]</sup> These works prefigured much of the material and themes that Radcliffe would synthesise in her novels, most particularly ideas of the supernatural, terror, romance, and history.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Reception

It was praised by the poet Coleridge who wrote 'the attention is uninterruptedly fixed, until the veil is designedly withdrawn' [1] ([http://books.google.com/books?id=ixANAILK1d0C&pg=PA51&lpg=PA51&dq=romance+of+the+forest+radcliffe&source=web&ots=Dh7FLSLLuu&sig=DwR3w\\_\\_26w5PRVz1OgsS\\_PzUsUo](http://books.google.com/books?id=ixANAILK1d0C&pg=PA51&lpg=PA51&dq=romance+of+the+forest+radcliffe&source=web&ots=Dh7FLSLLuu&sig=DwR3w__26w5PRVz1OgsS_PzUsUo)) . The first volume was published anonymously in its first edition.

Although *The Critical Review* saw it as her finest work, it is not generally regarded in the same league as *The Italian* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; however the *Romance of the Forest* was hugely popular in its day and remains in print after over two hundred years. It is the subject of much critical discussion, particularly in its treatment of femininity and its role and influence in the gothic tradition Radcliffe did so much to invent. [2] (<http://books.google.com/books?id=LBpDEGcV9DkC&pg=PA73&lpg=PA73&dq=romance+of+the+forest+radcliffe&source=web&ots=GQFUdbPnKQ&sig=ISuR7xX81Qpmh98Rn6tb3UZVUcw#PPA73,M1>) .

## Notes

- ↑ Gamer, Michael (2001). "Introduction". In Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*. London: Penguin Books. pp. xiii-xiv. ISBN 9-780140-437676.
- ↑ Spender, Dale (1986). *Mothers of the Novel*. London. pp. 230–233.
- ↑ Baker, Ernest A. (1929). *The History of the English Novel. Volume 5: The novel of Sentiment and the Gothic Romance*. New York. pp. 175–195.

## References

- Cotton, Daniel (1985). *The Civilized Imagination: A Study of Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Sir Walter Scott*. New York.

## External links

- The Romance of the Forest (<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/r/radcliffe/ann/forest/index.html>) available at eBooks@Adelaide (<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/>)

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