

Three Gothic Novels: The Castle of Otranto; Vathek; Frankenstein

Horace Walpole, William Beckford, Mary Shelley

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Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, Beckford's Vathek, and Shelley's Frankenstein

The Gothic novel, which flourished from about 1765 until 1825, revels in the horrible and the supernatural, in suspense and exotic settings. This volume, with its erudite introduction by Mario Praz, presents three of the most celebrated Gothic novels: *The Castle of Otranto*, published pseudonymously in 1765, is one of the first of the genre and the most truly Gothic of the three. *Vathek* (1786), an oriental tale by an eccentric millionaire, exotically combines Gothic romanticism with the vivacity of The Arabian Nights and is a narrative tour de force. The story of *Frankenstein* (1818) and the monster he created is as spine-chilling today as it ever was; as in all Gothic novels, horror is the keynote.

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