



# **I Promessi Sposi [The Betrothed]**

*Alessandro Manzoni*

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The Betrothed (orig. Italian: I promessi sposi) is an Italian historical novel by Alessandro Manzoni, first published in 1827, in three volumes. It has been called the most famous and widely read novel of the Italian language.

Set in northern Italy in 1628, during the oppressive years under Spanish rule, it is sometimes seen as a veiled attack on Austria, which controlled the region at the time the novel was written. (The definitive version was published in 1842). It is also noted for the extraordinary description of the plague that struck Milan around 1630. The Betrothed was inspired by Walter Scott's Ivanhoe and was the first Italian historical novel. It deals with a variety of themes, from the cowardly, hypocritical nature of one prelate (Don Abbondio) and the heroic sainthood of other priests (Padre Cristoforo, Federico Borromeo), to the unwavering strength of love (the relationship between Renzo and Lucia, and their struggle to finally meet again and be married), and offers some keen insights into the meanderings of the human mind. I promessi sposi was made into an opera of the same name by Amilcare Ponchielli in 1856 and by Errico Petrella in 1869. There have been many film versions of I promessi sposi, including I Promessi Sposi, 1908, The Betrothed 1941, The Betrothed, 1990, and Renzo and Lucia, made for television in 2004.

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