



LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

SOURCE MATERIAL

Donizetti's 1835 opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* was based on *The Bride of Lammermoor*, a historical novel written by Sir Walter Scott, published in 1819. The novel is set in the Lammermuir Hills of south-east Scotland, and tells of a tragic love affair between young Lucy Ashton and her family's enemy Edgar Ravenswood. Scott indicated the plot was based on an actual incident. *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *A Legend of Montrose* were published together as the third of Scott's *Tales of My Landlord* series. As with all the *Waverley Novels*, *The Bride of Lammermuir* was published anonymously. The novel claims that the story was an oral tradition, collected by one "Peter Pattieson", and subsequently published by "Jedediah Cleishbotham". The 1830 "Waverley edition" includes an introduction by Scott, discussing his actual sources. The later edition also changes the date of the events: the first edition sets the story in the 17th century; the 1830 edition sets it in the reign of Queen Anne, after the 1707 Acts of Union which joined Scotland and England.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR*

Scott's story recounts the tragic love of Lucy Ashton, and Edgar, Master of Ravenswood. Edgar's father was stripped of the title for supporting the deposed King James VII. Lucy's ambitious father, Sir William Ashton, then bought the Ravenswood estate. Edgar hates Sir William for this usurpation of his family's heritage, but on meeting Lucy, falls in love with her, and renounces his plans for vengeance.

Sir William's haughty and manipulative wife, Lady Ashton, is the villainess of the story. She is determined to end the initial happy engagement of Edgar and Lucy, and force Lucy into a politically advantageous arranged marriage. Lady Ashton intercepts Edgar's letters to Lucy and persuades Lucy that Edgar has forgotten her. Edgar leaves Scotland for France, to continue his political activities. While he is away, Lady Ashton continues her campaign. She gets Captain Westenho, a wandering soldier of fortune, to tell everyone that Edgar is about to get married in France. She even recruits "wise woman" Ailsie Gourlay (a witch in all but name) to show Lucy omens and tokens of Edgar's unfaithfulness. Lucy still clings to her troth, asking for word from Edgar that he has broken off with her; she writes to him. Lady Ashton suppresses Lucy's letter, and brings the Reverend Bide-the-bent to apply religious persuasion to Lucy. However, Bide-the-bent instead helps Lucy send a new letter, but there is no answer.

Lady Ashton finally bullies Lucy into marrying Francis, Laird of Bucklaw. But on the day before the wedding, Edgar returns. Seeing that Lucy has signed the betrothal papers with Bucklaw, he repudiates Lucy, who can barely speak. The wedding takes place the next day, followed by a celebration at Ravenswood. While the guests are dancing, Lucy stabs Bucklaw in the bridal chamber, severely wounding him. She descends quickly into insanity and dies. Bucklaw recovers, but refuses to say what had happened. Edgar reappears at Lucy's funeral. Lucy's older brother, blaming him for her death, insists that they meet in a duel. Edgar, in despair, reluctantly agrees. But on the way to the meeting, Edgar falls into quicksand and dies.

Source: Wikipedia.com