

Tuscan Penitent: The Life and Legend of St. Margaret of Cortona



A Tuscan Penitent; the life and legend of St. Margaret of Cortona by Andrew Dalby

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In the heart of medieval Tuscany, where rolling hills and vineyards paint a picturesque landscape, lies the story of an extraordinary woman whose life and legend have captivated generations. St. Margaret of Cortona, known as the "Tuscan Penitent," embarked on a remarkable journey from sinner to saint, leaving an enduring legacy that continues to inspire today.

This article delves into the fascinating life and legend of St. Margaret of Cortona, shedding light on her humble beginnings, her transformative encounter with repentance, and the profound impact she had on the spiritual landscape of Tuscany.

Early Life and Enchanting Environs

Margaret was born in Laviano, a small village nestled amidst the hills of Tuscany, around 1247. Her early life was marked by poverty and hardship, yet her spirit remained resilient. She possessed a deep love for nature and a compassionate heart that would later guide her towards a life of service.

As a young woman, Margaret's beauty and captivating presence drew the attention of a wealthy nobleman named Arsenio. Despite their differences in social status, they fell deeply in love and lived together for nine years, bearing a son named Francesco.



The Tragic Turning Point

Their idyllic life took a tragic turn when Arsenio was brutally murdered in a political feud. Margaret was devastated by her loss and grief-stricken by the realization of her own complicity in their sinful relationship. She believed that her sins had brought upon Arsenio's untimely demise.

Haunted by guilt and remorse, Margaret resolved to renounce her past and embrace a life of penance. She left her home and son behind, embarking on a journey of spiritual transformation that would lead her to become a beacon of hope and redemption for countless others.

Embracing Penance and Asceticism

Margaret sought refuge in the Franciscan friary at Cortona, where she lived a life of extreme austerity and self-denial. She wore a hair shirt, slept on a bed of thorns, and subsisted on bread and water. Despite the harsh conditions, Margaret's spirit remained unbroken.

Her extraordinary penance and unwavering faith attracted the attention of the friars and townspeople alike. News of her transformation spread throughout Tuscany, and people from far and wide came to seek her guidance and prayers.



Divine Visions and Miracle-Working

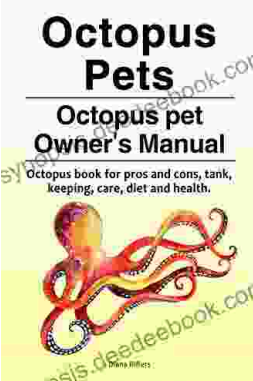
As Margaret's reputation for holiness grew, she experienced a series of divine visions and mystical encounters. She reportedly received stigmata, the wounds of Christ appearing on her own body. Her ability to heal the sick and perform miracles further c



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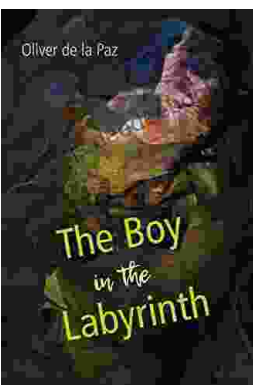
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