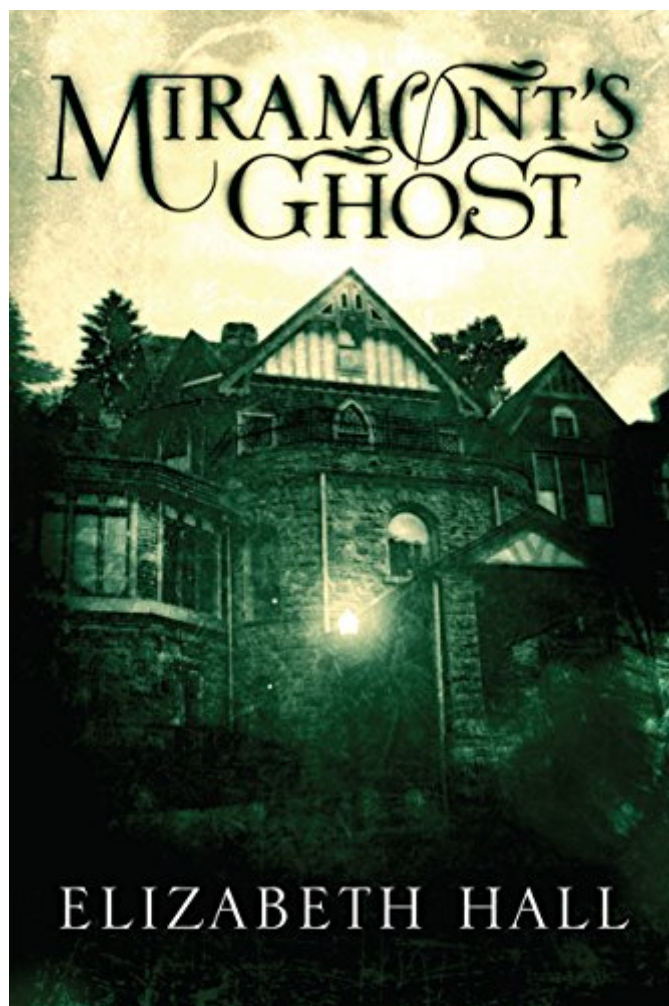


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Miramont's Ghost



Synopsis

Miramont Castle, built in 1897 and mysteriously abandoned three years later, is home to many secrets. Only one person knows the truth: Adrienne Beauvier, granddaughter of the Comte de Challembelles and cousin to the man who built the castle. Clairvoyant from the time she could talk, Adrienne's visions show her the secrets of those around her. When her visions begin to reveal dark mysteries of her own aristocratic French family, Adrienne is confronted by her formidable Aunt Marie, who is determined to keep the young woman silent at any cost. Marie wrenches Adrienne from her home in France and takes her to America, to Miramont Castle, where she keeps the girl isolated and imprisoned. Surrounded by eerie premonitions, Adrienne is locked in a life-or-death struggle to learn the truth and escape her torment. Reminiscent of Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca, this hauntingly atmospheric tale is inspired by historical research into the real-life Miramont Castle in Manitou Springs, Colorado.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I rarely actively dislike a book so severely I wonder why I am still reading it. Part of the fault here is mine, as I was expecting some form of ghost story or haunted house novel. This is no such thing,

unless you grant a few tacked on pages at the end with being the main narrative drive of the story. Instead, this is a long, rambling history of a highly dysfunctional family. The writer shows sufficient mastery of language to draw me along for some time, but the abysmal sense of plot and pace are dreadful. A couple of times during the book, I actually thought "I guess she felt she'd taken that as far as it will go, so this is going to be a different story now..." There is no payoff lurking at the end, no redemptive twist or upshot for having made it through. There is no clever tying up of the visions...no, all you get is a few things introduced after they've taken place - not mentioned when they happened, only mentioned later when needed to explain some plot point or other. This is one of those narratives about a life so bad that death is a release. It doesn't get better. Thankfully, it does eventually run out of pages.

First, let me state how I chose this book. I have a son who lives in Colorado Springs. Miramont Castle is in Manitou which is a ten minute drive adjacent to Colorado Springs and Old Colorado City. I have briefly visited all three but never stopped off at Miramont Castle. I thought this book might pique my interest further to visit there. After reading this book my interest in visiting there is now near zero. I might stand outside for a moment for a look, but will move on to other things. The events of what occurred there, according to this novel are horrible, even macabre. You will read about: incest, rape, pedophilia, humiliation, suicide and one truly evil person - Aunt Marie. For all of the reasons above, I will not recommend this book to anyone I know. For its content, I would give this book one star. On the other hand, the author did a masterful job of researching her story. She is equally masterful in her writing. Her characters are well developed. You will feel inside them and feel their thoughts and pain, particularly "Adrienne" the main character. You will feel her pain well after the book is finished. For her masterful writing and research the author deserves five stars. How did I arrive at three stars. I simply chose the median between my above two appraisals. In truth, I cannot judge this book in 'stars'. I endured this book to the end - all 335 pages and then it was over, I was left with a question. Why did this author who has so much skill even want to write this?

I normally enjoy my Kindle First reads. I've found authors that I'm unfamiliar with and gone outside my comfort zone on genres. I wish I'd stayed in my comfort zone this time. Miramont's Ghost rambled in places, but when it didn't it was so dark and despairing, so unrelenting, so impenitent that I can't even come up with more adjectives for it. I felt so bad for the main character that I literally wept at the horribleness of her life at the end of the book. My chest hurt and my most prevailing thought became crawling into bed in the fetal position and never coming. I thought the first half of

the book was sad. Adrienne is misunderstood and receives very little in the way of emotional support but it had absolutely nothing on those last hundred or so pages. Elizabeth Hall is a good author, but what a horribly depressing story. Three stars because I just really wish I could unread this book, even though the author is quite talented. It takes a lot of skill to make a reader feel as deeply as I did.

I liked it, a lot! Having just been through Miramont Castle in Manitou Springs the day before I bought and started reading it, the rooms were still fresh in my mind and I could picture just where the characters were when described in the book. I know some reviews have been less than flattering because of the sadness of the main character. But keep in mind, a century ago, women took on all the guilt and shame for whatever happened to them in their lives. Whether or not they caused it, they suffered from it. So to me, the ending was realistic. Not happy and light and full of sunshine and butterflies. But real and gritty and lifelike. I would recommend it. In fact when I went through the Castle I told the waiter in the tea room about it as well as the lady who sits in the main entrance (who has been contacted by the spirits who still reside there). The picture I am including is from the front of the parlor.

At the advice of another, I skipped the prologue and went straight into the story. That and ignorance of the specific history spared me from knowing what was coming, so I am glad to have read the story first, then the prologue, epilogue, and afterword. Miramont's Ghost was an engrossing good read. The story engaged my imagination quickly leaving me with no more pages to turn. The characters were very well developed, deep and completely believable. I felt I could have known these people: Genevieve the living doll, Marie the woman within the hard shell of her own design, Adrienne the sheltered and naive. Furthermore Hall writes beautifully, her words flowing and painting rich imagery. I think I detect the heart of a poet in her composition. For example, page 256, chapter thirty-seven, paragraph two: "The air in the castle was different, brittle, as if all the secrets that each of them carried were shards of glass, suddenly spilled all over the floor. All three did their best to avoid stepping on anything that held the stab of truth." Historical fiction has never been my preferred genre for pleasure reading. I am so glad I gave this one a read. I look forward to seeing more from Hall.

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