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**Anya Seton**

**Dragonwyck**



Title: Dragonwyck

Author: Anya Seton

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## Description

First published in 1944, *Dragonwyck* was a national bestseller that was made into a major motion picture starring Gene Tierney and Vincent Price in 1946. A classic gothic romance, the story features an 18-year-old Miranda Wells who falls under the spell of a mysterious old mansion and its equally fascinating master. Tired of churning butter, weeding the garden patch, and receiving the dull young farmers who seek her hand in marriage, Miranda is excited by an invitation from the upstate New York estate of her distant relative, the intriguing Nicholas Van Ryn. Her passion is kindled by the icy fire of Nicholas, the last of the Van Ryns, and the luxury of Dragonwyck, and a way of life of which she has only dreamed. Dressed in satin and lace, she becomes part of Dragonwyck, with its Gothic towers, flowering gardens, acres of tenant farms, and dark, terrible secrets. This compelling novel paints a marvelous portrait of a country torn between freedom and feudal traditions; a country divided between the very wealthy and the very poor. Poor tenant farmers at Dragonwyck, the European royalty who visit, and American icons such as Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and the Astors are vividly brought to life. This is a heart-stopping story of a remarkable woman, her breathtaking passions, and the mystery and terror that await her in the magnificent hallways of Dragonwyck.

## Insightful reviews

Heather: So, I have this collection of old and interesting novels. I'm attracted to the beauty of old books, the richly colored covers, the bright foil lettering, the enigmatic titles. I found *Dragonwyck* while browsing an antique store. It had a royal blue cover, and lovely silver lettering in a gothic-tinged font. I had no idea what it was about, but I was charmed by it and had to have it. It sat on my shelf, so lovely and mysterious, for years, until one day, I decided to crack open its pages and see what story lay inside. I discovered a strange, gothic morality tale, detailing the horrors that await those that covet money and status, that are swayed by shallow beauty. It was odd and interesting, in an old fashion sort of way, a snapshot into an early time. I was mildly amused and entertained, and found it to be a good book to read in small snippets of time, while waiting in offices or for water to boil. A strange read and an interest experience over all.

Melinda: This is a classic gothic love story. An historical work of fiction, this wonderfully written book is set in 1840's New York. The main character is Miranda Wells who sees her way out of her provincial life through a chance invitation from a wealthy cousin. Nicholas Van Ryn invites Miranda to his manor house, Dragonwyck, to serve as a companion for his young daughter. This was the answer to Miranda's prayers. But beware! Evil lurks! By the end of the story, Miranda makes a painful discovery that removes her rose-colored glasses. This book was well researched especially about the early Dutch in New York. There are several real events and people intertwined in the story line as well. This was a fun read - a real page turner!

Oriana: I always had a soft spot for Gothic novels like *Rebecca* and *Jane Eyre*, so *Dragonwyck* seemed like a must read to me, especially when a brooding and mysterious character like Nicholas Van Ryn is involved. Nothing could be more perfect!

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Honestly, in the beginning, I had some troubles warming up to Miranda Wells. In the movie adaptation, she's more sympathetic and we easily relate to her wish to see the world, where in the book I found her a tad unpleasant and extremely snob. I wasn't very sure I was going to like her, but slowly she became a much stronger woman, someone definitely more interesting.

Nicholas Van Ryn seduced me as easily as Miranda. After reading the final page of *Dragonwyck*, I couldn't stop thinking about him, the last of a long line of patroons, and also the last of a long line of cruel men. His heavy heritage combined with a dark past (both always hinted, never really explained) create a very intriguing character. He is charming and generous, but his attitude towards his first wife, Johanna, and later, Miranda, reveal how deeply disturbing he could be. His final scenes came up as a surprise... Somehow, I was expecting a different end.

The captivating historical background researched by Anya Seton is undoubtedly one of the strong assets of *Dragonwyck*. I knew next to nothing about the middle 19th century New York and the Dutch community. I did remember reading about the strong Dutch presence in the state in the short story *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving, which was set about 60 years before Seton's novel. But other than a reference here and there, I never had the opportunity to read any other stories who fully explored this interesting part of American history.

*Dragonwyck* can sometimes be a little predictable but the author's delicious writing style, the historical research and the wonderful characterization make this book special. This is definitely a keeper!

Marialyce: I cherished this publication because it was once relatively gothic in its environment. The characters have been typical, the gorgeous heroine, the darkish mysterious man, and the great taking a look high quality characterized different "man in my life" figure. happening alongside the realm of the Hudson River and NYC, the e-book evoked a surroundings that used to be either prevalent and beautiful. The wealthy of Dutch big apple are explored with all their wealth, society, and social strata. Into that atmosphere comes the attractive Miranda, far away cousin to Nicholas a prosperous patroon who whereas moody, is naturally good-looking and debonaire. the matter is that he's married yet that challenge is completed away with whilst his spouse dies mysteriously and Nicholas publicizes that inside of a 12 months Miranda may be his wife. The little fairy story starts off to take a sinister trek presently as one discovers there's something simply no longer correct with Nicholas. the tale is going via instances of light happiness and sour tragedy as all reliable gothic novels do. All in all, this was once a pleasant publication to whereas away it slow with. It used to be very evocative of Katherine in its writing style. Ms Seton back combined slightly of historical past with a love tale which continually turns out to entice many. i do know it frequently does to me.

Bettielee: i used to be not likely chuffed with this. i didn't just like the major personality and so much of my judgement is since it does not have as a lot of the gothic aspect as I wanted. It does not have that cloistered feeling. although the wedding and Nicholas's will cloister our heroine and she or he supplies herself over to him, the surroundings of the home does not have that overbearing personality consider to it. the home has a presence and a clammy, uncomfortable

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feeling, however it is haunted extra by means of Miranda's regrets and thoughts than genuine ghosts. I admire the various historic references, with the Astor's, Poe makes an appearance, the issues with tenants and the feudal manor system, which I'm embarrassed to confess I didn't even be aware of existed in America. And the hero was once no genuine hero. The hero comes from particularly one other quarter. an excellent book, yet no longer a delightful gothic romance.

Susie: learn this simply because I beloved the motion picture and it happens the place I dwell (shout-out to the historic facets of Catskill and Hudson and every little thing all the way down to NYC that made it into the story). I additionally are inclined to like tales a few type of tortured love that cannot fairly paintings set in Gothic manor houses. cross figure. The motion picture follows the publication very heavily till approximately mid-way through. The motion picture places extra weight at the ghostly making a song and taking part in from the purple Room and at the Dutch patrol chair. It additionally makes Nicholas' mystery (I'm now not giving it away) because the root of his difficulties while the publication permits Nicholas a few worry and vulnerability that motives him to (hide in his tower room...) Nicholas is a monster in either the movie and the publication however the booklet bargains a intensity in the back of his actions.

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