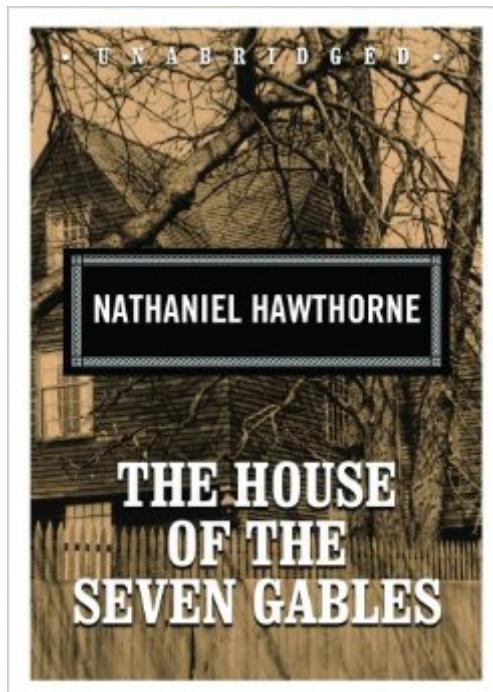


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The House Of The Seven Gables



Synopsis

In a sleepy little New England village stands a dark, weather-beaten, many-gabled house. This brooding mansion is haunted by a centuries-old curse that casts the shadow of ancestral sin upon the last four members of the distinctive Pyncheon family of Salem. The greed and haughty pride of the Pyncheon family through the generations is mirrored in the gloomy decay of their seven-gabled mansion, where the family's enfeebled and impoverished relations now live. Mysterious deaths threaten the living. Musty documents nestle behind hidden panels carrying the secret of the family's salvation--or its downfall. A brilliant intertwining of the popular, the symbolic, and the historical, Hawthorne's gothic Romance is a powerful exploration of personal and national guilt, a work that Henry James declared "the closest approach we are likely to have to the Great American Novel."

Book Information

Audio CD: 9 pages

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.; Unabridged edition (February 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1433211971

ISBN-13: 978-1433211973

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.1 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Nathaniel Hawthorne is probably one of the most despised figures in the American literary canon, at least in the minds of the millions of school children forced to read "The Scarlet Letter." I will go so far as to admit I never finished that novel. I took one look through the book and laughed at the ridiculous idea of reading such a convoluted looking story. That was at age seventeen. Now, many years later I am able to go back and actually read some of these daunting novels. What is surprising is that they are not daunting at all, just written in an ornate style from a different age. The plots often deal with the same issues and concerns modern people fret about. For those uninterested in relationships and human dramas, there are also great old stories with supernatural elements, which is where this book comes in. This edition of the book includes an introduction by Mary Oliver and

several commentaries on the work by Edwin Percy Whipple, Henry T. Tuckerman, F.O. Matthiessen, and Herman Melville. The Melville commentary is actually a letter the author of "Moby Dick" sent to Hawthorne where he concludes with a demand that Hawthorne "walk down one of these mornings and see me." Pretty neat. In "The House of the Seven Gables," the author tells his reader the story is a romance. What he means by this terminology is not a cheap paperback that involves swooning hearts with Fabio on the cover, but "a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight." Hawthorne's specific goal is to show that the bad behavior of one generation devolves on future descendants.

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