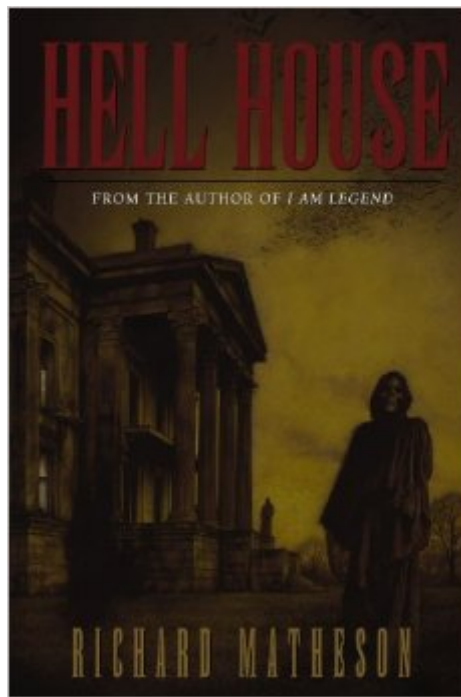


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Hell House



Synopsis

Rolf Rudolph Deutsch is going die. But when Deutsch, a wealthy magazine and newspaper publisher, starts thinking seriously about his impending death, he offers to pay a physicist and two mediums, one physical and one mental, \$100,000 each to establish the facts of life after death. Dr. Lionel Barrett, the physicist, accompanied by the mediums, travel to the Belasco House in Maine, which has been abandoned and sealed since 1949 after a decade of drug addiction, alcoholism, and debauchery. For one night, Barrett and his colleagues investigate the Belasco House and learn exactly why the townfolks refer to it as the Hell House.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am now officially a fan of Richard Matheson. I started out by reading "I am Legend", which is one of the best horror stories ever written, so I was expecting a little less from this. And, it isn't as good as "I am Legend", but then again, not much is. I am on a crusade now to get all of my horror-loving friends and family to read Matheson - it seems his work has been virtually buried by the enormous amount of really bad horror that seemed to spring up in Stephen King's wake (which isn't King's fault...publishers just started seeing dollar signs...). Matheson is a rarity in the field of horror - he's classic. "Hell House" is a fast read. Each chapter consists of one day, and the chapters are broken down into little sections (7:08pm, 1:39 am, etc.) that keep the pace quick, and make it very easy for you to say, "Oh, I guess I can squeeze in just a little more before turning out the light." (Or at least going to sleep!) The writing is snappy, and to the point. Matheson creates vivid, cinematic images without having the writing call too much attention to itself. Surely this is a skill he perfected while

writing for "The Twilight Zone". "Hell House" has enough twists and turns to satisfy, and enough really scary, disgusting stuff to possibly haunt your dreams. I found myself having to think happy thoughts as I closed my eyes at night. I haven't had to do that in a while...not since reading "It" by Stephen King as a kid. Fellow horror fans, you really ought to do yourselves a favor and read this book (and all of his others, too!). And remember, if anything seems familiar -- like it's been done before -- then it was probably lifted from this! Highly recommended!

"Hell House" author Richard Matheson has always been one of the great supernatural authors of recent history. His novels may not hit the bestseller lists with the frequency of Stephen King or Dean Koontz, but his contributions to the genre are legendary. His resume includes episodes of "The Twilight Zone," "I Am Legend," "Somewhere In Time," "The Shrinking Man" and "Stir of Echoes." For me, "Hell House" stands out as his great contribution to the genre, a storied and historical form of literature traveled by the likes of Shirley Jackson, Bram Stoker, H. G. Wells and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Just when you think all has been covered in the haunted house genre, here comes Matheson with this electric and extraordinarily creepy variation circa 1971. Wonderfully realized and darkly imaginative, "Hell House" is a simple tale of four unlucky folks hired to crack the legend of Hell House, an isolated mansion in Maine with a history as dark as the Manson Family at Spahn Ranch. Once owned by a Mr. Belasco, the house was an early 20th century hangout of deviant folks who explored carnal avenues to the ultimate point of starvation and death. Two previous expeditions of scientists ended in suicide and disaster, and our modern-day protagonists, needless-to-say, have their work cut out for them. By novel's end, each character must come to terms with their own human weaknesses and repressions, exposed by the overwhelming evil of Hell House. Matheson's novel is brilliant because it brings a sexual awareness to the genre only flirted with in the past. The house, in many ways, is a prison with windows bricked over, nestled uncomfortably in an isolated, fog-covered valley. Matheson's characters are painfully alone, battling forces psychologically and eventually physically. What is most memorable about "Hell House," is the set-up and creation of one of the most evil houses in literature history. Matheson's dark imagination has created a character that is both repulsive and erotic, possessing an energy that slowly works on human frailty, devouring and dominating. Past haunted house novels have enthralled with gothic and mysterious allure. Matheson's novel throws goth out the window, replacing such conventions with an oozing, carnal evil, grotesque in nature, overwhelming and horrifying. "Hell House" is so good, one wonders how it could possibly be topped. I don't think it ever really will, but recent authors such as King and Anne Rice continue to create epic variations on the

haunted house story. But the brilliance of Matheson's novel is its primal simplicity. Horror has rarely seen a tale as creepy as "Hell House."

I've been indulging in horror novels for the past year and I've read everything from Anne Rice to Stephen King. This novel was the most frightening novel I've laid my eyes on. While reading it, someone knocked on my door and I screamed so loud that I practically gave my visitor a heart attack. So would you like this book? Picture this. There is a house where only one person has survived living beneath its roof in over 30 years. Four people return (a physicist, his wife, and 2 mediums); with a reward of 100,000 to see if they can get rid of the "hauntings" at Hell House. The physicist, Lionel, insists that there are no such things as ghosts; that paranormal occurrences are a natural part of the world created by electromagnetic forces rather than the dead. The spiritualist, Florence, argues that the phenomenon's are a result of trapped and tormented spirits which she has the power to relinquish from their prison. The mystery emerges as the debate of the force behind the phantoms grows. Will any of these four survive to solve the mystery of Hell House and if they do did they really learn the truth or just what the house wanted them to learn?

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