



Afton of Margate Castle

Angela Elwell Hunt

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In this tale of medieval lords and serfs, a peasant girl is taken from her family to be raised as the earl's daughter -- an account of adventure, romance, and struggle to survive desperate times.

Beautiful, headstrong Afton is taken from her parents at an early age and raised in the castle, a companion to the Earl's daughter. Schooled in the ways of kings and surrounded by splendor. Afton falls in love with the Earl's son, Calhoun.

But Calhoun's mother has much different plans for her son than marriage to a lowborn lady's companion.

When Afton's world is viciously torn apart, she is left with nothing but a burning desire for vengeance.

Afton of Margate Castle Details

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Author : Angela Elwell Hunt

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From Reader Review Afton of Margate Castle for online ebook

Michelle says

excellent picture of Christianity in medieval times

Linda says

The romance is very light. The 1st part of the book (~1/3 or so is focused on the heroine's childhood. Thereafter as a adult there is no "falling in love" story which is usually the part that I enjoy most when well written. It's more a 'how do they get together'. Flipped over quite a bit of the story. It's also rather dark.

jennie says

Great story!

Wonderful period piece, great characters and enough action to keep you interested. Can't wait to read the rest of the series.

Margaret Roberts says

An excellent novel, cleverly written with such topics as honour, humility, forgiveness and the Sovereignty of God clearly woven together. Hunt obviously did her research on life in the medieval age, portraying a realistic portrait for Afton, the daughter of a villein (slave) and Calhoun, the son of the Lord of Margate. While the two are in love at a young age, both are vastly separated not only by distance but by circumstances as Calhoun leaves to become a knight and Afton is forced into marriage with a miller. Numerous, although realistic (for that time period) situations arise giving the reader a wonder if any good will come for either character. It made my mind reel and kept me guessing as to what would happen right until the end!

English says

There was a decent story in this novel, but I fear it was wrapped or so thoroughly in the negatives that I could not enjoy it. It was possible to sympathise with the characters, at least at first, but the device of throwing every possible ill circumstance conceivable (and some inconceivable) at the characters for as long as possible, seemed to be to become stretched and predictable after a while.

To me, some of the motivations of the characters and situations also seemed-a little far –fetched- something akin to, “We can do defy the law, abuse people an’ get away with it cos’ it not America and it’s the Medieval times”.

A faulty assumption if there ever was one- rule of law has its origins in Medieval England, and I for one have never heard of peasants’ children being taken as tribute by the nobility- yet this is the major basis of the

plot.

I don't doubt that some research has been done on the time period- though I wonder if it extended to the plants and animal life of the British Isles considering the references to potatoes and characters being given Turkey to eat, as well a bear and a Hickory tree. The former were not introduced to Britain, from the Americas, until at least the 1500s, four centuries after this novel is set, and Hickory is certainly not indigenous to the UK.

The biggest issues with me, however, was the imposition of modern standards, values and beliefs onto the past, mainly with the protagonists who judge their fellows and the world around them by these standards, and the inclusion of a number of myths, misconceptions, and misinformation about the Middle Ages into the story.

I understand the author might have wanted to incorporate Evangelical Christianity into the story, and that's all well and good, but along with this are 20th century ideals, and a hint of political correctness (demonstrated in the hero's belief- not consist with the time that many people who went on Crusade were 'religious fanatics'- I doubt twelfth century people had the some definition of fanaticism that we do- and being told that Muslims had as much of a claim to Jerusalem as anyone else.)

A knight who stubbornly clings to pacifist sentiments is a severe aberration in itself, but the hero Calhoun's pontificating about the supposed 'cruelty' and 'bloody ways' of King Henry I suggested an entirely unrealistic and naïve view of the world and the period on his part. The accusation of cruelty was based on an incident, recounted in the early chapters, in which the King had his granddaughters blinded, which is made to seem like a wanton act of sadism by a paranoid tyrant (perhaps in part due to the misreporting of 20th century historians). In reality, this incident was a response to the girl's father, and the King's son in law having had his own hostage, the young son of another Lord, blinded, and apparently believing he could get away with it because he was related to the King.

Herein lies the crux of the matter- Medieval Kings had to be tough, and to a certain extent hard, to maintain their credibility, law and order, and keep the nobility in check. A King who allowed his son-in-law escape punishment for such an act as that recounted above would have caused his nobles to believe he didn't care about justice and was prepared to allow his friends and relatives to get away with murder.

I doubt any King who espoused the ideals of Calhoun would have lasted long, and the fact that Henry's reign bought peace to England for 30 years, when that of King Stephen resulted in 20 years of civil war shows who was the more successful King by Medieval standards. Yet modern judgement prevails, and Stephen is presented in a far more favourable light.

Afton, the peasant heroine, is also modern in her outlook, reflecting feminist and so some extent, socialist sentiments as well as an apparently modern attitude towards God allowing suffering.

I understand her abusive marriage put her off men, but here insistence that she could 'look after herself' just did not always seem credible.

Afton believed her husband had the 'right' to kill her if he suspected her of adultery, or even if she failed to please him- which culminated in him dragging her out into the garden and trying to burn her. One would think that having been raised in a Castle, she would have a better knowledge of English law- as she cites it later on.

In years of studying the Middle Ages at degree level I have never once come across any law, custom or precedent in Medieval England which allowed a man to kill his wife on the mere suspicion of adultery- for any kind of legal penalty to be implemented-usually a fine, whipping or the confiscation of land- the woman usually had to be physically caught in the act.

Also, burning was never a punishment for this offence in England, so not even evil and horrid Hubert, husband of Afton could have just got away with such a thing.

Overall, I think the representation of the nasty and unpleasant aspects of this period were exaggerated and life for women and peasants at the time made to seem worse than it really was. I don't blame the author for this, it's probably the sources which were the problem- but it's not correct that women and peasants had no rights. Nor was I convinced by the idea that peasants never washed- one does not have to have a full sized bathtub in order to do this. Accompanied with the usual tropes of black teeth and non-existent table manners, the depiction of the period struck me as unrealistic and clichéd.

All the above, coupled with some passages that bordered on the erotic made this a tiresome and often quite frustrating read for me. For me, this is certainly not a book for keeps or, I might suggest, one to please those seeking an accurate presentation of this fascinating and formative period. I might just stick to Cadfael...

Meghan Ball says

I love this book! It's slow, it's sweet, sometimes I don't remember why I love it so much but I always will. The story is about two people who fall in love and get separated and their journey to get back together. Some terrible things happen and some wonderful things happen but I guess what I still love is the message that love can endure that long. For me it's a hopeful story of two people who never give up. No one else in the world may like this book but I love it!

Mays says

First thing that determined how I'd hated this book. beauty is considered golden had and gray eyes. dark hair is diminished in this book. as well as the use of the word Negroes which I hardly think was used during that period. Then we have small children with more mature minds with thoughts far exceeding that of a hopeless romantic adult. At nine years old the main character is speaking as if she's a 16yr old love struck girl. The reality escapes me when you have a 13yr old marrying a 50+ yr old which a custom to time period but also doesn't feel real if her mind set seems as if an elderly women. Also lets not mention her two children that ultimately fair horribly one scarred for life only to give her life to her mother and the other a evil knight because of her previous husbands personality. As if she couldn't have perfect children unless she was with her soul mate destined from the beginning. Some how that disgusts me...Not to mention all the times more things could have been done or said but weren't for the sake of plot I presume

Oh how I hated this book...the Edeline woman infuriated me in a horrible way the relationships between the two main characters constantly felt forced, Afton is on the title but the book seems to bounce back between

so many characters it's so difficult to keep up. the lack of so many things irritated me. it's a slow and boring book. I don't want more and I don't want to read anymore of this series. I found the book depressing and unsatisfying. if I want to read a book about blunt realistic cruelty with no positivity whatsoever not even within the final pages I shall read a GRRM book. truly upset with this

Liz says

My sister brought this home from the library. As always I glanced through the books to see if any interested me, when I came across this one. From the first page I was trapped in the world and never put the book down. Amazing

Ashley says

This is a review of the 4th ed. release of the book.

I had read this story in junior high school after reading the second book in the series. While it didn't leave as much of an impact on me as *The Troubadour's Quest* had, I did love it enough to remember it until now. On a whim, I bought the series and decided to reread them to see if they were as good as junior high school me thought they were.

I was not disappointed.

Reading this story now as an adult, I can appreciate the historical accuracies of the book much more and exactly how much they suffered. I have seen it described by someone else as a "slow-burning romance" and that would be the way I wish to describe it as well, with love spanning years and trials that all of us could face -- frustratingly bad timing, pride, bitterness, and unexpected disasters and changes in the two character's life plans. I loved reading this again, and will continue to recommend it to any people interested in a classy work of historical fiction with a satisfying conclusion.

Plot aside, I have to say that I was not impressed with this edition of the book. It was rife with typos and blatant misprints, including a doubly printed paragraph on the second page and a chapter in the middle of the book named "0 CHAPTER NAME". I wish more care had been taken to proof this copy, which I bought unknowingly.

tl;dr - The story is an excellent historical fiction/clean romance which deals with contemporary relationship and life problems. Get an older edition for a cleaner reading experience.

Susan says

I picked this book up at a local thrift shop. I was drawn to it due to cover picture, castles, knights and damsels in distress! The description on the back cover also reeled me into purchasing! I am mostly a historical romance reader. I like medieval stories.

This was not what I expected and was hard to read! Like the title said, it is about Afton of Margate Castle. The first few chapters are loaded with violence and horrible things happening to Afton! I kept having to tell

myself it was the 12th century, these things were probably acceptable! Yikes!

I kept having to do math to make sure I had her age right! Another reviewer said she was 13 married to a 50 yr old, ok probably common for that time. At the end of the book I think she is in her 30's.

So many awful depressing things happened to Afton during the course of the book that frankly, I don't know how she kept from flinging herself off of a high cliff! I guess that is where here faith in God was applied.

The author tried really hard to show God's faithfulness in hard times. Especially in Calhoon's life and trials with Faulk. I really liked Calhoon, at least until the end when he was callous and rejected Afton AGAIN after rescuing her from a wedding. Maybe it was because he and Faulk (I was so sad when he died) spent 12 yrs in captivity! 12 yrs! I felt that time frame was a bit much for survival in horrible conditions. Author kinda left them hanging in captivity till she could figure out what to do next!

Like previous reviewers, I felt that the story jumped around way too much. I kept wondering when Afton was going to find out her daughter was in fact alive? Not enough in the story line about the daughter. I was so bummed that even when reunited, Afton was denied joy and happiness! What?! She finds her, doesn't know she has found her and then loses her again! AAARGH! I really was shocked at the end result and almost cried for Afton!

There was only happiness in the epilogue, glad I didn't read that first!

I gave this a 3 star review because, it DID hold my attention, I wanted to read and find out if Afton and Calhoon would ever be able to be together and put aside the demons of life! Ugh! Really? last few pages and the epilogue! Looks like the troubadour has his own story, not sure if I will try to find it.

One reviewer said scenes bordered on erotic-where? When? There is no sexual activity, only chaste kisses and hugs. Well, the wedding night...but she only talks about it thru Afton's POV after, how brutal, probably rape and awful he was. no actual sexual activity description.

It felt a little like Calhoon's mom was a little on the incestuous side with Afton's teenage son- even though no, blood relation, she had raised Afton as a daughter and then managed to take her son away and raise HIM as a son and the description of how she related to him was a little icky. But she was icky and I wish SHE had fallen to her death!

See, it did earn some stars, it wrapped me up in the characters and I like that! I just wish she had done more good romance development with Afton and Calhoon. Maybe an actual tame love scene! Jaded romance reader here! Maybe less side characters and bad guys, It was hard to keep them all straight! Overall, I'd recommend this book if you can handle some dark issues.

Paula says

Tough to read

While I submit that Book is well written, I found it hard to read. There was a lot of violence and death. I know that it has always existed and it may have been more prevalent during this time period, but I just don't need it imprinted on my brain. There was so much in this book.

Kathy says

This was an amazing book! I have loved the other books I've read by Angela Hunt, and have always been amazed at how she writes a story. This book did not disappoint. It was one of those that I couldn't wait to get back to when I had to put it down. It was set in medieval England, a setting I'm not so familiar with, and was most excellently written. I highly recommend it and can't wait to read the others in the series.

Charlotte says

This book has a fabulous historic world...and a dreadful plot. I loved the detail into the medieval world, but spent the last half of the book wanting to smack the characters for being dumb. Their decisions could have been fleshed out much better, as could the two romance protagonists' relationship to each other. We know they love each other, but we don't really have any good idea why, since they seem to barely know each other.

If it's really a love that can endure literal decades of separation, the reader needs to understand why the characters pine for each other. The ending was, until the last ten pages, quite frankly ridiculous. The characters made nonsensical decisions, because we didn't get to see into their heads in any but the most superficial way.

But the world was so good that I was particularly disappointed in the lack of character depth. I wanted to love this book, but just couldn't.

Cam says

I really enjoyed this epic tale set in medieval England. It was full of unrequited love, adventure, tragedy, friendship, angst, honor, treachery, battles, losses—and finally—victory and happiness, though it was hard-won, not without its own loss, and not wrapped up as tidily as I'd wished. But it sure made for an interesting story with an ending that satisfied me.

I loved the medieval settings; this is my favorite time period. The author clearly did her research on the people, places, customs, and societal classes of the time period, and every time I was lucky enough to sit down and read for a spell, I was quickly and completely transported to this time and place, which was a wonderful escape (my favorite thing about reading!). The romance was squeaky clean, if you like to steer clear of trashy romance.

I didn't give 5 stars because there were some flaws that kept me from absolutely loving the book. I read the Kindle edition (it was a freebie), and the errors were plentiful and annoying. Not just spelling/grammatical errors, but glaring errors like missing words, and even sometimes entire phrases were missing. These were not few and far between, but common occurrences that had to be dealt with every few pages, it seemed.

As for the writing, I was frustrated by the lack of character development, especially in the main characters. Afton, especially, was hard to really "feel" and understand. I often had no idea why she did (or thought) some of the things she did. I still pulled for her and wanted desperately for her to have happiness instead of the almost constant heartbreak she had to bear, but on the other hand, some of her heartbreak was her own doing, and I still can't figure out what her reasons were for her foolish actions and decisions at those times. Foolish pride was the supposed answer, but she made the same bitter mistakes over and over again, to the point I wondered why I was even pulling for her. The same goes for the other main character, Calhoun. Although I felt his character was a bit more understandable than Afton, he, also, was a victim of his own overblown pride time and again, and never seemed to learn from these foolish mistakes.

Otherwise, there was something about the "voice" of the novel that seemed a bit amateur, especially at the

beginning. Upon reading about the author, I saw this was her first novel (20 yrs ago), and she's written many since then, so I assume it is a bit amateur. But it certainly didn't cause me to want to stop reading, and this seemed to improve quite a bit as the novel progressed (or maybe I just got used to it, or wrapped up in the story, or both).

But overall, the story was quite interesting and enjoyable to read. While it was a bit slow to start (I found the first 20% of the book to be a bit slow—though not boring), once it got going, I found it hard to put down, and it kept me up late into the night several times. There were many twists and turns, and I found myself on the edge of my seat on more than a few occasions. 4 solid stars.

kattie says

Castle

I loved this story, I recommend everyone to read this book, look forward to reading more of her books .
Kattie
