



Midnight Champagne

A. Manette Ansay

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April Liesgang and Caleb Shannon have known each other for just three short months, so their Valentine's Day wedding at a chapel near the shores of Lake Michigan has both families in an uproar. As the festivities unfold (and the cash bar opens), everyone has an opinion and a lively prediction about April and Caleb's union, each the reflection of a different marital experience.

Meanwhile, at the nearby Hideaway Lodge, a domestic quarrel ends in tragedy. As April and Caleb's life together begins, death parts another man and woman in angry violence—and as the two stories gradually intersect, their juxtaposition explores the tangled roots of vulnerability and desire.

By the time the last polka has been danced and the bouquet tossed, *Midnight Champagne* has cast an extraordinary spell. From the novel's opening epigraph from Chekhov—"If you fear loneliness, then marriage is not for you"—to its final moments in the honeymoon suite, A. Manette Ansay weaves tenderness and fury, passion and wonder into a startling tapestry of love in all its paradox and power.

Midnight Champagne Details

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From Reader Review Midnight Champagne for online ebook

Mouse says

I was involved from first page to last. I felt an intimacy with the characters (often it seemed like I was eavesdropping on conversations) and was awestruck by the intense sense of atmosphere. The fine-tuned details, and the puzzle-piece plot reminded me so much of classic storytellers... Edith Wharton, E.M. Forster, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather.

Ginger Williams says

You are cordially invited to the wedding of April and Caleb at the Great Lakes Chapel and Hideaway Lodge in southern Wisconsin on Valentine's Day. Get ready to feast on Chicken a la King and do the Hokey Pokey and the Bunny Hop. But beware - everything that can go wrong at a wedding will go wrong - some things trivial and one tragic.

But in spite of the fire in a toilet of the ladies' room, a broken mirror, a lost bridal bouquet, a drunk father of the bride, the awful lederhosen the band members are wearing, a mistaken identity, bratty children, snooty in-laws, the misery of the newly divorced and the mysterious goings on in Room 33 (the Western Suite: decorated with a wagon wheel and pictures of cowboys -right down the hall from the Night in Tunisia Suite, the Caribbean Holiday Suite and the Garden of Eden Suite), this is one wedding you don't want to miss. You will laugh and you will cry. Your head will ache from too many drinks and your feet will hurt from too much Bunny Hoppin'. But you will be more than a little bit wiser as the evening draws to a close and you lift your glass of champagne in a toast to April and Caleb at midnight.

Cranky says

I never got that interested in the story, but I liked the author's use of language.

Jkdaun says

Ansay is a wonderful storyteller. She manipulates her story to expertly include so many characters and storylines. I was completely engaged by her unexpected twists.

I found myself pondering a particular quote by Oscar Wilde that she used and upon which she expounded: "Men marry because they are tired and women because they are curious. Both are disappointed." Ansay goes on to say, " He was right about the disappointment. You will be disappointed. Not just in each other but in yourselves. It's inevitable that you'll each fall short of your own expectations. But you will also exceed those expectations, again and again, and in ways you can't possibly imagine...You look back and realize that - in spite of the disappointments - even the best of your old expectations seem pale in the face of actual life." I find this sentiment to be both so true and also so hopeful.

Marilyn says

This remains one of my most favorite books of all time. Not only did it give me a shock when I found out who the mysterious unknown person really was, but there is a passage that still remains new to me every time I think of it, on page 213. It's the wedding toast given by the grandmother of the bride. It's inspirational . . . and just perfect.

Jeri says

Loved it! Great writing, interesting characters, wonderful setting! What kind of book was it? Ghost story? Love story? Mystery? Family drama? Who knows? But, it was quietly mesmerizing and I kept thinking about it when I wasn't reading. A. Manette Ansay is a gifted writer and this one, which takes place over the course of a wedding and reception during a harrowing, midwestern blizzard, is a unique tale.

Judith Marshall says

This was a really quirky book. From the first chapter, I was intrigued. The story takes place at a well-worn chapel and lodge near Lake Michigan on Valentine's Day, where April Liesgang and Caleb Shannon are to be married. Over the next several hours, you meet their zany families and some unwelcome guests, all of whom are unique and memorable in their own way. This is not your typical romantic tale of love and marriage. It's a complex story of human frailties and forgiveness. I loved it!

Sofia says

Honestly, the book was a bit disappointing. The story itself is very well written, but there really wasn't much of a storyline, and it was hard for me to really follow the story.

Ellen Prewitt says

This book is exquisitely written. The structure is almost perfectly executed (the present day story takes place within the night of a wedding, and the point of view flows seamlessly between family members, inn owner, etc.), and the sentences are beautifully crafted. It's not a topic I'd ordinarily be interested in—the reluctant family wedding—but it had me from the initial introduction of the terrible younger sister of the bride. Plus, I appreciated the magical realism thrown in. I highly recommend it.

Katherine says

I very much enjoyed this almost novella. The time-frame is a single evening where a family wedding is occurring during a mid-western blizzard. One I most enjoyed was Ansay's character portrayal. Although there

are a dozen or so characters Ansay is able to give a real sense of each of these people and we can imagine their lives clearly from what we are given.

Kitty says

If I had one word to describe this book, it would be mediocre. I didn't hate it but I didn't like it either. All the characters were unlikable and the story's climax really disappointed me. The only reason I can think why I kept reading was the way the characters' stories were intertwined with one another. Other than that, it was incredibly boring.

Linda says

Quirky story of a wedding that has the potential to go terribly awry, but ends up resolving itself into an (almost) happy ending, at least for the bride and groom. Lots of family drama, including a murder, exes behaving badly, teenaged vandals, and the bride's former fiancé showing up. A fast and entertaining read, a step above a cozy mystery.

AndreaH says

Need to save the wedding toast an aunt gives in this book that looks at married love, from newlyweds to oldtimers and all permutations in between. Covers a lot of emotional ground for such a slip of a book.

Tiffany says

I couldn't get into this book. Too many characters, no real direction... the book did nothing for me. After reading Blue Water I was really looking forward to reading another novel from the author, but this was just disappointing.

Karina Almeroth says

I thought this was going to be a romance, or chick lit...the cover is deceptive, I think the cover could be better to depict the book's contents, cause it is quite a serious book.

Definitely not a romance or chick lit! I really enjoyed it, and was surprised, happily, by its seriousness and literary qualities (I love good literary books! But ones that aren't too serious).

I love that it was set one day over a wedding...I love wedding settings! Weddings are curious things, and I love characters being let loose at a wedding and seeing what they get up to. This was essentially this book.

But it has much deeper themes and issues running through it. Domestic violence, and violence against

women, being the main one. I was really surprised to see it featured so heavily in the book, but happy it was. I feel really strongly about this issue and believe society turns too much of a blind eye to it. There was no turning a blind eye to it in this book!

Most importantly the book is about relationships, and marriage. It was an often sorrowful look at marriages, in all varieties and at differing stages of life. The happy newlyweds, the unhappy, cheating ones married 30 years, the wife-beating, murdering ones! I cried a lot, at the truth of it all, but also that there is still hope. There is still love, and there is still marriages that work out there.

There's also a mini ghost storyline happening, which I loved, and the setting, at this glorious, sprawling lodge and wedding centre was so comforting (even with a ghost or two), that I just longed to stay in a place like that (but maybe not get married! I may be turned off marriage for life after this book)!

I love the contents page for some reason....I've just stared and stared at it for many hours! Can't tell you why...I just love reading the contents page! I think that page alone brings so many images to mind, before you've even read the book. Maybe I'm just jealous, and I really want to write my own book with those chapter headings, like its vital to the story! Who knows, I'm just a girl addicted to words and books.

Basically, I loved it, and I think weirdly it was a case of reading a book on a certain subject that I really needed to read at this exact stage of my life.

Books have a way of finding you.
