



## Chateau Laux: A Story of Colonial America

**David Loux**

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*Chateau Laux is an engrossing novel set during colonial times.*

Based in truth, David Loux's historical novel *Chateau Laux* is a bittersweet story of tragedy, found family, and reconciliation in colonial America.

In 1710 in Pennsylvania, twenty-two-year-old Lawrence inherits a brewery from his grandfather. Needing reprieve from the work, and from his grandfather's abuse, Lawrence hires John, a Native American, to take him on a hunting trip. They separate when Lawrence wants to continue through the woods alone.

Lawrence stumbles upon Pierre Laux's family farm and falls in love with Pierre's daughter, Catharine, whom he later marries. Lawrence's relationships with each member of the Laux family changes all of them. All navigate colonial life, helping Lawrence to build an ambitious chateau in order to prove his value to, and love for, the Lauxes.

Lawrence's introspection and mild-manneredness are endearing, and his steadfast loyalty to his found family is profound. He retains his grateful attitude despite tragedies, and his emotional turmoil and strength are made apparent via subtle expressions. The book's language is gentle even in its moments of brutality, resulting in glimpses into characters' perceptions. When Lawrence first meets Pierre, for example, and is given a tour of his homestead, he is reminded of his childhood arrival at his grandfather's home, and of feeling as if he's "standing on the doorstep of an old man he never met, a note of introduction in his hand." The humility and loneliness that Lawrence once felt complement the Laux family's decision to accept him as one of their own. Strong images and sensory details help to make the colonial setting tangible. Characters ably describe the smells of cow manure, the grueling efforts of building a house from stone, and the scorching heat of a fire.

In addition to Lawrence, various other characters trade narrative duties, including Pierre, his two oldest sons, his wife, and Catharine. Jean Laux's consideration of a military career, and desire to be a part of something bigger than himself, leads him to save a kidnapped girl from outlaws; the local militia that recruits him gives him a sense of meaning, even as their anti-Native sentiments thwart his involvement because of his esteem for John. Other characters' fears and ambitions are also balanced and held in check by those around them, resulting in a dynamic cast who form a compelling family unit. When tensions arise in the story, the resultant questions of potential betrayals are enthralling.

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AIMEE JODOIN (January 22, 2021)

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