



## The Fiction: Complete and Unabridged

*H.P. Lovecraft, S.T. Joshi (Introduction)*

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## The Fiction: Complete and Unabridged H.P. Lovecraft , S.T. Joshi (Introduction)

In the 1920s and '30s, H.P. Lovecraft pioneered a new type of weird fiction that fused elements of supernatural horror with the concepts of visionary science fiction. Lovecraft's tales of cosmic horror revolutionized modern horror fiction and earned him the reputation as the most influential American writer of weird tales since Edgar Allan Poe.

This omnibus collects for the first time in a single volume all of Lovecraft's groundbreaking fiction: "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dreams in the Witch House," "The Haunter of the Dark," "At the Mountains of Madness," "The Shadow out of Time," "The Shadow over Innsmouth," the full-length novels *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*, and many others.

*H.P. Lovecraft: The Fiction* is part of Barnes & Noble's Library of Essential Writers. Each title in the series presents the finest works—complete and unabridged—from one of the greatest writers in literature in magnificent, elegantly designed hardback editions. Every volume also includes an original introduction that provides the reader with enlightening information on the writer's life and works.

## The Fiction: Complete and Unabridged Details

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## From Reader Review The Fiction: Complete and Unabridged for online ebook

### Miramira Endevall says

When JFi gives a present, JFi GIVES A PRESENT. You rock, chica!

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### J.R. Walker says

Before picking up this book, I had only heard the name Lovecraft in passing in vague connection with cosmic horror. But I saw it in the book store and at a reasonable price so I thought I'd pick it up and give it a try. A friend recommended I begin with "The Statement of Randolph Carter", which I read later that evening. And from that point, I was hooked. Since then, I have devoured the rest of his fiction compiled in the book and still I crave more. He has become my favorite author and a huge inspiration to me and to my own writing. This book is full of stories so epic and so ahead of their time that even today, there's very little like it on the market. A few, such as Stephen King, compare. And even they owe their own inspiration to Lovecraft. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in horror or science fiction. He blends the two together so perfectly that it begins to feel unnatural to separate them again. If you enjoy amazing, weird horror and rich, deep science fiction paired with mysticism and magic, read these stories. You won't be disappointed.

And try to disregard the occasional racist elements. Lovecraft was a product of another time, and truth be told, he didn't dislike races other than white so much as he dislike anyone who wasn't specifically *English*. They are but a minor stain on a wonderful tapestry of creative work decades ahead of its time.

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### Shlomo Zalman says

Best Hanukkah present I ever received

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### Christina says

**NB! At the Mountains of Madness** is on the '1001books you must read before you die' list and is rated individually below. See below for comments to the individual stories.

#### **The Beast in the Cave**

The protagonist gets lost in a cave and even though he is proud of staying so calm, he is scared almost senseless by the sound of *something* approaching. HPL wrote this when he was 15 and it reads like it... The achieved horror is somehow too easy.

#### **The Alchemyst**

The story of a family curse. Also a teenage story. Nothing special.

### **The Tomb**

A young boy discovers an old family tomb in the woods and are slowly transformed in every way so he ends up believing he belongs to the family and has a right to be put to rest in the tomb. Ok story.

### **Dagon**

A man lost at sea comes upon a new continent which has so far been under water. Walking across it, he comes upon a big monolith and a hideous creature worshipping it and is driven mad. Quite a nice story.

### **A Reminiscence of Dr. Samuel Johnson**

An imitation piece. Not very interesting for the casual reader.

### **Polaris**

Something about a city in the sky where the protagonist finds himself - maybe in dreams. Did nothing for me.

### **Beyond the Wall of Sleep**

Our protagonist is an intern in an institution for the insane where a primitive man is brought after having killed his neighbour. It turns out the man dreams of another world, a world he cannot possibly know, and via some sort of machine the intern is able to experience the same world and discovers that the man had some sort of an extra-terrestrial being trapped in him.

### **Memory**

A prose-poem. Again, nothing much.

### **Old Bugs**

A story about what can happen, if you drink too much. An old bum works in a bar and tries to keep young people from having their first drink, one young man in particular, whom it turns out is a relation to a woman the bum knew when he was sober. Rather liked this one. Not very Lovecraftian, I think though.

### **The Transition of Juan Romero**

A man works at a mine and meets a Mexican who have never known his parents. A large abyss is blown in the mine and both men are drawn towards it one night, with their way guided by the light of a ring... - only one of the men survive, the other falls into the abyss, but both men are found in the bunks... Rather a blah story...

### **The White Ship**

No matter how much we have, we always hope for more. An allegorical tale where the narrator believes himself taken on board a white ship which travels to various places and end up in the Land of Fancy which the narrator leaves, searching for the Land of Hope... I liked this one.

### **The Street**

A story of a city and it's history from peaceful beautiful town with rose garden to a place where terrorists gather...

### **The Doom that came to Sarnath**

We never like those that are different so the humans from Sarnath slaughter the weird green beings from Ib. But at the 1000 year celebration of this, something happens...

### **The Statement of Randolph Carter**

This felt like an Lovecraftian tale to me. To men go to an old cemetery at night with a mysterious book in search for a *thing* One heads down a grave and call up to the other with what monstrous, terrible sights he sees ... and then the *thing* calls... Very scary and this was a real horror story!

### **The Terrible Old Man**

Three robbers try to rob a seemingly feeble old man - who turns out to have a few secrets up his sleeves...

### **The Tree**

Story from Ancient Greece about two sculptors and best friends competing to create the most beautiful statue...

### **The Cats of Ulthar**

A tribute to cats. An old couple kills cats but when they kill a young boy's kitten, he prays and all the cats in the town take revenge on the couple.

### **The Temple**

A German submarine breaks down and drift through the ocean. The men are killed over the period of drifting because of going insane or mutiny and only one remains when the submarine arrive at Atlantis - and sets down close to an old temple... A story of going insane.

### **Facts concerning the late Arthur Jermyn**

A story of a family with a sort of 'curse' from the Congo. Several member of the family was driven mad - or at least thought mad - by something from the African continent and when the last surviving member of the family discovers the truth about the 'curse', he commits suicide... Okay story.

### **Celephaïs**

A man finds a better place to dwell in his dreams and slowly enters completely into the dreams and exists only there.

### **From Beyond**

A man invents a sort of electrical machine that enable humans to use more than the normal five senses and see all the hideousness that surrounds us - and is driven utterly mad by it... Ok story.

### **Nyarlathotep**

A sort of Egyptian God takes over the world in this prose poem.

### **The Picture in the House**

A man on a bicycle gets surprised by a storm. He takes shelter in a scary, dark, seemingly uninhabited house where he discovers a creepy books with pictures from a cannibalistic butcher's shop. Suddenly he hears footsteps above him and it turns out the house is inhabited by an old man - with a strong interest in the book and a feeling that killing sheeps just didn't cut it... Rather scary - okay story.

### **Ex Oblivione**

Another prose poem. Again about taking refuge in a city and a place discovered in dreams. About the joy of oblivion. Blah.

### **Sweet Ermengarde; Or, The Heart of a Country Girl**

Rather funny, play-like story about a young poor farm girl and the various men and villains courting her.

## **The Nameless City**

A man investigates a strange city in the desert. He has heard a lot of strange rumours and scary tales about the city but investigates it nevertheless - and enters a world, he didn't dream of.

Very like *At the Mountains of Madness* which HPL wrote later on. I liked the latter more - and not only because of the penguins... But interesting that you can see here that he took this short story and made it better and incorporated it in the later work.

## **The Quest of Iranon**

The story of a young man searching for his childhood city, a place more beautiful than anywhere else - but nobody ever seems to have heard of it. But then one day, he meets a man that knew him when he was a child... Nothing special.

## **The Moon-Bog**

A man visits his friend who has acquired a castle with a huge bog. The new castle owner wants to drain the bog - but this has gotten everybody to leave him because they say it's will be very black to drain the bog so he has called in his friend for support. But suddenly, the friend starts to experience weird happenings in the bog as well... Okay story.

## **The Outsider**

The narrator has always lived alone but one decide to climb a tower in his home to reach the light and see it for the first time. After finishing the climb, he comes face to face with what he really is for the first time... A Frankensteinian story.

## **The Other Gods**

A story about the folly of man and what happens when you commit hubris. An old wise man decides to climb a mountain where the gods meet and dance to see them - with fatal consequences. Nothing much.

## **The Music of Eric Zamm**

My friend wrote a paper on this short story and I read parts of the paper and found the story interesting so I decided to start with that.

Short novel about a young man who hears an elder musician play notes, the like of which he has never heard before. He is drawn to this cellist but the music turn out to be the cello fighting with some unspeakable evil with the cellist drawing the losing straw.

## **Herbert West - Reanimator**

A story of two medical students who discover a way to make dead bodies come back to life. Herbert West is the leader and after having killed all kinds of small animals to bring them back to life, he moves on to humans - which creates a big problem since his 'samples' have to be as fresh as possible. This eventually leads to him killing a man to obtain as fresh a sample as possible - but before that he actually succeed in making dead bodies come alive. Only problem is - he is not sure where every test person is and he starts to feel that someone is following him...

Creepy story - this one I liked! It was rather scary and disturbed my dreams afterwards...

## **At the Mountains of Madness**

This is one of Lovecraft's short novels. It takes place in the Antarctica where we follow an expedition drilling holes in the ground. The expedition part ways and one half of it travels to some very high mountains and discovers million old organism, part vegetable, part animal - very weird organisms. All the scientists are very excited about this new discovery but after a violent storm, something goes wrong. The expedition at the mountains don't answer any calls and when the rest of the expedition arrives at the new camp, nobody is

alive anymore. Something has killed them - and has been performing an autopsy on one of the men and one of the dogs as well. The rest of the expedition investigates the mountains - aptly named 'The Mountains of Madness' and discover an old city. But the city has many secrets...

A lot of the novel is description of the landscape and similar things - and it gets a bit boring. I understand that it is written that way to establish the narrator as a rational and scientific man who doesn't believe in the supernatural. But it doesn't read that well. Towards the end however, the story really picks up and in the ending it takes a really nice plot twist that I for one hadn't foreseen - although it was obvious when it's revealed.

Rating: 3 stars

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## Brenton says

Sorry for this absolutely huge review, I couldn't help myself.

I've known of Lovecraft for quite some time, but somehow had never gotten around to reading more than two short stories of his until several months ago, when I figured it was time to see what all the fuss was about. I found out that he wrote nearly all short stories, and had finished just under 70 by the time of his death, so I figured I'd read them all to get a complete overview of his output. I started looking around and found that to do so I'd have to check out a variety of overlapping collections of his tales to do this, and bemoaned the fact that a cult author as widely cited as Lovecraft had not been collected into a complete volume.

Then, in December, I walked into Barnes and Noble and here it was, the complete works of H.P. Lovecraft, with an introduction and notes on each story. The volume is over 1000 pages long and includes every piece of fiction that Lovecraft wrote and published in his own name, as well as a handful of unfinished fragments and some of his early tales he wrote as a child. These stories are all unabridged and corrected against the original documents (though, being a first printing, I did find numerous missing letters and even a whole word or two). The book even closes with his highly regarded essay on supernatural literature. An all around sturdy, wonderful volume, my one minor quibble is the fact that Lovecraft ghostwrote or rewrote a few dozen stories for other authors in his lifetime, and I wish that some of those had been included as well, or that they were put into their own volume or something, because I've read a few and one of them ended up being the most evocative bit of story that I've read from the man. But aside from that, this collection is complete.

Now, on to the fiction itself. Lovecraft is regarded as one of the best authors of supernatural horror and weird fiction in the 1920s and 1930s, and is credited with turning the concept of horror in literature at that time on its head, casting the gaze of the reader out into the endless cold beyond our atmosphere while his precursors and many of his contemporaries dealt with far more terrestrial and comparatively homely methods of inspiring dread and fright.

I found this cosmological horror to be fascinating more than terrifying. To be sure, this work is all at least seventy years old now, and emulation has dulled the impact of Lovecraft's machinations, but that in no way lessens the vitality of the mythos that the man put together: Man is but a mote of dust in the universe, and what we worship as gods are not divine in any way other than the mere fact that, in the grand scheme of things, they are larger motes of dust than we, and are just as impartial to our lives as we are to the dust mites in our pillows.

All of the stories within being placed chronologically, it is apparent that Lovecraft improved upon both his

writing abilities and his cosmological mythos, which is not to say that some of his early stories, in their simplicity, don't hit home just as powerfully. The tales gradually grow longer as one reads through the book, with Lovecraft's three novellas appearing in the middle and end of the book. It was these tales that I found to be the most enjoyable, the most thorough in their ability to draw me in and engage me in the alternate universe that Lovecraft structured. It is also these three short novels that one can use to divide Lovecraft's entire collection of fiction into three categories of theme: men stumbling through the realm of dreams, men meddling in necromancy and dark arts, and men confronting the godless, Darwinian truths of the universe, hints of which lie hidden in obscure corners of the earth.

The first of these novels, "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath", acts as a lynchpin for the portion of Lovecraft's tales that take place in or otherwise have to do with the world of dream that we glimpse in our sleep, a selection of stories also known as Lovecraft's Dream Cycle. The Dream-Quest unfolds like a classic questing tale in which the protagonist, Randolph Carter, traverses a variety of realms and escapes one fantastic danger only to confront another. Although Lovecraft himself apparently dismissed this work as mere practice unfit for publishing, I found it to be richly picturesque; throughout my reading of the tale I wanted nothing more than to become ten times better a painter than I am so that I could put the amazing images the story gave me onto canvas. Many of Lovecraft's shorter stories from the first half of his career belong in the Dream Cycle and bring additional depth and definition to the dream realms traversed in The Dream-Quest, some of these shorter stories being "The White Ship", "The Doom That Came To Sarnath", "Celephaïs", and "The Silver Key". It should be noted that many of these stories appear to deal with gods or deities in the realms beyond the physical, something that Lovecraft sought to undue or amend in his later fiction.

The second novella, "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward", is by far the most fascinating of Lovecraft's necromancy stories, containing both a rich false history of antique New England locales and characters and a frighteningly evocative pastiche of one man's experiments in the complex necromantic arts. It is this tale that gives Lovecraft's infamous Necronomicon the bulk of its infamy. Unlike "The Dream-Quest", it reads like a historical journal, being the written account of one of Marinus Willett, a family doctor, as he records certain events that he found himself confronting, events that he at first did not understand, and which suggested truths that he could not fully accept. The dark arts and supernatural happenings involved are rarely written of in any sort of objective, descriptive manner, being instead always slightly obscured by both the character's purely scientific assessment of events and his lack of direct dealings with the acts themselves. Thus what the reader receives are impressions, glimpses, hints of horrifying deeds and soul-wrenching beings, which are never fully described or explained by the story's end; all the reader knows and, indeed, all Willett knows is that some vague yet monstrous evil has been done away with. There are many stories which fit into this "necromancy cycle" after a fashion, but they all share a lot with the Cthulhu Mythos cycle as well, as Lovecraft attempted to weave a cohesive universe behind all of his fiction, with the Necronomicon acting as somewhat of a common thread through all of it.

The final novella is often regarded as Lovecraft's best and most devastating tale, and is one of the primary stories of the third category of his work, the Cthulhu Mythos. "At The Mountains Of Madness" follows a scientific expedition to Antarctica that meets disaster and uncovers evidence of a fully sentient, advanced, societal race of beings that inhabited earth before and during the genesis of the scientifically accepted chain of evolutionary life on Earth. It is this, more than any of the other Cthulhu tales, that references and amends the mythology of all of Lovecraft's previous work, Dream Cycle and necromancy cycle included, recasting everything not as supernatural but as part of a vast, multi-faceted, and purely natural universe in which the "gods" of humanity's religions are merely ancient and powerful creatures from far reaches of our universe, mischaracterized and largely indifferent to us. And again, this novella most of all was most like the sort of sci-fi thrillers we read today, with very competent writing depicting the harsh Antarctic wild and the piece-

by-piece revelation of ancient knowledge and terror by human scientists who are only following their instincts and their desire to discover and understand. I found myself surprised by the ultimately sympathetic view the story gives to the Elder Things, the aliens that came before all known earth life, since nearly all other instances of alien encounters in Lovecraft's world casts them as amoral animals to be feared and avoided, at best. Other notable stories in the Cthulhu Mythos cycle are "The Dunwich Horror", "The Whisperer in Darkness", "The Shadow Over Innsmouth", "The Shadow Out Of Time", and, of course, "The Call of Cthulhu". Note that many of the earlier Cthulhu Mythos tales put a supernatural/deity spin on the alien beings encountered, prior to Lovecraft's "retcon" in this novella.

Finally, at the end of the book, we readers are treated to Lovecraft's well-regarded treatise on weird fiction, "Supernatural Horror in Literature". Lovecraft describes his understanding of horror and the place that fear has in humans, and then proceeds to trace the evolution of horror in writing from ancient times right up to his contemporaries in the pulp magazines of the Twenties and Thirties, from elements of classical mythology cycles through old folklore, Gothic literature, and the weird fiction of the early 20th Century. I don't know how the essay holds up to modern examinations of the subject, but I'll certainly use it as a reference in my own survey of the genre.

There is not much more I'll say about the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft. It may take some getting used to because of the dated writing style, but when you get into the proper frame of mind Lovecraft was quite competent when it came to helping the reader suspend disbelief. I found myself annoyed from time to time by Lovecraft writing a competent story that evoked true creepiness but ruining it at the very end with an unneeded final revelation or exclamation that shoved the tale firmly into the realm of pulp-rag camp. "The Statement of Randolph Carter" is the clearest example of this, with everything going well until the last sentence. Readers should also note that there is no question that Lovecraft was a racist; a significant handful of these stories contain insulting stereotypes of immigrants and minorities, especially people of African or Asian descent. I hope that readers can look past these "intrusions of Lovecraft's personal character" because, frankly, they were never the point of his fiction. He wrote to partake in exciting storytelling. He wrote to make what I think is an important point no matter what you may believe about mankind's ultimate destiny: that it is a huge, unknown universe and that we are very, very small and very, very finite in our knowledge. And, above all, he wrote to cultivate a robust and healthy emotion within his readers, what he believed to be the oldest and most primal of mankind's emotions: fear.

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### **Nick says**

BEST. BOOK. EVER.

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### **Kevin Larkin Angioli says**

I got really into Lovecraft after the first phase of my Stephen King obsession had ended, after I realized how bad Dean Koontz's books can get, after I had wearied of Anne Rice's bisexual vampires and witches and their cameo jewelry and damask wallpaper, after Poe's necrophiliac unreliable narrators had for the moment become too all-alike for me, at the age of 14—what King maintains is the perfect age for reading him. Clive Barker and his infinite imagination for bizarre creatures who can't decide whether to fuck you or eat you lay a little ahead of me, but I had begun reading him, and Neil Gaiman was still two years ahead of me. I read "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and my life was suddenly different. The story instantly joined my list of

favorite horror short stories, right between "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Monkey," and "In the Hills, the Cities." I read a few more and enjoyed them all, although never to the extent of "Innsmouth." I was so excited about it, I did what I normally do—give it away to a friend. I had a friend who never read anything except for books about World War II; I wanted to convert him to the world of literature. Oh, boy I did. The day after I lend him my collections of Lovecraft stories, this friend of mine is walking down the hallways at school with his face in the book. He has it open surreptitiously in his desk, compulsively reading it during class. I feel like an enormous success. But the next thing I know, my friend tries to hang himself and is put in an institution. They take the book away from him. I never see it again.

After that, I kind of avoided Lovecraft, though I still respected and admired him. He was kind of like an ex I guess. I would wave at him, but never hang out with him. Not after that day, when he showed me what he was capable of.

I picked up "At the Mountains of Madness" once, a few years back, after watching Carpenter's The Thing, but was driven away by the prose.

Recently, I've been submerging myself in the pool of horror. I'm reconnecting with it as a major part of who I am. And I began to feel like a fake, for not knowing more Lovecraft, but talking about him very often.

I found this 1,000+ volume of all of his fiction at Barnes and Noble for 13 dollars. It is beautiful. I could not resist. Now, I am making my way slowly but surely through his world(s) in chronological order. Some nights, after long days of working, I read Christine, by Stephen King; other nights, after long days of working, I read this. I try to stay sane by reading stories written by insane narrators.

I'll let you know how that works out for me.

Up next on my horror lessons: Shirley Jackson and Bram Stoker.

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### **Thomas Ray says**

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### **Andy says**

Let me be perfectly clear: I LOVE Lovecraft. Despite his obvious flaws as a writer he remains one of my favorites. The one star review is for the atrocious job of editing done on this volume. This isn't just a word or two messed up, this is whole lines of text missing or words completely replaced, consistently too, every couple pages. It took me half of "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" to figure out that the titular character was engaged in human sacrifice because the book replaced the word "chattel" with "cattle," I just thought he really liked beef!

In summation, if you're looking for a complete Lovecraft collection, look elsewhere.

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## **Delicatemoth says**

Lovecraft's best work ('At The Mountains Of Madness', 'The Colour Out Of Space', 'The Call Of Cthulhu') achieves an exceptionally high level of hallucinatory horror, and there are many fine moments to be found in his lesser stuff, notwithstanding ludicrous plot holes ('The Dunwich Horror') and blasphemously overblown descriptive prose (pretty much everything). If you like horror, it doesn't get much better than this.   
HOWEVER... It does neither reader nor writer any favours to gloss over his virulent racism, class snobbery and misogyny, all of which are evident in much of his work. It can be argued that his racism, which tends to take a horrified form, is part of what gives the cosmic misanthropy underpinning his writing its visceral power. None of this should put one off reading imo, but it needs acknowledgement.

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## **Mike Galligan says**

Fantastic!

This collected edition of H.P. Lovecraft's stories is excellently put together and a wonderful read. The overarching theme of cosmic horror and things that are too terrible to behold binds these stories together into a interesting world where despite people's ordinary everyday lives, complete doom for the world is around every dark corner. Despite the period these stories were written in, both the writing styles and the content never seem dated. Instead, you get an imagination bending trip where forbidden knowledge could bring about the end of the world at any time. Lovecraft is cited as an inspiration of many renown authors, from Stephen King to Neil Gaiman. This book is one of my treasured possessions, and I can't recommend it enough.

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## **Erica says**

A solid compilation featuring all of H.P. Lovecraft's published fiction. I'm giving the book 4 stars instead of 5 because I like the Penguin Classics editions better; they're edited by S.T. Joshi, the world's premier Lovecraft scholar, and each story is accompanied by exhaustive footnotes. Still, you can't beat this edition for the price, and there's nothing inherently wrong with the book or its editing. The volume contains an introduction by S.T. Joshi, which offers newcomers a nice introduction to Lovecraft's life and works, and the fiction is ordered chronologically by date of writing.

Verdict: A well-edited compilation of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction without any bells or whistles. Buy this if you want lots of cosmic horror on the cheap, but if you can spare the cash I would recommend that you purchase the three Penguin Classics volumes instead.

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## **Marsha Altman says**

OK, if you're going to read the master of horror, just get the complete collection in this book. Yes, there are highlights to his work, but you never know what you're going to stumble upon in his "lesser known" or just

less-often published works. I've also never found a complete audio collection of all his works, so this book was needed to include the stories that have not made it to any audio edition.

Also included: Lovecraft's essay on horror writing, in which he insults a lot of previous horror writers, but otherwise is not as interesting as he thinks it is. Also his juvenilia, which I'm not sure should have been published, and is a good reminder that if you have any surviving copies of things you wrote in grade school and you become a published author, burn all the copies of those stories before you die.

Not included: His poetry or collaborative work (with the exception of "Under the Pyramids" with Harry Houdini). Also a lot of contemporary horror in the 1920's was ghostwritten by him, but is found under other names, so check Wikipedia for those stories. Otherwise, this book is about as complete as you can get without having to deal with "The Fungi of Yuggoth."

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### **Nicole says**

Being that this book took me close to 3 years to finish reading, I'm not sure I could aptly review all the tales without having to look up and skim through each of them again.

Some of the stories I really enjoyed while others tended to drag on for me. The benefit of reading ALL the Lovecraft tales that he penned solo in one volume is to really grasp where there is overlap between tales, whether it be characters, themes, or gods, and see it as one semi-cohesive body of work rather than just a scattered pile of stories. I likewise enjoyed that his essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature" was included at the end and shed light on not only who influenced Lovecraft himself, but also felt a bit like a time capsule, since what was current in 1937 is long past.

The likelihood of me ever rereading all of the stories is slim, but I will carry with me the overall feeling that they provoked, of the utter weirdness of the landscapes painted there and a great appreciation of how Lovecraft infused the ideas that he got from other writers with his own particular brand of horror and madness and wove them into monstrous tales of his own.

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### **Nathan says**

I thought I'd update my review of this anthology...

Firstly, this is the best anthology of Lovecraft I've read, primarily because all the stories are in chronological order according to the time they were written and published, and the editor has given some very nice commentary as well. It's fascinating to see Lovecraft's writing develop from Poe knock-offs to developing his own mythology and expanding on that subject.

A problematic side is that a recurring theme in his writings seems to be that of "cultural de-evolution" - which can take some rather racist turns, especially in his earlier writing... "Polaris" is one example, in which the narrator has recurring dreams of a previous life millennia ago in which a "noble, fair-skinned race" is plagued by "squat, yellow-skinned demons" and reveals later that "they were called 'Esquimoux'"!!!

Urgh. I don't feel like it's possible to be a fan of Lovecraft's without addressing his racism. All I can say is, yeah, it's there, and it sucks, but his fear of "genetic pollution" DID create such weird stories as "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and "The Doom That Came to Sarnath."

On the other hand, you have a fantastic imagination for creating mythology - in particular "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" captures a lot of his earlier tales into a particular mythology, in which the dream-quester is involved with the Cats of Ulnath, the Night Gaunts, the ghouls, and travels to and from their world and our own physical world.

His later mythology has to deal with Cthulhu, the Old Ones, the Fish-people of Dagon, and the Crab-like creatures from "Whisper in the Darkness" - all of which are nicely summed up in what probably is his greatest work "The Mountains of Madness."

Still, I feel it's worthwhile to read all the stories that Lovecraft wrote in between these epics, at the very least to see how he made an attempt to fit them all together in these two tales.

In short, it's Lovecraft - you're gonna have to deal with a couple Poe knock-offs at first, and some racism, and a TON of adjectives (which he uses to describe an "indescribable horror") but they guy can still write a creepy story anyway :)

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