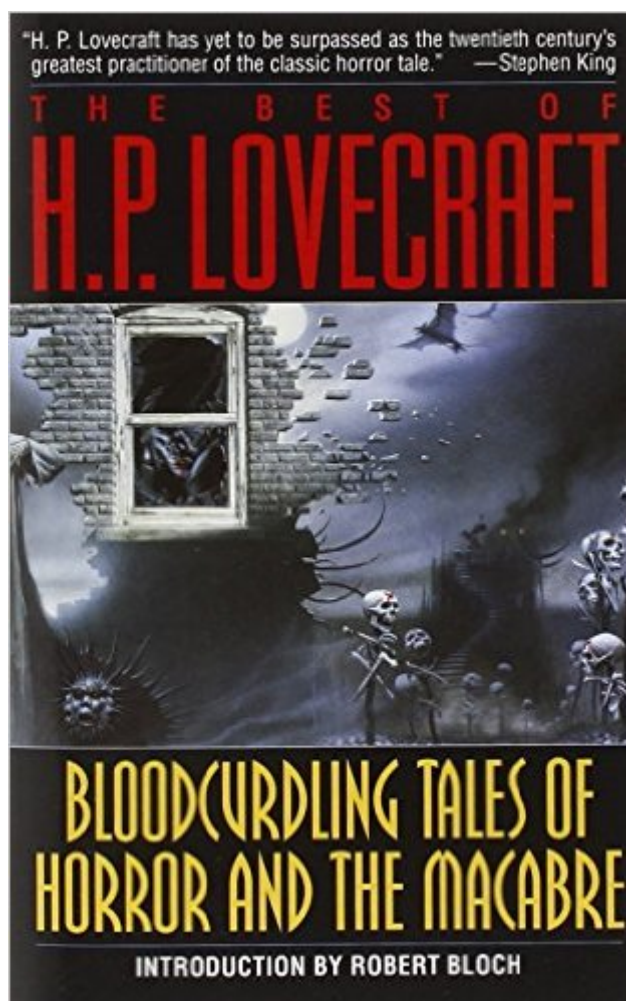


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The Best Of H. P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales Of Horror And The Macabre



Synopsis

This is the collection that true fans of horror fiction have been waiting for: sixteen of H.P. Lovecraft's most horrifying visions, including Lovecraft's masterpiece, THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME--the shocking revelation of the mysterious forces that hold all mankind in their fearsome grip."I think it is beyond doubt that H.P. Lovecraft has yet to be surpassed as the Twentieth Century's greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale."Stephen King

Book Information

Paperback: 375 pages

Publisher: Ballantine Books; 1st edition (October 1, 1982)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345350804

ISBN-13: 978-0345350800

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.9 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (211 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #60,099 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror > Anthologies](#) #498 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories & Anthologies > Anthologies](#) #901 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories & Anthologies > Short Stories](#)

Customer Reviews

This is basically the essential Lovecraft collection, featuring 16 of his best pieces of fiction and a noteworthy introduction by Robert Bloch, a member of the Lovecraft circle.. Naturally, one can make an argument for other tales that should be included, but the contents as they are represent a compelling cross-section of the master's work over the course of his literary career. It must be noted that Lovecraft's three short novels, which are of course immensely important, are not among these shorter works, but their inclusion in these pages would result in a much longer book that could potentially turn away potential readers. This book more than any other serves as a beacon to new readers yet to discover horror's greatest writer. Every story herein deserves its own review, frankly. "The Rats in the Walls," "The Dreams in the Witch-House," and "In the Vault" (one of my favorites) offer traditional horror tales full of Lovecraftian atmosphere. "The Outsider," perhaps the least satisfying read, is an allegorical tale reflecting an isolated individual's view of society and of himself. "The Silver Key" is a solid representative of the dream-myth stories of the author's earlier years and

serves as an introduction to Lovecraft's heroic character Randolph Carter. "The Colour Out of Space" is a singular, science fiction/horror tale counted by Lovecraft himself as one of his favorites. "The Picture in the House" is perhaps Lovecraft's most efficiently horrifying story ever, "The Music of Erich Zann" is an unforgettable tale touching on the great secrets of the unknown, and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" sensationally evokes the horror and depths of influence by unseen agents on this earth. These stories effectively set the stage for the Cthulhu Mythos tales, of which the remaining stories form an integral part. "The Call of Cthulhu" and "The Dunwich Horror" herald the full manifestation of Lovecraft's cosmic horror and describe the ambivalent agency of incomprehensible outside forces on mankind. "The Haunter of the Dark" and "The Thing on the Doorstep" highlight even more mysterious access points of the unknown into man's consciousness. I must give special attention to my two favorite Lovecraft tales: "The Whisperer in Darkness" and "The Shadow Out of Time." Much of the action detailed in the first of these stories is related to the reader by way of letters exchanged between an isolated scholar in the hills of Vermont and the narrator, an expert in folk tales who is compelled to believe the ancient stories of alien influences he once preached against. We see no action first-hand until the latter pages, when the protagonist finally visits his correspondent in Vermont and is presented with facts and examples proving the reality of advanced alien life forms; the evolving conclusion of the tale is perhaps predictable to a degree but the final revelation remains quite effective nonetheless. I consider "The Shadow Out of Time," written very near the end of Lovecraft's too short life, to be his masterpiece, and it does effectively tie together many of the themes of cosmic horror and alien influence he devoted so much of his time to. A learned man loses almost five years of his life to amnesia, during which time a wholly secondary personality controls his body and masquerades as his old self. After he returns to his body, he continually dreams of a strange world in which he is a "monster" setting forth a record of earth's history. When he discovers a buried megalithic structure underneath the Australian desert corresponding exactly with his dream-images, he is faced with the realization that he underwent a transfer of consciousness with a Great Race of beings who garnered knowledge of space, time, and the universe eons before man's forebears crawled out of the earth's hot oceans.

The Rats in the Walls, The Picture in the House, The Outsider, Pickman's Model, In the Vault, The Silver Key, The Music of Erich Zann, The Call of the Cthulhu, The Dunwich Horror, The Whisperer in Darkness, The Colour Out of Space, The Hunter in the Dark, The Thing on the Doorstep, The Shadow Over Innsmouth, The Dreams in the Witch-House, The Shadow Out of Time.

This book contains 16 of Lovecraft's best works, though you will find a few equally good or even better stories in the other 2 Del Rey compilations. Lovecraft has a unique writing style that separates him from most other horror writers I have read, a tenaciously descriptive style with lots of rare old syllables. Most of the horrors are either dimly described or not described at all, leaving a lot up to the reader's imagination, in line with Lovecraft's famous sentence: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." What we can't see certainly does scare us! Some of the best known stories like "The Call of Cthulhu" and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" are essentials, and my 4 personal favourites "The Shadow Out of Time", "The Whisperer in Darkness", "The Rats in the Walls", and of course Lovecraft's own favourite: "The Colour Out of Space". Highly recommended! If you like it get the other 2 books in the series, or one of the Arkham House hardbacks if available.

H.P. Lovecraft was the best horror writer of this century. And by saying this, I do not feel I am going out on a limb. Never before has an author impacted my thought as much as Lovecraft has. I constantly read his work and frequently talk about him to others. In fact, I even sport a few Lovecraft shirts around town. Obsessed? Yes, but for good cause. As Ramsey Campbell said, Lovecraft can do something many other "master" authors can't: Infuse the reader with mindnumbing terror. Maybe "mindnumbing" is a little bit of an overstatement, but terror isn't. Mixing a broad range of stories from tales of crazy scientists to genocide of ancient races, Lovecraft presents a very powerful and interesting philosophy (best summarized by earlier said Campbell): Man is luckily ignorant of certain things, for if they knew them it would be death or insanity. And this book shows just that. From "Call of Cthulhu" to "The Rats in the Walls", this book is sure to please anyone searching to own their first Lovecraft book or someone that wants to find out if the rumours of Lovecraft being a horror master are correct.

I read a library copy of the Random House edition of this book and liked it so much I wanted my own. Unfortunately, this CreateSpace edition of "The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre" has the exact same title, but 10 fewer stories than the Random House edition. I wouldn't have minded the cheap production values, pixelated cover, questionable formatting and occasional typos so much if it included all the stories I wanted, but instead it only has six. The CreateSpace edition includes "The Call of Cthulu," "The Dunwich Horror," "The Whisperer in the Darkness," "The Thing on the Doorstep," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," and "The Shadow Out of Time." Great stories, but I was expecting the 10 additional stories I enjoyed in the Random

House edition of the same name. Try the Random House edition. I think this CreateSpace edition should be removed from because of its deceptive title and bootleg-quality production values.

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