



The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft (Knickerbocker Classics)

H.P. Lovecraft

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Another excellent edition in the Knickerbocker Classic series, The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft collects the author's novel, four novellas, and fifty-three short stories. Written between the years 1917 and 1935, this collection features Lovecraft's trademark fantastical creatures and supernatural thrills, as well as many horrific and cautionary science-fiction themes, that have influenced some of today's writers and filmmakers, including Stephen King, Alan Moore, F. Paul Wilson, Guillermo del Toro, and Neil Gaiman. Included in this volume are The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath," "At the Mountains of Madness," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Colour Out of Space," "The Dunwich Horror," and many more hair-raising tales.

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The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft (Knickerbocker Classics) Details

Date : Published October 27th 2014 by Race Point Publishing (first published September 16th 2008)

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From Reader Review The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft (Knickerbocker Classics) for online ebook

Brent says

I started this book back in October for a Halloween themed catch-up read. Lovecraft's creatures are referenced so often in urban fantasy that I wanted to see for myself where it all came from.

The stories are interesting individually, but their shared format gets pretty repetitive when reading them one after the other. So I put the book down for a while before coming back to finish it up.

Skipping around a bit, I finished up with The Mountains of Madness, which seems to tie together all the different threads of his various stories, even if it does seem to drag on forever. (It feels like a short story stretched out to fill the space of a novella.) Definitely original (though often imitated) these stories still excite the imagination.

Arisawe Hampton says

If you don't mind elevated writing and first-person POV then this is a classical weird fiction must-read. This is the most complete and attractive volume of the master Lovecraft! Loved every story, but especially The Tree and Dunwich Horror.

I'm sure I will come back to this one again as I tend to do every year or so.

Bill says

Just bought this, and a really beautiful book it is too.

Guillermo says

"The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us a little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age."

This opening paragraph from Lovecraft's Call of Cthulhu pretty much sums up that ever nebulous "Lovecraftian" adjective used to describe everything from the first season of True Detective, to the wonky haunted hell house in space film, Event Horizon. I am a huge fan of this philosophy of a dark, impenetrable, and uncaring universe more than I am of the actual stories I read in this collection. I thought many of the stories just suffered from too much diarrhea of the mouth and not enough actually happening. Thank Cthulhu

for the HP Podcast in helping me crawl through these stories and give me far more entertainment than I would have experienced just reading this alone on a creepy rock somewhere. I think these stories would've blown my socks off if I were back in the 1920s, but by now I feel others have done the Lovecraftian thing better and more entertaining than....well...Lovecraft.

I did not read the entire book's contents, but instead read only the following. I'm still interested enough in his fiction that I will probably slowly dip into other stories of his I haven't read.

The Tomb

Dagon

Polaris

Beyond the Wall of Sleep

The Transition of Juan Romero

The White Ship

The Doom that Came to Sarnath

The Statement of Randolph Carter

The Terrible Old Man

The Tree & The Cats of Uther

The Street

Poetry of the Gods & Celaphais

From Beyond

The Picture in the House

Nyarlathotep

The Crawling Chaos

Ex Oblivione

The Nameless City

The Quest of Iranon

The Moon-Bog

The Outsider

The Other Gods

The Music of Erich Zann

Herbert West

Hypnos

What the Moon Brings

Azathoth

The Horror at Martin's Beach

The Hound

The Lurking Fear

The Rats in the Walls

The Unnamable

The Festival

The Horror at Red Hook

The Call of Cthulhu

The Colour Out of Space

At the Mountains of Madness (first 2 parts only)

Nick Black says

this piss-stinking craptank came godawful close to a single star, and i'm convinced anyone who calls themselves a lovecraft fan is either mentally deficient or simply lying. either way, one oughtn't further tolerate their presence; call them on their shit and make a swift exit.

i read this because robert anton wilson used the illoigor and Old Ones and such to great effect in The Illuminatus Trilogy, and the scene therein where robert putney drake meets h.p. lovecraft is one of the book's finest, and RAW clearly thought the man deeply talented. i mean, there was no real point in dragging ol' Cthulhu and Kadath in the cold wastes and all that into the Illuminatus! Trilogy, but it was all wonderful. when Fission Chips was getting dragged through the deadlights of Tsathoggua... well, RAW does it best, after all:

A damned huge ugly brute of a spider. Black gods, Saint Toads, rats, mysterious and heathenish capitalized Gates, that nasty-looking shoggoth character, and now spiders. A buggering tarantula it looked like, in fact. Next, Count Dracula, he thought grimly, testing the vestry door. It slid open smoothly and he stepped back out of visible range, waiting a moment.

They were either not home or cool enough to allow him the next move.

He stepped through the door and flashed his light around.

"Oh, God, no," he said. "No. God, no."

"Good-bye, Mr. Chips," said Saint Toad.

Did you ever take the underground from Charing Cross to one of the suburbs? You know, that long ride without stops when you're totally in the dark and everything seems to be rushing by outside in the opposite direction? Relativity, the laboratory-smock people call it. In fact, it was even more like going up a chimney than going forward in a tunnel, but it was like both at the same time, if you follow me. Relativity. A bitter-looking old man went by, dressed in turn-of-the-century Yankee clothing, muttering something about "Carcosa." An antique Pontiac car followed him, with four Italians in it looking confused- it was slow enough for me to spot the year, definitely 1936, and even to read the license plates, Rhode Island AW-1472. Then a black man, not a Negro or a wog, but a really truly black man, without a face and I'd hate to tell you what he had where the face should have been. All the while, there was this bleating or squealing that seemed to say "*Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!*" Another man, English-looking but in early 19th-century clothing; he looked my way, surprised, and said, "I only walked around the horses!" I could sympathize: I only opened a bleeding door. A giant beetle, who looked at me more intelligently than any bug I ever saw before- he seemed to be going in a different direction, if there was direction in this place. A white-haired old man with startling blue eyes, who shouted "Roderick Usher!" as he flew by. Then a whole parade of pentagons and other mathematical shapes that seemed to be talking to each other in some language of the past or the future or wherever they called home. And by now it wasn't so much like a tunnel or even a chimney but a kind of roller coaster with dips and loops but not the sort you find in a place like Brighton- I think I saw this land of curve once, on a blackboard, when a class in non-Euclidean geometry had used the room before my own class in Eng Lit *Pope to Swinburne and Neo-Raph.* Then I passed a shoggoth or it passed me, and let me say that their pictures simply do not do them justice: I am ready to go anywhere and confront any peril on H.M. Service but I pray to

the Lord Harry I never have to get that close to one of those chaps again. Next came a jerk, or cusp is probably the word: I recognized something: Ingolstadt, the middle of the university. Then we were off again, but not for long, another cusp: Stonehenge. A bunch of hooded people, right out of a Yank movie about the KKK, were busy with some gruesome mummery right in the center of the stones, yelling ferociously about some ruddy goat with a thousand young, and the stars were all wrong overhead. Well, you pick up your education where you can- now I know, even if I can't tell any bloody academic how I know, that Stonehenge is much older than we think. Whizz, bang, we're off again, and now ships are floating by- everything from old Yankee clippers to modern luxury liners, all of them signaling the old S.O.S. semaphore desperately- and a bunch of airplanes following in their wake. I realized that part must be the Bermuda Triangle, and about then it dawned that the turn-of-the-century Yank with the bitter face might be Ambrose Bierce. I still hadn't the foggiest who all those other chaps were. Then along came a girl, a dog, a lion, a tin man and a scarecrow. A real puzzler, that: was I visiting real places or just places in people's minds? Or was there a difference? When the mock turtle, the walrus, the carpenter and another little girl came along, my faith in the difference began to crumble. Or did some of those writer blokes know how to tap into this alternate world or fifth dimension or whatever it was? The shoggoth came by again (or was it his twin brother?) and shouted, or I should say, gibbered, "*Yog Sothoth Neblod Zin*," and I could tell that was something perfectly filthy by the tone of his voice. I mean, after all, I can take a queer proposition without butting the offender on the nose- one must be cosmopolitan, you know- but I would vastly prefer to have such offers coming out of human mouths, or at the very least out of mouths rather than orifices that shouldn't properly be talking at all. But you would have to see a shoggoth yourself, God forbid, to appreciate what I mean. The next stop was quite a refrigerator, miles and miles of it, and that's where the creature who kept up that howling of "*Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!*" hung his hat. Or its hat. I shan't attempt to do him, or it, justice. That Necronomicon said about Yog Sothoth that "Kadath in the cold waste hath known him," and now I realized that "known" was used there in the Biblical sense. I just hope he, or it, stays in the cold waste. You wouldn't want to meet him, or it, on the Strand at midday, believe me. His habits were even worse than his ancestry, and why he couldn't scrape off some of the seaweed and barnacles is beyond me; he was rather like Saint Toad in his notions of sartorial splendor and table etiquette, if you take my meaning. But I was off again, the curvature was getting sharper and the cusps more frequent. There was no mistaking the Heads where I arrived next: Easter Island. I had a moment to reflect on how those Heads resembled Tla-loc and the Iloigor of Fernando Poo and then this kink's version of a Cook's Tour moved on, and there I was at the last stop.

everything in that paragraph is infinitely better than anything in this douchecanoe swirl of a collection of garbage. i could go into great depths, but you know what? i sum it up thus:

- (1) one of the most highly-recommended stories, "the dunwich horror, used dialect, which is generally unforgivable, and certainly so here.
- (2) his "at the mountains of madness", origin of the shoggoths, centers around a geological impossibility (extremely high mountains in a low-deposition, high-erosion environment) read up on eolian processes.
- (3) the shoggoths? they were bubbles. lots of bubbles. though probably not so many bubbles as in Breakfast of Champions, in the Sacred Miracle Cave. doesn't matter. motherfucking bubbles.

pretty terrible all around. lots of 5 star reviews of this book. like i said, you're either retarded or lying, or

both.

Thomas Evans says

The complete fiction of H.P. Lovecraft is pretty much that; complete.

Missing only one Story which was "In the walls of Eryx" co-written by Lovecraft and Kenneth J. Sterling.

The complete works embodies Lovecraft's progression as a writer and fills his mythos well. The only complaint I could find is some earlier works do not stand the test of time or hold well. However having to find other compilations would no longer be needed. For those into noir horror, epic monsters, and the diminished mind seeing the unspeakable terrors and having to rationalize the fear, this is a great book. With some being into lovecraftian lore from gaming, other authors, or even the creepypasta craze, and not reading the original works: buy it now. No other book covers as much. Every other book will have most of the popular selections, not all. At the price you cannot go wrong.

There is a warning with this: please buy the second printing. The first has many spelling errors, all of which were fixed in the second printing. The noticeable difference is the cloth bookmark. Gold for first print, purple for second.

M.K. Rhodes says

This "Knickerbocker Classics" edition of Lovecraft's (more or less) Complete Fiction is actually an apparently licensed dupe of the contents of the infamous, typo-riddled Barnes and Noble edition (complete with the same font), namely the second "corrected" edition that fixes most of the typos, but introduces a few new ones of its own. The B&N edition has more material, but this edition features an introduction by Eric Carl Link, not S.T. Joshi (Joshi's introductory notes for each story have also been excised). I have checked the text against some of both the typos found in the original B&N edition by Martin Andersson, and the typos in the second "corrected" printing found by myself and another dedicated reader who scoured the B&N "corrected" version for further errors. This new edition issued by Knickerbocker Classics features corrections to some of the additional typos found in the "corrected" second B&N printing, but not all of them (it seems whoever did the corrections for this Knickerbocker volume googled our proofing work and then made the corrections... but stopped at a certain point). I haven't actually read the entire volume yet, so it may have its own special "surprises" lurking, but it seems be a very fine volume in tandem with the corrected second B&N printing, with a few less typos, albeit this one features none of the "Juvenilia" or other bonuses in the B&N volume, and is slightly less visually beautiful compared the Leatherbound edition. It does, however, come with a nice slipcover, and is quite heavy and sturdy.

These are the typos I've verified so far that are ported over to this volume, left uncorrected from the last B&N volume (please note that the typos are on the left, bordered by hyphens since Amazon doesn't allow formatting, with the correct version on the right):

202.11: sins like Ptolemaism, Calvinism, -anti-Darwinism-,] sins like Ptolemaism, Calvinism, -anti-Darwinism-,

456.34: The next day they -spoke with- a ship with violet sails] The next day they -spoke- a ship with violet sails

902.11: I made no -proges-.] I made no -progress-.

994.1 I had seen him -one- or twice in my youth] I had seen him -once- or twice in my youth

The contents don't seem to be listed anywhere, so I'll transcribe from the table of contents:

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- Dagon
- A Reminiscence of Dr. Samuel Johnson
- Polaris
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- Memory
- Old Bugs
- The Transition of Juan Romero
- The White Ship
- The Street
- The Doom That Came to Sarnath
- The Statement of Randolph Carter
- The Terrible Old Man
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 - The Book
 - The Shadow Out of Time
 - The Haunter of the Dark
 - "The Life and Times of H.P. Lovecraft" [essentially a condensed timeline style biography]
 - "Further Reading"
-

P.E. says

4.5/5 - indispensable for ye seasoned H.P. Lovecraft reader.

Matching soundtracks :

- **Rue d'Auseil - The Great Old Ones**

- Any Lovecraft-like **album from CryoChamber**
-

Greg Kerestan says

Reading the complete Lovecraft is a mixed bag. His prose is notoriously dense, gratuitously purple, but one warms to it eventually- indeed, it possesses a strange charm. And the quality of his work varies from disposable to masterful. However, unlike Poe (whose complete fiction I just reviewed last week), when Lovecraft figured out what he was good at, he kept at it, rather than moving into dilettante territory experimenting with genre and form and style. Most complaints about Lovecraft- his racism and xenophobia,

his snobbery, his overly pulpy, pretentious language- vanish about midway through his work. Towards the end, he switched from short stories to longer novellas, and moved from the nebulous Cthulhu Mythos into a much more interconnected set of works, in which Nyarlathotep, a humanoid agent of chaos, and the mindless forces of destruction the Shoggoths, move the plot forward. Perhaps the stories towards the middle third of his career are the most memorable, but it was only at the end that he truly got cooking.

Mindi says

The Master. This book is the entirety of his works, so obviously there are some weaker titles included in this hefty volume. I really enjoyed reading this edition though, because each story is listed in the order that it was written. You can really get a sense of Lovecraft's increasing genius, and I loved seeing that evolution. I would recommend reading the most lauded of his stories first, and then if you are still obsessed pick this one up. My favorite is the incredible "At the Mountains of Madness", and I still can't understand how this fabulous tale hasn't been made into a film yet!

I admit that I'm ashamed to have waited this long to read his stories, especially since they have influenced some of my favorite authors so heavily. However, now that I have read his entire body of work, I can finally understand what all the fuss is about.

Erik says

HP Lovecraft, the Complete D&D5E Character

Name: HP Lovecraft

Class & Rating: Warlock, 3 stars

Race: Human

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Not only is HP Lovecraft famously nativist (i.e. racist) – his way of describing non-white personages isn't by describing the color of their skin so much as using a word like 'mongoloid' or 'savage' – but female characters are almost non-existent in his works as anything besides window dressing. Nevertheless, if you delve into Lovecraft's life, you can't help but feel a bit of pathos. He was devoted to his mother, becoming near suicidal when she was committed to an asylum. He visited her and wrote her regularly, and was quite broken by her death. He struggled all his life to make ends meet and sometimes had to choose between paying for the postage to mail in his latest story and feeding himself. So evil? By no means. For the other axis, nearly every Lovecraft story explores some aspect of how people respond when their perceptions of reality and cosmology are shaken. The result is, invariably, mental chaos.

Stat Block

Strength: 7

The emotional strength of a HP Lovecraft story is low. They sometimes sort-of-kind-of have character arcs, but they're not compelling. His stories aren't horrors either. There's no sense of dread of turning the page. Rather, I would classify them as mysteries and more of a milieu mystery than a character mystery. Any page-turning quality of a Lovecraft story arises because we're interested in discovering more of the world-building, of finding out the truth of whatever strange cosmic mystery he's invoked for the story. We don't particularly care about the fate of the protagonists, especially as most of the stories are narrated after-the-fact, anyway.

Dexterity: 16

Lovecraft's stories often remind me of how nudity or sexuality was depicted in early film. It was never shown directly. The Hays code didn't allow it. Instead, you might see a silhouette. Or a dress fall to the ground at the woman's feet. Or there'd be a bannister in the way. Lovecraft likewise has this propensity to avoid actually describing his cosmic horrors. His characters will instead simply say, 'I cannot describe it, for my very mind rebelled against grasping such a reality! Mouth and teeth and tentacles!' or 'I refuse to share this knowledge, for it will inspire madness in all who hear it.' It is, frankly, annoying.

Constitution: 13

My copy of HP Lovecraft, *The Complete Fiction* is highly sturdy and well constructed. When it became temporarily possessed, I struck it with a hammer. It survived this blow intact.

Intelligence: 16

HP Lovecraft was clearly a man of high intelligence. In particular, he possessed a certain arcane vocabulary that gives his stories an other-worldly aesthetic. I was delighted to discover him use not one but TWO of my favorite rare words: chiaroscuro (a word I once used in a story, which earned me a rejection note from the editor: 'pass. too pretentious' bwahaha) as well as tenebrous, which I snuck into the opening for my review for PKD's *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*. I even encountered a few words whose meaning I had to look up, which is quite the feat, given I am a connoisseur of words: fulgurite and noisome, for example. And of course there's the classics that you've no doubt encountered if you've ever played a Cthulu game, words like Eldritch or Daemon or Aeons or what have you, all of which serve to imbue his stories with a sense of vast cosmic mystique.

Wisdom: 5

I'm probably least impressed by the humanity of HP Lovecraft's stories. Despite his clear intelligence, I'm quite certain Lovecraft didn't understand people. Because of this, the characters come across less as people with rich inner lives and more as generic passive receptors of the world. At the least, the book displays a profound lack of foresight when compared to modern psychology. Today we know that 'insanity' isn't a single affliction at all – it's not even a term used in medicine anymore. Rather, what might once have been called 'insanity' now has a much more specific classification, such as dementia or schizophrenia, and we have some grasp of the neurological reasons behind these illnesses. Thus the madness we encounter throughout his stories is less a specific ailment of a specific human being than it is

the general madness of our entire race as a whole.

Charisma: 6

The stories aren't charming or magical or inspiring or anything like that. Which is fair, they're cosmic horror. But don't expect to come out of reading these stories energized to do good in the world or to treat your fellow human beings with greater love and kindness. Unless you think doing good in the world involves sacrificing a goat to the Elder Gods to stave off their hunger and imminent return. In which case you may well be plenty inspired.

Class Features

Otherworldly Patron: The Great Old One

In Lovecraftian mythos, there are great beings out there, Gods to some, who are beyond human comprehension. To them, we are but ants, and we draw their attention at our peril. Thus, science is in many ways foolish to so wantonly sift through the mysteries of the universe. What happens when we uncover something that is beyond our comprehension – or, worse, our control?

Pact Boon: Pact of the Tome ...Yeah.

Eldritch Invocation: Knowledge of New England

Much like Stephen King, HP Lovecraft set most of his stories in New England, where he lived all of his life. His knowledge of its towns, history, and geography comes through strongly and confidently.

Eldritch Invocation: False Knowledge of Ancient Tongues

HP Lovecraft didn't know Sumerian, Babylonian, Aramaic, or even of those truly ancient tongues. But that didn't stop him from making up incantations in other worldly languages. ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn! Yi-nash Yog-Sothoth-he-lgeb-fi-throdog-Yah!

Eldritch Invocations: Frame Narrative

HP Lovecraft's stories consistently use a literary technique called the Frame Narrative, which was popular at the time and earlier but is now rather antiquated and rarely used. Most of HP Lovecraft's stories actually consist of an outer framing narrative, within which the narrator encounters someone who relates the inner, usually more interesting story. The result is that much of each story is actually being told AFTER THE FACT. This technique, as is typical, makes Lovecraft's stories a little more philosophical/reflective, but at the cost of drastically lowering the tension within the story.

Spellbook

Dagon

1st-level conjuration

Components: Madness, Deep Ocean, Elder Gods

Casting Time: 5 pages

A man shipwrecked at sea finds himself on a strange island...

Dagon is to Call of Cthulu what Magic Missiles is to Fireball. It's not that one is superior to the other per se, but Dagon is the clear precursor, containing many of the same elements but generally shorter and simpler and less involved. Given that, Dagon was a quicker, lighter read, but less oomph in the actual story. ...and yes I know Magic Missiles and Fireball aren't Warlock spells.

The Outsider

2nd-level divination

Components: Death, Otherworldly

Casting Time: 6 pages

A man who lives in a remote land seeks to escape...

This is a short and fairly simple story that, while undeniably atmospheric, is also undeniably juvenile. It all builds toward a twist that is – these days at least – a bit overdone. Whereas many of these other stories are uniquely Lovecraftian, I found this one derivative.

The Lurking Fear

4th-level transmutation

Components: NE, Madness, Rural, Death, Atavism

Casting Time: 17 pages

A rural legend tells of a haunted abandoned mansion, and creatures of death who lurk within...

The Lurking Fear is a bit different than others on the list, and consequentially, I found it refreshing. For one thing, it's less of a frame story. The narrator is the one who actually experienced the events of the story, which grants it a much better immediacy than the other stories. For another, instead of the horrors coming from outside of us, this is more about the horrors that dwell within us.

The Call of Cthulu

7th-level conjuration

Components: Frame, NE, Deep Ocean, Madness, Elder Gods

Casting Time: 25 pages

A landmass rises from the sea, and the Call of the Priest of the Elder Gods tolls forth...

Probably my favorite spell in the book. It's one of the better plotted, with a real sense of layers of mystery unfolding. But it alone directly addresses the greater mythos. Most of the other stories indirectly reference a world-view in which humanity is insignificant. The following spell, for example, contains some necromancy, sure, but it never actually talks about where the souls of the dead reside or what that might mean for us. Call of Cthulu, however, specifically

speaks of the Elder Gods and humanity's place in a universe where such beings exist. This made it feel a little more coherent and interesting, to me.

The Case of Charles Dexter Ward

3rd-level necromancy

Components: Frame, NE, Madness, Death, Doppleganger

Casting Time: 104 pages

A young historian becomes obsessed with an ancestor who delved deeply into arcane matters...

Not being a fan of this story. It's that casting time. Far too long. And it hits this slump in the middle where there's a REALLY OBVIOUS plot-twist that the readers know, but the characters don't, and it just drags on and on and on. To the point that I began to feel a little embarrassy (this is a word I invented and am foisting upon you: it means second hand embarrassment) for Lovecraft because a huge chunk of suspense in the story hinged on this reveal.

The Colour out of Space

6th-level evocation

Components: Frame, NE, Rural, Madness, Otherworldly

Casting Time: 23 pages

A strange meteor falls from space, and it begins to warp its environs...

I don't think I'd call this Lovecraft's most iconic story – that one must be Call of Cthulu – but I might say it's his most prototypical. Many consider it his best. You have an otherworldly visitor. In this case, it's a comet or meteor with a, umm, let's say a chromatic passenger. It strikes in a rural New England locale. And it's largely told by proxy. That is, the narrator himself didn't experience the primary events of the story. Even the character the narrator got it from gives only a first-hand account of SOME aspects. This second-hand, third-hand approach just drains the tension from the story. That said, I had great fun because it's dripping with horrific wonder, a uniquely Lovecraftian emotion.

In fact, hey wow, actually, what? Did I just roll a 20 with that phrase, that 'horrific wonder'? Was that a critical hit?

Because really those two words are a perfect summary of what makes Lovecraft Lovecraft, and why he's endured for over a hundred years. He combines two emotions that are usually considered completely different – wonder and horror – and he shows how, really, they're two sides of the same coin. When something new rises up from beyond the depths of our current experience, we experience either a fear that our world-view is under threat or a sense of wonder at the evolution of our world-view. Or, as is the case in many of Lovecraft's stories, we manage to experience both, simultaneously. A horrified wonder. Let us say, we are wondrrified.

Harry Lang says

Indispensable for serious fans. Lovecraft was a tireless writer who covered a little more territory than he is

generally given credit for. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" is a fine example of Lovecraft's ability to merge his sharp observation and engaging knowledge of his native New England with his outrageous imagination. The fate of the protagonist, while horrifying in typical Lovecraft fashion, is also truly sad and moving.

While many stories follow a predictable, well worn groove (the horrified protagonist declares his horror upon discovering the horrifying truth of some ancient horror) the gems polished by the abrading action of these efforts are some of the most satisfying short stories of any genre. "The Strange High House in the Mist" immediately became one of my all time favorites when I first read it in the 70's and time has taken nothing away from it. "He" did not seem particularly original or striking until I read it in the light of the editor's assertion that it reflected Lovecraft's unhappy experience with life in New York City. This awareness added a human element rarely, if ever, associated with Lovecraft and I suspect such an element may be hiding in other stories as well.

Overshadowed by Lovecraft's reputation as a master of horror is his unique contribution as a science fiction visionary. There are no supernatural elements in his stories. None. All of his horrifying creations are creatures of an incomprehensible but strictly materialistic science.

Last but not least is Lovecraft's facility as a lyrical, poetic fantasist. I was surprised to find that many of these stories were rejected for publication. That's too bad; I think they may be his most honest works, revealing the dreams and longings of a notoriously atheistic materialist trapped in a brutish world. They are more beautiful than his horror is horrifying.

Johann (jobis89) says

"That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die."

326 days later... I have finished reading this collection of HP Lovecraft's complete fiction. The master of weird fiction and cosmic horror delivers a range of different short stories and novellas, from chilling tales to the downright terrifying.

This complete fiction is chronological, so it's interesting to see Lovecraft progress over the years. Admittedly, it was tough to get through some of the stories at the beginning, but once you get accustomed to the way Lovecraft writes, it becomes a lot easier. Not only that, but Lovecraft himself gets better at writing and the quality of his stories vastly improve. Therefore, quite predictably, my favourite stories are actually towards the end of the collection, when Lovecraft has really mastered his craft.

Lovecraft is not the master of creating memorable characters, but he is the master of building an atmosphere and writing unforgettable tales of dread and horror. As a King fan, strong character development is something I look for in a lot of my books (this just brings me back to a review I read recently for *Sleeping Beauties* where the reviewer commented on how King has never been great at character development.... hahahahahaha, okay, sure), but Lovecraft has taught me that that's not always needed in order to truly create an incredible story. Ask me the names of the characters in stories such as *The Shadow over Innsmouth* and I would look at you with a blank stare, but ask me to tell you that story and the dread and fear it instilled in me, and you couldn't shut me up (I actually did tell Matthew that story one morning over breakfast and I'm pretty sure I made a mess of it - Lovecraft I ain't).

Don't get me wrong, there are negative aspects to Lovecraft's writing - it's pretty dense, which I'm sure some readers would love, but that kind of writing requires me to be sitting in a silent room where I can concentrate. Given that I do a decent amount of reading with background noise (as I like to be in the heat of my living room), I struggled at times and would find myself reading the same paragraph over and over again. That also might help explain why it took 326 days! He's a huge fan of going into unnecessary detail, which can be frustrating at times.

I can completely understand that Lovecraft is not for everyone - his stories don't read as easily as King's, there isn't a lot of dialogue, but there is no harm in trying a story or two before deciding if you want to explore further. So! I thought I would recommend some stories to begin with if you want to venture into some cosmic horror...

1. The Shadow over Innsmouth - creepy, creepy, creepy. The tension and dread is built and sustained for the majority of this one, and it also has one of my favourite endings.
2. The Thing on the Doorstep - also, a greatly crafted tale, with another epic ending - Lovecraft knows how to bring them endings!!
3. The Colour out of Space - this one blew me away, and possibly might be my favourite tale. Highly recommend.
4. At the Mountains of Madness - chilling and tense... loved this one!
5. The Call of Cthulhu - come on! You're gonna read Lovecraft and not read about the Great Old One?! That would be unheard of!!

Lovecraft has firmly cemented his position as one of my favourite authors, and I will revisit these stories in years to come. It's been a pleasure. 5 stars out of 5 from me! And just remember.... "ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn" which translates into "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming."

Ian Casey says

I am going to gush here, so be forewarned.

First of all, yes Lovecraft was a horrendous racist even by the standards of his day and the wrongfulness of that should be acknowledged. Having said that, those sentiments manifested more strongly in his letters than his fiction. It's rarely a central feature of the narrative (as it is in *The Street*, *He*, *The Horror at Red Hook* and *Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and his Family* – which have hints of the autobiographical), more often revealing itself in glancing mentions with little or no impact on the story.

And yes, there's a whole bunch of criticisms to be made of Lovecraft's writing style, a number of which I'm sure hold some academic weight. He was after all published in pulp and mostly self-taught, aspiring to the level of social, scholarly and artistic respect owed to an M.R. James but having no means of achieving it in his lifetime. Whether any of his work counts as 'literature' is a debate which could go on indefinitely.

All that being said, Lovecraft achieved something immense with his brand of 'cosmicism' which was

original for his time and unsurpassed since. Leaving aside its influence on film, music, games etc. and considering only the particular literary niche of weird fiction, he possessed a perfect storm of style, substance, skill, erudition and being in the right place at the right time to tie it all together. To those of a certain disposition which I share, his work exemplifies the adage that ‘genius hits a target no-one else can see’.

Truthfully there are precious few works here I don’t love to a greater or lesser degree and even in his supposedly lesser efforts I find much to admire. This is especially so with his later material such as *The Haunter of the Dark*, *The Thing on the Doorstep* and *The Dreams in the Witch House* which are little celebrated but favourites of mine. Perhaps my favourite of all is *The Music of Erich Zann* – hardly a conventional choice – although depending on mood I may have to give the nod to *The Call of Cthulhu*. The charms of the poster-child of weird fiction are not easily resisted.

Then there’s the helpful inclusion of the essay ‘Supernatural Horror in Literature’ to close out the collection. Apart from the value of its literary criticism, it is at the least a solid reading list of two centuries worth of gothic novels and weird fiction, plus an insight into the authors who inspired Lovecraft. I’m some way into collecting and reading the many works mentioned.

The editor S.T. Joshi is a man who divides opinions, having set himself up as the world’s most prolific scholar of supernatural horror and weird fiction. Judging solely by this book though, his introductions to the collection and each individual work are short and informative, giving the impression of commendably thorough research without insisting on overbearing opinions and grandstanding.

The book itself – mine being the 2011 Barnes & Noble edition – is an artwork in its own right and one of the most beautiful objects I own. There’s an aesthetic and tactal synergy with the content, from the iridescent depiction on the front cover to the silver-edged pages and purple satin bookmark. I would want a copy of this volume if it had nothing but microwave user manuals in it.

The Complete Fiction to me is more than merely a book I immensely enjoyed. It’s a gateway to a veritable rabbit-hole of written word and other artworks before, during and after Lovecraft’s lifetime. The influences are now so extensive that to be ‘Lovecraftian’ is almost a lifestyle.

One would not soon run out of material by reading his influences such as Bierce and Chambers, his contemporaries such as James, Machen and Blackwood, his circle of correspondents such as Howard, Smith, Bloch and Long, his followers and preservers from August Derleth onwards, later Cthulhu mythos writers such as Campbell, Klein and Lumley, and then of course the modern authors experimenting from the foundation of his influences, such as Barron, Ligotti and Kiernan.

With the benefit of hindsight, authors like these are precisely what I always pined for in my youth but without the means of learning about them. In the days of dial-up internet it would have taken more dumb luck than I possessed for a kid in a small country town to find this material, so I’m overjoyed to now be delving into the kind of writings I would gladly have devoured as a teenager if only I’d known it.

All the legitimate criticisms notwithstanding, for me personally I give this five star-spawns of Cthulhu out of five.

p.s. For more Lovecraft, there’s also his collaborations, many of which are collected in ‘The Horror in the Museum’, and his poetry collected in ‘The Ancient Track’.

Asha Bays says

Was excited to find this hardbound edition of The Complete Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft at Barnes & Noble - a B&N exclusive edition - for the reasonable price of \$20.

Over the last 20+ years I've read and re-read almost all of the short stories and novellas contained within, but it is quite nice to have them all compiled into one large volume, and I'm enjoying re-reading them yet again. This "collector's edition" styled volume is quite large, but well-bound and visually appealing. I like the little touches - silvered edges on the outside of the pages, a bookmark-ribbon bound into the volume, (I love how convenient built-in bookmarks are!) and short introductions by the editor of this compilation before each short story, poem or novella.

All these things really have little to do with actually reviewing the written content within, but I feel that is unnecessary here. Save it for smaller compilations.

If you are already an established fan of Lovecraft, this volume is wonderful, because of just how much of his work is compiled within.

If you are new to the works of Lovecraft, this may be a bit overwhelming, but may also be a sound choice for the same reason. It contains just about all of his works of fiction.

Either way, enjoy!
