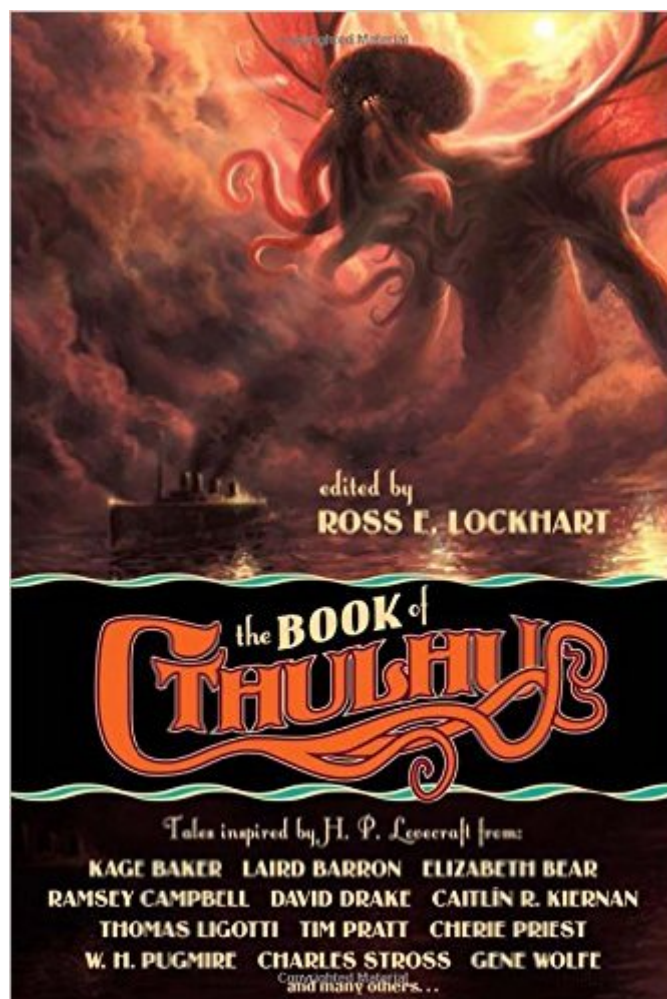


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The Book Of Cthulhu



Synopsis

The Cthulhu Mythos is one of the 20th century's most singularly recognizable literary creations. Initially created by H. P. Lovecraft and a group of his amorphous contemporaries (the so-called "Lovecraft Circle"), The Cthulhu Mythos story cycle has taken on a convoluted, cyclopean life of its own. Some of the most prodigious writers of the 20th century, and some of the most astounding writers of the 21st century have planted their seeds in this fertile soil. The Book of Cthulhu harvests the weirdest and most corpulent crop of these modern mythos tales. From weird fiction masters to enigmatic rising stars, The Book of Cthulhu demonstrates how Mythos fiction has been a major cultural meme throughout the 20th century, and how this type of story is still salient, and terribly powerful today.

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Customer Reviews

The Book of Cthulhu (\$15.99 Nightshade Books) edited by Ross E. Lockhart--overall rating--five stars--highly recommended for fans of H.P. Lovecraft, Stephen King, literary horror in general, and great writing. 27 stories inspired by H.P. Lovecraft, the author who created the Cthulhu mythos many years ago. If you haven't read Lovecraft, or don't know who he is, think of him this way: he's the J.R.R. Tolkien of horror. His fiction is impressive and very readable today, and I've thoroughly enjoyed his short stories. If you haven't read Lovecraft, find a collection of his short stories that features "The Call of Cthulhu" and dive in, then buy this book to see the evolution of the world he created. The Book of Cthulhu is an anthology of short stories featuring authors who have written tales that carry on the Cthulhu tradition, as Lovecraft wanted. The editor, Ross Lockhart compiled most of these largely literary stories from other sources, packaging them up nicely, and also presents a few new ones. It's hard to review so many stories, but I'll give each one a line or more, and all of the stories had good qualities, but I connected with some more than others. Everyone has different tastes, and if you're looking for lots of gore or crazy action this isn't for you, but if you like to read some of the best authors writing today, check this out.

The stories:

Caitlin R. Kiernan: Andromeda Among the Stones--five stars, (new story). This is arguably the best story in the anthology. It evokes everything that Lovecraft created and more. The alien horror of the otherside and the sacrifices that must be made to keep the evil at bay are real and palpable in this brilliantly written and menacingly beautiful story set (mostly) in the early 1900's just before World War I. A terrible apocalypse can be averted, perhaps, if a terrible cost is paid, and the family in this story is right there at the edge of the sea, staring into the depths of the void. Brilliant story.

Ramsey Campbell: The Tugging--four stars. Fascinating story about an astronomer and a wandering planet that is coming closer to Earth. It's appearance is a harbinger of doom that is driving poor Ingels mad, as he knows it's much more than a planet. Why can't everyone else see what's coming?!

Charles Stross: A Colder War--five stars. A completely awesome story set during the Cold War told by a master writer. You think nuclear bombs are bad. They turn out to be nothing to worry about when the power of the Elder Gods can be harnessed and used for world ending destruction. Great story featuring top secret reports, Cthulhu bombs, and well, the end of life on Earth as we know it.

Bruce Sterling: The Unthinkable--three stars. Interesting and short piece also set in an alternate history cold war setting where the supernatural horrors are walking around, and a couple of aging cold war spies have a chat about the world.

Silvia Moreno-Garcia: Flash Frame--four

stars. This was a cool story but it made me go, huh? It was awesome and interesting, and I liked it, but I think I would need to read it again to really get everything. It's very literary and author has great skill, no doubt, in painting pictures with words.

W.H. Pugmire: Some Buried Memory--four stars. A high-brow tale about a "found foundling" woman who is extremely ugly. The descriptions were awesome.

Molly Tanzer: The Infernal History of the Ivybridge Twins--five stars. One of the most awesome and horrifying stories in the anthology about two disgustingly awful children, who should probably have been drowned at birth, though the girl wouldn't have drowned This was such a creepy and cool story, and I loved the narrator's voice. Great story.

Michael Shea: Fat Face--three stars. Too subtle for my taste, but an interesting character study about a woman who has a lot of problems. Horror.

Elizabeth Bear: Shoggoths in Bloom--four stars. This story has won some major awards, and I liked it a lot, but I just didn't connect with it on all levels, hence four out of five stars. Still, it's worth a read just to see what the fuss is about. I admired Bear's skill and can see why Shoggoths in Bloom was so critically acclaimed. Solid story.

T.E.D. Klein: Black Man with A Horn--three stars. Somewhat meandering and quiet story about an old man, who is/was a writer, and is near the end of his life. I liked the story, but it was too slow for my tastes.

David Drake: Than Curse the Darkness--five stars. This was the most powerful story in the book for me. I loved it, and was blown away. David Drake is a master and he really hits the dark note of the Cthulhu mythos on this one. This tale is set in darkest Africa and is somewhat reminiscent of Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, with a very supernatural twist. The natives resort to dark magic to get revenge upon their Belgian colonial oppressors at the turn of the century, and some white people come up river to stop what is coming. The characters were awesome and this was an extremely entertaining story.

Charles R. Sanders: Jeroboam Henley's Debt--three and a half stars. More dark magic out of Africa, with an interesting twist.

Thomas Ligotti: Nethescurial--three stars. A little slow, a little dense, too quiet, and in the style of some of Lovecraft's works. I just didn't connect with it, but could appreciate what the author accomplished.

Kage Baker: Calamari Curls--three stars. Well done story, but I wasn't in the mood for the brand of humor contained here.

Edward Morris: Jihad over Innsmouth--four stars. Freaking cool story about a character who wages his own war aboard an airliner. Very spooky story and so Twilight Zone.

Cherie Priest: Bad Sushi--five stars, best character story in the book. I'd heard how awesome Cherie Priest is and now I know why. No other story in the book paints a more complete and awesome picture of a character. In this case a World War II Japanese veteran who works in an American Sushi restaurant. Lets just say that when his boss changes sushi suppliers things get really bad at the restaurant. Note: beware anyone who is addicted to sushi.

John Horner Jacobs: The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife--three stars (new story).

I didn't connect with the characters in the short slice of life kind of story. Brian McNaughton: The Doom that Came to Innsmouth--five stars. Wow, what a horrifying story about a sick and demented character. This is about a former resident of Innsmouth, a town Lovecraft invented, who returns home to reconnect with his roots. Dark, black, slimy, roots. Ann K. Schwader: Lost Stars--five stars. Great character story about a gal who starts going to an occult group and finds out the Egyptian High Priestess in charge is the real deal. This would make a great Twilight Zone episode. Steve Duffy: The Oram County Whoosit--five stars. Brilliant story, and Lovecraft would be so proud of Steve Duffy's tale, which recounts the discovery of a thing (actually a couple of things--or whoosits) that had been buried for millions of years, and should have been left deep in the ground. Joe R. Lansdale: The Crawling Sky--five stars. One of my favorite stories in the anthology. A tough preacher comes across a small town with problems. Lansdale is a master and I loved how he presented the story and the characters. His style and skill are brilliant. His stories and books are among my most favorite reads. Brian Lumley: The Fairground Horror--three stars. Creepy, and nasty, but I just didn't connect with this one. Tim Pratt: Cinderlands--five stars. This awesome story pays homage to Lovecraft's classic, The Rats in the Walls. I loved this one and it was pretty much perfect. Highly recommended. Gene Wolfe: Lord of the Land--two stars. A lot of interesting stuff, but a little too slow for me. I did enjoy all the Egyptian and occult references though. Joseph S. Pulver, Sr.: To Live and Die in Arkham--five stars. Very graphic story about some deplorable characters. This one will wake you up and punch you in the throat. Horror all the way through. John Langan: The Shallows--two stars. Very literary, very slow, too much telling for me. This one just wasn't my taste, but I know some people will love this one. Laird Barron: The Men From Porlock--five stars (new story). Very awesome ending to The Book of Cthulhu. It features some lumberjacks going on a deer hunt and finding a strange community in the forest, and interrupting something they should not have interrupted. Mayhem and murder abound in this horror story of epic Stephen King proportions. Highly recommended. In summary (according to my personal taste), there are 11 five star stories, 5 four star, and lots of other good ones that will please readers of varied interests. Fans of H.P. Lovecraft, Stephen King, and horror in general will love this book. Highly recommended. Paul Genesse Editor of The Crimson Pact anthology series[...]

If you are fan of Lovecraft this IS the book for you. I have slogged my way thru dozens of Cthulhu inspired anthologies and this is by far the best! The Editor, Ross J. Lockheart of Night Shade books has assembled an all star collection of stories that buries the competition in its' utter elder goodness. This collection of stories was lovingly assembled from a myriad of sources, spanning

from 1976 to today. This book has many things going for it, including amazing stories and sheer girth. This book is meaty, the kind of meaty that would fill up the ravenous gullet of even the hungriest Deep One. But as we often hear size is not an indicator of success. Lockheart has shown just how much he truly loves the Cthulhu Mythos with this anthology. I was amazed at all of the collected author's abilities to re-capture the weighty and elaborate writing style that made Lovecraft so amazing. While some of the stories reflect the time period they were written, all of the horrible goodness they contain is timeless. I enjoyed not only the way the stories were placed in the book, but the verity of time periods that the stories occurred in. From the Gold Rush to the Cold War and periods on either side of those, this collection covered so many ages it showed just how timeless horror can be. For me this is the best Cthulhu anthology out there hands down! If you like Horror, you'll love this. I would honestly give this six stars if I could. Buy this it is worth every cent!

I am utterly confused by *The Book of Cthulhu*. According to all the advertising and the introduction this was supposed to be a retrospective of the best Cthulhu Mythos stories. Don't just take my word for it ". . . Lockheart has delved deep into the Cthulhu canon, selecting from myriad mind-wracking tomes twenty seven sanity shattering stories . . ." or "A hand picked selection representing the best post-Lovecraft Cthulhu Mythos literature . . ." So, based on this I'm looking forward to seventy years of Cthulhu scoured from the depths of rare fanzines and hard to find paperbacks, topped off with some of the more interesting things published in the last decade. Sadly not so. This is stuff, good stuff, but not a deep delve into the canon. In fact let's analyze that concept because frankly I claim false advertising. Of the 27 stories 16 are from 2000 or later, 2 are brand new, so more than half of this anthology is less than twelve years old. In fact, the earliest stories are from 1976 both from *Disciples of Cthulhu*: Lumley's *Fairground Horror* and Campbell's *The Tugging*, so the whole thing only spans thirty five years. Two stories from the seventies, three from the 80s, four from the 90s. Wow talk about a slanted pick. What exactly does post-Lovecraft mean? Oh and be clear there is no Derleth, no Carter, no Myers, no King, no Chabon, no Wagner, no Brennan. I mean really, you couldn't include Price's *Wilbur Whateley Waiting*? Please don't misunderstand me, these stories are good, most of them, but I don't think it's the book that was described. The deep delve was limited to the last 35 years and drew mostly from very mainstream magazines or other Cthulhu themed anthologies. So much was missed, and for such a fat book it seems to add very little to the shelf that wasn't already there. If you're new to the genre this might be a nice anthology to have, but if you're a collector, prepare to be adding just a few stories that you haven't seen before.

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