

Best Ghost Stories of Algernon Blackwood (Dover Mystery, Detective, & Other Fiction)

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A woman of snow . . . a midnight caller keeping his promise . . . forests where Nature is deliberate and malefic . . . enchanted houses . . . these are the beings and ideas that flood through this collection of ghost stories by Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951). Altogether thirteen stories, gathered from the entire corpus of Blackwood's work, are included: stories of such sheer power and imagination that it is easy to see why he has been considered the foremost British supernaturalist of the twentieth century.

Blackwood's ability to create an atmosphere of unrelieved horror and sustain it to the end of the story is almost unsurpassed. "The Willows" — which has been called by H. P. Lovecraft the finest supernatural story — is a typical example of Blackwood's art: slowly and surely Blackwood draws the reader into a world of shadows, nuances, and unearthly terror.

Blackwood was also a master at evoking feelings of mysticism and cosmic experience; dealing with such ideas as interpenetrating levels of existence and pantheistic elemental powers, he expanded the content of supernatural literature enormously. But even the more traditional elements of horror stories such as ghosts and haunted houses are handled with such energy and feeling that they rise far above their predecessors. Drawing on serious Oriental thought, modern psychology, and philosophy, Algernon Blackwood introduced a sophistication to the horror story that — with few exceptions — it was devoid of before. The results are stories that are not only guaranteed to chill, but stories that have something to say to the intelligent reader.

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