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**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

**H.P. LOVECRAFT**

# The Thing on the Doorstep

and Other Stories

Read by **William Roberts**

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<b>1</b>	<b>The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Stories</b>	6:06
<b>2</b>	Derby's parents took him abroad every summer...	4:40
<b>3</b>	<b>II</b>	9:39
<b>4</b>	<b>III</b>	8:56
<b>5</b>	<b>IV</b>	7:55
<b>6</b>	'Asenath – is there such a person?'	7:20
<b>7</b>	<b>V</b>	5:55
<b>8</b>	I shuddered as Derby paused.	6:32
<b>9</b>	<b>VI</b>	7:57
<b>10</b>	<b>VII</b>	5:21
<b>11</b>	When I opened the door...	6:16
<b>12</b>	<b>The Colour Out of Space</b>	9:21
<b>13</b>	It was then that I heard the story...	7:56
<b>14</b>	They had uncovered what seemed to be the side...	5:24
<b>15</b>	Winter came early...	6:34
<b>16</b>	April brought a kind of madness to the country folk...	7:35
<b>17</b>	By September all the vegetation was fast crumbling...	6:45
<b>18</b>	Three days later Nahum burst into Ammi's kitchen...	7:12
<b>19</b>	Commencing his descent of the dark stairs...	8:01
<b>20</b>	The six men drove out in a democrat-wagon...	6:49

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21	All three horses outside...	7:33
22	At this point, as the column of unknown colour...	8:56
23	They say the mental influences are very bad, too...	4:33
24	<b>The Outsider</b>	6:05
25	All at once, after an infinity...	6:26
26	I now stepped through the low window...	6:47
27	<b>The Doom that Came to Sarnath</b>	6:07
28	The wonder of the world and the pride of all mankind...	6:24
29	Each year there was celebrated in Sarnath the feast...	6:59
30	<b>The Festival</b>	8:47
31	Pointing to a chair, table, and pile of books...	8:50
32	Fainting and gasping, I looked at that unhallowed Erebus...	9:08
33	<b>The Rats in the Walls</b>	6:52
34	In 1921, as I found myself bereaved and aimless...	8:02
35	A few of the tales were exceedingly picturesque...	7:39
36	That night, dispensing as usual with a valet...	7:28
37	With the two men I went down to the door...	7:30
38	Norrays now took a lantern...	6:38
39	I must be very deliberate now...	7:03
40	Having grasped to some slight degree...	6:06

**Total time: 4:46:30**

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**H.P. Lovecraft**

(1890–1937)

# The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Stories

I never can be tied to raw new things,  
For I first saw the light in an old town,  
Where from my window huddled roofs sloped down  
To a quaint harbour rich with visionings.

Streets with carved doorways where the sunset beams  
Flooded old fanlights and small window-panes,  
And Georgian steeples topped with gilded vanes –  
These are the sights that shaped my childhood dreams.

H.P. Lovecraft (from *Fungi from Yuggoth*)

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born on 20 August 1890 in Providence, Rhode Island. Forty-seven years later, in 1937, he died in that same evocative, time-locked city of narrow streets and sloping roofs, having spent most of his life there – much of that time spent solely with his mother, two maiden aunts and his maternal grandfather. Within

that narrow lifespan, and in spite of a youth troubled with poor health and the loss of his father to syphilis at the age of five, he overcame a virtual lack of formal education (he never finished high school, and his early schooling was often interrupted by bouts of illness), became a voracious reader and soon showed signs of being a prodigy, able to

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write poetry at the age of six. In spite of a lifelong timidity about the great world beyond the confines of his family home and an abhorrence of what he saw as the degradation and decadence of the modern industrial age, he nurtured an early interest in both science and the unnatural (one of his prime influences was Edgar Allen Poe) and out of that interest began in his twenties to write extremely original stories of a darkly menacing and bizarre nature that found their way into the pages of *Weird Tales*, a popular magazine of the time. Though he never gained notoriety as an author during his lifetime, he did manage to attract the attention of similar-minded established writers of the weird and fantastical, with some of whom he maintained a lifelong correspondence. These authors, who included Robert Bloch (the author of *Psycho*), Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth and Robert E. Howard (creator of the *Conan the Barbarian* series), later became known as the 'Lovecraft Circle', several of whom carried on using or referring to elements of his dark creations in their own writings long

after his death – thereby perpetuating Lovecraft's so-called 'Cthulhu Mythos' as established in such works as *At The Mountains of Madness*, *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Festival* (included in this volume) and other tales.

A recluse for most of his life, Lovecraft thought of himself as better suited to the early eighteenth century rather than to the early twentieth, which he saw as frivolous and corrupt. In his writing, he developed a style reminiscent of the mid-1800s, using a slightly archaic, stilted narrative language not unlike that of his predecessor and idol, Edgar Allen Poe.

The stories included in this volume cover a wide span of years and deal with several of Lovecraft's more common themes. In *The Thing on the Doorstep* and *The Outsider*, he depicts characters whose lives are severely constrained by forceful influences from malevolent or cruel superior beings, for whom escape by flight, or even through death, is ultimately impossible. Closely allied with this theme is the idea that the innocent blood descendents of a guilty ancestor will always be held responsible for the

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initial heinous crime – and will ultimately be made to pay for it, regardless of the generations between. This favourite Lovecraft plotline is reflected in *The Rats in the Walls* and *The Doom that Came to Sarnath*. Regarding with deep disdain what he perceived as the arrogance of the scientific community of his time, Lovecraft often depicts the efforts of modern science as puny and dismissively ineffectual when faced with forces, events and phenomena outside of its comfortable view of what is possible and what is not. In *The Colour Out of Space*, for instance, the misreading of the significance of a meteorite's landing on the earth reaps horrific consequences.

Lovecraft regarded modern science as misguided and delusional, and Einstein's theory of relativity in particular he challenged as making a joke of the cosmos and threatening to throw mankind into a chaos of misconception and fallacy. Science and technology, he argued, in spite of recent highly lauded discoveries, were simply a kind of illusory side-show that had nothing to do with the cosmos as it really is, and could only ultimately

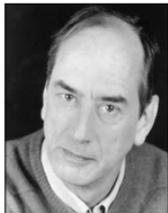
result in the horrific destruction of the human race. To Lovecraft (who was an atheist from his early years), the eventual extinction of mankind through its own vainglory and ignorance was inevitable, a conviction he hinted at time and again in his stories.

In a letter to the editor of *Weird Tales*, Lovecraft wrote: '...all my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the vast cosmos-at-large. To me there is nothing but puerility in a tale in which the human form – and the local human passions and conditions and standards – are depicted as native to other worlds or other universes. To achieve the essence of real externality, whether of time or space or dimension, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all. Only the human scenes and characters must have human qualities. *These* must be handled with unsparing *realism* (not catch-penny romanticism), but when

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we cross the line to the boundless and hideous unknown – the shadow-haunted *Outside* – we must remember to leave our humanity and terrestrialism at the threshold.'

**Notes by William Roberts**



**William Roberts** has appeared extensively in TV, film and theatre, varying from *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and *Navy Seals* to *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *A View to Kill*. He is also a familiar voice on radio and audiobooks, with numerous dramas and books to his credit. He has also read *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Tales*, *Billy Budd* and *The Essential Edgar Allan Poe* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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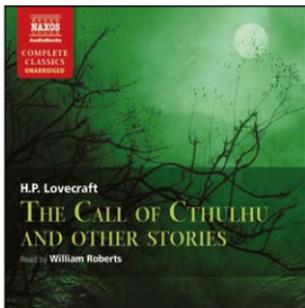
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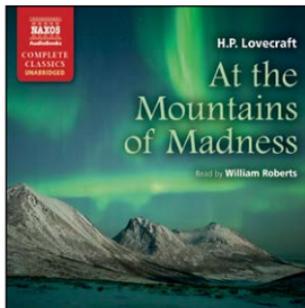
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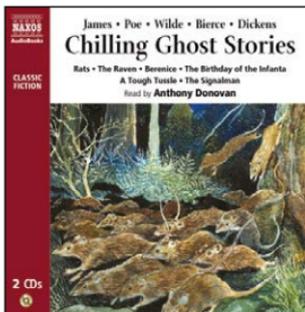
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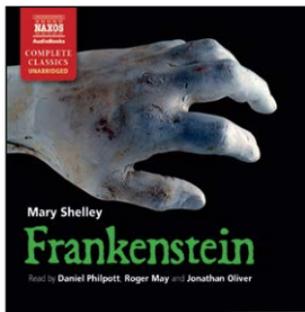
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**H.P. Lovecraft**

# The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Stories

Read by **William Roberts**

H.P. Lovecraft never found fame during his lifetime and died in 1937 in relative obscurity. But in the decades that followed his death, his importance as a unique and original visionary in the genre of science fantasy and 'weird fiction' has grown monumentally, so that even talents such as author Stephen King and film-maker John Carpenter have described him as a prime influence upon their creative lives. Here, then, is a selection of his stories.



**William Roberts** has appeared in *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, *Navy Seals*, *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *A View to Kill*. He has also read *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Tales*, *Billy Budd* and *The Essential Edgar Allan Poe* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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