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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH



SAD indeed is the news that tells us of H. P. Lovecraft's death on March 15, in the Jane Brown Memorial Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. He was a titan of weird and fantastic literature, whose literary achievements and impeccable craftsmanship were acclaimed throughout the English-speaking world. He was only forty-six years of age, yet had built up a following such as few authors ever had. As a child he was a prodigy. He learned the alphabet at two years of age, and early developed a liking for old-fashioned and fantastic books. Always a weak and nervous child, he managed to stick out four years in high school at the cost of a breakdown which kept him from college and put him virtually out of the world for a number of years. About 1920 his health began of itself to effect that mending which specialists for thirty years had sought in vain to bring about; and shortly afterward he began traveling, visiting new places and meeting old friends whom he had contacted through his wide correspondence. He had a masterful command of several languages; and, as E. Hoffmann Price once remarked, "There is scarcely an artistic or cultural subject on which H. P. Lovecraft cannot learnedly hold forth, and with an unflinching hold on the attention of the listener." As for his hobbies, let us quote Price again: "His hobbies? This is not a catalogue; let me short-circuit that by saying that the range must be from architecture to zoology." Between 1917 and 1936 Lovecraft wrote forty-six stories, each of which is a *tour de force* in itself. He invented the Lovecraft mythology (the *Necronomicon*, Abdul Alhazred, etc.), which has been adopted by many other writers of weird fiction. With all his studies, his capabilities, his wide knowledge, and his vast intelligence, H. P. Lovecraft was a kindly, gen-

erous human being, modest as to his own work, and ever ready to lend a helping hand to others. He carried on a voluminous correspondence with over seventy-five weird fiction enthusiasts, and endeared himself to all of them with his kind patience and generosity. His death is a serious loss to weird and fantastic fiction; but to the editors of *WEIRD TALES* the personal loss takes precedence. We admired him for his great literary achievements, but we loved him for himself; for he was a courtly and noble gentleman, and a dear friend. Peace be to his shade!

An Unfillable Void

Lorne W. Power, of Windsor, Ontario, writes: "The passing of that outstanding author, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, leaves a void which can never be filled. He was nothing less than a genius, and the greatest writer of weird fiction since Poe. His realistic method of treatment and uncanny ability to breathe life into his creations could give the most hardened reader shudders. The best of his works were printed in *WEIRD TALES*, and I suggest that these be published in book form. Such a volume would prove a 'best-seller,' judging by the immense popularity of the author. I, as well as thousands of others, will miss 'Abdul Alhazred' and his *Necronomicon* more than words can convey, and though others may try to take his place, they can only succeed in calling up memories of the deceased."

A Staggering Blow

Manly Wade Wellman writes from New York City: "The death of H. P. Lovecraft is a staggering blow, I am sure, to your magazine and to fantasy fiction in general. I had hoped to meet Mr. Lovecraft, and mourn my ill luck in not doing so; I can say, at least, that he was my early inspira-

tion and constant study in this field, as he must have been for many younger writers. His death and that of Robert E. Howard, so close together, leave a gigantic gap in the ranks of WT writers—it's going to be a grim job to close up and march on. Again let me express my shocked feeling of sorrow and loss at the passing of this consistently fine artist."

Death of a Master

Robert Leonard Russell, of Mount Vernon, Illinois, writes: "The morning paper brought the shocking news—Howard Phillips Lovecraft is dead. The greatest modern writer of weird fiction has passed on at the age of forty-six, in the very prime of his life. I feel, as will many other readers of WEIRD TALES, that I have lost a real friend. Lovecraft made a place for himself that can never be filled by another. His monstrous *Necronomicon* with the dread Cthulhu, Azathoth and the other Elder Gods struck a new note of weirdness. A Lovecraft story was always by far the best in any issue. I was eleven years old when I read his *The Silver Key*, and I have not missed a Lovecraft yarn since. One of my ambitions—never achieved however—was to meet the master himself and talk to him. And now the pen that gave us *The Dunwich Horror*, *The Hound*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *The Thing on the Door-step*, and many another tale of shuddery horror writes no more. We shall miss him."

From Mrs. Heald

Hazel Heald writes from Newtonville, Massachusetts: "I want to express my sorrow in the passing of H. P. Lovecraft. He was a friend indeed to the struggling author, and many have started to climb the ladder of success with his kind assistance. To us who really knew him it is a sorrow that mere words cannot express. His was the helping hand that started me in the writers' game and gave me the courage to carry on under the gravest difficulties. But we must try to think that he is 'just away' on one of his longest journeys and that some day we will meet him again in the Great Beyond."

From Robert Bloch

Robert Bloch writes from Milwaukee: "Now that Lovecraft's gone it's strange; I don't think so much about his wonderful work, his imaginative genius, and pre-

eminence as WT's first and finest author. I just remember what he meant to me personally—you know how I wrote him a fan note so long ago; how he got into a correspondence with me, encouraged me to write, helped, criticized. If it weren't for him I'd never have hit WT or any other magazine. And there are so many others that owe him a similar debt of gratitude. I wonder what they'll all do now—the fan magazines that depended on him for support and encouragement, the many aspiring correspondents that looked to him for help and advice, and all the others that knew and so greatly admired him. He was a great writer, but an even greater friend; a real New England gentleman of the old school. I think we ought to count ourselves proud to have known him. Of course there ought to be a memorial volume, with stories chosen by the readers. That's the smallest tribute one can pay. But there's an end of the world—the world of Arkham, Innsmouth, Kingsport; the world of Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Nyarlathotep, and Abdul Alhazred; the finest world of fantasy I know."

From Seabury Quinn

Seabury Quinn writes from Brooklyn: "Lovecraft, whom I had the pleasure of knowing personally, was both a scholar and a gentleman, and his writings disclosed both his scholarship and his gentility, as well as a genius which has not been observable since the death of Poe and Hawthorne. We who knew him personally shall miss his quiet humor and his always-interesting conversation; thousands of those who had never met the man will join with us in deploring the loss of his contributions to a field of literature which he had made peculiarly his own. God rest his soul."