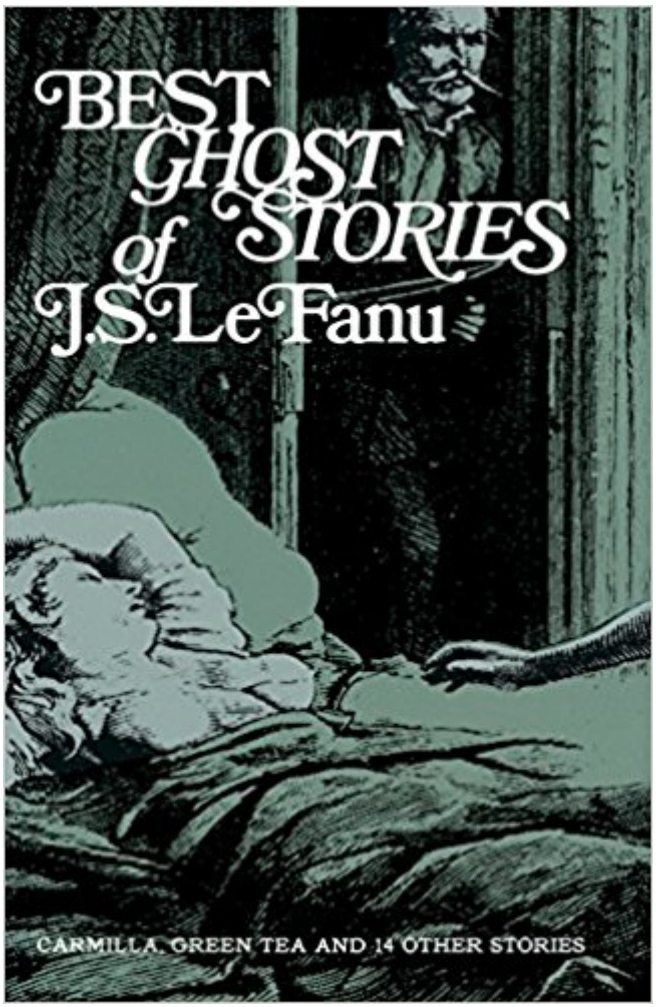
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Best Ghost Stories Of J. S. LeFanu



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Synopsis

Joseph Sheridan LeFanu (1814Ã¢â ¬â œ1873) is regarded by many critics as the greatest master of the English ghost story. A product of the decaying Anglo-Irish culture of the early and middle nineteenth century, he sums up in his work better than any of his contemporaries the fears and dreads that may haunt the sensitive individual.The reasons for his preeminence are many. He was a remarkable craftsman, whose work has been admired by critics as varied as V. S. Pritchett and H. P. Lovecraft, Henry James and M. R. James. More imaginative and more perceptive than his contemporaries who worked in the same form, he achieved depths and dimensions of terror that still remain otherwise unexplored. And although he was Victorian in his dates, he was in many respects un-Victorian in his writing: his ideas looked both backward to the great supernatural tradition of Romantic fiction and forward to the modern age.LeFanu's work, unfortunately, has not been as well known generally as it should be. A few of his better stories have appeared often enough in anthologies, but much of his very best work has lain hidden, because of its inaccessibility. His contemporaries were more interested in his detective novels (including the unmatchable "Uncle Silas") and his realistic novels than in his supernatural work, with the result that many of his stories were neither reprinted in England nor ever printed at all in America.The present collection contains such favorites as "Carmilla," "The Familiar," "Green Tea," and "Schalken the Painter," as well as much otherwise unobtainable work. There is, for example, the magnificent nouvelle "The Haunted Baronet," (reprinted for the first time from the fabulously rare "Chronicles of Golden Friars," which survives in perhaps less than a dozen sets), material from "The Purcell Papers," the practically unknown essay-story "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House," and nine other first-rate stories.

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Customer Reviews

Le Fanu is a Victorian writer who, along with Edgar A. Poe before him, invented the unity of mood and economy of means that characterizes the modern horror short story. Jack Sullivan, in Horror Literature, maintains that "Le Fanu was more revolutionary than Poe, for he began the process of dismantling the Gothic props and placing the supernatural tale in everyday settings." These quietly elegant tales include a female vampire who predates Dracula, a vicar troubled by a spectral monkey, a cruel hanging judge who gets his due and many other fine portents and hauntings.

Joseph Sheridan LeFanu (1814-1873) is regarded by many critics as the greatest master of the English ghost story. A product of the decaying Anglo-Irish culture of the early and middle nineteenth century, he sums up in his work better than any of his contemporaries the fears and dreads that may haunt the sensitive individual.The reasons for his preeminence are many. He was a remarkable craftsman, whose work has been admired by critics as varied as V. S. Pritchett and H. P. Lovecraft, Henry James and M. R. James. More imaginative and more perceptive than his contemporaries who worked in the same form, he achieved depths and dimensions of terror that still remain otherwise unexplored. And although he was Victorian in his dates, he was in many respects un-Victorian in his writing: his ideas looked both backward to the great supernatural tradition of Romantic fiction and forward to the modern age.LeFanu’s work, unfortunately, has not been as well known generally as it should be. A few of his better stories have appeared often enough in anthologies, but much of his very best work has lain hidden, because of its inaccessibility. His contemporaries were more interested in his detective novels (including the unmatchable "Uncle Silas") and his realistic novels than in his supernatural work, with the result that many of his stories were neither reprinted in England nor ever printed at all in America.The present collection contains such favorites as "Carmilla," "The Familiar," "Green Tea," and "Schalken the Painter," as well as much otherwise unobtainable work. There is, for example, the magnificent nouvelle "The Haunted Baronet," (reprinted for the first time from the fabulously rare "Chronicles of Golden Friars," which survives in perhaps less than a dozen sets), material from "The Purcell Papers," the practically unknown essay-story "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House," and nine other first-rate stories.

For anyone who is looking for some excellent gothic ghost-stories,this is the book to start with.Le

fanu is largely forgotten by today’s reading public and the television absorbed culture.They don’t know what their missing out on.Poe is the American grand-daddy of the mysterious horror story,yet the French-Irishman ,Sheridan LeFanu, is on the same level too.I can only recommend this gothic horror collection for all who what to be intellectually thrilled and pleasantly chilled .All before the witching hour surrenders,at the stroke of midnight,on the Eve of All-Hallows.For another year.Delicious reading for the Autumn season,til Samhain parts for another spell.-Beware of sleep,and Beware of Cats!

Probably the most distinguishing characteristic of LeFanu’s writing to me is that he doesn’t explain why something is happening in his stories. Ghosts search through drawers, skeletons are dug up, heroes disappear, and barons die of unseen causes, and we are never told what happened. LeFanu doesn’t necessarily explain the motives and occurrences of his stories and loose ends are not all tied up. At first, I was unsure about what to think; what kind of ghost story doesn’t explain all the events at the end? How am I supposed to be terrified if I don’t know the ultimate cause of Baron X’s demise? The method of storytelling began to grow on me, though, and I now feel that a lack of resolution on every issue creates a better story. Why should the supernatural be fully explained in 20 pages? When the reader is demoted from an omniscient viewpoint to that of only an eyewitness, the tale is more compelling.My favorite stories are probably "Sir Dominick’s Bargain" and "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House," the former for its mood and atmosphere, and the latter for its minimalist telling. "The Haunted Baronet" is another excellent story, with strong attention to detail and background that help in the story-telling; it was a very satisfactory read. "The Fortunes of Sir Robert Ardagh" is the same story told sans background and detail, and is clearly inferior. The other stories I enjoyed based on the setting, which is 19th century Ireland, which evokes a mood much like James’. Overall, it is the sort of book that makes you wish for a warm fireplace and a stormy night.Enjoy!

I like reading scary stories during October, and I’m so glad that I found this book! A perfect collection of ghost stories for autumn nights.The book came in great condition, too!

Le Fanu is brilliant. If you like "ghost" stories a bit on the intellectual side you’ll love this collection and his work. If you like Poe you’ll love LeFanu.

Enoyed the book.

These are great stories for bedtime reading. Compared to today's scary stories, these are elegant and inspired. If you have a taste for the fiction of bygone eras -- don't draw the line with today's best sellers -- you'll find a lot of magnificent writing. I'm still reading this book, and I plan to pass it around to all my pals. PBS and British Telly buffs will adore this book.

This handsome Dover edition of Le Fanu's stories has been in print for over 45 years, and during that time I have bought and pored over many a copy of it. Le Fanu writes beautifully. His prose at its best, like that of Algenon Blackwood, is as evocative and timeless as that of Charles Dickens. The stories are powerful and haunting. I have spent countless hours enjoying Le Fanu and studying his techniques for so subtly and beautifully describing his characters and their responses to the mysterious world around them. His small masterpiece, Carmilla, is one of the most seminal vampire stories in the English language, influencing Bram Stoker as well as 20th century film makers. Welcome to the enchanting world of this very intriguing and brilliant writer. With Algenon Blackwood and M.R. James, Le Fanu is a giant in supernatural fiction.

The best ghost stories of J S LeFanu are among the best ghost stories ever written. This is an extremely fine collection, including all the stories from LeFanu's greatest book, "In a Glass Darkly", plus more than a dozen others. There are regional tales of the author's native Ireland; traditional tales of supernatural revenge; and, as the title says, much if not all of LeFanu's best work, which prefigures the best modern horror in its psychological sophistication and absolute lack of the sentiment and moralising common to many Victorian ghost story writers (as well as to far too many of the moderns). Is "Green Tea", for instance, the story of a supernatural visitation or merely, as the narrator would have us believe, of "the process of a poison"? Is Captain Barton, in "The Familiar", haunted by guilt alone or by something more? The collection also includes LeFanu's most famous story, the subtle vampire novella "Carmilla

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