



At the Mountains of Madness & Other Weird Tales

H.P. Lovecraft , Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Introduction)

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(Introduction)

Multi-eyed protoplasmic entities, flesh-eating ghouls, animate corpses, time-traveling body snatchers, and, yes, huge albino penguins. These are some of the bizarre creatures that populate the universe created by American horror author H. P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft has influenced many of today's most famous writers and artists, including master of contemporary horror fiction Stephen King, Academy Award-nominated director Guillermo Del Toro, and artist and *Alien* set-designer H. R. Giger.

This collection includes three selections from the Cthulhu Mythos: the novella *At the Mountains of Madness*, which is often considered Lovecraft's masterpiece; "The Thing on the Doorstep"; and "The Shadow Out of Time." While including all the chilling "cyclopean vistas," monstrous abominations and appalling transformations that readers have come to expect from Lovecraft, this also showcases his fantasy writing in stories such as "The Cats of Ulthar," "The Silver Key," and notably *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*.

At the Mountains of Madness & Other Weird Tales Details

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From Reader Review At the Mountains of Madness & Other Weird Tales for online ebook

Lina says

Conclusions I have drawn from this book:

- a) H.P. Lovecraft was the king of the Info Dump.
- b) and he sure loved those adverbs.
- c) No one had ever introduced him to the concept of "show, don't tell".

Also, all the stories from the Cthulu Mythos felt like the same story over and over again.

elizabeth says

This book's saving grace was the last three stories (*At the Mountains of Madness*, *The Thing on the Doorstep*, *The Shadow Out of Time*). The fantasy portion was just, in a word, awful. The writing was so dense with his own made-up jargon that it was almost impossible to find any flow while reading it. The main character was so underdeveloped that his existence almost seemed incidental. This is the kind of fantasy writing I hate, because it feels like I'm reading a dry science textbook about a topic I find really boring.

In comparison, the last three stories were an example of decently-written horror. I was on the edge of my seat for parts of them, and I had a deep interest in the perils these characters faced. There wasn't as much jargon, and it was interesting to catch all the ways the disparate stories connected together. The writing was much, much better, at least in comparison to the first three stories. I rather liked *At the Mountains of Madness*. It was pretty tightly-written suspense. There were points where it got bogged down with description, which made the flow really awkward. Overall, not that bad. The second story, *The Thing on the Doorstep*, pretty much slapped me in the face with misogyny (Only a man is really human?!), and that made it pretty tedious. The third story, *The Shadow Out of Time*, was quite good. It wasn't quite as good with the suspense like *At the Mountains of Madness*, but it was obviously linked to that story, so it was building on already-established information for that universe in my mind.

I have to admit my surprise at finding that an author that is considered widely influential on most modern horror authors to be a pretty mediocre writer. He had a vivid imagination, but seems to have utterly failed at finding the correct phrasing to properly express it. The number of times I read a description of something where it was described as being (paraphrasing) "so shocking as to be indescribable" is practically obscene. It's not particularly accessible, and it's not particularly well-written. No wonder it kept being rejected by publishers.

2 stars because it took me a month and a half to get through the first 148 pages.

Teresa Cervera says

I was disappointed with the titular story. The mountains of madness is supposed to be lovecrafts masterpiece but I found it tedious and not scary at all.

However I loved "the thing on the doorstep", "the music of Erich Zann," "the Cats of ulthar," and the final

story "the shadow out of time" which is very similar to the mountains of madness, but more suspenseful. My biggest issue with Lovecraft is his tendency to say how something was "indescribable" seriously he does it about a dozen times in the book. Just use your words lovecraft

Lauren Little says

Some of his stories/novellas are just amazing while some are trying to read. He is good at creating some creepy imagery.

Austin says

It was definitely a challenging read. The last three stories are what made up for this book.

Amberlee Clark says

I had a difficult relationship with this book. It took me ages to read it. It's only 320 pages long. If I had set my mind to it I could have read it in a matter of days. Instead it took me months. When I put it down, I didn't really have a desire to pick it back up again. My issue wasn't with the writing. Lovecraft's writing is phenomenal. Perhaps the prose is a bit florid, but that wasn't my problem. It took me a while to figure it out, but I was finally able to put my finger on it. This book is overflowing with pretentious white boy nonsense. I understand Lovecraft was writing in the 20s and 30s. Which is why the rare fleshed out female character is desperate for the superior powers of a male brain. And all the vague racism in the form of "dark strangers" and "simpleminded black fellows." Just because it's a product of its time doesn't make it any less off-putting. Also, Lovecraft is so evidently full of himself. There is an entire story in here where his self-insert decides every aspect of life on earth is cheap and unfulfilling and the people who buy into, well, real life, are clearly shallow and idiotic. OK. That being said, when Lovecraft finally gets past all the exposition, and weird bigotry, and grating self-inserts, everything gets good and it gets good fast. The horror elements awesome. He was a pioneer of the genre after all. I can see myself having loved this book if I was reading it at a different period in my life. Perhaps before I got over my elitism and at the height of my depression, I would have thought Lovecraft was the bee's knees. The core ideas are enticing and enthralling. However, all the trimmings and trappings those ideas are wrapped up in are just as unsavory as some of the monstrous creatures Lovecraft describes. At least in my opinion. If you can plow past all the extravagant elements, then you'll probably really enjoy yourself.

Alicia says

I wanted to love this book, but that just didn't happen. It was boring. Everything is dry and lifeless. There are no characters, just blank spaces moving around and reacting.

The reader is kept distant from all the action. They feel more like summaries than actual stories. Instead of listening to a conversation the main character just tells you what was said, or what everyone decided to do. Here's an example from *At the Mountains of Madness*:

"From then on for another half-hour Lake kept up a running fire of comment, and expressed his intention of climbing some of the peaks on foot. I replied that I would join him as soon as he could send a plane, and that Pabodie and I would work out the best gasoline plan - just where and how to concentrate our supply in view of the expedition's altered character."

This sort of droll recounting happens all the time in most of the stories, especially the longer ones. Eventually I just started skimming because I didn't care about anyone. It's all tell, no show.

Kate says

Incredible surreal stories. Haven't been inspired to think this way in years. Nightmarish, disturbing tales, journeys into dark parts of the earth, ancestral civilizations. A must read for any fan of Poe, fantasy, surrealism.

Mario Hernandez says

I was really looking forward to read this book and it was a huge let down! I couldn't get into it. I found it really really hard to read and to stay interested in it. The story seems good but Lovecraft did not do a good job. I feel like he jumped around too much and really didn't describe what was going on. His description of the monsters was not that great and neither was the description of the Arctic city.

Nick Jones says

Having read this collection and a couple of other miscellaneous works nobody can say that I didn't give Lovecraft a fair shot, but his stories are just so agonizingly dull and repetitive that I can't imagine what people see in them. His characters are generally indistinguishable, he never says in five words what could be needlessly expanded to fifty, and most of the alleged "horror" seems to stem directly from his own phobias (which some readers may relate to, but I found baffling). The writer's worst offense is the flogging of words like "grotesque," "horrifying," "terrible," and the like to describe things without ever specifying in what manner those terms apply, the characters giving the cheap excuse of whatever it is they are dealing with being simply too awful to put into words.

Sasha says

I like Lovecraft's mixture of science and fantasy. Some of his stories have a philosophical tone to them, exploring the place of humanity in the universe. One of my favorite writers.

Caitlin says

I've now read two collections of Lovecraft, and I feel very accomplished. Overall I enjoyed most of the stories. Lovecraft definitely had a vivid imagination which has influenced some of my favorite pop culture items. Without Lovecraft, would Alien exist? Would John Carpenter's The Thing have been possible? Event Horizon? Hellboy? I'm sure that's just the surface.

HOWEVER!

HPL's prose left quite a bit to be desired. Some stories were a total chore to get through-- some things were just way too long, and the constant use of the same phrases over and over and over and over got very annoying. Also, if something can't be described, and you're a writer, maybe try harder? Yeesh. And of course, HPL's icky and bizarre racism crops up and removed me from the flow frequently (primarily the first collection, "The Call of Cthulhu" than this one, not that this didn't have it's own problems).

I'm glad I finally read Lovecraft, it gives me a greater appreciation for sci-if horror, even if it is heavily flawed.
