



Alhazred: Author of the Necronomicon

Donald Tyson

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H. P. Lovecraft's compelling character, Abdul Alhazred, is brought to life in this epic tale detailing the mad sorcerer's tragic history and magical adventures. Alhazred tells his own life story, beginning with himself as a poor, handsome boy in Yemen who attracts the attention of the king for his divine skill in poetry. As the court poet, young Abdul lives a luxurious life at the palace, where he studies necromancy and magic. But falling in love with the king's daughter leads to a foolish tryst, which is ultimately discovered. As punishment, Abdul is tortured, brutally mutilated, and cast into the desert, known as the Empty Space. Battling insanity, he joins a tribe of ghouls and learns forbidden secrets from a stranger called Nyarlathotep. Thus begins his downward spiral into wickedness. Renamed Alhazred, he escapes the desert and embarks on a quest to restore his body and reunite with his true love. Traveling across the ancient world and fantastic realms, he is hounded by foes and tormented by the demands of his dark lord.

Alhazred: Author of the Necronomicon Details

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From Reader Review Alhazred: Author of the Necronomicon for online ebook

Ivan says

An unfortunate book, in that the first half is uniformly excellent, and the second half is both dull and too sprawling for its own good, with far too many loose ends left by the time to put down the last page. I would recommend the first half to any Lovecraft fan, or even any fan of Arabian Nights-style adventure, with the warning it may be a bit more gory than you're used to. However, the hefty price tag may deter some, especially since the second half of the poor is rather poor. Rated 3 stars since it's a half-5 star book, a half-1 star book.

Lucy Vega says

Arabian deserts, Bedouins, djinn, ghouls, palaces, monsters, and Nyarlathotep - the dark, mysterious and faceless desert wanderer - haunting your dreams, what's not to love?

Tyson has a vivid, colorful and addictive writing style with a strong atmosphere that pulls you in and keeps you there. The writing flows beautifully, and really makes the scenes come alive on the page. I found myself taking my time reading this so I wouldn't miss the beautiful scenery, not to mention the incredibly colorful cast of characters Alhazred encounters along the way.

It is not as dark, horrifying and bizarre as Lovecraft's own stories can be, so keep that in mind. It feels more like a fun and magical adventure story in an Arabian setting with darker (and a few gory) elements rather than horror.

It had some flaws, as all stories do in one way or another, but I was too busy enjoying the story for them to annoy me.

I enjoyed it immensely for what it was - mysterious, magical and fun! Will definitely check out more of his books.

Dexter Morgenstern says

The story is narrated by Abdul Alhazred the Mad Arab. It starts by leading readers through his torture, mutilation, and banishment, condemned to die in the vast desert known as the "Empty Space".

Death doesn't come that easily for Alhazred though, and given incentive by a dark figure known as Nyarlathotep, he carries onto better fortune, and fates that may be considered far worse. He encounters several fictional creatures such as Djinn, ghouls, and many different Lovecraftian horrors.

Donald Tyson is not afraid to tell a gruesome tale, as the plot is full of extremely graphic violence, so this book is not for the faint of heart. However, for those ready to read an adventure, in this book, there are many. In fact, where other authors would make several small novels each with one important task, Tyson throws

them all into one fantastic epic.

Alhazred is not your typical hero either, in fact, some may question his alignment. Is he good? Is he evil? Alhazred doesn't fit neatly into either category, and often makes decisions some would consider immoral, as well as acts that the average person would consider "the right thing to do", and instead of applying the same reasoning to each action, he has many different motivations.

On top of many plot elements, interesting character development, vivid- amazing settings and monsters, and a large pile of characters including friends, foes, and foes of foes, there is a very widespread magical system to boot. Magic includes illusion, seals, summoning the dead, resurrection, instant death, and more. All of them with many different magical elements and backgrounds, rather than one globally accepted magical system (Such as in the Inheritance Cycle, Harry Potter, etc).

Overall, this is a great read that I highly recommend to anyone interested in fantasy adventure, the Cthulhu mythos, or a just long epic, and is okay with severe violent and sexual content.

Resbot says

Gruesome but very imaginative, I highly enjoyed this book.

Patrick says

I'm pretty sure I lost 2d6 sanity points reading this book.

ALHAZRED is the autobiography of a young necromancer who travels the Arabian peninsula circa 1000 A.D., gathering arcane knowledge and trying to keep one step ahead of the various wizards, outlaws, demons and monsters he manages to piss off along the way. This premise could have easily listed sideways into some insipidly awful Daaaaaaark Gawthic Fantasy bullshit territory, yet Tyson's novel is surprisingly light on its feet. ALHAZRED is a taut, action-packed historical romp and definitely the best novel featuring a corpse-eating protagonist since Hannibal Lecter was in his heyday. If squick's not your thing, give this one a pass. I'm not spoiling too much to say the protagonist is forced to eat his own barbecued genitals in Chapter One, and his diet only gets more, uh, *varied* from there.

You will like this book if :

- You're a fan of H.P. Lovecraft, Clive Barker, the Reanimator and Evil Dead movies
- You've got a long airplane flight and want a light fantasy pulp read while listening to your "1980s Satanic Speed Metal" playlist.
- You felt Game of Thrones needed fewer boobs and more cannibalism.
- You were suckered into reading a Guillermo Del Toro or Poppy Z. Brite novel and want to get the bad taste

out of your mouth, so to speak.

Dan Mazur says

DRIBBLE. I received a free copy of this book and felt that I would spend some spare time over the summer reading it. The more I read, the harder I found it to understand the plot. Interestingly enough, I kept reading the book hoping to actually understand what the plot was more than anything else. I completed the book content with the understanding that there isn't any plot at all! It is simply a collection of disconnected and boring 'events' in the main character's adventures. Thank God this book was free for me. I am still trying to figure out if there is any way I can get the wasted hours I spent reading this book back! it is nearly one of the worst books I've read. If anyone wants this book, send me an email before I use it as kindling. I understand this is a lovecrafty book, but as a first in a series it should be able to stand on its own

Eric Williamson says

Since I already had 'The Necronomicon,' 'The Grimoire of the Necronomicon,' and 'The Necronomicon Tarot,' I planned to pass this one up. My friend Big Will talked it up pretty well however, so I sought out a good, used copy. I'm quite glad I did. This essentially covers similar ground to his first work, but instead of dry descriptors, this is a narrative story and quite entertaining. I recommend this to anyone with an interest in the Lovecraftian Mythos.

Althea Ann says

Donald Tyson – Alhazred: The Author of the Necronomicon

Has any horror reader not heard tell of that tome of blackest occult knowledge, the Necronomicon? Invented by H.P. Lovecraft, and referred to in his 'Cthulhu mythos' stories, the fictional grimoire has achieved a mythic status, even acquiring its own rabid fans, self-styled 'occultists' who insist that the book, written, according to Lovecraft's tales, by the 'mad Arab' Abdul Alhazred, must truly exist. Indeed, two books entitled 'Necronomicon' do exist – one written in the 80's by an occultist associated with the now-defunct Magickal Child shop in NYC, and one more recently by the author of 'Alhazred,' Donald Tyson. Even during H.P. Lovecraft's tragically short lifetime, he 'shared' elements of his mythos with friends and correspondents. The list of writers who have written stories influenced by his work is long and contains names not insignificant to horror fans. Among the classics are Ambrose Bierce, Robert Bloch, August W. Derleth, Robert E. Howard, Henry Kuttner and Clark Ashton Smith. More recently, contemporary horror and science fiction authors have also turned their pens to pay tribute to the master: Gene Wolfe, Ramsey Campbell, Harlan Ellison, Roger Zelazny: Poppy Z. Brite, Joanna Russ, Bruce Sterling, Esther M. Friesner, Thomas Ligotti and more were all featured in Arkham House Publishers' tribute anthology 'Cthulhu 2000.' But by far the most ambitious and significant work of fiction based on Lovecraft's work published to date must be 'Alhazred: Author of the Necronomicon.' Although the book is presented by a company known for their non-fiction New Age titles, Llewellyn, and its author, Donald Tyson, has written well over a dozen non-fiction works in the genre, 'Alhazred' is purely a work of fantastic horror fiction, with no pretensions

toward occult revelation. Unlike Lovecraft's output, which consisted mainly of short stories, 'Alhazred' is, itself, a significant tome, mysteriously weighing more than most books its size (Good-quality paper? Or something more inexplicable?), and numbering 667 pages (Why not 666? – Now that's a wasted opportunity).

The book tells the story of Lovecraft's 'mad Arab's early years, before his writing of his book of black magic. The background given by Lovecraft is skimpy enough - in his 'History of the Necronomicon' he wrote:

“mad poet of Sanaá, in Yemen, who is said to have flourished during the period of the Ommiade caliphs, circa 700 A.D. He visited the ruins of Babylon and the subterranean secrets of Memphis and spent ten years alone in the great southern desert of Arabia — the Roba el Khaliyeh or "Empty Space" of the ancients.... In his last years Alhazred dwelt in Damascus.”

Tyson follows this outline, starting with Alhazred's beginnings as a talented youth under the patronage of a wealthy caliph, and following him through many wanderings and quests to Damascus – but he fleshes out the story in many ways, some of which may delight Lovecraft purists, others which may raise quibbles.

Alhazred's illegal studies of necromancy and occult knowledge are tolerated – until he angers the caliph by conducting an illicit affair with his daughter. Grotesquely punished and mutilated, he is cast out and begins his life as a wanderer. Falling in with a tribe of flesh-eating ghouls in the 'Empty Space,' for the rest of the story, he self-identifies as a ghoul, not a man. He becomes, unwillingly, the tool of the mysterious Dark Chaos, Nyarlathotep, who repeatedly visits him in dreams. He encounters a djinn, who takes up residence in his body, and later acquires a partner in crime, a girl, Martala, from a family of grave-robbers. From a writer's perspective, the inclusion of Martala makes sense. Alhazred is a remarkably non-sympathetic character, completely amoral and without any feelings except those conducive to self-preservation and the gain of necromantic knowledge. He isn't someone that the average reader can easily connect with. Even though she has few ethical standards, Martala is still human, and acts as a foil to his character.

Lovecraft purists may also object to the literary style of the book. Tyson is an accomplished writer – but his style is nothing like that of Lovecraft. Lovecraft loved antiquarian words, and intentionally created a very 18th-century feel to his stories, using phrases and terms which were already out-of-fashion when he was writing. He also is frequently lauded for his ability to conjure an atmosphere of terror and fear without coming right out and telling the reader. His horrors often happen off-screen, as it were. His writing is full of things that cannot be named, monsters which the mind cannot encompass, gods whose visages cannot be described... Tyson, on the other hand, can be compared more accurately to stylists such as Clive Barker. He has no problem coming right out and telling his readers every disgusting and gory detail – there are several scenes in the book which are not for the faint-of-stomach.

Still, for any reader who doesn't mind imagining exactly how it might feel and taste to consume a human brain straight from the skull... and who appreciates Lovecraft's mythos, this homage to his work is a respectful tribute – as well as an entertaining novel with a good mix of adventure and horror.

Biographical note:

Althea spent several of her formative years in Providence, Rhode Island, home of the master of horror H.P. Lovecraft. After school, she would often hang out in Swan Point Cemetery, site of his final resting place, where her friend did at one point in time encounter a giant and rather horrific slug with her bare foot - but the Elder Gods never made themselves manifest.

David says

Having fallen in love with the Yemeni King Huban's daughter Alhazred gets her pregnant.

When this is discovered he is tortured, forced to eat the grilled body of the miscarried fetus (amongst other things), mutilated and set loose in the desert (the Empty Space) of Yemen to die. He does not do this. Rather, he becomes a cannibal to survive, then becomes a ghoul and finally sets out on a quest to restore his body (deconstructed by the torture and mutilation). The bulk of the book is concerned with this quest.

Though heavily Lovecraftian (lots of unnameable beasts and subterranean adventures...as well as the ubiquitous 'Dark Wanderer' ~ Nyarlathotep...of course a servant of chaos...aren't they always though) the narrative is a fairly typical quest narrative. And although the narrative is not insightful the style is non-disruptive and pleasant and the action makes up for a lack of character depth.

Alhazred is an amoral protagonist and so the shift away from a morality play, which is typical of such narratives, is refreshing. Alhazred isn't evil but he does behave so on occasion. He is predominantly self-interested, while at the same time, on occasion, capable of compassion.

The conclusion was predictable, but it did tie off the quest nicely.

Though typical, redundant, and over-written the book is a refreshing change of pace...especially since Alhazred is not punished for his wicked behavior though this is hinted at when he considers that he is damned for his services to the 'Old Ones'.

Not for the squeamish or those with a well-defined moral sensibility.

Rachel says

Dark but poignant, Alhazred is a deeply flawed man and mystic who encounters the most astounding things during his exile. Thematically, this book bears a lot of weight: not immediately judging that which is unknown, acknowledging one's mistakes, and loving despite disfigurement.

Steve Cran says

I totally loved this book and for several reasons. First off the author has done his research on the Middle East. He put Alhazred's story back into its proper context. The Mad Arab grew up and experienced his adventures in the Middle East so it is only proper that Egyptian Gods, Jinn, Ghouls, Indian Thuggies and sultans play a part with the ever present spectre of the Old ones hidden in the background just outside of everyone's view.

The story starts off in Yemen when Alhazred, the king's poet, falls in love with Narissa, the King's daughter. They have an illicit affair that ends up with her getting pregnant. After they get caught the king of Yemen mutilates Alhazred's face, castrates him and leaves him to die in the Empty Quarter. But Alhazred is

resourceful and he survives instead of dying. During his desert journey's he befriends a tribe of ghouls, makes friends with a female jinn and steals from caravans that which he needs in order oreto survive. After his tenure with the ghouls, who by the way die from poison, Alhazred wanders to the lost city of Irem or Ubar. Itn is there that he confronts a witch and learns the history of the old ones. After leaving the desert with numerous jewels he makes his way Egypt going through such cities as Bubastis, Babylon and Alexandria. It is in Egypt that he meets with Martala and makes enemies with Farri, s street thug.Farria and thugs follow Alhazred through Egypt and do not stop until he is killed for the first time. In Egypt he also steals a scroll to summon the Old ones which angers a group called the Order of the Sphinx. In a fight with this order he is infected with a poison that will kill him in days unless he finds the cure.

Months after his first death he wakes up in Alexandria, Egypt. In possession of what he needs he makes his way to Mesopotamia.It is there that he finds a garden paradise and tries to find the Well of Seraph in Vain hopes that this will rest his damaged body. His hopes are dashes. Constantly evading the Order of the Sphinx he travels with Thuggees to Damascus where he befriends a group of Necromancers in Damascus. But all is not well as the Caliph wishes to kill the Necromancers. In the end magic is not a salvation but always the good old fashion sword that comes to aid.

Through out his travels Alhazred is bothered in his dreams by Nyalathotep , the dark one. In this take we come across several deities from Cthulhu mythos. Like I mentioned earlier this one puts us in the Middle East. Yet it lacks the same imaginary frightfulness of Lovecraft's writing

Jade says

For me, Alhazred is one of those life-changing kind of books. It's not going to be that for most people, it just happened to fall into my hands at the exact time I needed a book like that. I also had to be aware that I needed it, for what I took from it, could have made me worse, not better.

But I won't get into details – it's a review, not my life story ;)

This is not a hard read, Tyson is a great writer and the story is very smooth. Abdul Alhazred, author of the Necronomicon, goes 'walkabout' and we follow him on his journey of discovery. Basically, Alhazred learns about himself along the way, and if you are clued on while you are reading, you too will learn about yourself along the way. You will walk with Alhazred through evil places, and alongside foul beings, how will you interpret them? Do yourself a favour, go on an adventure that you might not otherwise take :)

William says

Excellent novel (or is it a biography?) that deserves five stars based on its own merits: well crafted characters in a richly imagined setting.

However, it falls well short of my expectations based on the Lovecraft mythos. And I am not sure that any book could ever fulfill those expectations.

Also interesting to note that the portrayal of Alhazred is substantially different that the portrayal in Tyson's

Necronomicon. Many of the details are the same, but the overall result is very different.

Ben says

Sword-and-sorcery style pulp fiction with good research on the setting (ancient Iraq, Egypt, and surrounding countries) and a cut-throat protagonist. Set in Lovecraft's universe, but lacking in his style since it reads like more of a straightforward pulp fantasy (think: Conan the Barbarian) with great action but fairly flat characters, and has an ending that dovetails irritatingly in the direction of a sequel with no sign of the Necronomicon in sight! Don't know if I'd buy it, but it was a fun read if you can borrow a copy from Slinky like I did. :)

Dan Schwent says

When Abdul Alhazred gets his lover, the daughter of the king, pregnant, he's forced to eat the roasted fetus, along with his own genitals. Mutilated and near death, he is left to die in the Empty Space, the great desert. But that is only the beginning of his journey to becoming the greatest necromancer in existence...

After reading Tales of Alhazred, I jumped at the chance to read this. Much like the time I drank a twelve pack of Angry Orchard, it was too much of a good thing.

Since I read Tales of Alhazred first, this book had a lot to live up to. Sure enough, it chronicled his meetings with Martala and Altrus, as well as his mutilation. Things hinted at in the collection of short stories were given life, like Alhazred's time with the ghouls.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. How could I not with its mixture of swords & sorcery and the Cthulhu mythos? Alhazred learns from a wide variety of teachers and gets into a wide variety of adventures. So why did I only give it a three?

It was too damn long! This could have easily been two or even three books. I feel like Cthulhu rose from his eternal slumber and went back to sleep in the time I was reading it. There were a lot of times I yearned for something major to happen. It probably would have worked best as a collection or two of short stories rather than the never-ending tale of wandering around the Middle East.

Three stars. I didn't like it as much as Tales of Alhazred but I'll read more of Alhazred's adventures at some point.
