



Más historias de fantasmas de un anticuario

M.R. James

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«El erudito Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936), preboste del Eton College, arqueólogo de renombre y reconocida autoridad en manuscritos medievales e historia de las catedrales, siguiendo su vieja afición a contar relatos de fantasmas durante las Navidades, se ha convertido poco a poco en un cultivador de primera fila de la literatura espectral, y ha llegado a servir de modelo a una larga serie de discípulos». Así presenta otro genio del terror, H.P. Lovecraft, al indiscutible maestro del relato de fantasmas victoriano M.R. James. Para James, el relato de fantasmas era todo un arte y debía ajustarse a tres normas esenciales: la historia debe tener un marco moderno, para acercar la experiencia al lector, los fenómenos espirituales deben ser malévolos más que beneficiosos, pues se busca provocar el miedo, y debe evitarse escrupulosamente la jerga técnica del «occultismo» con objeto de no ahogar la emoción directa que suscita la historia.

Más historias de fantasmas de un anticuario apareció en 1911. «De los siete relatos que contiene --comenta James-- los seis primeros son producción navideña; el primero de ellos, “Una historia escolar”, lo escribí especialmente para la escuela de coro del King’s College. “Los sítiales de la catedral de Barchester” se publicó en la Contemporany Review. “El señor Humpreys y su herencia” lo escribí para completar el volumen».

Más historias de fantasmas de un anticuario Details

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Author : M.R. James

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Canavan says

★★★½

Char says

This collection was a lot of fun. Even though some of the stories were very wordy compared to more contemporary tales, it was easy to get past that because of the vivid pictures the words painted.

There were a couple of stories that I thought were just okay, but there were also some real atmospheric knockouts.

I think my favorite in this collection was "Mister Humphreys and His Inheritance", but I could see that possibly changing upon a re-read. These tales were a good time for fans of classic horror.

Recommended!

Bill Kerwin says

Only slightly inferior to James' first effort, *Ghost Stories of An Antiquary*, an acknowledged classic of the genre. The first three stories here ("A School Story, "The Rose Garden," "The Tractate Middoth") are eminently readable although undistinguished, but the last four are very good indeed.

"The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral" is permeated with ecclesiastical atmosphere (a James specialty), "Martin's Close" introduces a pathetic ghost in the context of an 18th century trial transcript, "Mr. Humphrey's Inheritance" presents a vivid picture of a sinister neoclassic garden maze, and "Casting the Runes"--a recognized masterpiece--shows us the attempt of a scholar to foil the curse of a wizard whose alchemical manuscript he has rejected for publication.

Highly recommended for all traditional ghost story fans.

Ken says

This is the second published collection of short stories by MR James. There are several highly influential works in this volume including my three favorites "The Rose Garden", "Casting the Runes" and "Martin's Close."

4 STARS

Rebecca Foster says

I've only ever read one M.R. James piece before, in an anthology of stories about libraries. This was perhaps not an ideal way to encounter his ghost stories for the first time. Though all four ("Number 13," "Count Magnus," "Oh, Whistle and I Will Come to You, My Lad" and "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas") are adapted by the same pair, Leah Moore and John Reppion, each is illustrated by a different artist, so the drawing style ranges from rounded and minimalist to an angular, watercolor Marvel comics style. The stories have thematic links of research, travel, archaeological discovery and antiquities. Very often there are found documents that must be interpreted. Several of the narrators are scholars coming across unexplained phenomena: a hotel room that appears and disappears, a sarcophagus lid that opens on its own, a storm summoned by a whistle, and so on.

In a brief introduction, Jason Arnopp applauds the decision to "show readers the ghouls and ghosts," but I disagree – to me a central problem with using the graphic form for these tales that center around nameless horror is that depicting the source of horror saps it of its power. Still, I appreciated the introduction to James's ghost stories.

Brian O'Connell says

A good follow up to volume one of SelfMadeHero's MRJ adaptations. As in the first volume, the quality varies noticeably from story to story. The adaptation of "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas", in particular, feels very weak: Meghan Hetrick's artwork, while admittedly beautiful, feels unsuited to James' crepuscular terrors. Al Davison's rendition of "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" also has its low points, though it redeems itself with a genuinely eerie nightmare sequence fabulously rendered in a blurred, painterly style. George Kambadais' "Number 13" is just wonderful--the silhouette of the dancing occupant is bone-chilling. But the clear winner here is "Count Magnus" as illustrated by Abigail Larson, actually an enormous surprise to myself. "Count Magnus" has never been one of my favorite James stories, and (having encountered her work in the past) I'm not always fond of Larson's overly Gothic style. But here something came together so beautifully that I felt genuinely terrified, as if I was encountering one of James' finest stories for the first time. There are deeply frightening images--like the looming silhouettes at the crossroads, Wraxall waiting in terrified anticipation for his nightly visitors--that will stay with you, but Larson has an excellent command of what **not** to show. (This is only broken once, when showing an early victim of Magnus, to an unfortunate but not disruptive effect.) This adaptation, quite literally, managed to outdo the story for me, and is worth the price of admission alone; it bumped my review from three to four stars.

The writing is competent as in the last volume--Moore and Reppion do well at adapting James' stories, though one wonders what might be accomplished if they were given a little more space to work with. Making the adaptations longer, and perhaps cutting down some of the words to let the images speak for themselves, would probably benefit the book greatly. As it stands, though, this is overall a very good collection, well worth looking into for both fans of James and newcomers to his work. (I would recommend reading the stories first, though.)

Bionic Jean says

See review for "Ghost stories of an Antiquary."

Rebecca McNutt says

I don't think I would necessarily call these stories "horror" (maybe paranormal fantasy?). Either way, I loved all of them for their sheer eerie creepiness and profound depth.

Susan says

These seven eerie tales include the much anthologized "Casting The Runes" as well as less familiar stories like "A School Story" and "The Rose Garden". My favorites were "The Tractate Middoth" involving a dangerous rare book and "Mr Humphreys and His Inheritance" with secrets found in an old library. Great spooky reading.

Andrew says

And so on to the second volume - never an easy thing to write about especially since you could merge volumes 1 & 2 and really have the same effect (just longer).

therefore I will keep this review short since really everything I said for the first book can easily and most certainly be repeated for this book too. My only compliant I guess is that there are only so few stories from the huge collection from M R James. I will admit my ignorance to publishing and the creation of such a book as this but still I would happily have read further volumes if they were to be published (I hope someone is picking up the hint)

Either way another great book to read and one more I am more than proud of adding to my growing collection of graphic novels.

Graziano says

A School Story

'Si tu non veneris ad me, ego veniam ad te'
(If you don't come to me, I'll come to you) (page 13)

Two men were talking of their school days, especially concerning ghost stories.
During Latin grammar lessons, Mc Leod stops thinking, maybe feeling something strange coming from the teacher, Mr. Sampson.

One night Mc Leod is watching at the professor's window: 'there was a man sitting or kneeling on Sampson's window-sill ... beastly thin ... looking around and whispering as if he hardly liked to hear himself.' (page 15)

The next day Mr. Sampson was gone.

The Rose Garden

Quieta non movere
or Are ghosts noisy?

Mr. Anstruther and his wife are talking about their rose garden, he disagrees with his wife because the spot is not very nice: there are shrubs, and it is not sunny. Eventually Mrs. Anstruther makes sure that her husband starts the job.

A previous owner of the estate, Miss Wilkins, visits Mrs. Anstruther; they talk about the rose garden. But when Mrs Anstruther is telling to Miss Wilkins her project, the latter thoughts 'were evidently elsewhere.' When Miss Wilkins and his brother Frank were children, he disappeared for a while and reappeared on the bench of the rose garden. Frank had been asleep and he had had 'a very odd disjointed sort of dream.' Frank was in a court for a trial, and after he was walking towards the gallows. 'He never saw much of what was around him, but he felt the scenes most vividly.' (page 30)

The same night, Mr. Anstruther had had the same dream.

'Mrs. Anstruther ... was sure some rough had got into the plantation during the night.

- And another thing, George: the moment that Collins is about again, you must tell him to do something about the owls.' (page 35)

Are ghosts among us? or are they just owls?

THE TRACTATE MIDDOOTH

Mr. John Eldred is looking for a book in a library. The book is Tractate Middoth from the Talmud. A library assistant, Mr. Garret, helps Mr. Eldred to find the book, but a man is reading the Tractate:

'It looked to me dry, and it looked dusty, and the streaks of hair across it were much less like hair than cobwebs.' (page 58)

Mr. Garrett is shocked from the reader of the Tractate and he is forced to stay at home. Before Mr. Garrett returned to work at the library, the librarian wanted that he takes a week's rest. Mr. Garrett leaves for a village on the sea.

In train he met a landlady, Mrs. Simpson and her daughter. Mrs Simpson had apartments empty at that season, so Mr. Garrett decides to take one.

An evening, during their talk, Mrs Simpson is very interested in Mr. Garrett's job as librarian. The Simpson's decide to ask for help to Mr. Garrett: the women have to find a book where inside could be the will of their uncle. The only clue is a number that sounds familiar to Mr. Garrett: it is the number of the book that Mr. Eldred was looking for. Another interesting clue for Mr. Garrett is that Mr. Eldred is Mrs. Simpson's cousin.

Mr. Eldred is the first to find the mysterious book, but when he is searching for the will in the book: 'something black seemed to drop upon the white leaf and run down it, and then as Eldred started and was

turning to look behind him, a little dark form appeared to rise out of the shadow behind the tree-trunk and from it two arms enclosing a mass of blackness came before Eldred's face and covered his head and neck.' (page 79)

The story has a good plot and M.R. James is a master to insert the ghost's passages only when needed, so to keep the reader's curiosity high.

CASTING THE RUNES

Warning: before to write a book's review, read Casting the Runes (You could change idea!).

The runic alphabet, developed from the Etruscan, was used in northern Europe from third to seventeenth century.

In magical practice 'casting the runes' means send curses through slip of paper in runic letters.

Karswell is a writer of alchemy and witchcraft books. When somebody refuses to review or submits a negative one about his books, the reviewer's fate is marked.

'The obvious course was to find a match, and also to consult his watch: he might as well know how many hours of discomfort awaited him.

So he puts his hand into the well-known nook under the pillow: only, it did not get so far.

What he touched was, according to his account, a mouth, with teeth, and with hair about it, and, he declares, not the mouth of a human being.' (page 112)

The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral

Dr. Black is cataloguing the Barchester's Cathedral library, when he discovers a box containing some fifty year old diaries.

The diaries concern the death of Dr. Haynes, a former Archdeacon of the Cathedral.

During winter time Dr. Haynes is alone in the cathedral's apartment, because his sister's health doesn't allow her to stay.

Dr. Haynes diaries tell of ordinary events, but soon after the main theme of the diaries are the noises of cats in the cathedral (although Dr. Haynes has never owned a cat).

'The hall and the staircase seemed to be unusually full of what I can only call movement without sound.'

(page 157)

Has a carved figure on the stalls of Barchester Cathedral something to do with these noises?

Martin's Close

- Madam, will you walk, will you talk with me?
- Yes, sir, I will walk, I will talk with you.

The narrator has to visit some land in the West. He is accompanied by the estate handy-man John Hill. The rector of the parish where there are the properties, tells to the narrator to inquire about Martin's Close. During the visit the narrator asks to John Hill about Martin's Close: the story of this bit of land concerns the murder of a young woman, Ann Clark by George Martin.

George Martin 'was troubled before his cruel action come to light by the young woman spirit.' (page 174)

The narrator finds a report of Martin's trial by Judge Jefferies.

The story that follows tells about the trial's last days. Accordingly to witnesses 'Ann Clark was seen after the 15th of May (murder's day), and that, at such time as she was so seen, it was impossible she could have been a living person.' (pages 190-1)

'And prey, what came out (from the cupboard), a mouse?' (page 199)

Mr. Humphreys and his Inheritance

Mr. Humphreys has inherited a property from an uncle: 'neither the property nor the uncle had he ever seen.' (page 219)

Mr. Cooper, the property's bailiff, has gone to the train station to pick up Mr. Humphreys.

Soon after arriving at the house, Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Cooper start an exploration of the property. Mr. Humphreys enters into the maze or labyrinth, where he finds a strange sundial. But the first impression is wrong, instead of a sundial on the top there is a stone column with a metal globe engraved with figure of the patriarchs of evil.

The desecration of the maze follows a series of strange events.

When Mr. Humphreys is tracing a maze's plan, he finds a dot or a hole on the plan:

'An ugly black spot about the size of a shilling. Ink? No.

It resembles a hole, but how should a hole be there? ...

It seemed to go not only through the paper, but through the table ... and through the floor below that, down, and still down, even into infinite depths.' (page 269) and 'far, far down there was a movement, and the movement was upwards - towards the surface. ... waving black arms prepared to clasp the head that was bending over them.' (page 270)

Quid multa?

I didn't believe in ghosts, not until I became one.

Tonk82 says

Este segundo libro de M.R. James me ha resultado bastante mas irregular que el primero. Mientras que en

aquel costaba encontrar una historia mediocre o normalita sin más, aquí si pasa unas cuantas veces. No es, desde luego, por falta de ideas, sino más bien la ejecución y el tipo de historia hacia donde se va orientando.

Hay un fuerte componente moral en varios de los relatos y no puedo evitar la sensación de que a veces ha sido conservador de más. Lo que si contiene son tres historias de nivel superior, totalmente a la altura del volumen previo.

- "A School Story": Me gustan las historias donde una persona cuenta un "suceso extraño" a un colega. Esta es muy sencilla, pero esta muy eficazmente realizada. El final es algo previsible. 3.5/5

- "The Rose Garden": De momento, la única historia de James que no me ha gustado en absoluto. Me hizo gracia el intercambio que tiene el matrimonio al comienzo, pero narrativamente es una historia algo mediocre. El climax es poco efectivo y en general es todo algo cofuso. Bastante torpe. 1.5/5

- "The Tractate Middoth": Otra de estas historias que es más como una película de suspense e intriga, que un relato de terror propiamente dicho. Es muy entretenido, pero no me ha dejado demasiado poso. 3/5

- "Casting the Runes": Un clásico, con un par de escenas realmente inquietantes en su desarrollo (ese espectáculo a los niños, esa escena en la biblioteca) y un tramo final que se desenvuelve casi como una película de suspense. Tremendamente eficaz. 4.5/5

- "The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral": La obra maestra de este libro, en mi opinión. Una historia sobre oscuros pasados, una imponente catedral y una atmósfera espectacular. 5/5

- "Martin's Close": Creo que es la historia más claramente humorística de todas, sobre un caballero en un juicio, acusado de matar a una jovencita. Esta narrado a través de una transcripción del propio juicio. Esta bien, pero no me ha parecido nada fuera de lo normal. 3/5

- "Mr Humphreys and His Inheritance": Es más largo de lo que debería, y tiene una simbología muy obtusa... pero lo compensa de sobra con una idea brillante (el laberinto) y con una de las escenas más espectaculares que he leido de James (un agujerito, que crea una poderosa imagen). 4.5/5

Creo que con esto ya he leido la mitad de la obra de MR James en el libro "The penguin complete ghost stories of MR James". Bastantes anticuarios y fantasmas quedan por delante.

Harsh Kumar says

An excellent collection of short classic ghost stories. Ghost stories of an antiquary and this second volume are both very fine. Each and every story has a very perfect logical and terrifying ending. Much better stories than the stories in Stephen King's Skeleton Crew.

Oscar says

Como venía diciendo en 'Historias de fantasmas de un anticuario', M.R. James es todo un maestro escribiendo cuentos, concretamente relatos de fantasmas victorianos. 'Más historias de fantasmas de un

'anticuario' incluye siete historias de igual calidad que aquélla, fantásticamente escritas y construidas, con argumentos muy interesantes, intrigantes y estremecedores.

Estos son los siete relatos que contiene:

- **UNA HISTORIA ESCOLAR.** Dos amigos están charlando sobre los viejos tiempos escolares, y caen en la cuenta de las pocas historias ambientadas en colegios que existen. Entonces, uno de ellos le relata un caso que sucedió en su colegio hace treinta años... Sencillamente maravilloso.
- **LA ROSALEDA.** La señora Anstruther está empeñada en plantar una rosaleda en las afueras de su finca, un terreno donde hubo un cenador, ahora destruido, y donde también hay un viejo poste. Detrás de todo esto se oculta una vieja historia...
- **EL TRATADO MIDDOTH.** El señor Garrett, bibliotecario, atiende un buen día al señor John Eldred, que desea saber si tienen cierto libro. Este simple hecho occasionará una serie de aventuras y desventuras a Garrett, algunas terroríficas, que nunca hubiese imaginado... Imprescindible.
- **EL MALEFICIO DE LA RUNAS.** Una Asociación recibe continuas cartas del señor Karswell para que le dejen dar una conferencia sobre alquimia. Pero al secretario de dicha Asociación, y al señor Dunning, experto en el tema, les parece de pésima calidad y deniegan su petición. Pero Karswell es más insistente, y vengativo, de lo que creen... Gran historia.
- **LOS SITIALES DE LA CATEDRAL DE BARCHESTER.** El protagonista de esta historia está intrigado por una noticia que ha leído en la sección necrológica, en la que se anuncia el fallecimiento del doctor en teología y arcediano John Haynes en extrañas circunstancias. Tanto es así, que seguirá profundizando en la investigación, encontrando una caja de diarios y papeles... Muy buena historia.
- **EL CERCADO DE MARTIN.** El protagonista, de viaje unos días por cierta localidad, está dando un paseo con el rector de la parroquia, y con John Hill, carpintero, llevándole ambos a visitar un extraño cercado con una misteriosa historia tras él. Resulta que allí fue ejecutado un preso, acusado de asesinar a una joven. El protagonista, intrigado, seguirá investigando en viejos archivos para conocer toda la historia... Fascinante relato.
- **EL SEÑOR HUMPHREYS Y SU HERENCIA.** El señor Humphreys llega a Wilsthorpe tras recibir una inesperada herencia de un tío al que nunca conoció. Se trata de toda una mansión, con jardines y bosques, incluso con su propio laberinto, lugar éste que el fallecido dueño tenía totalmente vetado a todo el mundo; ahora está completamente lleno de hierbajos y matorrales, algo que va a durar poco tiempo... Buen historia.

Eggp says

Nice enough old guy
but the cat knows what he did
killing for the church.
