



The Colour Out of Space

H.P. Lovecraft

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'It was a monstrous constellation of unnatural light, like a gluttoned swarm of corpse-fed fireflies dancing hellish sarabands over an accursed marsh...'

H.P. Lovecraft was perhaps the greatest twentieth century practitioner of the horror story, introducing to the genre a new evil, monstrous, pervasive and unconquerable. At the heart of these three stories are terrors unthinkable and strange: a crash-landing meteorite, the wretched inhabitant of an ancient castle and a grave-robber's curse. This book includes "The Colour Out Of Space", "The Outsider" and "The Hound".

The Colour Out of Space Details

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Baal Of says

This is the Lovecraft that I really like. The language on this is overwrought, but at the same time so beautiful. I like the slow creeping dread of the meteorite that gradually poisons everything around it, and drains everything of color. This story contains some of key components of Lovecraft mythology, i.e. the gradual descent into madness, and the inability of people to pull themselves away from the eldritch influences even as they know its horror. I read this in the middle of the night, and it was entirely appropriate for that time.

? Irena ? says

4.5

I loved this story.

A surveyor comes to the valley near Arkham to check the land for the new reservoir. People in Arkham tell him that the place is evil. At first he thinks it is just plain old superstition. Nothing grows there. After he sees it though he 'marvelled no more at the frightened whispers of Arkham people'.

And that's even before he finds someone to tell him the whole story about what happened in the past when a whole 'family had disappeared or was killed'. He is very curious to find out what the phrase 'strange days' mean. He soon realizes that the horrible thing in the old days happened in 'the lifetime of those who spoke' and after too many warnings not to listen to Ammi Pierce's crazy stories, he decides to talk to Ammi.

After he finds out what actually happened, the surveyor quits his job praying that the water would destroy anything that might be in that valley.

The first part of the story is told in the first person. Ammi's story is in the third.

Stephanie Campi says

Un cuento interesante, que podría haber tenido más de terror pero estuvo muy abocado a la investigación científica. Me gusta la forma de escritura de Lovecraft aunque creo que voy probar otras historias para conocerlo.

Aenna says

My first attempt on H.P Lovecraft. A three-story book, this seems like a sampler for me. This book consists of Lovecraft's short stories: The Colour Out of Space, The Outsider and The Hound.

I am glad that this didn't fail my expectations of Lovecraft. Carefully written, with vivid details on the imagery, and dark appeal, this can give you goosebumps. The stories are creepy, but not the kind that can

make you scream. But it's a page-turner, and the voice of the storyteller is perfect for a dark, gothic storytelling.

This book is a good start for me to continue on my next book of his.

Amy (Other Amy) says

It was not a matter of old legendry at all, but something within the lifetime of those who spoke. It had happened in the 'eighties, and a family had disappeared or was killed. Speakers would not be exact; and because they all told me to pay no attention to old Ammi Pierce's crazy tales, I sought him out the next morning, having heard that he lived alone in the ancient tottering cottage where the trees first begin to get very thick.

To me this reads entirely as camp, and it's camp I love. (I have no doubt whatsoever that Lovecraft was deadly serious about it, though. I was going to plaster photo realistic rainbow fields and forests all over this review, but I will tip my hat to Lovecraft and refrain. The story is sufficiently horrifying in spite of its rainbows of disgusting vegetation.) There's even an almost killer bunny. That said, Lovecraft's writing is awful and he's back to using characters as props to observe the horror as it unfolds rather than allowing them to do anything actual people would do when faced with a threat of this nature. (And the Darwin Award on this entry goes to the entire municipality of Arkham, or at least whoever is in charge of their water and sanitation departments.) By rights this should be two stars, but it made me laugh. Take your three stars and go, Lovecraft.

Daniella Jácome says

4.5

Fantástico. Qué manera tan especial de relatar tiene Lovecraft, me encanta cómo con pocas palabras logra llevar al imaginario cada una de las imágenes relatadas.

Altamente recomendado a todo el que le gusta una buena historia de misterio.

Lyn says

In some ways, if you think about it, The Colour Out of Space could be H.P. Lovecraft's scariest story.

And that is saying a lot.

Published in 1927, this was almost certainly an influence for Stephen King in his story "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verill" which gave rise to King's memorial dramatic performance and his unforgettable line

of “meteor s***” from the 1982 film Creepshow.

Lovecraft describes, in his unmentionable, oldest and strongest, ancient and mysterious, eldritch style of writing how a strange and unworldly meteor crashes into a New England farm and then literally all hell breaks loose.

In classic Lovecraft fashion, he gives the reader a hint of the unknown and lets our fear go on from there.

José says

Lectura del mes del #Clubdelectura.uy.

"This was no breath from the skies whose motions and dimensions our astronomers measure or deem too vast to measure. It was just a colour out of space, a frigthful messenger from unformed realms of infinity beyond all Nature as we know it; from realms whose mere existence stuns the brain and numbs us with the black extra-cosmic gulfs it throws open before our frenzied eyes."

Katy says

Please note: This is part of an omnibus, The Complete Works of H.P. Lovecraft, which can be found on the CthulhuChick website formatted for Nook or Kindle.

My Synopsis: A man tells the story of how a strange, desolate piece of land came to be known as the blasted heath due to the coming of a mysterious meteorite containing a strangely colored globule inside.

My Thoughts: Another masterpiece of creeping horror over the strange and unknown. Some of the descriptions might almost - *almost* - describe radiation poisoning, but not quite.

Lovecraft definitely knows how to build a scene, especially in these works from the height of his career. Check him out if psychological horror is your thing.

Patrick says

I can see why this is Lovecraft's favorite. The way he described the decay of the land and the slow shift to madness was so well written!

Vaishali says

To simplify...

Plot : A meteorite lands in Arkham, Massachusetts; deforms flora and fauna, and makes the sentient insane.

Wow quote : "But even all this was not so bad as the blasted heath. I knew it the moment I came upon it at the bottom of a spacious valley; for no other name could fit such a thing, or any other thing fit such a name."

My thoughts : When it comes to modern New England creep-o-rama, Lovecraft is the man... but favors description over plot. So if you love stories focusing on a slow melt-down of scenery, he's your guy. Me? I'm old-school New England. Gimme witch's cauldrons, colonial cemeteries, and pumpkin patches :)

.

Magrat Ajostiernos says

Da bastante mal rolo para solo tener 30 páginas :O

David Sven says

I listened to this on The SFFAudio podcast. Donal Buckley did a great job with the audio narration - I loved his accent (Irish?).

This was a mix of horror and sci-fi. In 68 minutes Lovecraft (and Buckley) managed to creep me out. Lovecraft masterfully builds tension and suspense and atmosphere. Here Lovecraft doesn't make the mistake of revealing the monster too early and even then he leaves a lot to interpretation. This story employs basic human fears of the unknown and of what lurks in the shadows to generate creep factor.

The subsequent audio discussion was pretty good too.

4 stars

Susana says

(review in English below)

Não achei grande piada à história, que versa uma série de acontecimentos trágicos e misteriosos numa zona rural após a queda dum meteorito.

Mas gostei imenso da forma como é contada, através duma escrita muito evocativa e visual, que consegue realmente transmitir uma sensação de inquietude desde o início. Tive de ir pesquisar várias palavras, o que é sempre bom para aumentar o vocabulário e também fiquei a saber quem foram Salvator Rosa e Henry Fuseli e o que são estruturas de Widmanstätten! Nada mau para um conto de 20 páginas!

I didn't think much of the story, which tells us about a series of tragic and mysterious events that occurred in

a rural area after the fall of a meteorite.

I really liked the way it was told, though. The writing is highly evocative and visual, effectively conveying a feeling of uneasiness from the beginning. I had to look up several words - always a good thing, to increase my vocabulary - and I also came to know about Salvator Rosa and Henry Fuseli and Widmanstätten patterns! Not bad for a 20 page short story!

Bill Kerwin says

West of Arkham the hills rise wild, and there are valleys with deep woods that no axe has ever cut.

Thus, with the finest opening sentence in the Lovecraft canon, the “The Color Out of Space” begins.

This story, the last Lovecraft wrote during the remarkable ten-month spurt of creativity that spanned the years 1926 and ‘27, is a culmination of sorts. During this period, H.P. had refined the art of horrific description, dispensing with the unnecessary adjectives and overwrought prose which often detracts from the power of his effects. Now, in “The Color Out of Space,” he set out to induce terror *almost entirely by description alone*. No forbidden books, no repulsive idols, no sinister dark men with deevolutionary faces; no, this time he would terrify through something simple and pervasive, through the use of *color* alone.

Lovecraft who wanted to write an outer space story but was determined to avoid the “bug-eyed monster” cliché. who wished to create an extraterrestrial invader who was essentially, utterly alien, had lately been reading about the scientific detection of colors outside the spectrum which can be viewed by the human eye. Yes, *color*, if it were uncanny, could surely terrify.

The story itself is simple: one night, a meteor lands on Nahum Gardner’s farm, and things begin to change. The farm does not, at first, look all that different. But the colors of the crops, the vegetation, the trees . . . well, they’re just not *right*.

There is not much explicit horror here (although a horrific fate is implied for Nahum’s wife Nabby), but the accumulation of suggestion and oblique narrative make “The Color of Space” one of the most unsettling of all Lovecraft works.

The effect of the descriptive details is subtle and cumulative, but I would like to include one small passage as an example. In the summer, the fruit harvest on Nahum's farm is unusually bountiful, but the individual fruits are monstrous and inedible. Then, when winter comes, the neighbors begin to realize there is something wrong with the animals that inhabit the property too:

In February the McGregor boys from Meadow Hill were out shooting woodchucks, and not far from the Gardner place bagged a very peculiar specimen. The proportions of its body seemed slightly altered in a queer way impossible to describe, while its face had taken on an expression which no one ever saw in a woodchuck before. The boys were genuinely frightened, and threw the thing away at once, so that only their grotesque tales of it ever reached the people of the countryside. But the shying of the horses near Nahum’s house had now become an acknowledged thing, and all the basis for a cycle of whispered legend was fast taking form.

Oh, I almost forgot! The Good News: "The Colour out of Space" was published in Hugo Gernsback's legendary science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*. (September 1927). The Bad News: Gernsback paid 1/5th of a cent per word. Lovecraft earned \$25 (approximately \$350 in today's money) for the story, and never submitted anything to *Amazing* again.

Simon says

Another re-read for me. One of Lovecraft's finest stories that is perfectly paced and with a great build up and release of tension at the end.

A meteor lands in a farmer's land in a rural backwater in New England. It has exceedingly strange properties that baffle scientists and gradually has a strange and insidious effect on the surrounding area.

Definitely recommended for those new to Lovecraft, especially if you're already inclined to read SF.

Rose says

This was my very first (and as of this date, only) H.P. Lovecraft I have ever read. Considering my reading history, you would have thought I would have at least a few of them under my belt by now but I was avoiding him.

When I was fairly young, there was a show on TV that was about Lovecraft. I wasn't really watching that show but in those days there were only a couple of channels and I just happened to flip to it and watched a few minutes. I was freaked out. I was totally and completely turned off of him and never forgot his name. Keep in mind, this was also around the same age that I ate a grilled cheese sandwich, got the flu and subsequently didn't eat another for 15 years.

I'm glad I got over it because he was a good writer. Considering almost a century has passed, I didn't really find it to be overly dated. Thinking back on the story, I guess the alien was the colour itself (as implied by the title) but it really felt like we never got to see the actual alien. While reading, I was reminded of *Roadside Picnic* - you see the aftermath but never the alien that caused the problems.

If you've been putting off Lovecraft, this may be a good one to start with. It was short but very good. I really enjoyed it.

Jerry Jose says

'The Blasted heath' is a vacant, almost shunned deep wood valley by the West Hills of rural New England, a place no good for imagination with its withered vegetation and evasively muttered local legends. This novella, like atavistic *Arkham* mysteries, takes reader through the narrative of an unnamed outsider, in his quest to understand the queer happenings of *Gardner Estate*, following a meteorite fall.

The monster or alien or other dimensional entity in this book, is a colour, or takes the form of a colour, a colour unknown to us, and not of our cosmos.

In *Lovecraftian* horror, the little details that are left out for reader's imagination usually embellish the ones that form the premise. Considering the time of publication(1927), I was amazed at the metallurgical details author put on that other worldly meteorite - a soft, ductile non homogeneous shrinking mass completely in contradiction with every definition. *Miskatonic University* analysis of the specimen, is said to have concluded traces of 'Widmanstätten ferrite' in its texture along with strong 'silicon' affinity and other unfathomable properties. Interestingly enough, the iron ore content goes well with frequent lightening at crate and Silicon, the semiconductor material, could, though arguably, give some scientific side to the strange colours. And the effect of 'colour' and meteorite to the surroundings and inhabitants, though archaically, draws close parallelism with modern day nuclear holocaust. Seemingly prophesying HPL was keen to leave the 'unknown factor' in a rather clever manner with protagonist's outsider pov. Never are the readers credited with the authenticity of 'strange days', and *Amni Pierce*, the sole inhabitant and spectator of the incident, for all we know is an unreliable narrator. Nevertheless, in all its openness and reticent narrative, *The Colour out of Space* had my preponderant attention buoyed up.

Though it should have been the other way around, 'the blasted heath' and Gardner Estate constantly reminded me of *Mirkwood* from *Stranger Things* and *Keyhouse* from *Locke and Key*. And the strangest part was, as usual, me being more immersed in Howard's word flow and writing, than the creeping alien horror this story is famous for.

Joey Woolfardis says

A longer short story from Lovecraft this time and quite possibly the best I've read (actually it is the best I've read, but I've only read two others). A meteor crashes down to earth on some farmstead and thus proceeds to infect all around it with its out-of-this-world eerie qualities.

It becomes apparent that, much like Shelley and her Frankenstein's creation, we don't get told everything. Things happen, but no details come forth. It is implied strongly, with language and rhetoric I've not come across before, but it isn't obvious what is happening all of the time.

This was written at a time when science wasn't quite there for the fiction. This is early sci-fi dressed up as gothic horror. The mix of attempted sci-fi and eldritch horror is a good combination that *Alien* vs. *Predator* could never capture. It's quite something and it's very intriguing. Mr. Lovecraft has me hooked.

Teresa says

Un relato de apenas 35 páginas pero que ha conseguido hacerme estremecer y sentir miedo. Totalmente recomendable para amantes del género del terror.
