

Dark Adventure Radio Theatre

The Players

Aidan Branney Darrell, Soldier
Sean Branney Gordon Stuart
Kacey Camp Harriet Bacon, Mrs. Kelly
Mark Colson Phineas Bacon
Dan Conroy Erskine Blackwell, Kid O'Brien, Mr. Conroy
Andrew Leman Herbert West
Barry Lynch Hiram Taft, Policeman
David Pavao Mr. Salamon, Phil, Leavitt, Newsreader
Kevin Stidham Jeffrey, Wojochowski, Clapham-Lee, Medic
Josh Thoenke Announcer
Sarah Van der Pol Newsboy, Nurse Ritz
Time Winters Dr. Allan Halsey, Mayor Peabody, Kaminski

Students/Workers/Soldiers/Zombies Scott Barber,
John Bladec, Dee Calhoun, David G. Cercone II, Mike Dalager,
Matt Foyer, Jess Gulbranson, Martin Holt, Catherine Jones,
Thomas Nichol, Tobias Nilsson, Eric Ohrt, Sam Francis Page,
Mike Testerman, Tom Woodger, & Jim Vincent

The Staff

Based on the story by H. P. Lovecraft
Radio Adaptation by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman
Original Music by Reber Clark
Dark Adventure Theme by Troy Sterling Nies
"Onward Miskatonic" by Reber Clark and Andrew Leman
"Rock of Ages" by Augustus Toplady and Thomas Hastings
"Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life" by Victor Herbert
"Over There" by George M. Cohan
Audio Engineering by Chris Horvath
Cover, Disc, and West Notebook Illustrations by Darrell Tutchton
Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman and Sean Branney
Technical Advisors: Hannah Rose Greenberg and Ken Baldwin, Ph.D.
Thanks to Arlene Doucette of the Canadian War Museum
Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman



ENTIRE ORIGINAL CONTENTS AND PACKAGING © & © MMVIII BY HPLHS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORIZED DUPLICATION IS A VIOLATION OF APPLICABLE AND FREQUENTLY BROKEN LAW. THIS AUDIO PROGRAM IS LICENSED ONLY FOR PRIVATE HOME ENJOYMENT, AND IS, PERHAPS IRONICALLY, NOT INTENDED FOR ACTUAL RADIO BROADCAST.

But first, a few words from our sponsor....

Herbert West—Reanimator is perhaps the most improbable of Lovecraft's well-known stories. Thanks to the Stuart Gordon film, *Re-Animator*, it might be Lovecraft's most famous work. The low-budget 1985 comedy/horror movie became a cult classic, and still ranks on *Entertainment Weekly's* list of Top 50 Cult Films. But while it may have introduced a new generation of fans to H. P. Lovecraft, and delighted audiences worldwide (including us) for decades, the film is a very liberal adaptation of Lovecraft's original tale. It keeps the main character and some elements of his morbid adventures, but otherwise the movie departs rather widely from the plot and tone of the story. But maybe that is fitting, since the story itself departs rather widely from most of the rest of Lovecraft's literary career.

In the fall of 1921, Lovecraft was asked to contribute a serialized horror story for a fledgling humor magazine called *Home Brew*. That alone seems like an improbable assignment for the serious-minded Lovecraft, but the pay was decent and he took the commission. He described the process of writing the story as "manifestly inartistic" as he drags "one figure through a series of artificial episodes." But he completed the task, and the story was published in six installments under the title "Grewsome Tales". The story generally flies in the face of the principal goal to which Lovecraft aspired in his fiction: evoking a sense of horror through atmosphere rather than action. Lovecraft also professed to have little interest in the human characters in his stories, but with Dr. West he created a vivid, enduring character with a real — if perverse — psychology. HPL did an admirable job of breaking his own rules, and in so doing created a lurid and action-packed tale which is the quintessence of "pulp fiction." While Lovecraft himself might not have had a very high opinion of the result, he did create at least one thing of value in its pages to which he would return time and again in better work: this story features the first mention of Miskatonic University.

Lovecraft clearly did his homework, and as a result many of his science fiction stories are eerily prescient. At the *Mountains of Madness* predicted some cutting-edge science being conducted on the Antarctic continent even now. The high-level interdimensional mathematics imagined for "The Dreams in the Witch House" seem to be manifesting in contemporary physics surrounding multi-dimensional string theory. And in the mad science of Herbert West one hundred years ago, Lovecraft nearly stumbles into the notion of stem cell research "in the form of never-dying, artificially nourished tissue." Crazy as West's theories may be, Lovecraft backs them up with just enough real biology to make them seem tantalizingly plausible.

It is perhaps regrettable that this particular story has turned out to be one of Lovecraft's most famous, because it's also one of his most blatantly racist: the third chapter is especially cringe-worthy that way. Lovecraft's intolerant views softened over the years as he matured and traveled and met a wider array of people, but there's no denying that there's an ugly amount of casual bigotry in his earlier work. In adapting the story for our listening audience, we decided it was best not to whitewash it. In fact, we decided to make a point of it. Since this story was always meant to be a "black comedy," we decided to make a twisted joke out of the political incorrectness.

Although HPL felt himself reduced to "unimaginative hack work" with *Herbert West—Reanimator*, the story has an enduring legacy with regards to Lovecraft's place in popular culture. We hope you'll listen to the bonus track and join us in singing "Onward Miskatonic! On to victory!" and we hope you find that the *Dark Adventure Radio Theatre* treatment given to Dr. West and his friends/victims will prove... (cue dramatic music) ...fresh enough!

—SB & AHL



WWW.CTHULHULIVES.ORG
LUDD FORE PUTAVIMUS