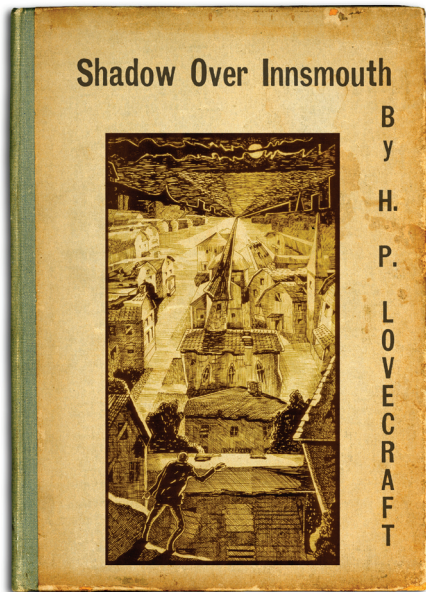


Dark Adventure Radio Theatre



Replica of the cover of the 1936 book edition of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, illustrated by Frank Utpatel. Only two hundred copies were printed, and HPL praised Utpatel's drawings as the "one redeeming feature" of what he considered to be otherwise a rather shoddy publication.

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The Players

Leslie Baldwin	Operator
Sean Branney	Station Agent, Creepy Customer
Kacey Camp	Anna Tilton
Mark Colson	Gilman House Clerk, Rude Passenger
Dan Conroy	Agent McGraw
Steve Coombs	Grocery Store Clerk
Matt Foyer	Robert Olmstead
McKerrin Kelly	Librarian
Andrew Leman	Nathan Reed, Joe Sargent, Uncle Walter
Barry Lynch	Zadok Allen
John A. McKenna	E. Lapham Peabody, Evil-Looking Man
Josh Thoemke	Announcer, Bank Clerk
Noah Wagner	Chester Langfield
John Callaghan	
David G. Cercone	2
Reber Clark	
Kevin Dole	
Nick Pendleton	Croaking Deep Ones

The Staff

Based on the story by H. P. Lovecraft
 Radio Adaptation by Sean Branney, with Andrew Leman
 Original Music by Troy Sterling Nies
 Cover and Disc Illustrations by Darrell Tutchton
 Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman, with Sean Branney
 Innsmouth Tiara Illustration by Keith Thompson
 Thanks to David Pavao, John Holman and S. T. Joshi

Very Special Thanks to Chris Horvath

Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman



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 LUDO FORE PUTAVIMUS

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

I certainly hope you get to see Newburyport sooner or later, for its antiquity and desolation make it one of the most spectrally fascinating spots I have ever seen. It has started me off on a new story idea...

—Letter from HPL to Clark Ashton Smith,
 November 20, 1931.

"The Shadow Over Innsmouth" is one of H.P. Lovecraft's most beloved weird tales. It features many classically "Lovecraftian" elements, but also explores territory unique to itself. Its protagonist, Robert Olmstead (whose name comes from Lovecraft's notes, though it is never specified in the finished story), slowly uncovers latent horrors in a decaying New England town. The discovery exposes him to unimaginable forces that cause him to flee with his sanity in tatters. The story fits into the greater context of the Cthulhu Mythos but creates its own sub-mythology of the Deep Ones and their existence in the sea's abyssal depths. While the horror here is not as far-reaching as many Lovecraft stories, it still puts humanity in its place as a relatively recent and feeble race on earth. And yet, as with "The Shadow Out of Time," the protagonist's journey is simultaneously both cosmic and deeply personal. Olmstead's own role in the unfolding story provides the final, terrible moment of the tale.

The setting of Innsmouth was inspired by Lovecraft's second visit to Newburyport, Massachusetts in 1931. By November he was working on the story, and he finished it in December. He executed four full drafts of the tale, but in writing about it to his colleagues he displayed nothing but dissatisfaction with his manuscript. "I don't intend to offer 'The Shadow Over Innsmouth' for publication," he said in a letter to his friend August Derleth, "for it would stand no chance of acceptance. ...It has all the defects I deplore..." Derleth attempted to have it published in *Weird Tales* without Lovecraft's knowledge, but it was rejected until an abridged version was printed in the magazine in the early 1940s. Meanwhile, it was issued as a slim book in its own right, becoming the only one of HPL's tales to be published as a book during his

lifetime — though only a disappointing 200 copies of the Visionary Publishing Company edition were ever printed. The sad irony is that the tremendous popularity of the story in the modern age has led to its adaptation for multiple films, many books, games, songs, and even a Broadway-style musical that we cannot and must not discuss.

Lovecraft drew inspiration for the story from his visit to the region and Robert W. Chambers' "The Harbor-Master" and Irvin Cobb's "Fishhead." Innsmouth itself was created by HPL, though it borrowed elements from Newburyport and Gloucester, actual cities on the Massachusetts coast not far from where fictitious Innsmouth was located. Lovecraft provided ample detail about the town as he described Olmstead's journey through the place. Ultimately, Innsmouth embodies many of Lovecraft's personal fears: the decay and decline of New England's once-great aristocracy, looming hereditary madness, monstrous miscegenation, and, of course, the smell of fish (HPL abhorred seafood and its odor).

The First National grocery chain mentioned in the story is now defunct, but in 1931 it had stores throughout New England, and the fish-scented map included with the CD features an authentic replica of the company's logo, just as Lovecraft might have seen it. Likewise, the prop newspaper clipping is a detailed re-creation of the *New York Evening Graphic*, a real tabloid from Lovecraft's day, infamous for its lurid stories and made-up photographs.

In our effort to make a compelling radio drama, we have once again taken a few liberties with the story (and rather more significant ones than usual, we must confess). We hope we've hewn true enough to the original so that our listeners will find our liberties to be enjoyable bonuses rather than distractions from the tale. Poor Robert Olmstead is predestined to be sucked into the story of Innsmouth, and eventually he becomes a part of the horror. We hope our listeners may find they too are strangely drawn to—and never quite released by—the shadow over Innsmouth.

—Sean Branney
 HPLHS

