

# Dark Adventure Radio Theatre

## The Players

Leslie Baldwin ..... Mrs. Ward  
Aidan Branney ..... Mr. Jackson  
Sean Branney .... Wooten, Capt. Whipple, Robertson, Thackeray  
Mark Colson ..... John Brown, Herman Younger  
Dan Conroy ..... Erskine Blackwell, Ezra Weeden  
Mike Dalager ..... Eleazar Smith, Fifer, Gomes  
Matt Foyer .... Sterling, Fenner, Duty Tillinghast, Talbot, Lunatic  
Andrew Graves ..... Dr. Lyman, Merritt  
Maeve Kiely ..... Eliza Tillinghast  
Andrew Leman ... Mr. Ward, Stephen Hopkins, Peabody, Alienist  
Barry Lynch ..... Dr. Marinus Bicknell Willett  
Erin Noble ..... Mrs. Fenner, Mrs. Jackson  
David Pavao ..... Rev. Manning, Snyder  
Kevin Stidham ... Charles Dexter Ward/Dr. Allen/Joseph Curwen  
Josh Thoenke ..... Announcer  
Time Winters ..... Dr. Waite, Jabez Bowen

Old Providence Raiders/Crypt Creatures: ..... Dee Calhoun,  
David G. Cercone II, Reber Clark,  
Jonathan Crimmins, Martin Holt, & Catrin Jones

## 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  
Audio Engineering by Chris Horvath  
Cover and Disc Illustrations by Darrell Tutchton  
Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman, with Sean Branney  
Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman



A jar of Essential Saltes

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

**"I have brought to light a monstrous abnormality, but I did it for the sake of knowledge."**

*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is unique among Lovecraft's stories. Originally entitled "The Madness Out of Time," it was written in 1927, shortly after he returned to his native Providence after two bitterly unhappy years in New York City. It is the longest single piece of fiction he ever wrote and is a favorite of many fans, yet Lovecraft himself never cared for the story, describing it in a letter to Robert H. Barlow as a "cumbrous, creaking bit of self-conscious antiquarianism." He did not actively pursue its publication: in fact the story's 147 page handwritten manuscript was never even typed during his lifetime. An abridged version of it was published in *Weird Tales* in 1941, and the full version was published in Arkham House's collection *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* in 1943.

One of the qualities that makes it stand out from his other works is how much of Lovecraft himself shines through into the story. Here HPL relishes one of his favorite moments in history: the world of pre-Revolutionary New England. He explores the themes of deathlessness, forbidden knowledge and ancestral guilt. He brings in occult elements which pave the way for "The Dunwich Horror" and initiate the "Yog Sothothery" of his future work. And more than any other story of his, *Ward* is a love letter to his beloved home town of Providence.

*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is uncommonly revealing of Lovecraft himself on a subjective level as well. The story's protagonist, Dr. Willett, is an archetype of the New England academic who appears in so many of Lovecraft's tales (Armitage, Wilmarth, Angell, etc...), but there can be little doubt that HPL identified with him personally: Dr. Willett's address is given in the story as 10 Barnes Street, which happens to be the Providence address where Lovecraft himself lived at the time. But the character who really drives the story's plot is young

Charles Dexter Ward, and in him there's clearly a shadowy reflection of HPL. Charles is a precocious lad, brimming with a fiery intellect and antiquarian interests, much like young Lovecraft. Charles' mental decline befalls him late in his high school years and lasts into his early 20s: Lovecraft himself suffered some kind of nervous collapse in the years 1908-1913 which caused him to withdraw from high school and live an almost entirely reclusive life from the age of 18 to 23. Charles is enamored with Providence, taking particular delight in its rich history and architecture, just as Lovecraft did. And Charles is haunted by his ancestors, just as Lovecraft was haunted (though not nearly so literally, one hopes) by both his family's prosperous past and the fall of its fortunes during Lovecraft's lifetime.

Perhaps the story's three significant characters can all be seen as reflections of Lovecraft himself. In Charles, we see the author's own youth, whom Lovecraft dispatches in a horrific manner. In Dr. Willett we see Lovecraft as a kindly patrician of Providence, willing to go to great lengths to give aid to his friends. And in the dread Joseph Curwen, we see the Lovecraft who was eager to transcend his physical being and travel unfettered through time and space to acquire knowledge.

While *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* was not among HPL's own favorite works, we find much to enjoy here, and we hope *Dark Adventure Radio Theatre* fans will too. We're excited to feature the music of Reber Clark, which augments the sweeping scope of the tale. Adapting the tale into a two-part episode provides an opportunity to go on a longer journey through the place Lovecraft held most dear, with excursions to the era he loved most of all. And of course there's no shortage of miasmal vapors, nefarious occultists and unspeakable horrors along the way.

—SB & AHL



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