

Dark Adventure Radio Theatre

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

The Players

Leslie Baldwin	Augusta Corlear
Sean Branney	Detective Malone, Captain Falmouth
Kacey Camp	Myrna, Old Woman
Dan Conroy	Erskine Blackwell
Mike Dalager	Loathsome Immigrant, Bourgos' Brother,
	Asif, High Priest
Lucas Dixon	Agent Sutter, First Mate Pimm
Matt Foyer	Second Mate Morgan, Asif
Andrew Leman	Maurice VanBrunt, Policeman, Dr. Colson
Jacob Andrew Lyle	Jimmy the Snitch, Vile Foreigner,
	Horrible Child
Barry Lynch	Sarge McKenna, Robert Suydam
John A. McKenna	John, Capt. O'Hara, Wild Bill Lovett
Kevin Stidham	Dr. Peterson, Officer Perkins
Josh Thoenke	Announcer
Time Winters	Dr. Lieber
Cultists	
Tamara Hembree, Ruth Horne, TK Jusola-Sanders, Umberto Lenzi, Tobias Nilsson, James Vincent and Tom Woodger	

The Staff

Based on the story by H. P. Lovecraft
Radio Adaptation by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman
Original Music by Troy Sterling Nies
"Bub-L-Pep" jingle written by Andrew Leman,
arranged and performed by Harold Lindell and Kathleen Demarest
Audio Engineering by Daniel McMains
Engineering Assistance by Adam Pardee
Cover and Disc Illustrations by Darrell Tutchton
Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman and Sean Branney
Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman

Age-old horror is a hydra with a thousand heads.



Illustration by Jon Arfstrom from the March, 1952 publication of "The Horror in Red Hook" in *Weird Tales*.

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"The Horror at Red Hook" is one of HPL's most maligned stories. Modern readers tend to find the story's flagrant racism repulsive, and hate to see such an ugly fault in one of our literary heroes. The story itself is not HPL's most original or best executed. Esteemed Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi refers to it as "one of the poorest of his longer efforts," and laments the story's "perfidious rhetoric." Even Lovecraft himself didn't think it was very good.

But it is, at heart, a detective story — and a rather pulpy one at that — and we thought that alone could make it a compelling candidate for adaptation to *Dark Adventure Radio Theatre*. With its decayed urban landscape, its lurid plot, and its host of nefarious characters, it seemed to us there was plenty great entertainment to be had, even if the story's literary merits might be lacking.

"The Horror at Red Hook" is a fascinating lens through which to look at Lovecraft himself during one of the most interesting chapters of his life. In the spring of 1924, Lovecraft suddenly moved to New York and married Sonia Haft Greene, a Jewish milliner and businesswoman with whom he'd been exchanging correspondence for some time. Lovecraft's move to New York was perhaps the greatest upheaval of his entire life. Having left behind his beloved Providence, he found himself living in Brooklyn, a borough of New York occupied by immigrants from around the globe. By all accounts, he generally disliked New York and acutely disliked its international population. He believed it was incumbent upon immigrants to learn the customs and language of their new homeland, and was unsettled and offended by those who continued to speak their native languages.

But for all his vitriolic racism, in many ways it was HPL himself who was the immigrant — leaving behind his home "country" of Providence, and living in a community where he was more of an outsider by being a New England gentleman than the countless immigrants who surrounded him. "The Horror at Red Hook" was written in August of 1925. By that time, HPL was living alone in a dismal flat and had suffered a burglary. After less than a year and a half of marriage, his wife had moved to Cincinnati to pursue business opportunities. He was a stranger in a strange land, isolated and miserable.

But the story is not all racism. There's also misogyny. The notably rare appearances of women in Lovecraft's

fiction include the doomed albino Lavinia Whately in "The Dunwich Horror" and the doomed occultist Asenath Waite in "The Thing on the Doorstep." Here, in Lovecraft's only depiction of a female with power, she is the antagonist — and a naked, tittering one at that — Lilith. Nowhere else in HPL's work does there appear a naked woman, and here he makes multiple references to her unclothed phosphorescent form. Further, she is presented as a demon, feasting on the souls of men, and the climax of the horror occurs as the corpse of Robert Suydam is about to be married to this succubus. This overt depiction of female sexuality is unique in his work, and the fact that it was written immediately following his separation from the only woman with whom, presumably, he ever had sexual relations suggests that there were some acute issues there which erupted along with his racist rage as he wrote "The Horror at Red Hook."

The story centers around Yezidi "devil worshippers" who chant quite a number of memorable occult spells. One of those spells was lifted verbatim by Lovecraft from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and the "occult" stuff in the story is a jumbled conflation of Greek, Jewish, Christian, and secular literary traditions all bound together with Middle-Eastern phobia. The actual Yezidis are an ancient people who have been catastrophically misunderstood and villainized throughout history, and who are even now being brutally persecuted by some very real and inarguably evil villains: the "Islamic State."

In adapting this story we make no apologies for its racism, nor attempt to whitewash HPL's attitudes, no matter how much they may break our hearts. Our goal is to let our audiences experience the kind of entertainment which might have been on the airwaves had HPL been writing for the radio. The world of the 1930s, like this story, offered much to like, and much which horrifies us beyond monsters and demons.

—SB & AHL



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