

Lovecraft; A Biography,

L. Sprague De Camp

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Few writers have had more ironic, paradoxical lives that Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), the great horror-fantasy writer of Providence, Rhode Island. Never having a book of his stories published in his lifetime, he became a best seller after his death. Dying in poverty and obscurity, convinced of his own utter failure, he has been hailed not only as the equal of Poe but even as once of the greatest writers of all time. A self-proclaimed misanthrope, he collected a circle of devoted friends, who remember him as one of the kindest, most delightful and most lovable persons they had known. The son of parents both of whom died insane, Lovecraft became a powerful philosophical thinker. A scientific materialist, he embraced pseudoscientific racial theories, only to abandon them in his last years. A poseur who liked to fancy himself as an eighteenth century English gentleman, he condemned poses and affectations in others. A political ultraconservative, he became a Socialist and New Dealer. A man who prided himself on aristocratic reticence, he poured out his inmost thoughts in at least 100,000 letters, making him one of the greatest letter writers of all time. Here is the tale of his weird upbringing; his bizarre habits, preferences, his tragi-comic literary and marital careers; his key role in the origin of science-fiction fandom; and how he worked his nightmares and neuroses into the stories that became a legend after his death.



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