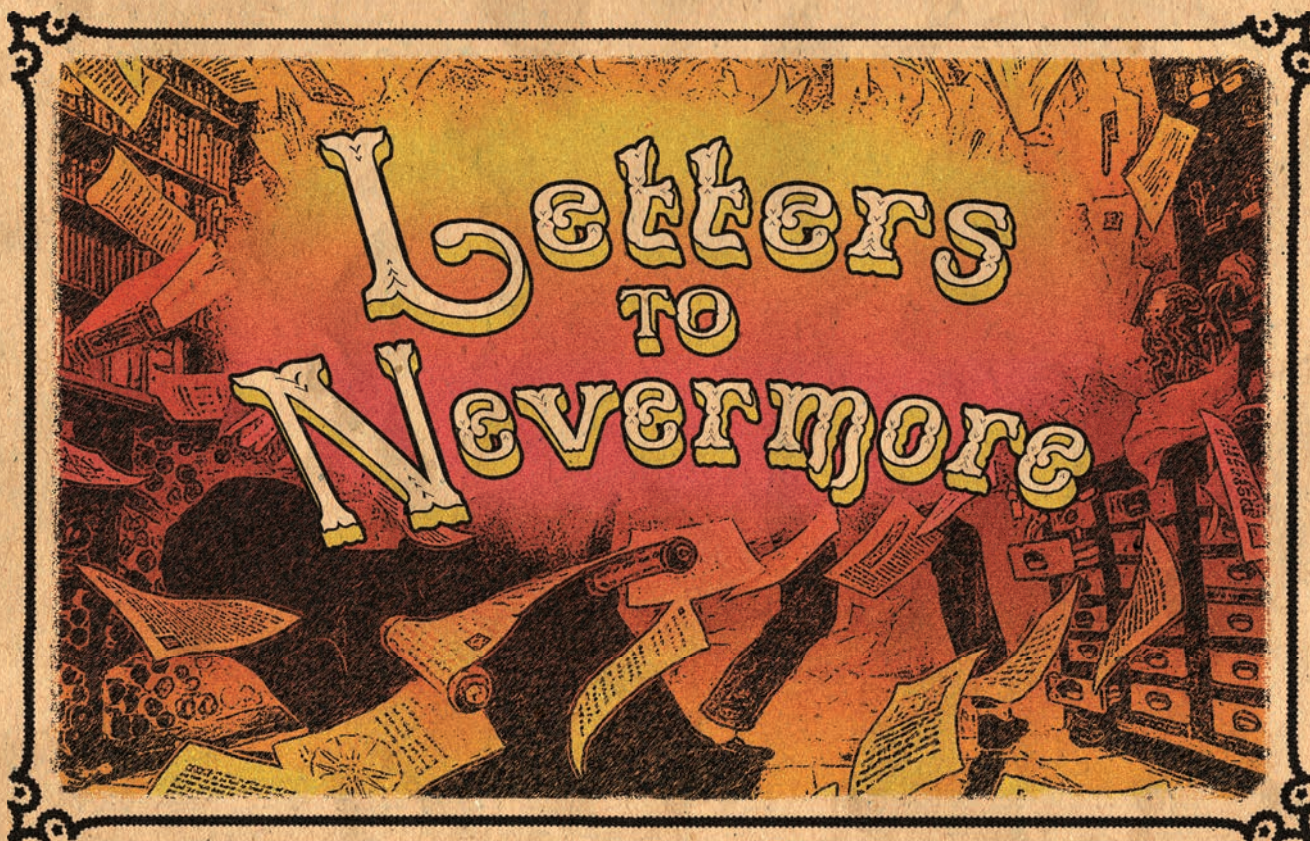


Kindly direct any correspondence to our postal box
(*Tales from Nevermore*, PO Box 20853, Northside,
Arkham, Mass.). We endeavour to publish as many
letters as we're able, and welcome your thoughts!



As our regular readers will be all too aware, the editors of *Tales from Nevermore* welcome correspondence from our readers and fellow enthusiasts for esoteric ephemera. Our burgeoning mailbag usually assures a healthy spread of opinions, ideas and feedback, with a vibrant back-and-forth between regular writers-in. Of course we enjoy the praise most of all!

Forgive us therefore on this occasion, for devoting (almost) all of our segment to a single—indeed—singular correspondent. We salute their passion and contribution. Let it be known that *Nevermore* fears no criticism, and we do our utmost to supply you with tales of phantasmagorical splendor, intrigue and thought-provoking notions. May we at least say here that we have inspired further thoughts...

SOME COMMENTS ON
PETER OSMAN'S
"THE GREEN-EYED SHADOW"

Dear Sir,

It is not often that I am compelled to put nib to paper, or, as in this case, to dictate my feelings, but I felt so strongly about Peter Osman's contribution to the most recent issue of *Tales from Nevermore* that I must steel myself and take you, the esteemed editor, to task for the terribly slipshod—not to say, dangerous—research (and I use the term loosely) displayed in the piece in question. For, ultimately, is it not your responsibility for what appears in print? I think so, and I hope that you will see fit to include this missive in an upcoming issue.

First, let me say that I am quite impressed with the general quality of your fine periodical, and it has become something of a comfort to me in this period of enforced isolation. Though I must admit that I do miss the Dunsanian sword and sorcery tales of the notably absent Virgil Gray, and I hope to see a new story by him in a future issue. Do come back, Mr. Gray—*Tales from Nevermore* needs you now more than ever!

I was also particularly pleased to read the latest installment in Sherwood Caine's Maximilian Rune series, "The Teeth of Theu-

tobochus". The climax was as thrilling as anything yet put to page by Mr. Caine. If men of the enigmatic Rune's caliber truly existed in reality, the shadows of this world might not seem so deep. Please pass along my compliments to Mr. Caine for his attention to detail, particularly in regards to the smell of aged marrow. It is the little things which make the stories come alive.

May I also commend you in continuing to solicit Deidre Sablewind for her artistic contributions. Her photo composition in the December issue, which accompanied

Joanna Taschen's poetry, was sublime in its subtle evocation of Mother Night's dreadful beauty. I am given to understand that there will be an interview with her in an impending issue, and I for one am most excited to read it. I feel quite strongly that Miss

Sablewind and I share an abiding interest in certain unusual phenomena, and I do hope to meet her one day, though I am told by my doctor that this is sadly unlikely.

Now, on to less pleasant matters. Namely the shoddy efforts of the magazine's current bete noire, the infamous Peter Osman. I note I am not the first, nor, I suspect, the last, to direct invective upon the head of the devil Osman.

The man's crimes against the English language are too numerous to list here. Suf-

*"It is the little
things which
make the stories
come alive."*



fice it to say, he is not fit to share a table of contents with luminaries such as Caine or Miss Sheila Watkins. At least their stories are wholly theirs. Take for instance his tale of oriental vampirism, "The Hopping Fiend"—a more sinophobic farce I cannot imagine. Worse, the plot is almost a direct copy of Virgil Gray's infinitely superior "A Shadow in Amoy". Frankly, upon

reading it, I felt ashamed to call myself a subscriber. Indeed, so disappointed was I, that I almost had my subscription cancelled then and there. Or, rather, the institution's subscription.

Or let us consider his jingoistic spook-story, "Walking the Razor Line" (a thinly-veiled retread of Caine's wonderful "The First Case of Maximilian Rune"). As a man who saw his share of butchery at Flanders, I can safely say that Osman has never served a day in uniform in his life. He misidentified ranks, weapons—why, he didn't even know the difference between a salient and an enfilade!

I digress. Osman's regressive views extend to various inoffensive parties including suffragettes, dockworkers and, most perplexingly to me, elevator attendants. I will admit that I am, however, sadly in agreement with him regarding the Belgians. Even so, I cannot help but wonder why such a disagreeable voice continues to appear in your publication. You even gave a scene from his tepid tale of Egyptian woe, "Howl of the Cynocephali" (another liberal borrowing from the Caine backlist, I might add—it lifted whole



passages from "Lord of the Land", which I'm surprised you didn't notice as they were published in back-to-back issues), the coveted cover spot—illustrated by A.L. Whipple no less!

But I do not write simply to vent a general opprobrium upon Osman's deserving head. As I mentioned earlier, others have done so, and at length, in these very pages. No, rather I am writing to address specific concerns regarding Osman's most recent offering to the gods of mediocrity: specifically, his tale, "The Green-Eyed Shadow".

Let me be blunt: this story is, without a doubt, the single most ignorant, wrong-headed, and inept assemblage of vocabulary to ever darken the pages of *Tales from Nevermore*. That your august

publication should stoop to printing such utter twaddle beggars belief. It is, quite simply, the utmost lunacy—and I know from lunacy, let me tell you. Lunacy and I are on speaking terms, you might say. Dr. Fern, who is so kindly taking dictation for this letter, does not like it when I employ such terminology, but needs must.

*"Lunacy and I
are on speaking
terms, you
might say."*

First, the title itself is all wrong. The eyes of the charnel folk—the ghul or ghouls, as some call them—are not green. They are almost always of varying shades of yellow, as any noteworthy scholar will tell you. Having encountered the creatures myself during the

Great War, I can attest to the veracity of this assertion. Yellow eyes—not green! As yellow as those I see in the mirror, on those rare occasions I am allowed the use of one.

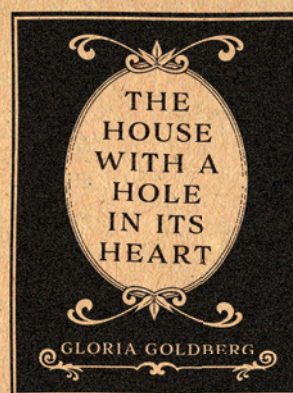


Please make a note of this to pass along to your other authors—save, of course, the inestimable Caine, whose depiction of the monstrous eaters of the dead in “A Song of Bubastis” was quite satisfactory. There is a fellow who does his research!

Next, the appearance of the ghoul-woman, Ashka. While it is distressingly common to find such changelings nestled in the bosom of humanity, they are not creatures of ethereal beauty as Osman so witlessly describes. Quite the opposite, in fact. In my experience, these changelings are often coarse creatures, whose claim on humanity grows ever more threadbare as they age. Nor do the ghul have princesses. Indeed, their society, insofar as I have been able to ascertain, appears to be distressingly socialist in its set-up.

Thirdly, we must look to the matter of their repast, however unpleasant that might be. Osman maintains that the ghul eat only the flesh of the willing; this is an egregious oversimplification of a highly complex system, reminiscent of the witches sabbath as depicted in the works of Margaret Murray. Quite simply, ghouls eat the dead. The dead cannot consent and therefore cannot be said to be willing. Now, in certain cases... but again, I digress. Suffice it to say, Osman struck out on the research front yet again.

I could forgive all of this, had Osman not committed that most grievous of sins: he claimed that the charnel folk were peaceful. That they had no interest in the world of men. A ridiculous notion you'll agree, considering their main source of sustenance, no?



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Even worse, Osman had his narrators insist several times that the ghouls are our secret protectors! That it is only through their beneficence that we—poor, paltry humanity—continue to survive in a world of savage horrors of which we are mercifully ignorant.

If I didn't know better, I'd call it propaganda. Further, as I can find no similar tales in earlier issues, I must ask: from whence did Osman lift this particular narrative? Who told him the story of Ashka, that he so blithely recounts for your readers? For I know the truth of her dalliance with that unfortunate English gentleman, and what awful thing came of it.

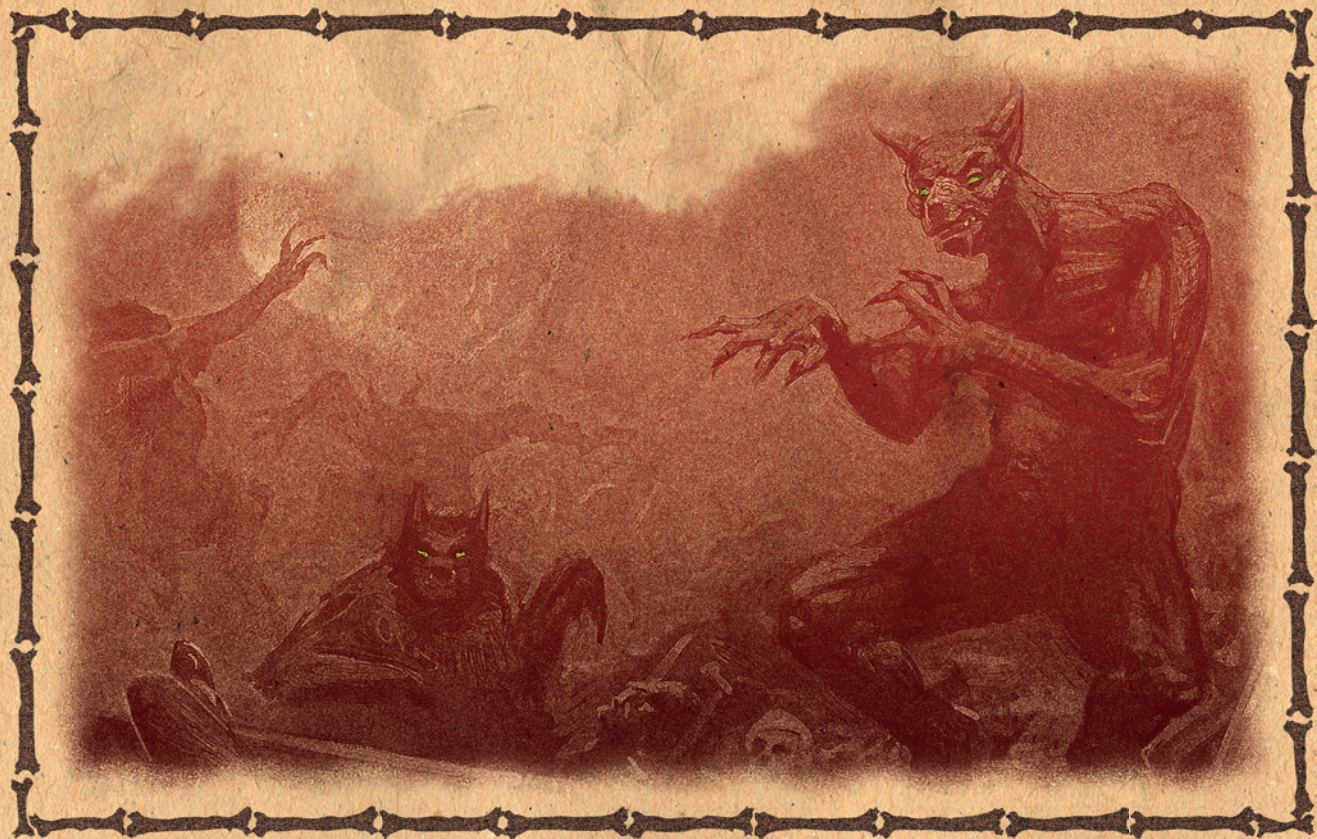
I know, because I have knelt at its feet, and eaten the leavings from its table.

Should the sheep thank the shepherd? The pig, the swineherd? We are meat for the beast, and any kindness they do us is in the name of satiating their awful hunger.

Our hunger.

The world we endure, sir, is a most terrible jungle. But this story is nothing more than an invitation for the gullible to set their heads in the tiger's mouth. Osman must be made to retract his tale, before it convinces the more naïve members of your audience to spend a night in Christchurch Cemetery in hopes of meeting their own ghoul-princess. I expect that is what they wish. The flesh of the willing, you see.

Please do not ignore me, sir. I know



whereof I speak, though I wish I did not. Would that we were all so ignorant as Peter Osman. For in ignorance, there is a sort of safety. I say again, Osman—and *Tales from Nevermore*—must retract this story.

Before it is too late.

Yours,
Philip Drew,
c/o Dr. Carolyn Fern,
Arkham Sanatorium

A BRIGHTER PERSPECTIVE

Sirs,

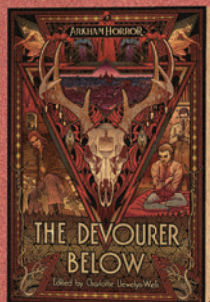
In my first letter to this fine publication, I wish to praise the prose and empathy found in Mr. Osman's "The Green-Eyed Shadow". Osman's ghouls were brought to life with the warmth and good feeling. The world is a wondrous place indeed, filled with peoples of all kinds whose different lifestyles are not always handled with such care and thought.

Is it not past time that employments such as that of the gravedigger, mortician and those of similar industry were treated with respect and appreciation? My thanks to the author for redressing the balance somewhat.

Yours sincerely,
Mr. Helmund
(a green-eyed reader of Arkham)

*Something monstrous
has come to Arkham!*

A nightmare
has fallen
across
Arkham,
and it will
devour all.



Eight tales of
occult horror,
captivating
mystery, and
existential
fear...

*Ghoulish mysteries from
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Josh Reynolds