

ROBERT PHILLIPS



Dark Fire Press

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J. M. DeSANTIS



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J. M. DeSantis

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HPL, REH, AS, and JRRT

About the Book

Originally published in 1943, this book did not see wide circulation and was considered lost shortly after the Second World War. Black Raven Publishing House burned down in January of 1947, with nearly all of its published works, including this one which it would appear sold very few copies. (No doubt contemporary minds were more focused on the War in Europe and its aftermath.) A fair copy was recently rediscovered and is reprinted here in its original form, with all included notes (by BRPH) and letters from the original 1943 edition.

The publisher is indebted to J. M. DeSantis for this discovery and his permission to use his copy to republish the haunting words of Prof. J. Lewis. Thanks also to Susan P. DeSantis, Edmond A. DeSantis, and K. L. Young for their assistance thereof.

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The Account of Robert Phillips

From the papers of former Harvard
Professor John Lewis

John Ambrose Lewis

1943
Black Raven Publishing House

Providence, Rhode Island
United States of America

Prologue

It is with a considerable amount of apprehension that I so much as recall the tale of Robert Phillips, even so many years after his disappearance—despite what the authorities say on the matter.

The reasons for such feelings have nothing whatever to do with the man named here. For a good portion of the time I knew him, Robert was well-reasoning and kind, even if eccentric. Even after that strange madness seemed to take hold of him, I still felt nothing but amiably toward and genuinely concerned for my friend.

Rather it is the very nature of his disappearance, the events which led up to it, the horrifying thing I believe that I witnessed, and the hideous truths I have since learned, which has driven me to the sorry state I now find myself in: no longer a respected professor of History and searching obsessively for any remaining copy of an old and forbidden grimoire in order that I might destroy it, and being hunted unceasingly by members of the cults who follow the teachings of an ancient visionary named Abdul Alhazred.

Despite my passionate and determined course, I fear that in the end, I shall not succeed, so frighteningly fanatical and wide-spread, albeit secretive, are the influences of those Nameless Cults

described in the work of Von Junzt. I even begin to worry that they've men on the faculties of Harvard and Miskatonic, and abroad I'm afraid the mad ravings of an unhinged and disgraced American historian are not taken seriously. Then there were the copies Robert acquired and his work which were never found.

But that there are copies in Argentina, France, and Great Britain (and those are just the ones I am able to confirm), information about Alhazred and his book in the New York Library, an unconfirmed and lost copy of the hideous grimoire in California are enough to confirm that these cults have spread beyond the borders of the Miskatonic River Valley—and indeed they did not even originate there. Then there is the fact that I believe the cultists are closing in on me, despite my nomadic and largely anonymous existence since leaving Harvard and even Massachusetts behind me forever.

What I am here about to confess in detail you will not find much information to corroborate, I fear. The cultists have done their work, and officially it is the accepted position that Robert Phillips moved to Italy some three years ago, despite the absence of other evidence which would confirm that story to hold true. No missing persons report has been filed, and there is no further investigation into the case. In fact, there is no case at all.

Other vague references to cases of about a decade or so before this writing are confirmable to those who do research of their own. I would urge the reader be careful in that research. If they must look further, the disappearances of a Massachusetts artist named Pickman¹, a man from Vermont

1 Richard Upton Pickman was a renowned Boston

named Akeley, many of the locals of a little known town named Innsmouth (outside of the Miskatonic Valley), and a sinister man named Whateley all will lend further credibility to my tale.

That said, I beg you not discredit Robert's story, no matter how weird or seemingly impossible the implications. I swear by any sanity and dignity that I have left that the whole of it is completely true. I am still an historian above all things, and uncovering the truth is ever the principle value of mine.

At the very least, hold all judgment until the bitter end and all the facts are laid bare. Then when you find yourself drawing your own conclusions, even should you find me to be completely mad, I implore you not delve into hidden and darksome things. There are realities within this world which men should rightfully fear even the barest knowledge of, and if you find yourself presented with a translated copy of a book known as *Al-Azif* or *The Necronomicon*, I beg you not to crack open even the cover of the tome and throw it into the fire as soon as you are alone.

In truth I myself have questioned if what I saw in the end were not a mere hallucination or some trick the lights played that night in the old Phillips Manor, yet I cannot, in good faith, ignore how disturbing and real the incident had been at the time, nor what it all but confirmed, not least based upon my experiences with Robert leading up to that horrible night and confirmed by the research I've done since.

Though, perhaps I get ahead of myself. It would

artist, well known for his macabre paintings and who inexplicably disappeared in 1926.

be best to begin my tale with how and when I met Robert, for it will give you a point of reference for how the character of this man of such great potential changed, and to give a clear and stark point of reference before the beginning of my good friend's slow spiral toward his undoing.

It may seem pedantic and trivial, but I wish to describe the full scope of my dealings with Robert. I will attempt to give no conjecture as to events, save for my own feelings at the time. After all, I am an historian by trade, and I wish to give whoever you are who is reading this the barest facts of the case as they were.

Because of the nature of my relationship with Robert, I offer this manuscript in two parts. The first being firsthand accounts of my interactions with Robert whilst we were both students at Mis-katonic University, much written from memory, though a few scenes are directly quoted from the journals I kept between 1931 and 1936, each account written at or about the time of the incidents (and which, as of this writing, I still have in my possession)².

The second half is largely made up of correspondences with Robert, with very few encounters. Where a complete letter is referenced (all twenty-two of them included with this manuscript, and in ascending order of their dates), I will refer to them by the dates in which Robert wrote them and the numbers which I have added to them that they might more easily be referenced and kept in a

2 These journals were never found and were not among the papers of Professor Lewis, else select readings might have been appended to this text.

certain order³. I have no carbon copies of my own letters to Robert.

That said, let us begin.

JAL

3 Because of the nature of this publication, and for the ease of the reader, the editor has included the letters from Robert Phillips directly in the pages at the point of Professor J. Lewis's references, and removed Lewis's written references to the letters' numbers and dates. As for Prof. Lewis's own letters to Mr. Phillips, any attempt to locate them have come up empty and the publisher can only surmise, like the journals (see note 2), they are unrecoverable.

Part I: Miskatonic University

END PREVIEW



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