

## Conan Doyle and the English Ghost Story

- \_\_\_ Ghost stories are among the oldest forms of story.
- \_\_\_ In 1 Samuel, King Saul orders the Witch of Endore to raise the spirit of Samuel.
- \_\_\_ Odysseus visits the Underworld to consult the seer Tiresias.
- \_\_\_ Folklore of most peoples and nations (especially China) include ghost stories.
- \_\_\_ Shakespeare employed ghosts as integral to the plot (no pun intended) in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.
- \_\_\_ Gothic literature of the 18th century featured ghosts among its trappings (ruined castles and cathedrals, evil villains, maidens in distress, fates worse than death), but almost exclusively as decoration.
- \_\_\_ Key works of Gothic: Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1765); Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794); Gregory Lewis, *The Monk* (1796); Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818); Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).
- \_\_\_ Parodies: Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey* (1818); Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818).
- \_\_\_ Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) included a ghost story, "Wandering Willie's Tale," which ACD admired.
- \_\_\_ Charles Dickens domesticated ghosts and moved them center stage with *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and subsequent shorter works. Ghost stories had been most popular during the winter solstice and Christmas for centuries, but Dickens's impact with the *Carol* and subsequent ghost stories at that time of year was so great that the Christmas season became the traditional time for ghost stories, a tradition that continues to this day.
- \_\_\_ Joseph Sheridan le Fanu, an Irish writer, incorporated folk tales, rural settings, and psychological elements along with a heightened sense of terror. His stories set the style and standard for subsequent writers in the genre.
- \_\_\_ Ghost stories were common in the popular fiction magazines (esp. *Blackwood's Magazine*) that proliferated in the 19th century.
- \_\_\_ ACD was influenced by the popular magazines and by Edgar Allen Poe's tales of mystery and terror. He called Edward Bulwer-Lytton's story, "The Haunted and the Haunters" (1859), "the very best ghost story that I know."
- \_\_\_ ACD discovered his ability as a storyteller when he was a teenaged student at Stoneyhurst, where he would enthrall younger students with serialized tales of action and suspense.
- \_\_\_ Andrew Lycett, in *The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (2007), believes "The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe" was probably ACD's first completed story after he began his medical studies and became a doctor's assistant. It was submitted to *Blackwood's* but never published there. It was discovered in their archive sometime after 1940 and first published in 2000.
- \_\_\_ ACD had recently renounced his faith after his time at Stoneyhurst College, but still struggled with it.
- \_\_\_ In "Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe," even though the two friends represent opposites (materialism vs. spiritualism), both accept existence of the soul and its survival after death.
- \_\_\_ ACD continued to write ghost and supernatural stories throughout his career.

**The English Ghost Story  
(Some Recommendations)**

Charles Dickens (1812–1870), *A Christmas Carol*, “The Signalman”  
J. Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873), “Green Tea”  
Wilkie Collins (1824–1889), “Mad Monkton”  
E. (Edith) Nesbit (1858–1924), “Man-size in Marble”  
M. R. James (1862–1936), *Ghost Stories of an Anitquary*, “Oh Whistle and I’ll Come to You, My Lad,”  
“Casting the Runes”  
Arthur Machen (1863–1947), “The Angels of Mons”  
Algernon Blackwood (1869–1951), “The Wendigo,” “The Listener,” “The Willows”  
E. F. Benson (1867–1940), “The Outcast,” “Caterpillars”  
Oliver Onions (1873–1961), “The Beckoning Fair One”  
H. R. Wakefield (1888–1964), “The Red Lodge”  
A. M. Burrage (1889–1956), “Playmates”  
L. P. Hartley (1895–1972), “The Traveling Grave”  
Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973), “The Demon Lover”  
Robert Aickman (1914–1981), *Cold Hand in Mine*  
Ramsey Campbell (1946– ), “The Chimney,” “Macintosh Willy”