

Top 25 Horror Books of All Time (Chronological)

1. The Epic of Gilgamesh. 3,000 years before Beowulf: the very 1st 'Man vs Monster (& mortality)'.
 2. Marlowe – Dr Faustus. Bugger Goethe: the Renaissance version has all the themes covered.
 3. Shakespeare – Macbeth. Witches, Ghosts, Murder: we always forget that it's a horror story.
 4. Matthew Lewis – The Monk. Sex, Satan, Protestant Bigotry: the pick of the gothic novels.
 5. E T A Hoffman – Tales of Hoffman. Mlle de Scuderi really is the first modern detective story.
 6. Shelley – Frankenstein. The Scientific Revolution brings mad scientists, & a classic monster.
 7. Hogg – Confessions of a Justified Sinner. Religious self-righteousness satirised as Satanic.
 8. E A Poe – Tales of the Grotesque. Again, see previous link for my pick of his stories.
 9. Dickens – The Signalman. Not a bad ghost story. A pity his other books were so ghastly.
 10. S Le Fanu – Through a Glass Darkly. He inspired M R James & invented lesbian vampirism.
 11. R L Stevenson – Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. The Victorians struggle with Darwinism.
 12. Kipling – The Mark of the Beast, etc. The best ever werewolf story chews up Imperialism.
 13. Wilde – The Picture of Dorian Gray. An exquisite Faust for the Aesthetic generation: devastating.
 14. Machen – The Great God Pan. The Decadent Movement discovers the horror of paganism: kinky.
 15. Gilman – The Yellow Wallpaper. A disturbing tale of madness with a feminist sub-text.
 16. Conan Doyle – Tales of Unease. Lot 249 is set in 'Old College' & created the mummy genre.
 17. Stoker – Dracula. A sex-fuelled cliché that seems impossible to escape.
 18. Henry James – The Turn of the Screw. An unreliably-sub-narrated repressed-sex ghost story.
 19. Lafcadio Hearn – Kwaidan. The West discovers the Japanese supernatural tradition.
 20. Blackwood – The Willows. The scariest thing in the World? Willow Trees?! Really!
 21. Aleister Crowley – The Drug etc. Uneven, but he did put his money where his mouth was.
 22. M R James – Ghost Stories of an Antiquary. See previous link for my pick of his stories.
 23. H P Lovecraft – At the Mountains of Madness, etc. Fun but hopelessly over-the-top.
 24. Kingsley Amis – The Green Man. Shamelessly entertaining drunken Faustian goings on.
 25. Susan Hill – The Woman in Black. A nasty ghost story with a clear Jamesian influence.
- Recents: Sarah Waters – The Little Stranger. Decline of aristocracy ambiguously haunts house.
Michelle Paver – Dark Matter. A surprisingly scary Arctic ghost story, deserves to last.