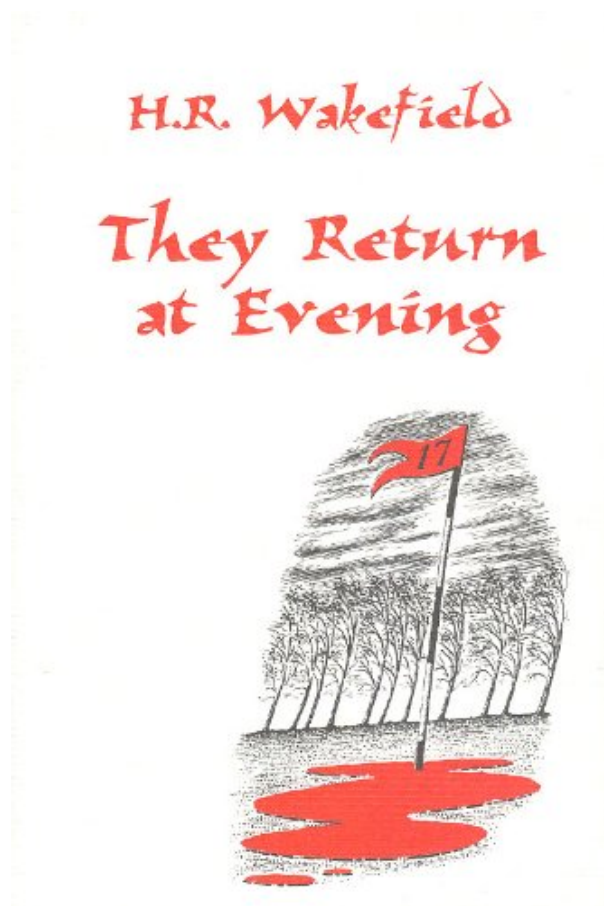


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The decomposing ghost of a murdered wife; the spectre of a dog, which answers to the most terrifying of whistles; evil in the tradition of M. R. James's 'Casting the Runes', as a lawyer seeks to avenge the death of a friend . . . These, and many more, are the ghosts which H. R. Wakefield has set to haunt us in his first book of supernatural stories—a landmark collection first published in 1928.

Wakefield's ghost stories have been compared to those of M. R. James, but this is an over-simplification. Wakefield's particular brand of terror is unique. But Wakefield agreed with James as to the need for malevolence, as shown by this wording from the dust-wrapper of the book's first edition: 'The Author of "The Ghost Stories of an Antiquary" in the preface to one of his books expressed his lively distaste for benevolent ghosts, and ghosts with nice minds. The author profoundly agrees with this sentiment of the master, and, furthermore, he abominates the "natural" explanation, a poisonous anti-climax. So this much can be said for his tales, that those Who Return therein are animated by undiluted malevolence, and no iconoclastic materialist has been allowed to cast a doubt on their credentials as genuine apparitions.'

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Masterful horror comes to the Kindle

By millimillenary

H. Russell Wakefield stands tall among the writers of the literary ghost story. His tales have something of M. R. James' influence in them, but they are grittier than James' stories; the entities and antagonists even more disturbing.

Most of Wakefield's output had been out of print for decades until Ash-Tree Press reprinted his work in the late '90s and early '00s in the form of exceptionally fine hardcover editions. Unfortunately, these were limited to small print runs, and most are now hard to find. Enter the eBook!

The Kindle edition of They Return at Evening works well. A table of contents links to the individual stories, and the original cover art from the Ash-Tree reprint is included.

If you appreciate creepy tales of vengeful ghosts and demons, They Return at Evening likely has something you'll (shudderingly) enjoy.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

The Best of the British Ghost Story!

By tularosa

H. R. Wakefield is in the top tier of British writers of the ghost story, which includes Sheridan LeFanu, M.R. James, and Robert Aickman, and "They Return at Evening" is probably his best collection. This author was a magnificent conjuror of the macabre and does not deserve the relative obscurity into which his works fell after his passing in 1964. Many thanks to Ash-Tree Press for re-publishing his titles and making them available and affordable in the ebook format.

Highly recommended to all readers!

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

"One of the cornerstone works of supernatural fiction."

By ealovitt

According to the poet-critic, John Betjeman: "M. R. James is the greatest master of the ghost story. Henry James, Sheridan Le Fanu and H. Russell Wakefield are equal seconds." The supernatural creatures glimpsed in the pages of this book are quite equal in malevolence to any apparition haunting the works of M.R. James (MRJ). Barbara Roden, who has edited and introduced five volumes of H. R. Wakefield's supernatural fiction for Ash-Tree Press, says of this title: "It is not, I think, an understatement to claim that H. R. Wakefield's 1928 collection "They Return at Evening" is one of the cornerstone works of supernatural fiction."

Readers may be offended by Wakefield's sometimes vicious misogyny and his casual jingoism, but his stories are still worth reading for the atavistic shivers that creep across our skin in the presence of pure supernatural evil.

The ten stories in this book:

"That Dieth Not"--A baronet grows tired of his socialite wife and murders her. After a few happy weeks with his new bride, his first wife returns with a vengeance.

"Or Persons Unknown"--A butler who is suspected of killing his former employer tells a strange story of a hound that returns from the dead.

"He Cometh and He Passeth By!"--Wakefield based this story on MRJ's "Casting the Runes." A rather weak young man dies a supernatural death after receiving a painted paper pattern, and his barrister friend vows revenge.

"Professor Pownall's Oversight"--Two brilliant students vie for the top prizes at school, then at Oxford. The more charming and physically perfect boy always comes in first. They meet again as adults in a chess match that will determine who is to be sent to Budapest to represent Great Britain in the championship games. In a sense, both of them go--or neither--depending on how you interpret the end of this story.

"The Third Coach"--A reverend in an insane asylum fantasizes about a train wreck that never happened.

"The Red Lodge"-- A family rents a summer house by a river and then learns that it is already inhabited by something that leaves patches of green slime on the floor, and in one memorable scene, on the narrator's face.

"And He Shall Sing..."--A printer is about to publish a book of poems when he learns of the real author.

"The Seventeenth Hole at Duncaster"--Evidently Druids don't care for golfers.

"A Peg On Which To Hang"--A hotel room is haunted by a suicide.

"An Echo"--A psychic witnesses a murder fifteen years past, and the question of whodunit is finally put to rest. More of a murder mystery than a ghost story.

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