



Kwaidan: Japanese Ghost Stories

Lafcadio Hearn

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Stories and Studies of Strange Things

A man terrified of the ghost who haunts his nights seeks help from a priest, who inscribes his body with protective holy texts . . . but misses a spot.

A woman on her deathbed coerces her betrothed's promise to wait for her reincarnated return, no matter how many years it will take. A samurai turned priest does battle with the floating severed heads of ravenous goblins.

These are just some of the haunting tales culled by distinguished American scholar, translator, and journalist Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) during years of travel and study in his adopted land of Japan. The twenty /"ghostly sketches/" Hearn gathered for his classic collection Kwaidan (or /"strange stories/") span the supernatural spectrum from grisly accounts of revenge from beyond the grave to haunting visions of beautiful snow spirits who bring quiet death in the night. Strange and wondrous creatures abound in these tales, including human-faced Heiké crabs who embody the spirits of dead warriors, and the jikininki, or man-eating goblins that feed nocturnally on funeral offerings.

In Hearn's vivid retellings of classic Japanese folk tales - further enhanced in this gorgeous, heavily illustration gift edition -- the spirit world swirls frighteningly close to human reality, the border between the two often being no more than a thin fog of dreams.

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