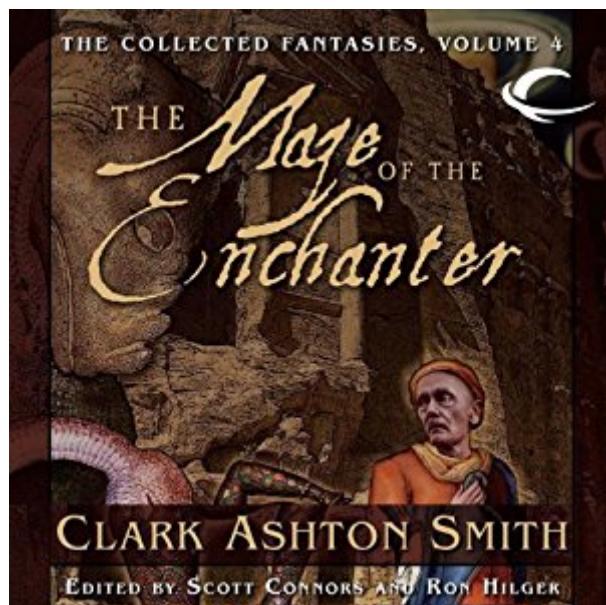


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The Maze Of The Enchanter: Volume Four Of The Collected Fantasies Of Clark Ashton Smith



Synopsis

This series presents Clark Ashton Smith's fiction chronologically, based on composition rather than publication. Editors Scott Connors and Ron Hilger have compared original manuscripts, various typescripts, published editions, and Smith's notes and letters in order to prepare a definitive set of texts. *The Maze of the Enchanter* includes, in chronological order, all of his stories from *The Mandrakes* (February, 1933) to *The Flower-Women* (May, 1935). This volume also features an introduction and extensive notes on each story.

Book Information

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CONTENTS:Introduction by Gahan WilsonA Note on the TextsThe MandrakesThe Beast of AveroigneA Star-ChangeThe Disinterment of VenusThe White SybilThe Ice-DemonThe Isle of the TorturersThe Dimension of ChanceThe Dweller in the GulfThe Maze of the EnchanterThe Third Episode of VATHEK: The Story of the Princess Zulkais and the Prince KalilahGenius LociThe Secret of the CairnThe Charnel GodThe Dark EidolonThe Voyage of King EuvoranVulthoomThe Weaver in the VaultsThe Flower-WomenAPPENDICESStory NotesThe White Sybil: Alternate ConclusionThe Muse of HyperboreaThe Dweller in the Martian Depths: Added MaterialBibliographyThis 4th volume of The Collected Fantasies has some of Clark Ashton Smith's finest tales. "Genius Loci" remains one of my favorite weird tales ever. The story casts a potent spell of dread that most such fictions usually lack. Whenever I read this tale, I am transported. The scene seems very real, authentic. One is swept away by the intensity of the narrative. Smith was indeed a

wizard, who conjured with language. His alien landscapes impress one as strange yet realistic. His language is evocative, as we see in this paragraph from "The Dweller in the Gulf": "None of the three adventurers was overly imaginative or prone to nervousness. But all were beset by certain odd impressions. Behind the arras of cryptic silence, time and again, they seemed to hear a faint whisper, like the sign of sunken seas far down at some hemispheric depth. The air was tinged with a slight and doubtful dankness, and they felt the stirring of an almost imperceptible draft upon their faces.

Clark Ashton Smith is undergoing something of a revival these days. As well as an amateur artist who even illustrated some of his stories for *Weird Tales*, he was also a superb poet of the fantastic. (*The Last Oblivion: Best Fantastic Poetry of Clark Ashton Smith* is an affordable, excellent introduction to that side of his talent.) And, of course, there are the stories. Smith was not as good a writer as poet, but he could still be very good. This series collects his stories in the order Smith wrote them with the editors working very hard to present Smith's preferred versions and alternate versions as well as Smith's opinion of those stories as well as that of his famous friends, H. P. Lovecraft and August Derleth. This volume's stories were written in 1932 and 1933 and have Smith working in the many universes he had already established or writing sequels to his popular past stories. In all cases, the stories stand alone even when part of a series. Smith's greatest and most influential creation, the decadent, magical, grotesque far future of Zothique, Earth's last continent, is the setting for many stories here. Showing the influence of Smith's idol Edgar Poe at several points, "The Isle of the Torturers" has a king and fellow sparse survivors of a plague ending up on said island, a place given to the sadistic pleasure of all kinds of torture. "The Charnel God" has a young nobleman braving the temple of Mordiggian to rescue his dead wife from its priests. (She only seems dead, more shades of Poe.).

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