

WOLFGANG HOHLBEIN



*WHEN THE
MASTER DIED*

01

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What is The Hexer from Salem?

The Hexer from Salem, a novel series in the vein of H.P. Lovecraft, was created and written almost entirely by Wolfgang Hohlbein. The epic began in 1984 in a pulp-fiction series: Ghost-Thrillers from Bastei Publishing and later as a stand-alone series under *The Hexer from Salem*, before it finally became available in paperback and collectors editions.

The story takes place primarily in nineteenth century London, following the chilling adventures of The Hexer, Robert Craven and, later on, his son as they encounter the Great Aged — godlike creatures hostile to humans — and their representatives on earth.

The Author

Wolfgang Hohlbein is a phenomenon: With more than 200 books selling over 40 million copies worldwide, he is one of Germany's most prolific fantasy writers. Hohlbein is well-known for his young adult books and above all his novel series, *The Hexer from Salem*.

Wolfgang Hohlbein



Episode 1: When the Master Died

Translated by William Glucroft

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When the Master Died

The sea was as smooth as a mirror. Fog had come in during the last hours, changing the grayness from billowing clouds to a heavy mass, flowing sluggishly like smoke over the water's surface, which became ever smoother as the fog thickened. The waves flattened out and the dull, rhythmic clapping that had accompanied the thirty-four-day journey of The Lady of the Mist like a monotone choir, grew quieter until it subsided completely.

The ship now lingered in place. The large, patched-up sails hung limply from their yards, the masts and rigging collecting moisture, which ran in sparkly streaks to the ground. An uncanny quiet accompanied the fog that was creeping across the water and enveloping the sleek, four-masted ship. It was a quiet that tugged at the nerves and gave off a sense of something other — a feeling, I know it sounds crazy but that is exactly what I sensed at the time. The mist was carrying something foreign and hostile that had now crawled aboard The Lady of the Mist with invisible spider legs, embedding itself into our thoughts and spirits.

The mist reached around the whole ship, shrouding it. Anything more than ten or twelve steps away became blurry and distorted, as if it wasn't real but just a vision from a dream. The creaks and groans of the wood became muffled while voices of the crew drifted up to the deck as if through a thick, invisible veil. One side of the aft deck was a tiny, isolated island in a vast ocean of gray and dense silence.

And it was cold.