

WOLFGANG HOHLBEIN



*THE TYRANT FROM
THE DEEP*

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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 2: The Tyrant from the Deep

Translated by William Glucroft

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The Tyrant from the Deep

The lake was like a black hole, swallowing all available light. In the night, clouds had risen from the water — a dark, seething front that extinguished the full moon's pale glow and pelted the earth with a torrent of frozen rain. A gusty, ice-cold wind blew the rain sideways across the water's surface, which ensured the residents of this strip of coastline forgot it was high summer, when the nights should be warm.

The relentless rainfall muffled the rhythmic clap of the oars as they dipped into the water. Steve Cranton let go of them with an exhausted sigh, sat upright and stretched his arms. His back ached. They had been circling the small, round lake for nearly an hour and the boat was now laden with rainwater. The frigid water came up to his ankles, the cold creeping in though two layers of wool socks where the water pooled inside his rubber boots. Everything up to his knees was numb.

"Tired?" O'Banyon asked quietly. "I could take over for you ..."

Cranton shook his head and grabbed hold of the oars again but kept his hands still and the oars motionless. The boat rocked lightly and, as if to answer O'Banyon's question, the wind beat another spray of rain against them. Cranton shuddered as water dripped into his raincoat and ran down his neck with an icy chill.

"No," he answered a little late. "I'm slowly seeing the futility of rowing in a circle and getting completely soaked. Let's stop."

O'Banyon laughed lightly. "You're afraid," he said.

Cranton shot back an angry glare. O'Banyon wasn't more than a few feet from him but his face was just a dark, shapeless form before the even darker backdrop of the lake. The cloud cover was like an opaque ceiling.

"No," Cranton snapped. "I don't like feeling stupid, that's all. They're probably all sitting in Goldspie laughing at us."

"You *are* afraid," O'Banyon repeated, ignoring those last words. "It's too late now, my friend." He sighed and rummaged around in his raincoat for a moment before pulling out his tobacco pouch and pipe. Cranton looked on with a frown as he carefully packed the pipe despite the unceasing rain and lit a match, using his hand to block the wind. The tobacco caught but because of the rain was more smoke than fire. O'Banyon grunted something, shook the pipe out against the edge of the boat and put it away. Then he took out his pocket watch and lit a second match, trying to read his watch in the flickering light of the tiny flame.

"It's time, anyway," he said. "Midnight in a few moments."

"And then it comes, I suppose," Cranton tried sounding derisive but an undertone of fear denied him the desired effect. "The monster of Loch Shin, what a joke! These are stories you use to scare your children when they don't want to sleep. Or fool clueless city folk."

"By which you mean me," O'Banyon said shaking his head. Cranton wanted to protest but O'Banyon stopped him with a quick gesture and continued to shake his head. "I don't blame you, my friend. I suppose I'd think the same if I were in your place but you haven't heard what I've heard."

"Idle chatter of crazy people," Cranton growled. "What's it worth?"

"He described it!" O'Banyon answered with conviction. "More precisely than I ever could. You can't make that up, Steve. I ..."