

WOLFGANG HOHLBEIN



*THE HOUSE AT
THE END OF TIME*

04

Contents

Cover

What is The Hexer from Salem?

The Author

Title

Copyright

The House at the End of Time

Preview

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 4: The House at the End of Time

Translated by William Glucroft

BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT 

BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT

Digital original edition

Bastei Entertainment is an imprint of Bastei Lübbe AG

Copyright © 2016 by Bastei Lübbe AG, Schanzenstraße 6-20, 51063 Cologne,
Germany

Written by Wolfgang Hohlbein

Translation by William Glucroft

Cover design by Thomas Krämer

Cover illustration © shutterstock/creaPicTures

eBook production: Urban [SatzKonzept](#), Düsseldorf

ISBN 978-3-73251-355-0

www.bastei-entertainment.com

The House at the End of Time

From the outside, the house looked grim and imposing. Perhaps the appearance was even a bit sinister, like those old, lonely mansions threatening danger, the blackened, decades-old facades exuding something malignant. Really, though, it was just a house forgotten a lifetime ago, alone in the woods for twice that long.

That was the outside.

Inside was unearthly. Unearthly and deadly ...

Jenny couldn't quite put it into words. She kept still after Charles broke off the decaying lock on the front door and leaned against one of the panes of the large entryway. A speck of gray light cast itself down the hallway. It was perhaps the first time in years the house's interior was lifted out of darkness. Jenny was sure she heard short, clattering claws above the pounding of her own heart. Rats, she feared. Of course. The house was vacant and had been taken over by rats and spiders. She hated rats.

That wasn't all. A strange and formless danger lay within the walls, something that could be neither seen nor heard nor smelled, but palpably felt.

"Let's go, Charles," she said haltingly. "I'm ... afraid." She whispered, as though the sound of her voice would awaken whatever ghosts were residing there, but it made no difference: it carried anyway through the hallway's cavernous darkness. The unpleasant sensation of creeping spiders trickled down her back.

Charles just shook his head and casually touched her arm, trying to smile. "Nonsense," he said. "There's nothing here to fear. This house has been empty for nearly fifty

years. I played here all the time as a kid. It was our hiding place, but that was a long time ago."

Jenny shuddered. Charles's attempt to comfort her only deepened her fear; she couldn't say exactly why. Her heart beat faster. Saliva was gathering behind her tongue. She felt nausea setting in. Her palms were sweaty.

"I don't want to stay here," she said again. "Please, Charles!"

Charles sighed. He looked back through the doorway and into the surrounding wilderness that faded quickly into the gray twilight. "We can't continue," he said after a while, his voice sounding both decisive and sympathetic. "They are searching the main road for sure and I have no doubt they'll check every guesthouse within fifty miles of here." He smiled. "We can't sleep in the woods, you know. It's just for one night." He shook his head and took a deep breath, looking around. "There must be a candle somewhere," he mumbled. "There used to be dozens lying around."

"Charles, I ..."

"Please, Jenny," he interrupted. "By this time tomorrow we'll be married and then nothing in the world can separate us. But until then we have to be careful." He stepped close to her, putting a hand on her shoulder and kissing her lightly on the forehead. "You know as well as I what will happen should your parents discover us," he whispered.

Jenny nodded slowly. Of course she knew. It was exactly why they had decided, like a modern Romeo and Juliet, to run away together and get married at Gretna Green. She was just eighteen and knew her parents would do everything in their power to keep Charles away from her. More than once they had threatened to ship her off to boarding school if she kept seeing him. And her father wasn't one to make empty threats.