



## The Compleat Crow

*Brian Lumley*

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## **The Compleat Crow Brian Lumley**

*Master of occult arts...*

‘He was tall and broad-shouldered, and it was plain to see that in his younger days he had been a handsome man. Now his hair had greyed a little and his eyes, though they were still very bright and observant, bore the imprint of many a year spent exploring – and often, I guessed, discovering – along rarely trodden paths of mysterious and obscure learning.’

*Mysterious, obscure learning...*

To many thousands of readers all over the world Titus Crow is the occult investigator, psychic sleuth and cosmic voyager of Brian Lumley’s novels of the Cthulhu Mythos from *The Burrowers Beneath* to *Elysia*.

But before the Burrowers and Crow’s Transition, his exploits were chronicled in a series of short stories and novellas previously uncollected in a British edition. Now these stories can be told. From ‘Inception’, which tells of his origins, to ‘The Black Recalled’, a tale of vengeance from beyond the grave, here in one volume, from the bestselling author of the epic *Necroscope* series, is THE COMPLEAT CROW.

## **The Compleat Crow Details**

Date : Published April 1st 1986 by W Paul Ganley Pub

ISBN : 9780932445223

Author : Brian Lumley

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

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## From Reader Review The Compleat Crow for online ebook

### Ian Casey says

The Compleat Crow is not going to be a five star book for everyone. But then, ‘everyone’ can get knotted because this is exactly what I hoped it would be. That is, thoroughly entertaining and high quality pulp.

Titus Crow is very much a Sherlock Holmes figure, if Holmes were in a bonkers alternate universe where every ancient mystery and occult, mystical and supernatural horror is real. That includes such varieties as Judeo-Christian, Cthulhu Mythos, Norse, African, you name it really. It’s preposterous that the world is seething with so many unnatural menaces and it’s also a lot of silly fun.

I haven’t started on the novels as yet though I feel this gave me a pretty solid idea of the titular white wizard, his sidekick Henri de Marigny and the setting in mid-20th century England. Admittedly it’s not a coherent work at all, being a collection of miscellaneous stories spanning about two decades of writing and being set at various points throughout Crow’s life. I quite enjoyed piecing together a mental picture from those select snapshots nonetheless.

And despite its overt reliance on Lovecraftian tropes, I couldn’t accuse this of being a ‘Lovecraftian’ work in any meaningful sense. Stylistically and philosophically it’s not at all in the vein of HPL and is not trying to be. As such I can’t agree with the descriptions of it as ‘Lovecraftian pastiche’ since it doesn’t fit either of those descriptors particularly well.

Also, these Subterranean Press hardcover reissues of various Brian Lumley books featuring the artwork of Bob Eggleton are some of the most beautiful Cthulhu Mythos items you’ll ever see. The one for The Compleat Crow features astonishingly vibrant colours and artwork that wraps around the entire cover in one unbroken image. You’ll want to get hold of one of these if at all possible.

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### Frank Barich says

Great collection of all the Titus Crow stories

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### Terri says

#### A Bit of Crow (Audiobook)

Titus Crow, his friend Henri-Laurent de Marigny and others are featured in this series of novellas and short stories beginning with the onset of Titus Crow’s supernatural abilities and ending with a story after his death.

Titus Crow is a occult detective with a Holmes like feel. The stories are based on the H.P. Lovecraft Cthulhu Mythos. I guess I am really going to have to read some Lovecraft one of these days as I think it would help me merge faster with the story.

The stories are narrated by Titus Crow and various other characters from the novels. I was confused on a few stories because I thought the narrator was Crow but it turned out to be someone else.

Included are stories ranging from 1970-1987:

Inception  
Lord of Worms  
The Caller of the Black  
The Viking's Stone  
The Mirror of Nitrocris  
An Item of Supporting Evidence  
Billy's Oak  
Darghud's Doll  
De Marigny's Clock  
Name & Number  
The Black Recalled

My favorites are: Lord of the Worms, De Marigny's Clock and The Black Recalled.

As always listening to Simon Vance is a pleasure.

This audiobook was provided at no cost in exchange for an unbiased review courtesy of Audiobook Blast.

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### **Scott says**

This is a collection of stories featuring or related to Lumley's occult investigator and researcher Titus Crow. They are vaguely in the vein of Lovecraft, though they do not rely too heavily upon his mythology, nor attempt to ape his writing style--a reference to the Necronomicon here or there; that's about it, which I was glad of, because I generally do not like pastiches. The stories feel original. The wonderful cover art by longtime Lumley illustrator Bob Eggleton is rather misleading, implying high adventure in alien landscapes with fantastic beasts. There are creepy creatures, to be sure, but much of the action takes place in darkened mansions, and in at least one instance, on a train. Frequently, the stories are recounted in the past tense by one character to another. They have as much the air of the mystery story as the horror, and I enjoyed them thoroughly.

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### **Mick says**

An early (pre-Necroscope, I believe) collection of Lumley's short stories centered on the character of Titus Crow, a paranormal investigator, in stories which draw heavily on Lovecraftian influences. Some of these pieces are terrific, and others are not so great, but the collection as a whole is a fantastic read if you like this style of horror/supernatural fiction.

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### **Luis Dantas says**

Brian Lumley does manage to take advantage of the Cthulhu Mythos and make it his own. The short stories of Titus Crow bring a much-needed element of purpose and hope to that genre. Looking forward to The Burrowers Beneath now, and later the Dreamlands and Primal Land series. Incidentally, a fairly subtle mention of elements of Primal Land is made in this book.

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### **Andre says**

"This audiobook was provided by the author, narrator, or publisher at no cost in exchange for an unbiased review courtesy of Audiobook Blast."

It is always a delight to immerse oneself into a Brian Lumley title (I have read all of the Necroscope titles) and this one is no exception. I love Titus Crow and his short adventures. My favorites include "Lord of the worms" and "De Marigny's clock" while "Billy's oak" was a short gem of a story. The characters are colorful in their dark setting and I was sad when this audiobook ended. I must read more adventures of Titus Crow, I simply must.

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### **Ade Couper says**

I'm going to be a little controversial here - I think Brian Lumley is better at the short story than he is at the novel.

These tales revolve around Titus Crow - urbane, intelligent, & a master of the arcane - an occult John Steed....& his battles against eldritch powers....

Standout tales here are "The Viking's Stone" & "The Black Recalled", but all these tales are well-written & very entertaining. There is definitely something of the Holmes or Nayland Smith about Crow, who is a flawed but engaging hero.

Definitely worth a look.

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### **Graham says**

I'm attempting to read Brian Lumley's Mythos series in some kind of chronological order, so I haven't read all of the stories collected here yet, but I've read enough to know that this is a decent collection. Titus Crow is an occult investigator in the vein of Flaxman Low, John Silent, Carnacki and many more classic 'psychic detectives' and his adventures in a Cthulhu-themed world are wonderfully enjoyable pulps.

Here are my experiences so far:

**THE CALLER OF THE BLACK** - A decent take on the classic M. R. James story, **THE CASTING OF THE RUNES**. The affectionate storytelling and fluid style count for a lot here.

**THE MIRROR OF NITOCRIS** - Closer to Lovecraft, good old-fashioned cosmic horror.

**AN ITEM OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE** - Cosy ephemera with plenty of references for Cthulhu fans.

**BILLY'S OAK** - A short, stand alone ghost story.

DE MARIGNY'S CLOCK - Crime meets Lovecraftian monstrosities in an unholy concoction as two unlucky thieves get more than they bargained for...

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### **Ralph says**

This is a type of fiction (Lovecraftian pastiche) I have not read in a long time, though there was a time many years ago when it could easily be claimed (and many did) that I read it excessively, when three out of every four fanzines I read were dedicated to fiction in homage to HP Lovecraft; I also wrote Lovecraftian short stories as well, quite a lot of them, so I quite familiar with the genre. I write this in preface only show that I am no starry-eyed newcomer easily impressed by an appearance by Cthulhu or a reference to the *Necronomicon* -- I have two copies myself. Many of the stories written in the vein of Lovecraft, including a few of my own, are pretty awful, but Brian Lumley is one author operating in the genre who consistently writes well.

In *The Complete Crow* we have all the short stories written about occult investigator Titus Crow, a character very much in the mold of Dr John Silence (by Algernon Blackwood), Carnacki the Ghost Finder (by William Hope Hodgeson) and Morris Klaw (by Sax Rohmer); what separates Crow from earlier occult detectives is the depth of characterization with which Lumley imbues him. And Crow is also distinguished from other characters in Lovecraft-inspired fiction -- whereas most writers will follow HPL's lead and create protagonists who will either faint or go stark barking mad when presented with the truly terrifying, Crow meets it head on (if it has a head) and is not slow to shoot it if necessary.

All the stories presented in the book are very satisfying reads in themselves, though it is clear in a few of the stories that they are just a small portion of a much larger tapestry. Lumley plots his stories with care, so when things Lovecraftian protrude into reality, the manifestation does not seem gratuitous in any way. Although much more well known for his Necroscope series, Lumley is really at his peak when writing in the short form, and his Titus Crow stories are among his best short tales.

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### **Jeff says**

Terrifically terrifying collection of short stories in the Cthulhu Mythos vein; the creepy *Lord of the Worms* being the best, and longest. Love the extended descriptions of the evil occultic library, complete with a copy of The Necronomicon, ala H. P. Lovecraft.

Lumley's probably best known for his Necroscope series, but I personally prefer these Titus Crow stories. And this volume published by Ganley is especially worth having for the numerous full page illustrations by Stephen Fabian. A phenomenal artist. You can usually find copies on Ganley's ebay store, or at ABEbooks and Alibris. Don't pass this up.

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### **Riju Ganguly says**

Despite being a nice hardcover (unfortunately bereft of illustrations, except the same headpiece being repeated for every story) despite there being ample scope thereof) containing some crisp tales about a person who is supposedly a master of Occult, I was disappointed with this book. But before I lament any further, let

me state the contents of this book:

- (\*) Introduction from the author, bringing the book (first published in 1987) somewhat up-to-date.
- 1) Inception: This story explains why & how Titus Crow's destiny took that particular shape. The story is quick, but rather uni-dimensional.
- 2) Lord of the Worms: A rambling Lovecraftian novella that goes on & on before we get a haphazard climax.
- 3) The Caller of the Black: A decidedly inferior rip-off of "Casting the Runes", which pales before not only the original, but also H.R. Wakefield's masterpiece "He Cometh an He Passeth By".
- 4) The Viking's Stone: Pretty formulaic fare, without any additional thrill or pace.
- 5) The Mirror of Nitocris: Another formulaic story, this one doesn't even have Titus Crow (except few mentions here & there).
- 6) An Item of Supporting Evidence: Again, a story that depends entirely on its last paragraph for the effect (if any).
- 7) Billy's Oak: Fortunately devoid of Lovecraftian mumbo-jumbo, this story (again a direct lift from the master) again stretches on until the last paragraph where it tries to deliver the shock (fails, I should say).
- 8) Darghud's Doll: Reminiscent of "Lukundoo" but somewhat inferior to that classic, this story has some twists, and is a crisp read.
- 9) De Marigny's Clock: This story entirely robs Titus Crow of any "heroic" stature that he might have gained through the previous stories, and turns out to be another tiresome Lovecraftian read.
- 10) Name and Number: Another Lovecraftian novella that rambles on, trying to create lots of "atmosphere" without succeeding much.
- 11) The Black Recalled: A tired conclusion of the (supposed) arc begun with "The Caller of the Black", in which, again, Titus Crow has no role to play.

These stories have become rather badly dated, and the psychic sleuth Titus Crow seems to be a shadow of his chronological predecessors (literary successors) like the reinvented Carnacki (thanks to Willie Meikle), Charles St. Cyprian, et.al. Although Mythos stories have become popular again, the dry setting of the stories, which are also utterly devoid of female characters and humour of any sorts, make them dishearteningly drab.

Not Recommended.

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### **Mike says**

I love Dennis Wheatley, HPL and Poe and I dearly wanted to like this book, too. But it just didn't click. I never felt I really got to know Titus Crow and the situations and solutions were usually just too trite.

I might give one of the novels a go to see whether Lumley develops thing better in the longer form.

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### **Phil Gonzales says**

A high energy introduction to the character of Titus Crow. The stories grow a bit redundant after a while, and Lumley's take on the Mythos isn't for everyone, but it's a quick, fun read. Recommended.

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## Fantasy Literature says

Subterranean Press has gathered a collection of Brian Lumley's stories in *The Compleat Crow*. As you'd expect, nearly all these tales feature Lumley's occult detective, Titus Crow.

Crow is the main character of a couple of novels by Lumley. He is a "white wizard," a force for good who struggles mostly against those in league with the Cthulhu-cycle elder gods. Lumley's style skates between Lovecraft-lite and an almost Holmesian tone. These eleven short stories were published mostly in the UK and range from 1969 to the early 1980s. Most involve Crow as the main character. Some are third-person; in some Crow is the first-person narrator, telling his own tale, and in a few he is the story-teller, relating events that have nothing to do with him. Notably, two tales use a third person narrator that is not Crow.

"Inception," the first story in the book, follows a fugitive ... [Read More](#)

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