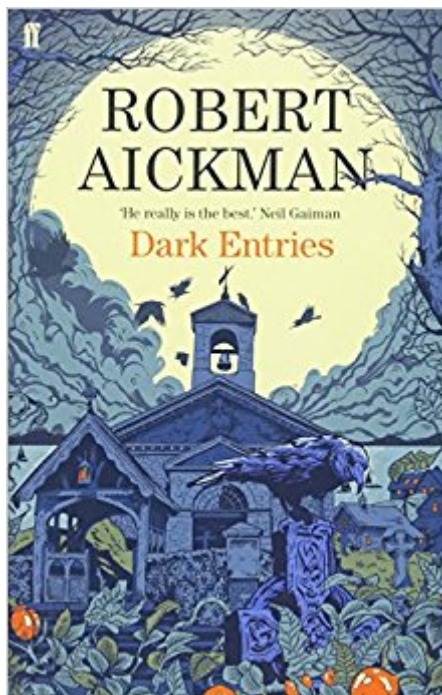


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# Dark Entries



## Synopsis

Aickman's 'strange stories' (his preferred term) are constructed immaculately, the neuroses of his characters painted in subtle shades. He builds dread by the steady accrual of realistic detail, until the reader realizes that the protagonist is heading towards their doom as if in a dream. *Dark Entries* was first published in 1964 and contains six curious and macabre stories of love, death and the supernatural, including the classic story 'Ringing the Changes'. Robert Aickman (1914–1981) was the grandson of Richard Marsh, a leading Victorian novelist of the occult. Though his chief occupation in life was first as a conservationist of England's canals he eventually turned his talents to writing what he called 'strange stories.' *Dark Entries* (1964) was his first full collection, the debut in a body of work that would inspire Peter Straub to hail Aickman as 'this century's most profound writer of what we call horror stories.'

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Faber & Faber; Main edition (September 13, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0571311776

ISBN-13: 978-0571311774

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #251,158 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Horror #984 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror > Ghosts #1660 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror > Occult

## Customer Reviews

Robert Fordyce Aickman was born in 1914 in London. He was married to Edith Ray Gregorson from 1941 to 1957. In 1946 the couple, along with Tom and Angela Rolt, set up the Inland Waterways Association to preserve the canals of Britain. It was in 1951 that Aickman, along with Elizabeth Jane Howard, published his first ghost stories entitled *We Are the Dark*. Aickman went on to publish eleven more volumes of horror stories as well as two fantasy novels and two volumes of autobiography. He also edited the first eight volumes of *The Fontana Book of Great Ghost Stories*. He died in February 1981.

One of Aickman's early collections. Full of his special unequalled brand of "strange stories." All horror fans should be required, hell, everyone should be required to read some Aickman.; he is also one of the great prose stylists of the 20th century and one of the most brilliant short story writers of any kind. Unlike earlier Aickman offerings from faber & faber, this is not riddled with typos. Someone must be listening.

Aickman's stories are truly strange and very evocative. The narratives grow on you subtly and then there's suddenly real horror and unexpectedness in his writings.

I read these stories as precursors to *New Weird* and I love them. Do not read them at night by yourself since they are a little bit on the scary side. Loving them!

Robert Aickman is a master of the strange.

All of Aickman's Strange Stories are simply amazing works.

Even though I have Aickman's collected stories from another publisher, the print is not easy to read. THIS book, *DARK ENTRIES*, is so easy to read. Aickman's stories are some of the best "strange stories" ever written. Once you have read, them many will remain strongly in your mind.

I read an article about this author in the *WSJ* and purchased this book. the stories were good, well written and with good character development, but the endings were confusing. Maybe I'm just not smart enough to figure them out, but every one of them left me wondering what exactly DID happen?

Though often categorized as horror fiction, Robert Aickman's stories are so distinctive and so great that the only productive analogies people use for him are not the typical horror fiction writers (who often hugely admire him) but such actual literary greats as Poe, Kafka, and Dinesen. You often finish his stories not knowing quite what happened until you re-read them, and even then the strange ambiguities are so deeply unsettling that it's hard to explain the effect Aickman has had on you. For years he has been a well-kept secret among fantasy and horror fans, but Faber Finds's plans to reissue his stories and his one novel (*THE LATE BREAKFASTERS*) and one novella (*THE MODEL*) in 2014 in honor of his centenary should make him much more widely known, at least in

the UK. DARK ENTRIES, which sports a gorgeously illustrated cover, is a fine place to start with Aickman because it was his first solo collection published in his lifetime (he had published a collection of stories with his one time girlfriend Elizabeth Jane Howard in the 50s), and features some of his finest stories, such as his deepest exploration into gender differences, "Choose Your Weapons," and the most famous (and anthologized) of all his stories, "Ringing the Changes." The latter is a beautiful example of Aickman's mastery of the genre of the "strange tale" (as he preferred to call his work--he didn't care at all for the descriptor "horror fiction"). The story opens with a couple, mismatched in age, making a vacation trip to an out-of-the-way town in East Anglia that had been an important seaport in medieval times, before the harbor had silted up and pushed the town away from the sea. The town is largely deserted, and the few citizens the couple come across make oblique references to the couple being in danger; in the mean time a local old church begins ringing its bell for no apparent reason, and as the day wears on and the mystery of the town deepens, the ringing bell is joined by others, which intensify the overall sense of dread. When the truth about the town's abandonment and the reason for the bells is finally revealed, it is so almost offhandedly, as a kind of throwaway cliché: but then the truth of the statement (and the inability to turn back) digs in for both the couple and for readers. As is typical for Aickman's fiction, no other explanation is overtly given for the horrific event other than that it is happening, and the reader must try to make sense of it based on the circumstances of the story: the city's position almost displaced from time, the couple's age gap, the psychological condition of the husband and wife, etc. Even then you're never sure--and thus Aickman's story lingers longer in the imagination than the basic plot might in the hands of another fantasy writer (even H. P. Lovecraft, who also deals with a visitor stumbling onto the horrific truth about a seemingly nearly-deserted coastal town in his fine story "The Shadow over Innsmouth"). Robert Aickman is one of the finest British writers (and international masters of the strange tale form) in the 20th century: it is terrific seeing him made available to a broader audience.

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