



Letters to Arkham: The Letters of Ramsey Campbell and August Derleth 1961 to 1971

By Ramsey Campbell

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August Derleth was the proprietor of the leading small press in weird fiction, Arkham House, based on Sauk City, Wisconsin. In early 1961 he received a letter from one J. Ramsey Campbell, asking some questions about the author that was then the focus of both their lives, H. P. Lovecraft. Soon thereafter, Campbell sent Derleth some of his early Lovecraftian tales, and Derleth quickly saw that a dynamic new writer of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos had emerged. Only months later did Campbell tell Derleth that he was only fifteen years old. In the decade that followed, Derleth issued Campbell's first book, *The Inhabitant of the Lake and Less Welcome Tenants* (1964), published several of Campbell's stories in his anthologies, and accepted Campbell's second book, *Demons by Daylight*, published two years after Derleth's unexpected death in 1971. In the course of their intense correspondence, the two writers debated a wide variety of topics: Lovecraft, Arkham House, weird fiction, and in particular the many films that both of them enjoyed. Derleth helped Campbell to obtain works by Henry Miller and others that were banned in England, and the two also discussed delicate issues of romance, marriage, and sexuality. In this lively exchange of letters, we see Derleth becoming a valued mentor to the young Campbell, who would go on to become a towering figure in weird fiction.

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