

# The Beetle (Tales of Mystery & the Supernatural)

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With an Introduction by David Stuart Davies

'I saw him take a different shape before my eyes. His loose draperies fell about him...and there issued out of them a monstrous creature of the beetle tribe...'

From out of the dark and mystic Egypt come The Beetle, a creature of horror, 'born of neither God nor man', which can change its form at will. It is bent on revenge for a crime committed against the devotees of an ancient religion. At large in London, it pursues its victims without mercy and no one, it seems, is safe from its gruesome clutches. Richard Marsh's weird, compelling and highly original novel, which once outsold Dracula, is both a horror masterpiece and a fin de siècle melodrama embracing the fears and concerns of late Victorian society. Long out of print, The Beetle is now available in this Wordsworth edition, ready to chill you to the marrow and give you nightmares.

The Beetle (1897) tells the story of a fantastical creature, "born of neither god nor man," with supernatural and hypnotic powers, who stalks British politician Paul Lessingham through fin de siècle London in search of vengeance for the defilement of a sacred tomb in Egypt. In imitation of various popular fiction genres of the late nineteenth century, Marsh unfolds a tale of terror, late imperial fears, and the "return of the repressed," through which the crisis of late imperial Englishness is revealed.

This Broadview edition includes a critical introduction and a rich selection of historical documents that situate the novel within the contexts of fin de siècle London, England's interest and involvement in Egypt, the emergence of the New Woman, and contemporary theories of mesmerism and animal magnetism.

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