

Dark Adventure Radio Theatre

The Players

Leslie Baldwin Martha Pierce, Merwin Gardner
 Aidan Branney Deputy Loveque
 Sean Branney Abel Cooke, Professor Lamb
 Kacey Camp Edith Green, Abigail Gardner
 Mark Colson Nahum Gardner
 Dan Conroy Erskine Blackwell, Professor Humburg,
 Doc Marsh, Chas. Needham
 Andrew Leman E. Lapham Peabody, Professor Barnes,
 Doctor Fleming
 Barry Lynch Ammi Pierce
 David Pavao Hughes, Sheriff Clark
 Kevin Stidham Stephen Rice, Mason Stubbs,
 Deputy Peterman, Barrow
 Josh Thoemke Announcer
 Sarah Van der Pol Ruth
 Time Winters Amos McGregor

The Staff

Based on the story by H. P. Lovecraft
 Radio Adaptation by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman
 Music by Troy Sterling Nies
 Audio Engineering by Chris Horvath
 Cover and Disc Illustrations by Darrell Tutchton
 Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman and Sean Branney
 Scenic Miniatures by Fred Manchento, Jason Voss & Andrew Leman
 Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman



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WICKHAM, MASS.

DEATH BY METEORS

Mr. Proctor writes: "In the wake of some recent events, we have received several inquiries, some of them rather anxious inquiries, respecting the dangers to be feared from meteorite downfall.

If we knew the average number of meteoric masses which break their way through the earth's armor — that is, through the 'firmament,' — that is, through the transparent expanse of ether, pure transparent elemental air — it would be very easy to calculate the exact chance of death by meteoric downfall. As a matter of fact, we have no satisfactory evidence on this point, because most of the meteorites which fall upon the earth escape attention. I suppose, however, that if Prof. Lamb, of Miskatonic University, rightly assumes the number of falling stars of all orders to be 400,000,000 yearly, we may fairly assume that about 4,000 meteorites fall annually upon the earth's surface. This allows one meteorite for 100,000 falling stars.

Now let us take the total number of human beings at any one time on the earth as 1,500,000,000. Assume the risk of persons within doors equal to that of persons in the open air for a meteorite falling on a house would not be seriously interrupted in its course, since it would travel with a velocity of several miles per second. Again, remembering that the meteors do not fall vertically, nor even if they did, do men always stand upright, we must take a larger surface for each person than that which he presents as seen from above when standing. We may take half a square yard for an adult, and perhaps a quarter of a square yard for the average human

But first, a few words from our sponsor....

"I have just finished one new tale which I'll send you in my next... Something falls from the sky, and terror broods. The thing is told by an old man forty years after, and the title is "The Colour Out of Space."

— letter from HPL to Bernard Austin Dwyer,
 March 26, 1927

SB: I never really liked "The Colour Out of Space."

AHL: What? Why not?

SB: When I first read it, decades ago, it seemed kind of bland to me. I remember the changes to the farm and the plants, a creepy atmosphere, but that's about it. It was nice, but it was no "The Call of Cthulhu."

AHL: What's wrong with you? I've always thought it was his creepiest tale. And it was Lovecraft's personal favorite of his own stories.

SB: I know.

AHL: After his creative dry spell when he got married and moved to New York, he bounced back by returning to Providence. In 1926 he wrote *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and then followed it up with "The Colour Out of Space." He sold it to *Amazing Stories* and got paid a paltry twenty-five bucks. It's outrageous.

SB: I agree.

AHL: This story's one of the best embodiments of the principles Lovecraft lays out in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. It's a prime example of cosmic horror because the colour itself is unknowable and remains almost entirely unexplained. The colour is a chillingly effective symbol for our perilously limited understanding of the vast cosmos beyond our solar system.

SB: I hear you. And I was going to say, in making this episode of *Dark Adventure Radio Theatre*, I've come around in my thinking. I've become a fan of "The Colour Out of Space."

AHL: At last!

SB: What I've come to like about the show is that it brings in this unknowable thing from cosmic space, and it unleashes (possibly by accident) horror and dismay upon mankind. But that cosmic horror is poignant in how it's experienced by the Gardners, who, when you dramatize them, turn out to be very nice people.

AHL: Well the story sure doesn't go well for them.

SB: I think the payoff is even better when we, the audience, get entangled in the lives of those subjected to the horror. I like my cosmic horror to have a personal touch.

AHL: Another aspect I couldn't help thinking about as we worked on this story was that Lovecraft wrote it in a pre-nuclear age, when the effects of radiation — and even its very existence — were practically inconceivable to the average person.

SB: We sort of give the nod to that by having the program sponsored by a toothpaste that actually contains radium.

AHL: Yes. A modern audience can get the horrible irony of that gag, but readers in Lovecraft's day would probably not have seen the connection. There really were "health" products that used radioactive ingredients in HPL's day.

SB: Hmm, I've never thought that radiation had anything to do with what happened to the Gardners.

AHL: I wonder how the story would have been different if it had been written after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

SB: And don't forget the Quabbin Reservoir.

AHL: That's right!

SB: The fictional reservoir in the story was inspired by real reservoir projects at the time, the Scituate in Rhode Island and the Quabbin in Massachusetts, both of which required the flooding and destruction of actual towns. Yet another of Lovecraft's tales that's based on a true story.

AHL: Wait, aren't they all?

—SB & AHL



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