The Gothic tale has been with us for over two hundred years, but this collection is the first to illustrate the continuing strength of this special fictional tradition from its origins in the late eighteenth century. Gothic fiction is generally identified from Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto and the works of Ann Radcliffe, and with heroes and heroines menaced by feudal villains amid crumbling ruins. While the repertoire of claustrophobic settings, gloomy themes, and threatening atmosphere established the Gothic genre, later writers from Poe onwards achieved an ever greater sophistication, and a shift in emphasis from cruelty to decadence. Modern Gothic is distinguished by its imaginative variety of voice, from the chilling depiction of a disordered mind to the sinister suggestion of vampirism.

This anthology brings together the work of writers such as Le Fanu, Hawthorne, Hardy, Faulkner, and Borges with their earliest literary forebears, and emphasizes the central role of women writers from Anna Laetitia Aikin to Isabel Allende and Angela Carter. While the Gothic tale shares some characteristics with the ghost story and tales of horror and fantasy, the present volume triumphantly celebrates the distinctive features that define this powerful and unsettling literary form.

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The Gothic tale has been with us for over two hundred years, but this collection is the first to illustrate the continuing strength of this special fictional tradition from the late eighteenth century to the present day. This book presents a comprehensive collection of Gothic tales from the beginnings of the genre (e.g., the 1773 "Sir Bertrand: A Fragment" by Anna Laetitia Aikin, to the 19th century works (e.g., the 1839 "A Chapter in the House of a Tyrone Family" by Sheridan Le Fanu), and to more recent 20th century works (e.g., the 1934 "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner). The book also includes a very interesting and informative introduction on the specific characteristics and history of the Gothic tale.