



Book of the Week

***Lovecraft Country* by Matt Ruff**

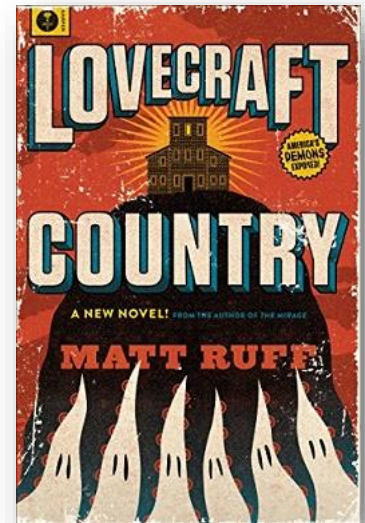
Book Review by Phillip Carter, Director of Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library System

The year is 1954 and Atticus Turner is an African American veteran returning home to Chicago to find his father who sent him a strange letter while Atticus was serving in Korea. Upon return he finds his father missing and a slew of strange clues that lead him to Ardham, Massachusetts (renowned as “Lovecraft Country” due to the region’s prominence in the writings of HP Lovecraft) where he discovers a strange order called The Order of the Ancient Dawn. From then on Atticus’ life gets stranger and darker.

Set firmly in Jim Crow era United States, the book highlights racial tensions of the time while weaving in a narrative straight out of an HP Lovecraft horror novel. Fans of Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and Shirley Jackson – and of course HP Lovecraft – will find familiar horror themes throughout the novel, and fans of novels like *The Hate U Give* and *The Help* will find familiar themes of harassment, violence, and the legacy of slavery as the protagonists are forced to not only navigate the social situation of their race but the horror of the supernatural situation they find themselves immersed in. Occasionally the experiences of the protagonists at the hands of every-day people is more unsettling than the monsters they must face.

This book has been turned into an HBO series of the same name. While the television series deviates significantly more from the book than most television shows, it carries an impressive cast and a stellar soundtrack, but do not expect to see the novel translated to the small screen.

I recommend this book for fans of horror, novels that tackle issues of race, but it is not a lighthearted read and could be a challenging read for more sensitive audiences.



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