

Ancestral Shadows: An Anthology of Ghostly Tales

Russell Kirk



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Foreword by Vigen Guroian

Widely regarded as the founder of the modern conservative movement, Russell Kirk was a noted man of letters whose prodigious literary career included a syndicated newspaper column and a regular page in National Review. This volume demonstrates another compelling side of Kirk — the imaginative author who could communicate his powerful vision through the dramatic genre of the ghost story.

Ancestral Shadows collects nineteen of Kirk's best ghostly tales from periodicals and anthologies published throughout his life. In the tradition of Defoe, Stevenson, Hawthorne, Coleridge, Poe, and other master writers, these frightful stories conjure the creaks and shadows of the very places where they came to life through Kirk's pen: haunted St. Andrews, the Isle of Eigg, Kellie Castle, Balcarres House, Durie House ("which has the most persistent of all country-house specters"), and Kirk's own ancestral spooky house in Mecosta, Michigan.

The volume ends with "A Cautionary Note on the Ghostly Tale," an incisive piece in which Kirk reflects on why he writes such stories." All important literature has some ethical end," Kirk says, "and the tale of the preternatural — as written by George Macdonald, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and other masters — can be an instrument for the recovery of moral order."

Masterfully crafted, Kirk's Ancestral Shadows will enthrall and delight all lovers of ghost stories.

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