

## The E.F. Benson Megapack

*E.F. Benson*

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## **The E.F. Benson Megapack** E.F. Benson

"The E.F. Benson Megapack" collects 36 of Benson's horror stories, including such classics as "The Bus-Conductor," "The Room in the Tower," and "The Thing in the Hall." Included are:

AT ABDUL ALI'S GRAVE

THE MAN WHO WENT TOO FAR

THE CAT

GAVON'S EVE

THE DUST-CLOUD

THE SHOOTINGS AT ACHNALEISH

THE BUS-CONDUCTOR

THE HOUSE WITH THE BRICK-KILN

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

HOW FEAR DEPARTED FROM THE LONG GALLERY

THE CONFESSION OF CHARLES LINKWORTH

THE ROOM IN THE TOWER

CATERPILLARS

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS

THE TERROR BY NIGHT

THE OTHER BED

THE CHINA BOWL

THE PASSENGER

THE APE

THROUGH

THURSDAY EVENINGS

THE PSYCHICAL MALLARDS

MRS AMWORTH

THE GARDENER

THE HORROR-HORN

"AND THE DEAD SPAKE..."

NEGOTIUM PERAMBULANS

IN THE TUBE

MR. TILLY'S SEANCE

THE CASE OF FRANK HAMPDEN

MRS. ANDREWS'S CONTROL

THE DEATH WARRANT

MACHAON

AT THE FARMHOUSE

INSCRUTABLE DECREES

THE THING IN THE HALL

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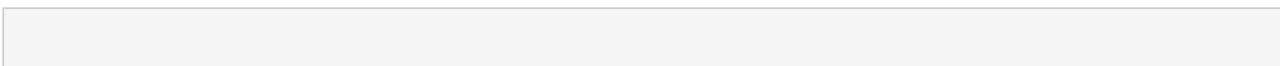
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# From Reader Review The E.F. Benson Megapack for online ebook

## Dan Johnson says

Fascinating stories and wonderful style. The descriptions are almost sensual at times.

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## Diane says

“But why you go ghost-seeking I cannot imagine,” he said, “because your teeth were chattering and your eyes starting out of your head all the rime you were there, from sheer fright.”

“Or do you like being frightened?”

Hugh, though generally intelligent, is dense in certain ways; this is one of them.

“Why, of course, I like being frightened,” I said. “I want to be made to creep and creep and creep. Fear is the most absorbing and luxurious of emotions. One forgets all else if one is afraid.”

(The Bus-Conductor)

E. F. Benson is probably best known as the author of the “Mapp and Lucia” stories about Emmeline “Lucia” Lucas and Elizabeth Mapp. However, he was also a talented short story writer, and was the author of several excellent supernatural stories, which are included in this volume. Some of the stories, like the Mapp and Lucia tales, have been adapted for TV and film or are available as audiobooks. Some stories are quite serious, while others (“Mr. Tilly’s Seance”) are humorous or satirical. I list a few of my favorites below:

\* “The Dust-Cloud” - A different twist on the ghost story – a ghost car. An evil man dies in a car accident after running over and killing a child. Now the ghosts of the man, his car, and his victim haunt the spot of the fatal wreck. The narrator and his friend, who actually knew the dead man, find themselves caught up in the haunting. Surprisingly chilling story. I have a long commute in the early morning well before daylight, and this story made a definite impression on me.

\* “The Bus-Conductor” - Probably Benson’s most famous tale. This story has been adapted for film (Dead of Night – 1944) and TV (Twilight Zone), and the catchphrase appears to have spawned an urban legend.

The narrator’s friend, Hugh Grainger, has a terrifying vision of a ghostly hearse and its conductor, who intones, “Just room for one inside, sir.” Is it a warning or a statement of things to come? Very eerie tale. Grainger (and this narrator) figure in at least two other Benson stories.

\* “How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery” - This is a not entirely successful mix of humor and terror. The change from humor to horror is rather jarring. It’s as if Benson couldn’t quite decide on what kind of story he was writing. I still don’t know whether I like this story or not. It starts out:

“Church-Peveril is a house so beset and frequented by spectres, both visible and audible, that none of the family which it shelters under its acre and a half of green copper roofs takes psychical phenomena with any seriousness. For to the Peverils the appearance of a ghost is a

matter of hardly greater significance than is the appearance of the post to those who live in more ordinary houses.”

The ghosts aren't taken seriously – except for two tiny phantoms who appear in the long gallery. To view them means a terrible death. When Madge, a young member of the Peveril family, falls asleep in the haunted area, she has to face the terrible twins.

\* “The Room in the Tower” - one of my favorite horror stories. Since he was 16 years old, the narrator has been having the same nightmare – he goes to visit a former classmate, Jack Stone, and Stone's cold, silent family. Though there are some variations over the years, the dream always ends the same way:

“And the silence I knew would always be broken by Mrs. Stone saying to me, ‘Jack will show you your room: I have given you the room in the tower.’”

The narrator would be led to the room in the tower.

“Then I knew that my conjecture had been right: there was something awful in the room, and with the terror of nightmare growing swiftly and enveloping me, I awoke in a spasm of terror.”

This goes on periodically for 15 years until the narrator goes to stay with a friend (NOT Jack Stone). When he arrives at the man's house, he realizes it is the same one that has been in his dreams. And then his friend's mother, who is very different than the creepy Mrs Stone, says, “Jack will show you your room: I have given you the room in the tower.”

\* “Mrs Amworth” - one of my favorite horror stories, though I do not normally like vampire tales. I know of only one adaptation of this for TV, a very poor and rather silly 1970s version for British TV starring Glynis Johns. I recommend sticking to the actual story or the audio version available on LibriVox.

The narrator lives in the idyllic village of Maxley, a picture-postcard of peace, prosperity, and contentment, though life can get rather dull at times – then Mrs Amworth moves in. In her mid-40s, she is a recent widow, her husband, a civil servant, having died in India during a mysterious plague. She claims to be a descendent of the Chastons, a family that lived in Maxley until a century earlier.

“She was always cheery and jolly; she was interested in everything, and in music, in gardening, in games of all sorts was a competent performer. Everybody (with one exception) liked her, everybody felt her to bring with her the tonic of a sunny day.”

(view spoiler)

Agatha Christie once commented on the power of horror when displayed in simple, everyday surroundings. You expect something bad to happen when you arrive at a dark, mysterious castle enveloped by fog. You don't expect anything bad in a pretty, sunny village full of flowers and friendly people.

\* "At the Farmhouse" - John Aylsford contemplates the murder of the wife he has come to hate. Indeed, he wonders if he ever loved her at all. He certainly can't love the creature he is now married to – drunken, slatternly, and thoroughly unpleasant. Aylsford believes everything will be just fine once she is out of the way. However, things don't work out quite as well as he thought. A nice (if that's the right word), short horror story with a shocking ending.

I also highly recommend the LibriVox recordings of "The Room in the Tower," "The Bus-Conductor," and "Mrs Amworth."

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### **Pat says**

I discovered E.F. Benson years ago through the Mapp and Lucia BBC series. I loved those books and had also read some of the Dodo stories, but had never realized Mr. Benson was as well known for his ghost and horror stories as for his social comedies. This megapack provides a great overview of horror, all well told.

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