



The Smell of Telescopes

Rhys Hughes

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Welsh writer Rhys Hughes regards this as his favourite book, and with good reason. It is one of the funniest and most intelligent books from the lighter side of macabre writing I have ever seen. It clamours with a cast of pirates, floppy-wristed welsh bards, explorers and inventors, imps, squonks, moving public houses, M R Jamesian revenants, M R Jamesian punctuation, blueberry pies, trousers, noses, clocks, carrots . . . I cant list them all here, there isn't room. Like all the best books, this quirky and surreal collection is hard to classify, but it lies in that region where the macabre and eerie worlds of classic horror and fantasy become a basis for something else - for a dark and original sense of humour filled with unexpected cross-references, homages, satires and black comedy. What makes this collection remarkable is not just the delightfully murky and skewed tales themselves, but the complex and ingenious way they all lock together and interrelate. I was going to say 'tessellate' but if this is a tessellation then it is filled with impossible-sided polygons, non-Euclidean three-dimensional geometry, unexpurgated curves and cracks from which blueberry-scented steam emerges with a screaming hiss. But what is without doubt is that 'The Smell of Telescopes' is a magnificent book and a cornerstone of the rather oddly shaped corner of literature that it occupies. Since the first edition went out of print, the unavailability of this book has been a great crime of literature. And Eibonvale Press is, as always, dedicated to the righting of the world's more substantial wrongs.

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