

The White People & "The Red Hand"

Arthur Machen



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The White People & The Red Hand (2 Books) "The White People" is a fantasy-horror short story by the Welsh writer Arthur Machen. Written in the late 1890s, it was first published in 1904 . A discussion between two men on the nature of evil leads one of them to reveal a mysterious Green Book he possesses. It is a young girl's diary, in which she describes in ingenuous, evocative prose her strange impressions of the countryside in which she lives as well as conversations with her nurse, who initiates her into a secret world of folklore and ritual magic. Throughout, the girl makes cryptic allusions to such topics as "nymphs", "Dôls", "voolas," "white, green, and scarlet ceremonies", "Aklo letters", the "Xu" and "Chian" languages, "Mao games", and a game called "Troy Town" (the last of which is a reference to actual practices involving labyrinths or labyrinthine dances[1]). The girl's tale gradually develops a mounting atmosphere of suspense, with suggestions of witchcraft, only to break off abruptly just at the point where a supreme revelation seems imminent. In a return to the frame story, the diary's custodian reveals that the girl had "poisoned herself—in time", making the analogy of a child finding the key to a locked medicine cabinet "The Red Hand" (1895) — A story featuring the main characters from The Three Impostors. It focuses on a murder performed with an ancient stone axe.

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