

Nightmare Abbey: "It is fashion to be unhappy. To have a reason for being so would be exceedingly commonplace: to be so without any is the province of genius."

Thomas Love Peacock

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First published in 1818 at a time when the Gothic genre was much in vogue, Nightmare Abbey is a novel by Thomas Love Peacock that displays many Gothic conventions. Peacock's characters are said to be based on his own friends and on other real people from the literary circles of the time. In addition, the novel is basically a satirical appraisal of the romantic and the transcendentalist movements flourishing in the lateeighteenth century. The plot follows Christopher Glowry and his son Scythrop who live in a family estate named Nightmare Abbey. Mr. Glowry is a very eccentric and melancholic man who likes to be surrounded by people who share his mood and obsessions. He has a taste for everything dark and gloomy and even his servants have such Gothic names as "Raven," "Graves", etc. The narrative particularly focuses on the character of Scythrop who is much like his father. Scythrop is obsessed with writing, research and the idea of "social regeneration" to which he devotes most of his time. The rest of his time is devoted to his two beloved females who do not know each other. While he publicly flirts with the one, he keeps the other in the tower's hidden chamber. Unfortunately for Scythrop, his secret is revealed suddenly to both women. The latter decide to leave him for good, which drowns him in depression.



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