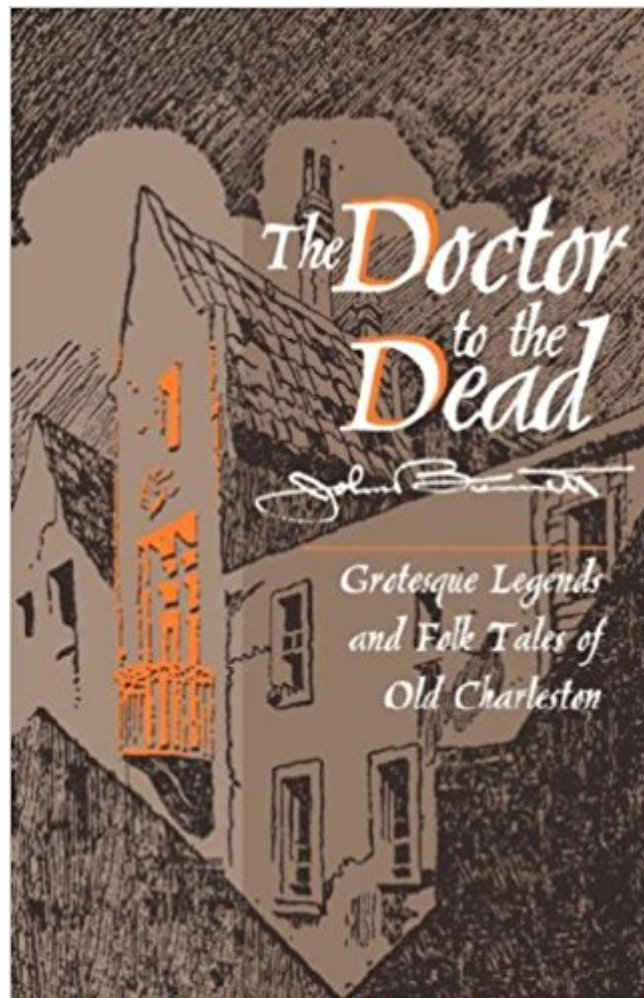




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Doctor To The Dead: Grotesque Legends And Folk Tales Of Old Charleston



Synopsis

Twice-told tales about historic Charleston and its African American community.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: University of South Carolina Press (February 1, 1995)

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Customer Reviews

I first came across this book in a college library when I was a teen. I was delighted and fascinated by the tales described, the historic tone of the stories, and the depiction of authentic Gullah culture. I re-read the book many, many times, and now am glad to have it in my personal library. The author deserves much praise for collecting these tales!

Excellent

If you're looking for southern history with a ghostly twist, this book is it! This page turner is sure to have you sleeping with the lights on!

The book is exactly what I was expecting. It is very good.

a fascinating story about a leading Charleston physician who falls in love with the ghost of a woman long since dead and buried. He becomes so obsessed with the condition of the dead that he ostracizes the conventional medical community and devotes the rest of his life to their care

The Doctor to the Dead is a collection of twenty-three folk tales, legends, and ghost stories set in or

near old Charleston in South Carolina. Author John Bennett collected and published these stories from African-Americans in the early twentieth century and assembled them in one volume in the 1940s. The first twenty stories are written in modern English but the last three are published in the Gullah dialect. Some of the stories have allusions to important people and events in South Carolina history such as John C. Calhoun, Denmark Vesey, Gullah Jack, and the Civil War. Race relations, punishment, pride, and death are some of the themes explored in these wonderful tales. The vivid imagery and descriptive language make these stories a real pleasure to read. My favorite story is The Army of the Dead which tells how wounded Confederate soldiers who died at the Trapman Street Hospital go on to reinforce General Robert E. Lee in Virginia. If you like legends, folk tales, ghost stories, Charleston, and the South you cannot miss this book. Highly recommended.

Enjoy Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Grady and George Washington Cable? Don't miss this much under-appreciated masterpiece by the man who started the Charleston Renaissance. Bennett and DuBose Heyward are to Charleston what George Washington Cable was to New Orleans, and Bennett's command of local "color" literature is evident here. As a collection of stories culled from the oral tradition of the Low Country's important Gullah culture, this book is an exhilarating alternative to the infinitely heavy and guilt-ridden tomes of Toni Morrison (Bennett was also from Ohio) for any serious student of Afro-American and Southern history. It includes original sketches of landscapes and portraits of black corroborators which firmly ground the stories in local history and folk culture. But this is not just a book for regionalists! One can't help but be impressed with Bennett's phenomenal interest, dedication, and erudition even if he was a bit self absorbed. The new edition, published by the University of South Carolina, is introduced with a lucid piece by Professor and Librarian Thomas L. Johnson.

Being from the Mt. Pleasant/Charleston area myself, I can vouch that this as a great collection of Black Charleston folklore. I know some of the areas that are spoken of in this tales. Essentially, Bennett, a sympathetic white Ohioan, collected these tales from African-Americans in Charleston in the early 1900s, but since this was the dark days of segregation and he chose not to patronize the tellers of these tales and treated them with dignity, he and these stories were scorned by White Charleston's establishment until he published this book in 1943. Even without this basic history, these are wonderfully entertaining stories of ghosts, lost loves, and divine revenge that will be a hit at your next halloween party or your (older) children at bedtime. Read, learn, and enjoy.

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