

MEMORIES OF LOVECRAFT: I. Sonia Haft Lovecraft Davis, who was married to H. P. Lovecraft in the 1920s and divorced by mutual consent late in that decade, has written some paragraphs about Lovecraft in letters to the editor. The following excerpts are from her letters —

“It is not true that H. P. L. liked other weird tale writers better than Poe. Poe was his first inspiration — in fact, in his early youth when he first read Poe, he identified his own imagination with that of Poe. His first Poe story was *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. From then on he read most avidly the rest of Poe’s writings and often referred to them. In later years he admired and almost worshipped Arthur Machen and other modern writers, but so great an admirer was he of Poe’s, that he took me to many places Poe had visited, particularly to Poe’s Cottage, now a museum. . . .

“As a child H. P. L. was not only far from being ‘hideous’ but he was a very beautiful baby with flaxen curls, beautiful brown eyes and an engaging smile. As a boy of six he was still a very handsome and interesting-looking child. As a married man he was an adequately excellent lover, but refused to show his feelings in the presence of others. He shunned promiscuous association with women before his marriage. Living a normal life and eating the food I provided made him take on much extra weight, which was quite becoming to him. He also learned to laugh heartily and more frequently. . . .

“If H. P. L. could not be described as facially handsome, he had an interesting atmosphere about him that attracted people, making them curious almost to admiration.

Unfortunately he was conditioned by his poor demented mother to believing himself badlooking. . . .

"H. P. was inarticulate in expressions of love except to his mother and to his aunts, to whom he expressed himself quite vigorously; to all other it was expressed by deep appreciation only. One way of expression of H.P.'s sentiment was to wrap his 'pinkey' finger around mine and say 'Umph!' . . .

"H. P. used to speak of his mother as a 'touch-me-not' and once — but once only — he confessed to me that his mother's attitude toward him was 'devastating'. . . . In my opinion, the elder Lovecraft, having been a travelling salesman for the Gotham Silversmiths, and his wife being a 'touch-me-not', took his sexual pleasures wherever he could find them; for H. P. never had a sister or a brother, and his mother, probably having been sex-starved against her will, lavished both her love and her hate on her only child. . . .

"During our marriage we often went to theatres, sometimes to the Taormina, a favorite Italian restaurant, where H. P. L. learned to eat minestrone and spaghetti with parmesan cheese, which he loved. But he balked at the wine. . . . Sometimes we went to the movies, but more often to some hidden, weird places in Prospect Park, visiting an old Indian burying ground. Occasionally we went to 'Blue Pencil' meetings at the homes of other members."

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