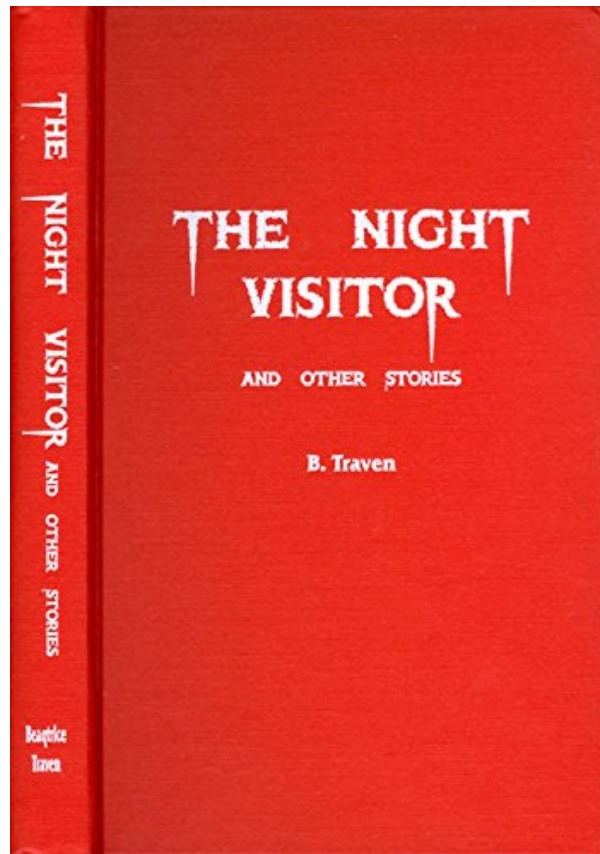
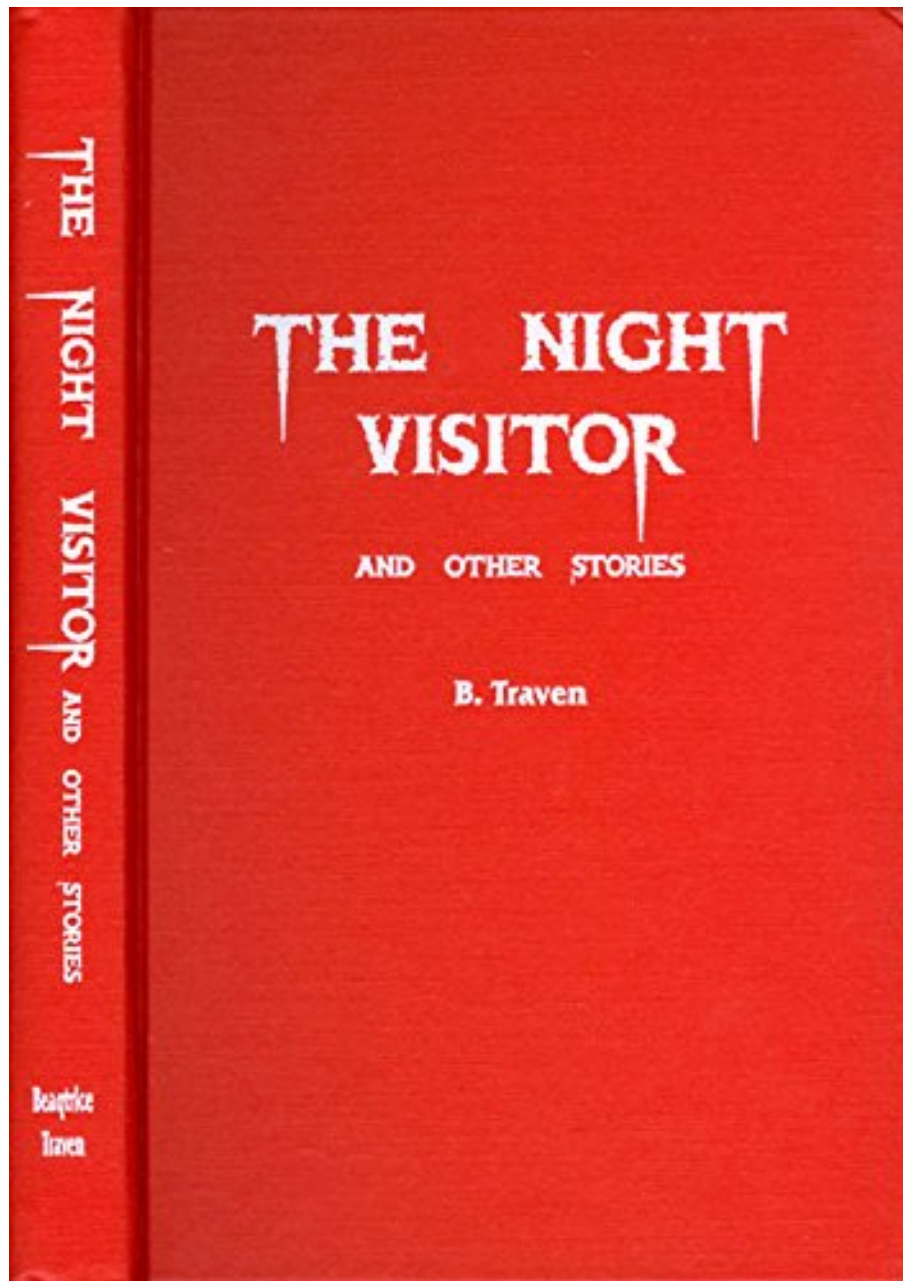


NIGHT VISITOR AND OTHER STORIES BY B. TRAVEN



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About the Author

The mysterious B. Traven (1890–1969) was born in Chicago, spent his youth in Germany as an itinerant actor and revolutionary journalist, became a seaman on tramp steamers, settled in Mexico in the early 1920s, and began recording his experience in novels and stories. In the United States his best-known novel is *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

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Here are ten of B. Traven's remarkable short stories. Three of them are long stories: The setting of "The Night Visitor" is a hacienda deep in the Mexican bush where a lonely American recreates in his imagination an eerie world of Indian folk legend. "The Cattle Drive" is a vivid description of a cowboy's trek with a thousand head of cattle across the Mexican plains; it has all the authenticity that Hollywood Westerns lack. "Macario," which was made into a prize-winning motion picture, is a wry Mexican fable about an Indian woodcutter who makes a compact with the devil to save his family from starvation. Among seven shorter stories, some are based on incidents from contemporary Mexican life, others on ancient Indian folk legends. All have spontaneity, humor, and warmth. "B. Traven is coming to be recognized as one of the narrative masters of the twentieth century."?New York Times Book Review.

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Stories of Mexico before Disney and Taco Bell

By Bob Newman

To say that B. Traven captures the essence of old Mexican life outside the big cities, coming from a reviewer who has yet to set foot in Mexico, might seem a bit rich ! But I've heard that his novels and stories are required reading in Mexican schools. That may give more than just a little insight into what Mexicans think of his work. The pleasingly-written stories are well-constructed around themes of interest to everybody--- history, poverty, work, love, dreams, animals, and humor. Throughout, Traven's respect for the common people of Mexico shines like an unwavering beacon, though he never idolizes them.

The title piece, about an American stuck away in remote jungles, who reads his way through a library of rare books on pre-Columbian Indian civilizations, and reaps an amazing result, cannot fail to grip readers. Stories like "Effective Medicine", "Assembly Line" and "The Cattle Drive" reflect Mexican life as seen through American (or foreign) eyes, while "Burro Trading" is one of the most humorous stories I've read in a long time. Mexico is no doubt in the grip of the 21st century already---traffic jams, pollution, the Internet, privatisation, globalisation, and sweeping political change. These stories might harken back to a simpler time of less justice but less uncertainty, when social status was more fixed and Mexican ways had not been sullied by MTV, MacDonalds, and Madonna. Mexico is no doubt better off nowadays. The view of Mexico provided by the history of the Conquest and by the broad strokes of Rivera, Orozco, and Sequeiros is not the only one. This group of stories, by a talented, somewhat-mysterious writer, ought to be much better known

than they are because of their attention to smaller details on a more daily plane. I strongly recommend THE NIGHT VISITOR.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

tremendous stories from b. traven

By Maureen de Sousa

"my personal history would not be disappointing to readers, but it is my own affair which i want to keep to myself" - b. traven in defense of his refusal to provide a biography to help promote his first novel.

the name that b. traven was christened with may never be revealed to us, but as tantalizing as that mystery is, i think it's pretty evident when you read his books that you know him: his interest in mexico and the indigenous population and their folklore; his disdain for greed and those who succumb to it; his love of travelling and adventure. the stories that comprise this collection are all reflective of those interests he most famously combined in the novel The Treasure of the Sierra Madre. i think b. traven's talents might suit the short form best: as a writer, his strengths lie in his dialogue, and his characters, and the adventures they embark upon, and while the adventures are grand, he doesn't rely on a lot of plot to entrance you.

with the exception of "a new god was born" which felt a little too thin, and too journalistic in style, more a footnote in a history of guatemala than something that stood up on its own legs, all the stories in this collection really kicked my ass. i found "night visitor" spooky but also fascinating, and my enjoyment of it was perhaps coloured by the mystery of b. traven: one of the characters claims he has written 18 books but had no desire to publish them once they were perfected, but instead burned them, feeling a complete satisfaction in his cycle of creation and destruction. stories like "effective medicine", "the cattle drive", and "midnight call" seem like he must have lived them, and yet make me feel i had these adventures too. "conversion of some indians" and particularly "friendship" ask some very basic and deep questions, that he surely believed we should all ask ourselves, and challenge us to think and find our own answers. "macario", the beautiful final tale in the collection, is regarded as a modern mexican fable: the story of a woodcutter whose only ambition in life is to eat a whole turkey himself, and faces life and death decisions as a result. it is a tremendous story, and it doesn't really matter if the man who wrote it was mexican, german, or american. he just tells a great rollicking tale. :)

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By EILEEN PLUNK

great

See all 5 customer reviews...

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