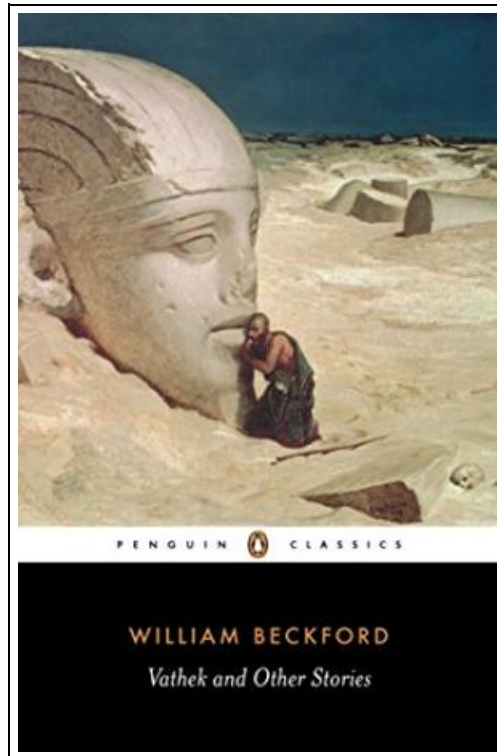


## Vathek" and Other Stories: A William Beckford Reader



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Penguin Books Ltd. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, "Vathek" and Other Stories: A William Beckford Reader, William Beckford, Malcolm Jack, An enthralling work of Gothic fiction, modelled on the Arabian Nights, William Beckford's "Vathek and Other Stories" is edited with an introduction by Malcolm Jack in "Penguin Classics". William Beckford was a novelist, travel writer, art critic and politician best known for his novel "Vathek" - a story with elaborate imagery, sardonic humour and an unforgettable gallery of grotesques - which describes a journey to the halls of Eblis, or Hell, in the pursuit of knowledge. This volume is arranged in three sections: "Oriental Tales", comprising "Vathek" and "The Long Story" (also known as "The Vision"); "Satires", which includes "Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters", an ironical expose of English art-collecting, and an essay on the exercises of the sentimental novel; and "Travel Diaries", containing extracts from Beckford's intimate and entertaining travel journals. Together this collection of writing exhibits the author's exuberant day-dreaming imagination as well as the deeply emotional, aesthetic themes and detailed physical descriptions of his writing. In his introduction Malcolm Jack explores Beckford's 'journeying spirit', assesses his reputation as a stylist and innovator and discusses his life and work. This edition also includes a bibliography, an index and a chronology of Beckford's life. William Beckford (1760-1844) inherited an immense fortune on his tenth birthday, and spent the next fifty years wasting it with reckless abandon. At the age of nineteen, he was forced to flee the country after his passionate affair with the Earl of Devon was exposed by a scandalised relative. He was a Member of Parliament and a traveller who spent large sums of money collecting rare books, curiosities and paintings for the embellishment of his Gothic folly, Fonthill Abbey, where he lived in opulent...

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