



WILLIAM
JACKSON

SHAPES IN THE
DARK

INTRODUCED BY CAROLINE MUNRO



gay horror



*'The boy's hair was silver-blond,
his skin pale as pearl.'*

OUT OF WATER

EXTRACT

When Matt woke up, he found he was hugging Dylan tight. The morning light had painted the room nectarine bright. He left the boy to sleep. From the porch, he watched the sun cast its first diamonds into the sea.

Dylan wanted to swim after breakfast. They walked hand in hand along the beach. The air was hot, the water warm and vivid under a cerulean sky. Dylan stripped naked and waded into the surf, his shins and ankles spattered by the tide's frothy margins. Matt splashed after him, aroused, churning up the salty water as he swam towards the boy. Dylan turned, waving and beckoning. Matt reached

out but the boy disappeared underwater, looping around him like a young seal. Matt dived, and opened his eyes as Dylan kissed him. They twisted downwards, deeper and deeper into the soundless underworld. Matt felt the sudden need for air, tensed against the instinct to panic. Dylan pushed his tongue into Matt's mouth, breathing into him, working Matt's hardness with his fingers. Matt felt his passion erupt, spiky white strands suspended in the cooling water.

They swam back to shore and lay together on the sand. The sky was empty. Matt felt the rising breeze, ample and fresh, teasing his skin as he drifted into sleep.

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Matt sat up, looking up and down the shoreline, scanning the wide, glimmering sea. The sun was high overhead and there was no sign of the boy. He ran into the surf, shouting Dylan's name but the undulating sea gave nothing away. He felt alone and belittled by the sea's absolute indifference. Then something flickered in the distant blue. Before Matt could make out what it was, it vanished again. A few moments later he saw it once more, much closer this time: Dylan was darting through the water at an incredible speed. The boy stood up in the shallows and strode towards the beach.

Matt hugged him and kissed him. 'I thought you'd drowned.'

‘Why?’

‘I couldn’t see you.’

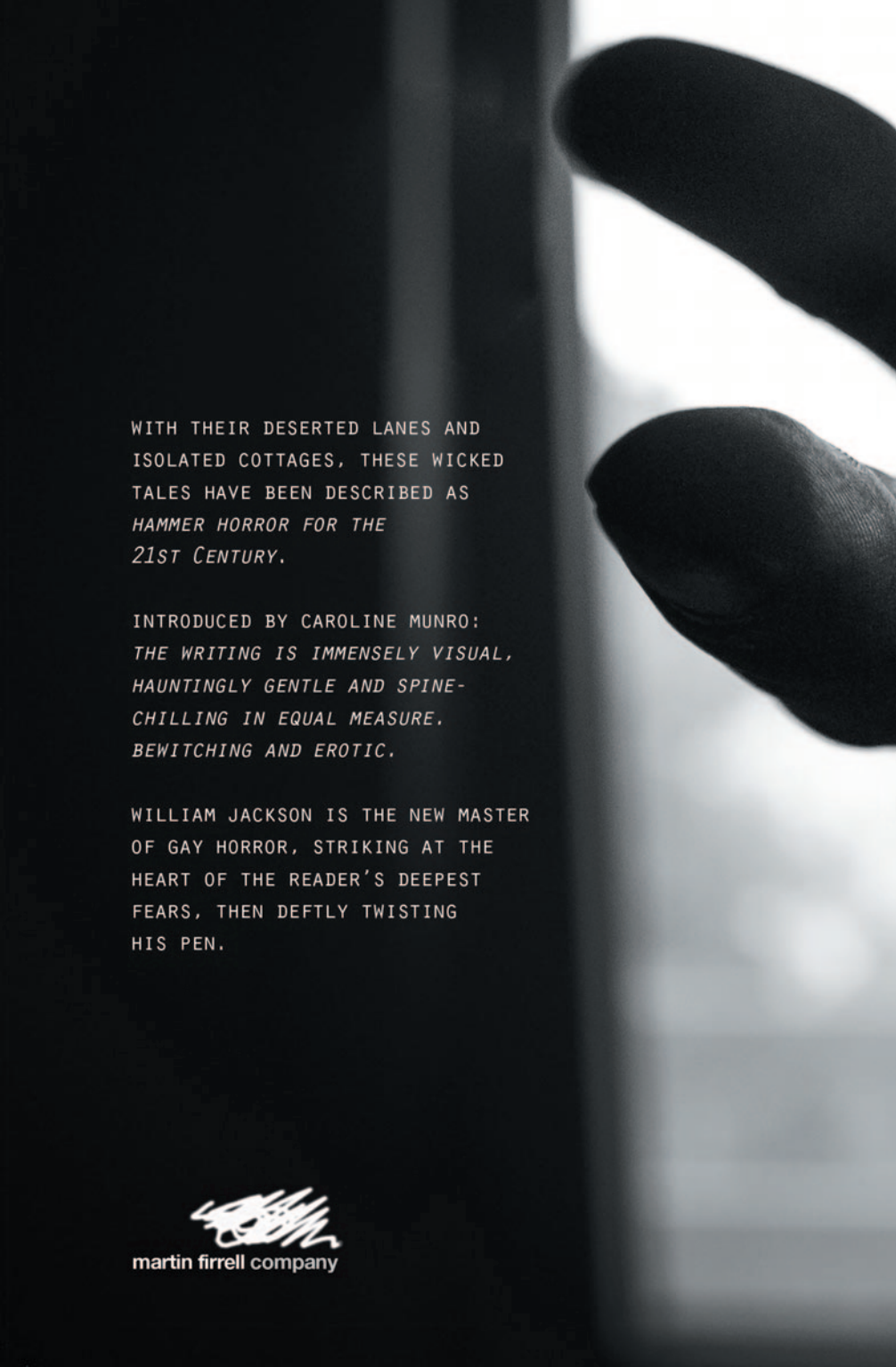
‘I was just out there. Just under the water.’

‘I thought I’d lost you.’

Dylan took Matt’s hand and they wandered slowly back towards the beach house, kicking their feet in the surf.

The house was cool and dark after the glare of the beach. Matt made chicken sandwiches and grabbed two Peronis from the fridge. He switched on the television and soon felt Dylan’s head heavy against his shoulder. He guessed the boy wasn’t used to alcohol.

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WITH THEIR DESERTED LANES AND
ISOLATED COTTAGES, THESE WICKED
TALES HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS
*HAMMER HORROR FOR THE
21ST CENTURY.*

INTRODUCED BY CAROLINE MUNRO:
*THE WRITING IS IMMENSELY VISUAL,
HAUNTINGLY GENTLE AND SPINE-
CHILLING IN EQUAL MEASURE.
BEWITCHING AND EROTIC.*

WILLIAM JACKSON IS THE NEW MASTER
OF GAY HORROR, STRIKING AT THE
HEART OF THE READER'S DEEPEST
FEARS, THEN DEFTLY TWISTING
HIS PEN.



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