

SCARY PLACES

# Wretched Ruins



by  
Steven L. Stern





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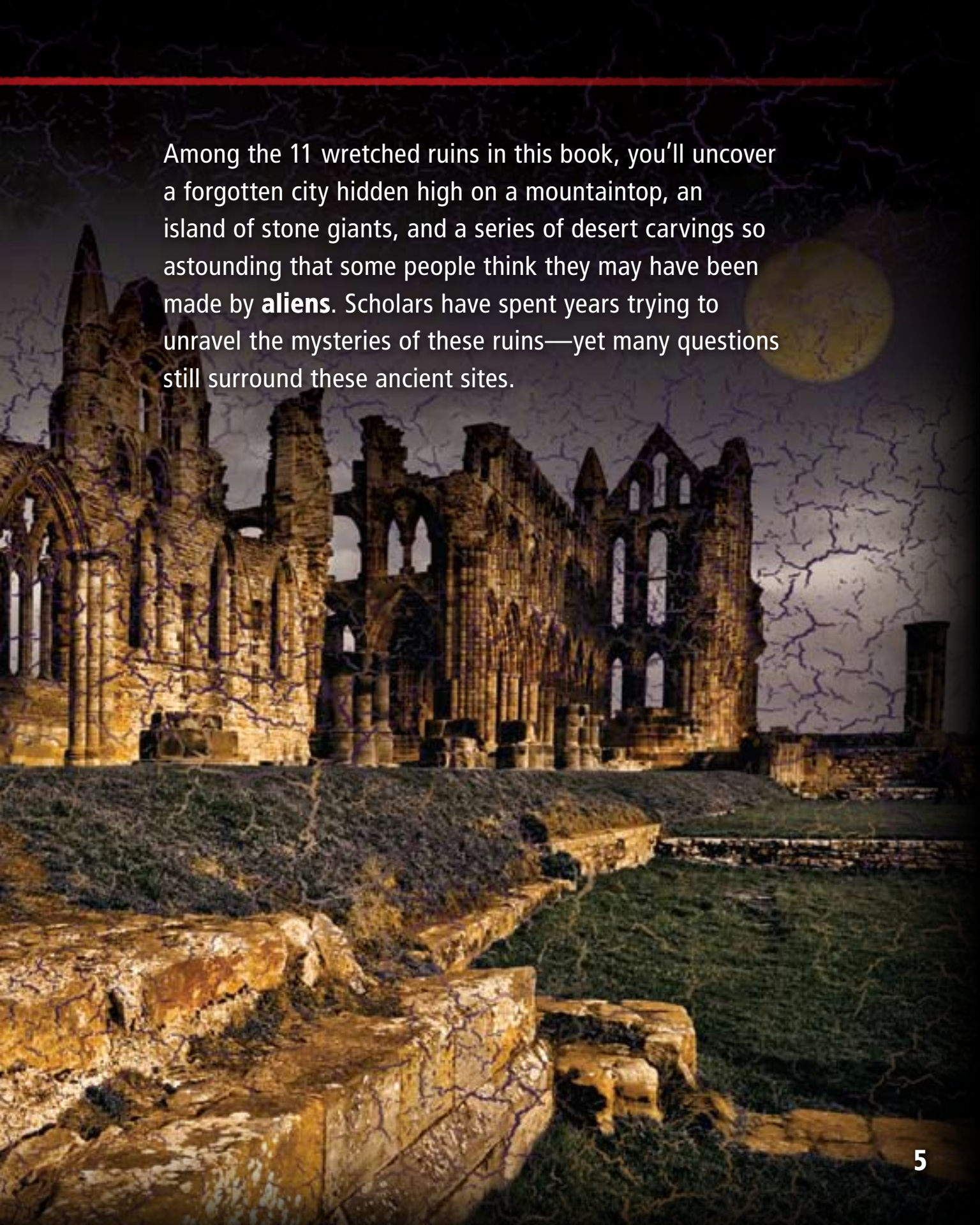
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# Wretched Ruins

In the shadows of history lurk the remains of **ancient** nations and powerful kingdoms. Many of these civilizations disappeared hundreds—or even thousands—of years ago. Yet ghostly traces of their world linger on in the **ruins** of their crumbling buildings, silent **tombs**, and blood-stained **pyramids**. These mysterious links to the past offer clues to strange, and even shocking, events.





Among the 11 wretched ruins in this book, you'll uncover a forgotten city hidden high on a mountaintop, an island of stone giants, and a series of desert carvings so astounding that some people think they may have been made by **aliens**. Scholars have spent years trying to unravel the mysteries of these ruins—yet many questions still surround these ancient sites.



# Dying for Their Ruler

## Ur, Iraq


Ur was one of the world's earliest cities. About 5,000 years ago, it was located in the region of Sumer (SOO-muhr), in what is now Iraq. At its center was a giant pyramid called a ziggurat. It was built as a **temple** for the moon god, Nanna. Not far from the temple was Ur's royal **burial ground**. Unfortunately, when a ruler was laid to rest there, others from the city were killed and buried there as well.

Temple built for the  
moon god, Nanna



In the 1920s, British **archaeologist** Leonard Woolley discovered Ur's royal burial ground. In these rooms carved out deep in the ground, he found the **corpses** of Sumerian kings and queens. The **graves** contained beautiful works of art and many silver and gold objects. They also revealed some disturbing facts about Sumerian **rituals**.

Close by the kings and queens lay the skeletons of their servants, soldiers, and musicians. Some rulers had been buried with more than 70 royal **attendants**. Many of them were young, and near each one was a gold or clay cup. The cups had been filled with a poisonous liquid. After the attendants had finished their deadly drink, they lay down to be buried with their ruler. The bodies looked like they had curled up to sleep.



Ur's royal  
burial ground



This beautiful box was found  
in the royal burial ground.



Proper burial was important to the Sumerians. They believed that the ghost of a person who had not been buried would haunt the living.



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## About the Author

Steven L. Stern has more than 30 years of experience as a writer and editor, developing textbooks, learning materials, and works of nonfiction and fiction for children and adults. He is the author of 19 books as well as numerous articles and short stories. He has also worked as a teacher, a lexicographer, and a writing consultant.









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# Wretched Ruins

In the shadows of history lurk the remains of ancient nations and powerful kingdoms. Many of these civilizations disappeared hundreds—or even thousands—of years ago. Yet ghostly traces of their world linger on in the ruins of their crumbling buildings, silent tombs, and blood-stained pyramids. These mysterious links to the past offer clues to strange, and even shocking, events. Among the 11 wretched ruins in this book, you'll uncover a forgotten city hidden high on a mountaintop, an island of stone giants, and a town that was hit by a storm so powerful that it sank into the sea.

**Abandoned Insane Asylums**

**Creepy Castles**

**Dark Labyrinths**

**Ghost Towns**

**Haunted Hotels**

**Haunted Houses**

**Spooky Cemeteries**

**Wretched Ruins**

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