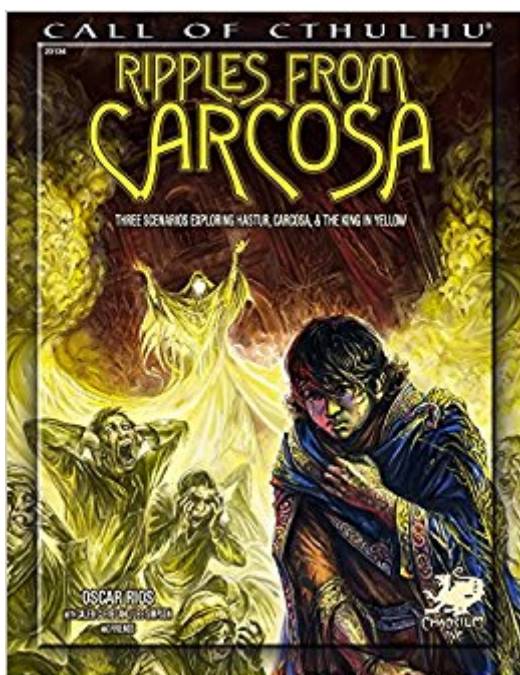


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Ripples From Carcosa: Three Scenarios Exploring Hastur, Carcosa, & The King In Yellow (Call Of Cthulhu Roleplaying, #23134)



Synopsis

O do not seek to learn or even ask, What horror hides behind... The Pallid Mask! -- Lin Carter, Litany to Hastur

OF ALL THE VARIED and mysterious Great Old Ones of the Cthulhu Mythos, few ensnare the imagination as easily as Hastur. The image of the silent, deserted city beside a dark, foreboding lake where sinister things lurk is one that stays with the reader. Many of us have walked the twisting streets of that dead alien city in our minds, finding our way into the tall towers to stand before an ancient throne. There sits the King in Yellow, the Lord of Carcosa, who gazes at us from behind his Pallid Mask. It is a journey many of us have taken, whether alone in our dreams or around a table rolling dice with our friends. It is a journey we are about to take again. Ripples from Carcosa seeks to expand upon the mythology of He Who Should Not Be Named and it gathers much of the varied material on Hastur into one place. The first chapter reviews the Great Old One Hastur and his various avatar forms. It examines the Yellow Sign, the play The King in Yellow, the Mythos tome of the same name, and the effects these things have on the human mind. Within these pages are a trio of adventures pitting the investigators against Hastur and his human worshippers, playable as either stand-alone scenarios or as a linked campaign, called Ripples from Carcosa. Each scenario focuses on a specific time period: Roman Invictus, Dark Ages, or the End Times of the far future. Pre-generated investigators are provided for each scenario, although keepers should feel free to incorporate existing player investigators if so desired. Across space and time, the King in Yellow reaches out... Dare you look upon his pallid mask?

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Customer Reviews

Considering my obsession with Call of Cthulhu RPG books, I loved it. The three scenarios were

provocative, interesting and twisty, the way you expect it to be.

As with all Chaosium products, this is a very high quality production. I get as much fun reading these adventures as I do playing them.

The great thing about "Ripples From Carcosa" (hereinafter RFC) is that it covers three scenarios in three different settings which can be run individually or as a loosely tied campaign. Cynics will argue this is merely a means for Chaosium to make money but I'd counter with the fact that all three of these are awesome settings so why would you cheat yourself with such a limiting belief? Besides, you don't necessarily need to pick up the supplements to run each setting anyway. The original RFC came out in 2005 as a monograph by Oscar Rios. Since then it has been revamped in preparation for the release of Call of Cthulhu RPG 7th edition which means this is a 7th edition set of scenarios, people. In addition, editing has put certain side chapters in better spots and there is more artwork as well as maps compared to the original monograph. In the back of this 135 page PDF are several handouts which include maps you can show to your players. RFC starts with a brief introduction to Hastur, the Yellow Sign and various avatars and such which serve him. After each scenario there is a coverage of how Hastur is worshipped which include cults to suit the era and future adventure seeds. In the very back is a conversion table for those who wish to use an older edition rather than 7th edition. In brief the three scenarios which are each about thirty pages cover Cthulhu Invictus (in which the Mythos meets the Ancient Roman era), Cthulhu Dark Ages (think early Middle Ages for Europe in which legends and fairy tales are tied into the Mythos) and The End Times Monograph (humanity has lost Earth to the Mythos in 23rd century and struggles to survive).

CTHULHU INVICTUS SCENARIO: the players play mostly regular Roman citizens on holiday with their children when something obviously horrible happens (don't give me that look you knew this was coming). What ensues after a false lull of vacationing becomes something of survival horror mixed in with a driving quest. There's a good map overview of the resort town and I like how Oscar Rios spent time evoking the era of Ancient Rome especially with little details that tell you he has a true love for the era. For this particular scenario the clue trails are fairly straight forward but the means to how various people lose their sanity are close to golden. This is arguably the most straight forward scenario of the three. I would recommend it for new groups to the Mythos. The objectives are easily understood and the clue trails to get to the end are easy enough yet arguably moderately hard for those completely new to this type of tabletop gaming. For a new group the keeper needs to decide if he/she will tone down the chance for a total party kill or keep it as is.

CTHULHU DARK AGES

SCENARIO: Saxon England has recently been conquered by the Normans and a Norman lord charges the players with investigating a bard of the Saxon people who feels wronged by a broken agreement. It all seems harmless at first but that's how some of these scenarios open up, right? Of the three scenarios this is arguably the most mind bending in reality so be prepared to give vivid descriptions to your players. In addition, the players will be doing a great deal of traveling through the fiefdom. This one also has a nice play on the Carcosa mythology. I would recommend this especially for keepers who have players who typically do fantasy gaming though warn them it will be different even if familiar in some instances. Clue trails are moderately difficult with a wide variety of different endings. END TIMES MONOGRAPH SCENARIO: the PCs play humans on a space cruiser when they meet an enemy ship and encounter startling information which could end the remaining humans once and for all. The nice part of scenario is that I rarely get to run Cthulhu scenarios in space. In addition, there's a really nice idea tied into a virtual reality in which the players must travel into it to fix a problem and along the way they get to experience the last days of Earth before it falls. Nice build on the Hastur Mythos as well as a few others that I cannot mention without moderate spoilers. The clue trails are moderate as the players have more options and a variety of choices. For gamers not familiar with Science Fiction this might very well be the most difficult of the three. Overall, the strength of this 7E product is that you get to experience three Mythos eras outside of the standard 1920s and then if you like any of them you can decide if you wish to invest in the supplements. Additionally, the ideas within those scenarios and the adventure seeds could potentially give you a campaign and arguably you don't need the supplements if money is tight for you. Lastly, you get three scenarios written by Oscar Rios who in my opinion is one of the top five writers in the last ten years for Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu RPG line. What's not to like?

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