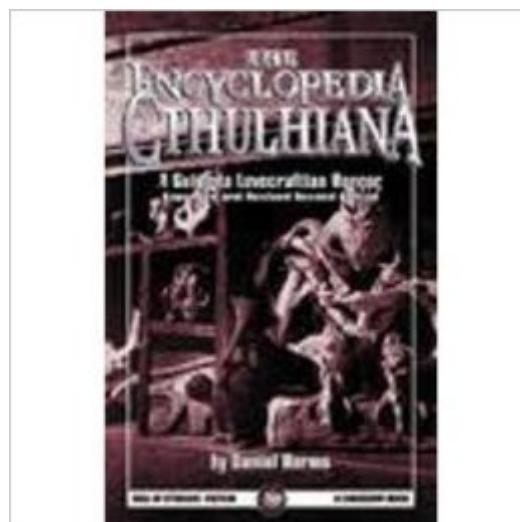


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Encyclopedia Cthulhiana: A Guide To Lovecraftian Horror (Call Of Cthulhu Fiction Series)



Synopsis

The Origins Award-Winning Call of Cthulhu Reference book is back! The Cthulhu Mythos was first created by H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), a Providence author considered by many to be the finest horror story writer of the twentieth century. Lovecraft's tales are a blend of fantasy, science fiction, and horror, with the latter being especially prominent. His tales describe a pantheon of powerful beings known as the Great Old Ones. Since Lovecraft's time the Cthulhu Mythos has grown exponentially, until it has become increasingly difficult to keep track of, even for devoted fans. Many writers have contributed to it, including Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, Brian Lumley, and Stephen King. This book is the first major attempt in many years to provide a comprehensive guide to H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. The second edition of Encyclopedia Cthulhiana contains over a hundred and fifty additional pages and scores of new entries. New features includes thumbnail illustrations of the most important signs and symbols (see sample, left) and a timeline of the Cthulhu Mythos spanning billions of years. Many entries have been revised to reflect our latest understanding of the Mythos, and the infamous Necronomicon appendix has been greatly expanded. Also present for the first time is "A Brief History of the Cthulhu Mythos", which examines the evolution of the genre from the 1920s to today. A Great Resource for Call of Cthulhu players! This book is part of an expanding collection of Cthulhu Mythos horror fiction and related topics. Call of Cthulhu fiction focuses on single entities, concepts, or authors significant to readers and fans of H.P. Lovecraft. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Even though I've been reading Lovecraft, and the later contributors to the Mythos, for over a quarter of a century, there were still fine points that I could never quite get straight. This is understandable seeing how you often have to piece the fabric of the whole out of off-hand remarks and vague hints and references. In a way that does contribute to the mystery of the corpus, but it can be dissatisfying, if not maddening at times. That is why this excellently written and designed reference is truly a treasure to the serious reader. Finally, I know the difference between the Elder Gods, the Great Old Ones, The Outer Gods, and the Elder Things. You finally get the associations in the pantheon spelled out. You know how Cthulhu, Tsathoggua, Hastur, and Ithaqua (the Great Old Ones) differ from Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, Shuh-Niggurath, and Yog-Sothoth (the Outer Gods.) And of course you learn never to associate Nodens, Kthanid, and Yag-Thaddag (the Elder Gods) with any of these. Come to think of it I probably shouldn't have spoken these names aloud while I was typing. What is that noise in the

First published in 1998, The Encyclopedia Cthulhiana, written by The Necronomicon Files co-author Daniel Harms, is now in its second and expanded edition. It's a meaty 425 page volume, part of Chaosium's collection of Cthulhu Mythos fiction, and presents itself unapologetically as an encyclopedia of the Cthulhu Mythos, including not only the canon stories and poetry, but also embracing games, essays, comic books, movies, television shows, and occult books. With a note on 'How to Use this Book in Call of Cthulhu', the author sets a tone that is in keeping with the self-effacing humour that one can only find in a labour of love. The majority of the text is an A-Z encyclopedia of the major entities, protagonists, and books in the Cthulhu Mythos with a merciful pronunciation guide. Like any good encyclopedist, Mr. Harms cautions that this material, as carefully written as it is, doesn't substitute actually reading and knowing firsthand the source material, which is well-referenced at the end of each entry. Each entry is not only a description, but also endeavours to harmonize conflicting sources. For example, the entry for the 'Elder Sign' includes a discussion on its application and significance in the Mythos, the controversies around its origin and use, a brief discussion of H.P. Lovecraft's original branch symbol and Derleth's pentagram, and a reference to the 'Star Stones of Mnar' found elsewhere in the book. The Encyclopedia Cthulhiana has a significant Appendix, which in my already fragile mind greatly expands upon usual notion of an Appendix as supplemental to the rest of the text. While supplemental, this material is no less

essential in its comprehension of the vast scope of the Cthulhu Mythos. The Appendix is divided into five parts, which is devoted largely to Mythos' most significant artifact, the Necronomicon. Three-fifths of the Appendix relate to its history, location, and contents. In the Appendix, you will also find Shannon Appel's very useful 'Timeline of the Cthulhu Mythos', which presents the reader with a staggering list of the Mythos' most significant events starting with the arrival of Cthuga when the Earth was newly-formed, to the 'Fall of Man' after the events recounted in Clark Ashton Smith's 'Zothique'. Without hyperbole I conclude that *The Encyclopedia Cthulhiana* belongs in the library of every 'Call of Cthulhu' gamer and Lovecraft fan. It is an especially readable pleasure when one randomly flips through its pages. It is simply one of those books that you will find yourself reaching for again and again and again. I could easily re-envision this book in a future edition as a coffee table volume with additional illustrations. I am also pleased to report very few typographical errors. The author's 'Suggestions for Further Reading' is a nudge to the reader to do some of their own research. Though an encyclopedia could have easily encompassed a multi-volume series suitable only for Lovecraftian scholars, the author seems to realize that the limits of a useful encyclopedia are best expressed and guided by practicality, accuracy, and concision.

If you have any questions as to what's what in the Mythos this book will answer them. A great guide for those familiar with the Great Old Ones and for those who are just now learning of their dread power. Fun for all ages!

Harms' Encyclopedia is geared heavily toward players of Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu role-playing game, but that doesn't mean it's not a good source for all things H.P. Lovecraft. After all, the game is based on the Cthulhu Mythos, spawned by Lovecraft and his circle of friends, so any encyclopedia must gather in all the source material. The non-gamer will find this a useful reference and the gamer will find listings for game modules produced up to the time of writing.

I have been recommending this book to people I know since I first encountered the first edition. This second edition is expanded and revised, and is even more helpful to Call of Cthulhu gamers, keepers, and especially writers of Mythos fiction. I've been using it as source material for my own odd little tales since I began writing them. And while it is true that the author has been known to frequent some of the same newsgroups that I do, he did not pay me to say these things. The book is extensively indexed and cross-referenced, with a very helpful timeline of the Cthulhu Mythos toward the back. It is clearly written, has doses of the author's dry sense of humor, especially in his

choice of a quote for the preface page, is quite attractively packaged, and will look very nice on your bookshelf next to the many volumes of HP Lovecraft that you should have if you're reading this.

For all of us who enjoy reading the 'Cthulhu Mythos' of Lovecraft/etc al, Daniel Harms has done us a great service. His book, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA CTHULHIANA is a comprehensive guide to all the beings, entities, creatures and races which dwell in the tales of the Mythos and Dreamlands; the far worlds and dimensions from which they came, and all the forbidden books, texts and grimoires which spoke of such things through the ages. Concluding each entry are detailed bibliographic references to the stories in which the subject appears. Harms also includes an appendix of an incredible timeline/history of the Cthulhu Mythos spanning billions of years. ENCYCLOPEDIA CTHULHIANA is a fascinating and fun book, indispensable for fans of the Lovecraft Circle and those who play the Chaosium game CALL OF CTHULHU as well.

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