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Introduction

Cthulhu Live is the official live-action version of the immensely popular *Call of Cthulhu* tabletop role-playing game published by Chaosium Inc. This new 3rd edition set of rules, brings dynamic new changes to player skills, sanity tests, combat rules, and many other aspects of the game. The book incorporates best practices and ideas culled from live-action groups around the world.

Inspired from the stories of Howard Phillips Lovecraft and the group of writers known as the Lovecraft Circle, *Cthulhu Live* allows players to use skills, wits, and teamwork to combat dark and alien forces from the stars and from outside our known concepts of reality. These ancient horrors wait just beyond the perception of our science and our senses; waiting to reclaim what was once theirs.

Live-action role-playing is unlike many games you may have played before. The game comes to life around you, rather than on a table or in your mind, with numerous players, props, costumes, and locations. Players have the opportunity to handle ancient relics, page through tomes of blasphemous secrets, and face otherworldly horrors in real-time interactions.

Each session involves at least one game master — known as the Keeper of Arcane Lore — a variable number of players, and a few members of a support staff who assist the Keeper and perform the roles of Non-Player Characters (NPCs). The number of players, Keepers, and support staff vary from one adventure to the next, depending on the complexity of the adventure and the number of players available. For convenience, the masculine gender is used throughout most of this rulebook, but of course there are no such restriction on the gamer's gender.

Adventures in *Cthulhu Live* are a form of interactive, improvisational theater. Adventure scripts are typically written to cover the most likely courses of action, but no one can foresee every eventuality. The unpredictability of the game is part of the fun. Players can often take the game in new directions and create interesting new twists to the established plot.

Cthulhu Live is based on the role-playing game Call of Cthulhu. Experienced role-players will notice that the rules of *Cthulhu Live* are streamlined and simpler than traditional role-playing games. The intent is to accommodate the requirements of live role-playing. Neither dice nor pages of complex tables are used in this game. The design of the entire rules system is to facilitate smooth, uninterrupted role-play. Even new actions not covered in the rules may be easily settled and adjudicated by the Keeper. Gamers may create new skills and tests they feel are necessary.

Character Creation

The character is your alter ego in the *Cthulhu Live* universe. During most games the Keeper provides you with a pregenerated character designed specifically for the adventure at hand. In other games you may have the chance to create your own character.

A character is defined by Statistics (or Stats), Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills. Stats are a series of numbers that indicate physical and mental capabilities. Advantages and Disadvantages are optional rules often used when players create their own characters. They represent unusual quirks, talents, or afflictions that add personality, special abilities, and personal handicaps that might arise during the game. Skills represent fields of knowledge and physical training your character has learned through life. Skills are purchased from a pool of available points derived from your character's stats.

Primary Statistics

Your character's mental and physical capabilities are defined by the following four Stats: Education, Dexterity, Constitution, and Power. A score of 20 is typically the maximum for a human. Average human ability scores are between 8 and 12. These four primary stats determine secondary statistics such as Wound Points, Magic Points, and Luck. Stats also help determine the number and quality of your skills. Be sure to chose your stats carefully and build them up according to your vision of the character you wish to create.

Most characters have Stat scores forming a bell curve around human averages. Exceptionally high or low scores are not as common but are not unknown. This is especially the case with extreme characters who typify strong but dumb, brilliant but sickly, fast but frail, or possessed of great psychic potential but physically disabled. Some players are terrified of having Stat scores less than 10 but having both strengths and flaws in characters make them more interesting. Play your character to his or her strengths and avoid situations that will trap you within your weaknesses.

A few Statistics seen in many role-playing systems have been omitted from *Cthulhu Live*. No Strength score is used; Constitution reflects the overall fitness and health of your character. No Intelligence score is used. You must use your own wits to solve the puzzles with which you're confronted. No Charisma score is used. You'll have to rely on your natural charm, or lack thereof, when interacting with other characters.