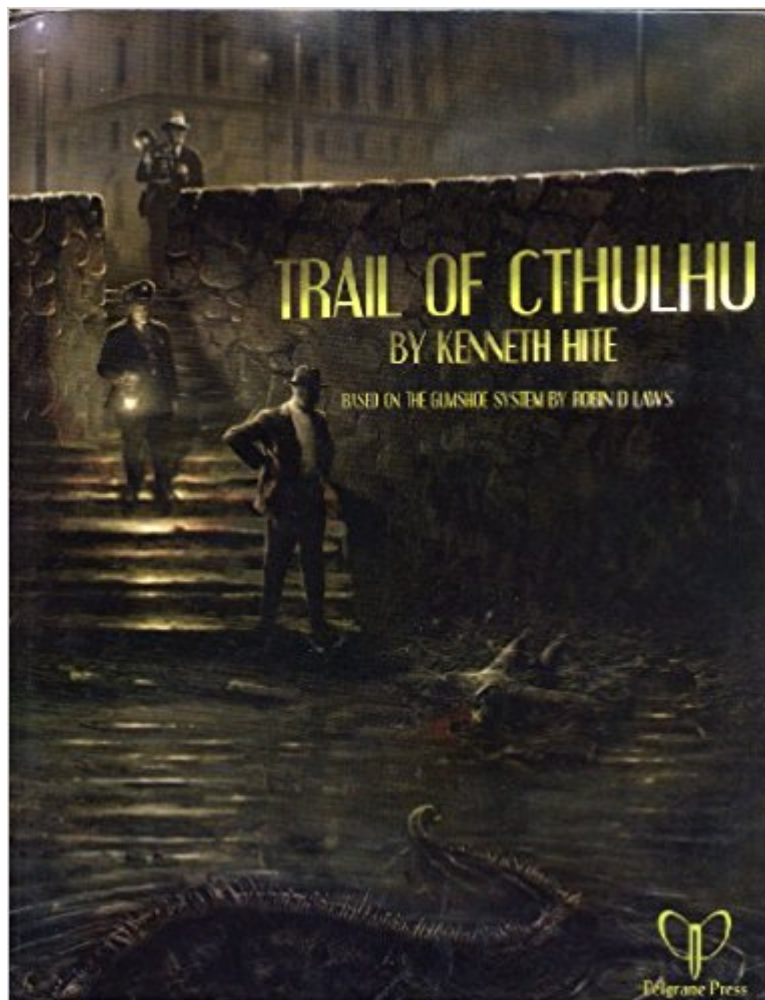


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# Trail Of Cthulhu



## Synopsis

Trail of Cthulhu is a new standalone GUMSHOE system game under license to Chaosium, set in the 1930s. It supports both Pulp (for Indiana Jones, Robert E. Howard, thrilling locations sorts of games) and Purist styles of play (for intellectual horror and cosmic dread). HP Lovecraft's work combined both, sometimes in the same story. It includes a new take on the creatures, cults and gods of the Lovecrafts literature, and addresses their use in gaming. It adds new player backgrounds, and bulk out the GUMSHOE system to give intensive support for sanity, incorporating into the rule set the PCs desire to explore at the risk of going mad. Trail of Cthulhu won two *Ennie* awards for Best Rules and Best Writing, as well as receiving an honourable mention for Product of the Year.

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## Customer Reviews

Trail of Cthulhu is a new standalone GUMSHOE system game under license to Chaosium, set in the 1930s. It supports both Pulp (for Indiana Jones, Robert E. Howard, thrilling locations sorts of games) and Purist styles of play (for intellectual horror and cosmic dread). HP Lovecraft's work combined both, sometimes in the same story. It includes a new take on the creatures, cults and gods of the Lovecrafts literature, and addresses their use in gaming. It adds new player backgrounds, and bulk out the GUMSHOE system to give intensive support for sanity, incorporating into the rule set the PCs desire to explore at the risk of going mad. Trail of Cthulhu won two *Ennie* awards for Best Rules and Best Writing, as well as receiving an honourable mention for Product of the Year.

This is both my favorite iteration of the Gumshoe System, as well as my favorite version of any Cthulhu RPG. The mechanics are light enough they never get in the way of the story (or the gaming). PCs have a high level of competence, never failing at something that supposed to be their area of expertise, yet can still be easily devoured or driven mad by various eldritch abominations. It's not diceless, but the dice come out only when something really dangerous is afoot. It really captures the feel of the source material quite well. The GM's section on the Great Old Ones and Elder Gods is hands-down the best Cthulhu brainstorming I've ever seen in print. Too many other gaming products have focused on the game stats of Cthulhu and his ilk; Trail of Cthulhu understands that what's interesting is the cosmic truths, the symbolism and metaphor, not how many bullets Nyarlathotep can soak up before he runs out of hit points. Fans of Cthulhu will be blown away by this game's GMing advice. For fans of Gumshoe, this is also a treat, regardless of what you think of Lovecraft. Trail of Cthulhu does a great job of porting Gumshoe to a less-CSI setting. It has a simplified skill list that's less crime-scene oriented than Esoterrorists, yet not as stripped down or oversimplified as Fear Itself. Optional "Pulp" and "Purist" rules allow you to customize the system to whatever style of game you prefer to run. Breaking Stability out into two stats (Stability and Sanity) allows for greater control (and variation) of player's decent into madness, and NPC Pillars of Sanity and Sources of Stability give you ways to pull them back from the brink. There's tons of useful stuff here for GMs to steal for their own campaigns. Don't miss the "Idiosyncratic Magic" rules hidden away on pgs 212-213. Though brief, they are the usable framework for a magic system that's playable yet retains a sense that it is creepy and supernatural... as magic should be.

I've always struggled with Cthulhu games, but Trail may be the one that fits the bill for me. I like the Gumshoe style of game, and putting it with a Mythos style game just makes sense. Give the players what they need, and let them dig into the problems out there. I also appreciate that they have a Pulp option, along with the Purist style.

I picked up Trail of Cthulhu because my normal game group decided to switch tracks from our usual Pathfinder campaigns to something Cthulhu-based. While the original Call of Cthulhu role playing system is decent, I like the rules and structure of Trail of Cthulhu, based on the Gumshoe detective system. This is a great "gateway" Role Playing Game, which doesn't devalue it for veteran RPG players. It just has a nice, easy-to-follow rule system that comes with a 1930's flair but is also easily

adaptable to modern day playing. Our group plays modern style and uses the area we live in as a story backdrop, which makes it a lot of fun. The artwork and attention to detail are really well done, and help set the tone for the mind-bending horror genre that Cthulhu is. The book's publisher has a free online character builder linked through their web site, which isn't necessary but definitely helps to understand how character building works in this system.

Fantastic alternate rules to a fantastic game (Call of Cthulhu) I am really enjoying the possibilities of the GUMSHOE system.

This is a marvelous reconsideration of many RPG conventions, and is admirably suited for the Lovecraftian genre. Hite eliminates the frustrating elements of the storytelling component of horror tales while simultaneously preserving the horrific and sanity-busting elements. Many great ideas!

Great job; easy to read, exciting features, I went from reading to making a campaign in just one week! And that's with zero familiarity with GUMSHOE. Highly recommended for horror role-playing.

I have always been a big fan of Cthulhu RPGs and was at first reluctant to try a new system other than the Chaosium Standard. However, I was pleasantly surprised. ToCth keeps the feel of the Mythos in its RPG but the best feature of this system is that you will always find the clues and a die roll will not prevent the adventure from moving forward. It's what you do with the clues that is important. There is even an appendix to convert all your old CoC adventures to this system.

As a fan of CoC and other mythos related games, it was really refreshing to find a new game with a new take on how to run investigator style stories. ToC has a really smooth system that allows for a lot of role-playing unhindered by the obligatory plot railroading and potentially excessive task rolling that sometimes is needed to help the players get back on track when they missed that important clue or fall hook line and sinker for the Red Herring. Five stars, and look into their supplements and pre-gen stories too, a treasure trove of useful material.

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