

LOST IN CARCOSA_{1c}

A Dungeon Starter by Mark Tygart
For Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel's
Dungeon World
www.Dungeon-World.com

AGENDA

- Make the world fantastic
- Fill the characters' lives with adventure
- Play to find out what happens

QUESTIONS

- How were you trapped in this hell dimension?
- What do you know about Carcosa and the King in Yellow?
- Have you ever seen the Yellow Sign?
- What are your nightmares?

IMPRESSIONS

- The sweep of unnatural flyers and alien moons in the skies above
- The alien beauty of the spires of the ancient city
- Ancient engraved marble beneath your feet
- Rich tapestries showing horrors
- The strange tentacles emerging from the fog shrouded waters of Lake Hali
- The whispers of unseen inhabitants
- The overwhelming feeling of ennui

"In many ways, Hastur seems to be a very abstract manifestation of something we cannot understand. Its existence raises many questions —One possibility worth considering is that Hali did not exist until the unknown writer created it, making the city, the palace, and the lake into a sort of projected reality, brought into being by the madness of the play's readers. Which came first, the play or the King? Perhaps Hastur knows, but It is not telling."

-John Tynes

Within the palace's shifting nightmare a figure stands, a strange whisperer in saffron mottled rags. This being will tell you of the palace's secrets, it will share its madness with any who will turn an appreciative ear. It will never tell the same story twice. —Zenopus of Portown

GOALS

- Establish details, describe
- Use what they give you
- Ask questions
- Leave blanks
- Look for interesting facts
- Help the players understand the moves
- Give each character a chance to shine
- Introduce NPC's
- Fill out your worksheet

DUNGEON MOVES

- Change the environment
- Point to a looming threat
- Introduce a new faction or type of creature
- Use a threat from an existing faction or type of creature
- Make them backtrack
- Present riches at a price
- Present a challenge to one of the characters

CASSILDA: *Indeed it's time. We all have laid aside disguise but you.*

STRANGER: *I wear no mask.*

CAMILLA (terrified, aside to Cassilda): *NO mask, No mask!*

- 1.2, *The King In Yellow*

LORE

The lore of **Hastur the Unspeakable One** largely revolves around this being's avatar the **King in Yellow** and the play by the same name. Reading the play brings madness, performing it will transport the actors and audience to the being's nightmare realm of **Carcosa**. Hastur is an extremely powerful and mysterious entity whose exact nature is much debated by Mythos Scholars. Just speaking his name can be dangerous and the Yellow Sign is a potent arcane sigil of madness. Scholars speak fearfully of "**The Unspeakable Oath**" that his followers are said to pledge to the being and wonder about what such a terrible bargain means.

Worshippers often are solitary madmen, artists, and poets, driven mad by reading the haunting play *The King in Yellow*, and inspired by its cruel beauty to create art that renders human experience meaningless. A special symbol, the Yellow Sign, is often stamped on surreptitious editions of the evil book. The sign is a subliminal focus for madness and evil, helping to warp the dreams of those who see it.

Custom Moves

Roll whenever a player has an epiphany realizes that Carcosa is a place of nightmares generated by the players themselves:

Roll + Wisdom:

On a 10+ You may awaken and return with your comrades to your home dimension.

7-9: You alone may awaken and return to your home dimension.

6 or less: The realization fades from your player's mind.

Inspired by the Hastur Mythos, John Tynes' Unspeakable Oath Magazine Number One and HBO's True Detective

Visit the Cats of Tindalos

(<http://catsoftindalos.blogspot.com/>)

For more free Dungeon World material

Items of Power

Camilla's Shears

An ornately decorated pair of scissors, marked with the Yellow Sign. To be used, they must be operated in the air, as if cutting all around a sleeping or immobile victim. When the scissors have "cut" all around the victim and the victim will be gone, transported to Carcosa.

Mottled Clay from Lake Hali

The user of the Clay covers the target completely with it. If a person is the target, they must be immobile or a volunteer for all of the clay to be applied. Of course, the target may also be a book or item, which will take no damage from the Clay's application. As it is smoothed on, the Clay hardens quickly into a tough shell. When the target is completely covered, this shell may be shattered with a quick blow, and will be found to now be hollow. The target has been transported to Carcosa.

Pallid Mask

If worn Roll + Wisdom:

On a 10+ You may awaken and return with your comrades to your home dimension.

7-9: You alone may awaken and return to your home dimension.

6 or less: The player is transformed into **The King in Yellow**.

The King in Yellow (play)

A cursed evil artifact that drives a player insane if read. If the play is performed the players and audience will be transported to Hastur's hell dimension of Carcosa.

Space Mead

A drug which places its users into a state of suspended animation while protecting the taker from the perils of the void. Used for interstellar flight on the backs of byakhee.

Rituals

Summon and Bind Byakhee for a Journey (Wizard)

Used for interstellar flight on the back of byakhee (with space mead)

Roll + Wisdom:

On a 10+ You arrive safely at your destination

7-9: You arrive near your destination

6 or less: You arrive at a location of the Byakhee's choice. You're in trouble.

Swirl of the Pallid Dancers: This evil ritual will enchant several dancers, all of whom must be willing participants. The dancers require special tattered robes and scarves, all of a mottled yellow. When cast, the dancers begin an elaborate and hurried dance, circling the targets that are to be transported to Carcosa. The dancers whirl around them, moving faster and faster, as their unraveling costumes form a solid blur. When completed, the dancers will collapse and the targets will be gone.

Monsters

Byakhee

Group, Planar

Claws (d10+2 damage 1 piercing)

Close, Far

10 HP, 1 Armor

Byakhee are interstellar predators that travel the vacuum of space by means of an organ called a "hune". This organ, located in the thorax of the creature, allows the creature to greatly surpass the speed of light by unknown means. The creature can also survive the interstellar vacuum unaided. If one had the means by which to survive the myriad threats space presents, than one could ride a Byakhee to anywhere in the cosmos. When travelling beyond the speed of light, the creature's metabolism is greatly increased. When descending to the surface of any given planet, it is usually to feed; it is best avoided. While on the earth's surface, Byakhee can fly at speeds up to 70 kph. The "hune" also allows them to hover on a planet's surface, using their wings for movement. Often serves Hastur.

Evil Carnival Masked Courtier

Solitary, Intelligent

Dagger (d8 damage)

Close

8 HP

Special Qualities: Assume form of its victim

It lures unwary people to slay them. The creature then eats the victim and takes the form of the person that it has most recently consumed. Its true shape is hideous.

Ythill Gibbering Moulder

Solitary, Large, Terrifying,

Amorphous

Countless jaws (d10+2 damage 1 piercing)

Close, Reach, Messy

12 HP

Special Qualities: Gibbering causes -1 on all rolls

A Gibbering Moulder is a horrible creature seemingly drawn from a lunatic's nightmares. It resembles a writhing mass of ooze covered with dozens of randomly placed eyes and gibbering mouths, of different sizes and shapes. If its gibbering is somehow understood it is saying "The dreamer must awaken!"

The Yellow King

Solitary, Divine, Planar, Terrifying

Tattered robes (b [2d12+9] damage 4 piercing)

Reach, Forceful, Near, Far

33 HP

6 Armor

Special Qualities: Tendrils

"At the farther end was a high stone dais reached by five steps; and there on a golden throne sat a lumpish figure robed in yellow silk figured with red and having a yellow silken mask over its face. To this being the slant-eyed man made certain signs with his hands, and the lurker in the dark replied by raising a disgustingly carved flute of ivory in silk-covered paws and blowing certain loathsome sounds from beneath its flowing yellow mask."



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).