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The Golden Dawn (Call Of Cthulhu)



Synopsis

The Golden Dawn is a sourcebook of Victorian occult intrigue and horror for the Call of Cthulhu Role-Playing system.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Pagan Publishing (April 1996)

ISBN-10: 1887797025

ISBN-13: 978-1887797023

Package Dimensions: 10.6 x 8.3 x 0.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #2,012,835 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #88 in [Books > Science](#)

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Customer Reviews

"What other role-playing system allows you the pure joy of adventure and occult intrigue in 1890's Victorian England. This book is a blast! Both as a sourcebook of occult intrigue, and as a book of scenarios. "The book is divided about half and half between source material and scenario material. It includes a healthy assortment of new spells and abilities built around the Golden Dawn's occult curriculum. (T)he information that is here is well-rounded and very well suited to gaming purposes. "The four scenarios are first rate, and within them players get to encounter such luminaries as W.B. Yeats, Dr. William Wynn Westcott, Gaston Leroux, Aleister Crowley, a certain violinist, and maybe even a phantom. These are well designed scenarios, which have a lot of advice for keepers running players with the kind of occult powers, and divinatory abilities (tarot readings), which players might possess. "All in all, this book gets a solid "A." -- Review by Scott Shafer on 03/03/98 for RPG.net

Join the most notorious occult society of Victorian England- The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn- alongside luminaries such as W.B. Yeats, Alister Crowley, and others. This book includes extensive source material (including rules for astral projection and Hermetic Magick) and four Call of Cthulhu scenarios offering a look at the dark side of Victoria's Empire.

THE GOLDEN DAWN (by the boys at Pagan Publishing, of Delta Green fame) is a sourcebook for

Call of Cthulhu in the 1890s. It is considered by many in the gaming community to be the best book on Gaslight Cthulhu and one of the better sourcebooks for any part of the game. It is a great sourcebook on the Golden Dawn, with a lot of historical information and some adaptations for better gameplay. I have some reservations about practical value which will be discussed later. THE GOLDEN DAWN begins with 7 pages of information on Victorian London, borrowed from the CTHULHU BY GASLIGHT sourcebook, which was out of print at the time. This is excellent in allowing THE GOLDEN DAWN to stand alone from other Victorian materials. There is also a few interesting chapters on the history of the Golden Dawn, omitting the philosophy and ritual stuff that fills umpteen volumes (!) of the actual book. The different orders are described as well as the spells and knowledge each initiate had to learn to progress. Incidentally, Golden Dawn members know some occult tricks that they may employ. There is also some discussion of King Arthur, as he is important to some of the scenarios included. Pagan Publishing has an alternate history of King Arthur (which, while they don't advocate as fact, they at least strive to make plausible insofar as Great Cthulhu is plausible). Then there are 4 scenarios, with strong and sincere Victorian-era flavor, that allow the investigators to bust Mythos and show off their occult skills. I thought that these scenarios were well-written, show a lot of depth in backstory, characters, and environment, and highlight a range of abilities. While the stories aren't so very long themselves, there is enough meat for a group to really dig their teeth into for quite a few sessions. The investigation motivations are all top notch as well (no dying relatives, strange bequests, etc.) There are also rules for creating (upper-class) Victorian investigators, as well as character sheets. Again, I think this is great as it allows this sourcebook to be independent of others. Still, some big questions remain. In Delta Green, it's obvious why you are part of the organization. Why would anyone join the Golden Dawn? The thrill of being part of a select organization? A place for the elite to "chill wit their homies?" Considering that as far as we know, no magic was successfully used in the real Golden Dawn, why stay in the group? In a sense, all stable anti-Mythos groups are Ghostbuster clubs, but the Golden Dawn as portrayed strives to remain historical but useful for Mythos-busting at the same time. What do the players actually do when they aren't Mythos-busting - sitting in leather armchairs sipping Chardonnay and making small talk? Is there political intrigue amongst the members based on factions related to forbidden knowledge? What is the advantage to being in the Golden Dawn over the Theosophical Society or the Society for Psychical Research? Anyway, I'm not trying to downplay the sourcebook - THE GOLDEN DAWN is great for what it is intended, which is to allow you to play Golden Dawn members exploring the occult and other-worldly events at the turn of the 20th century (in fact, it's almost more Edwardian than Victorian). It could have been better by explicitly stating

why the investigators would want to belong to this group and give some specific information on how membership affects their lives above and beyond mystery hunting. The scenarios are all top-notch, which covers over a lot of other shortcomings.

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