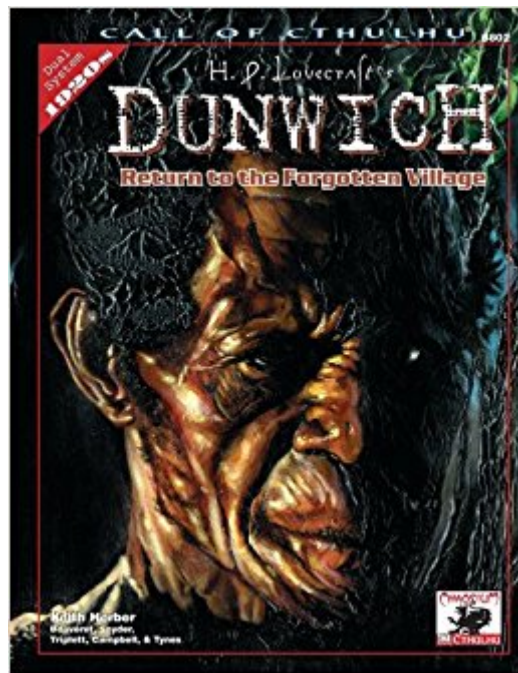




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H.P. Lovecraft's Dunwich: Return To The Forgotten Village (Call Of Cthulhu Roleplaying, 8802)



Synopsis

Dunwich is a small village located along the Miskatonic, upriver from Arkham. Until 1806, Dunwich was a thriving community, boasting many mills and the powerful Whateley family. Those among the Whateleys came to know dark secrets about the world, and they fell into the worship of unwholesome creatures from other times and places. Retreating to the hills and forests surrounding the town, they betrayed their uncorrupted kin. Prosperity fled, and a dark despair seized the people. What remains is a skeleton town, mills closed, its citizens without hope or future. However, secrets of the Mythos survive, to be discovered by brave and enterprising investigators. H.P. Lovecraft's DUNWICH begins with "The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft's masterful tale of life in the town and its surrounds. It expands upon the story with extensive information about the town: pertinent buildings, useful people, and important locations are described in detail. A 17x22" map depicts the area for miles around, and two scenarios are included. All statistics and gameplay notes for d20 Cthulhu are also provided. Features: About 80 pages of informative guidebook for Dunwich and Dunwich's environs. Written for BRP Cthulhu; includes conversions and statistics for d20 Call of Cthulhu. Part of our 1920's Lovecraft Country setting. New full color cover by Philippe Bouveret, "The Sorcerer". Introductory story by H. P. Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror". New template of a typical Dunwich farm. Introductory scenario, "Earth, Sky, Soul", by John Tynes. "Return To Dunwich" adventure serves a sequel to the H.P. Lovecraft story "The Dunwich Horror". "Underground" adventure takes investigators into the dark underbelly of Dunwich. New layout.

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Customer Reviews

The witches of Dunwich and their way of life and secrets are a segment of the Call of Cthulhu RPG

that I always wanted to explore and this guide gives tons of great ideas. Delighted by the maps (pull out plus more close-up detailed ones) and descriptions of characters. Part of my collection I cherish!

SPOILERS Chaosium's 2007 edition of H.P. Lovecraft's Dunwich (subtitled Return to the Forgotten Village) is quite an impressive role-playing supplement. The sourcebook provides a detailed overview of Dunwich, the small Massachusetts village which served as the setting for Lovecraft's The Dunwich Horror. Both the story and this sourcebook expertly portray an isolated, rural village that hasn't changed much in recent decades and whose inhabitants have dark secrets and aren't particularly fond of strangers. Dunwich is very much a place where urban investigators wouldn't want to visit and certainly wouldn't want to live. The sourcebook is 189 pages and divided into eight broad sections. Artwork is black and white, but very evocative of the decayed and forgotten village. The book has several maps of Dunwich and the surrounding area, and includes a large pull-out map which can be used by Investigators to track their progress. Both traditional and d20 statistics are provided for every NPC and skill challenge. The first section of the book places Dunwich in context by detailing the geography around the village with helpful capsule summaries of nearby towns and cities. The following section is a reprint of Lovecraft's The Dunwich Horror. Investigators and Keepers alike are invited to read the story before playing, as the sourcebook is "set" several months after the events in that story and some of the adventure hooks relate to it. Unless the Keeper wants to re-create Lovecraft's story, he or she doesn't have to worry about Investigators being spoiled by it. Welcome to Dunwich is a broad overview of the village and one of the most important sections for the Keeper. It briefly discusses major NPCs, climate, getting to the village, getting around the village (cars are likely to break down on poorly-maintained unpaved roads), staying in the village (no inns, but some residents have room for boarders), and the characteristics of a sample farm and farmer. A chronology of major events in the village is provided, but for some reason stops at 1898. Finally, a "Village Directory" lists the name and map location for every single resident of the village (over 300). The Secrets of Dunwich provides a building-by-building summary of the village proper, including the general store, cemetery, meeting house, and more. Each resident of the village is described with at least a single line, but often one or more paragraphs. Sometimes these descriptions serve only as an aid to role-playing, but other times it includes potential story hooks for the Keeper. Some of the write-ups of more important NPCs include small drawings, which would certainly be worth showing to the players. This section also provides an overview of a couple of the major surprises in store for Investigators who come to Dunwich. First, there are massive caverns under the village which contain dangerous alien spores, an abandoned Mi-Go complex, and a

slumbering incarnation of Abhoth, an Outer God ("Source of Uncleanliness"). Second, several residents of the village are members of a secret cult called The Believers. It's not exactly clear to me what The Believers believe in or what their activities consist of (other than dancing around a bonfire), but they are willing to act violently if Investigators discover and plan to expose them. There's a couple of other things that could provide major stories in Dunwich that are discussed elsewhere in the book, but I'll mention them here for simplicity: one of the villagers is secretly meeting with an incarnation of Nyarlathotep, and another village plans to resurrect Wizard Whateley and free the Son of Yog-Sothoth (the creature from The Dunwich Horror) from its imprisonment. One of the criticisms I have of this book is that information on each of these threats is scattered in several places throughout the book, and it's quite difficult to get the full picture without a lot of laborious skimming and flipping back-and-forth. Next up is the lengthiest section of the book, a detailed description of the various hills, mountains, swamps, and farms around Dunwich. As with the village proper, every single resident is given a name, a notation on the map, and a brief description. After reading this, one quickly gets the sense that adventures in Dunwich can involve far more than just the village itself. Another long section details the caverns underneath the village. Investigators who want to spelunk here need to treat this as a major undertaking and prepare themselves with food, climbing equipment, and a lot of courage. This is probably the closest Cthulhu gets to a "dungeon crawl", as there are no NPCs to communicate with down here and a lot of potential dangers. If possible, I'd suggest that Keepers hint to the Investigators to examine the caverns in carefully planned stages. The book includes two "adventures" which aren't scenarios in the traditional sense. The first one, "Return to Dunwich", takes place in Arkham and is designed to give the Investigators a reason to travel to Dunwich and look into the various secrets it holds. Although it includes several handouts to put them on the right track, it doesn't otherwise contain any encounters or detailed discussion of what happens once the characters arrive. As an adventure hook, "Return to Dunwich" really only works if the PCs are dedicated or professional investigators--otherwise, no reason is given why they would sacrifice time and money to travel to a dinky little village to unearth dark secrets (unless they've developed a strong relationship with Dr. Armitage through previous adventures in Arkham). The second adventure, "Earth, Sky, Soul" properly describes itself as an "incident" and is easy to place in the middle of a session if things start to get slow (I'd guess it wouldn't take more than an hour or so to resolve). It's a very dark, but effective portrayal of madness that might help hapless Investigators stumble upon one of the secrets of Dunwich. Last up are four appendices: NPC statistics if the Keeper wants to run the original The Dunwich Horror; legends and rumors that NPCs might share with Investigators; d20 system conversions; player

handouts from the "Return to Dunwich" adventure. The handouts are serviceable insofar as they contain a lot of information, but for the most part they're not attractively or "authentically" portrayed--a Keeper could have a lot of fun making them into more interesting props. I don't think I've ever encountered an RPG supplement like H.P. Lovecraft's Dunwich before, in which every single resident (hundreds of them) and building (dozens of them) are described and placed on the map. In this respect, Dunwich would make a great setting for adventure as the NPCs are already detailed and there's plenty of little incidents that can happen simply by Investigators stumbling around and knocking on doors. On the other hand, this is very much a background book and the Keeper still has a lot of work to do to integrate these various NPCs into larger stories and plot-related encounters. Even with all the attention to detail, it's hard to imagine Dunwich becoming the "home base" of investigators because there's simply not a lot there to convince them to stay: no work (other than farming), no electricity, no business or amenities except a single run-down general store. The sense I get from reading the book is that the Keeper will have to work very hard to provide a very good reason if he or she wants the PCs to remain in Dunwich for any length of time.

Having already read "Escape from Innsmouth" and the Kingsport Sourcebook, I read this book less charitably than I might have when it was first released. The characters of Dunwich all seem the same - poor, widowed, incestuous, abused, etc. After reading the hundredth entry on a family, I began to feel that it would be less tiresome to simply state that people there are backward, miserable, and degenerate. But then, why would you need a sourcebook? There are many things to like about the Dunwich sourcebook, though. The secrets from beneath the earth are revealed, and they are good ones. Characters and history are well fleshed out, and the local cult (there's one in each city, it seems) is very believable, for a change. Actually, I think the cult might be the best part of the source material. It's just that, having effectively convinced me that the whole area is grubby, backward, and degenerate, I don't really want to run characters there long term. But then I would only need a scenario pack and not a sourcebook. If you're not familiar with the format of these books, they begin with the source material from HPL (in this case, "The Dunwich Horror"). This is a great idea in my mind, as it is a reminder of why you're reading this in the first place, and how to use it in a story. Town history is related, as well as an explanation of the local cult. Then, the region is split into areas which have detailed entries on the people, places, and things found in each section. This allows a large amount of information to be presented without overwhelming the reader by "chunking" the info. Also, it gives each region its own flavor, and emphasizes the differences between parts of the Dunwich valley. The town is its own entry, and the environs are the rest of the

chunks. There is also a substantial amount of info on the underground of Dunwich. The scenario section is somewhat thin. One scenario is "The Dunwich Horror", but other than stats nothing is added to Lovecraft's story, related in the first chapter (at least you're not paying for redundant material). There is a "Return to Dunwich" which has a similar feel. "Earth, Sky, Soul" is a very different kind of scenario (really a scenario seed) that might lead to more terrible explorations underground. There is also a chapter on legends, rumors, and plain old gossip. I think this is an excellent addition, as this is one of the primary ways for investigators to get clues. Including false leads just makes everything more intriguing. This is probably the weakest of the Lovecraft country sourcebooks (not scenario packs), but that still leaves Dunwich in high quality. I don't know that it has as much potential for a campaign setting as Kingsport or Arkham, but you should still find it extremely useful in plotting adventures in Lovecraft country.

A+ Seller

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