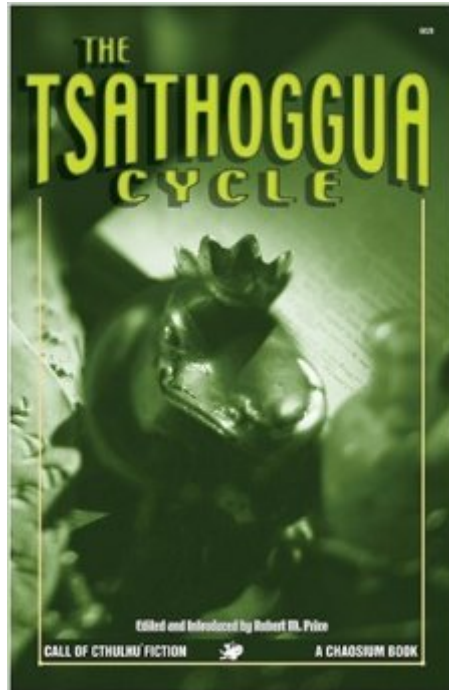


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The Tsathoggua Cycle: Terror Tales Of The Toad God (Call Of Cthulhu Fiction)



Synopsis

Can a god be a pet? Even a devil-god who relishes human sacrifice? It is hard to deny that for his creator and godfather, Clark Ashton Smith and H. P. Lovecraft, Tsathoggua was exactly that. They found the Saturnian-Hyperborean-N'klaian toad-bat-sloth-deity as cute and adorable as horrific, and this strange ambivalence echoes throughout their various tales over which Great Tsathoggua casts his batrachian shadow! Some are droll fables of human foibles; others are terrifying adventures of human delvers who perish in the fire of a religious fanaticism fully as awful as its super-sub-human object of worship. Tsathoggua has inspired many types of stories in many moods. And not just by Smith and Lovecraft! In this arcane volume you will read Tsathogguan tales old and new by various writers, chronicling the horrors of the amorphous amphibian's descent into new decades and deeper waters. The mere fact that such a thing is possible attests mightily the power of the modern myth of Tsathoggua, and the men who created him!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Man oh man it's finally here. The saga of The Tsathoggua Cycle is very familiar to those of us who haunt the Lovecraft usenet groups regularly. This book was compiled in the late 1990s for a 1998 release when certain unfortunate financial realities kicked in for Chaosium. At last things turned around for the small press icon and after a lengthy delay we have the finished product. And it was actually finished back in 1997-1998; this is not an anthology of stories new in the last 5 years. List price is \$14.95 but 's price is \$10.17, and eligible for free shipping if you buy \$25 worth of stuff. It is a standard trade paperback with 220 pages. This does not include a 6 page introduction by Robert

Price but it does include an introduction to each story. Production qualities are reasonable. The cover art however, continues the dreadful, shameful tradition of the Chaosium cycle books, which have notably poor artwork. The picture looks like pitiful claymation of a dinosaur. After stunning artwork in modern mythos books like *Hive*, *Horrors Beyond* and *Night Voices*, *Night Journeys* this effort by Mark Achilles White leads me to wonder how much he got paid and that maybe I could become an artist too. The introduction by Robert Price (the workhorse of the Chaosium cycle series) was actually very useful. It laid out the entire history of the creation of Tsathoggua by Clark Ashton Smith and also discussed various pronunciations. Best of all, there was a photo of a sculpture of Tsathoggua by CAS! This would have been a great cover! In fact more CAS artwork throughout the book would have been most welcome. I also think the individual story introductions, also by Price, were mostly good, although not as good as the book introduction.

The long and the short of it...I loved the book. Ok, that was the short...here's the long Here are my opinions on the tales.

From the Parchments of Pnom: Clark Ashton Smith The first tale is more of a setup for the other Tsathoggua tales, the idea of how he came to earth, his relatives and other bits of tale that gets more detail in the stories. Never read this one before now, but I knew all the data already. Still, nice to read it in CAS's own words.

The Seven Geases: Clark Ashton Smith First tale that Saint Toad actually shows up in, a hunter is cursed to be a snack for Tsathoggua, but instead he's sent on a series of weirder and weirder geas meeting various critters of ancient Hyperborea. Amusing tale.

The Testament of Athammaus: Clark Ashton Smith How the city of Commorian was rezoned for amorphous beings. Not the best tale, but still worth the read. Proof that losing your head over something is a bad idea *wink*.

The Tale of Satampra Zeiros: Clark Ashton Smith First appears of Satampra Zeiros, thief of Hyperborea. Why stealing from the temple of a nearly forgotten god can really disarm you. ;)

The Theft of the Thirty Nine Girdles: Clark Ashton Smith Not really a Tsathoggua tale, but starring Satampra Zeiros and set in Hyperborea. More like one of Fritz Leiber's Gray Mouser tales, but enjoyable.

Shadow of the Sleeping God: James Ambuehl Third tale of Satampra Zeiros, a wrap of the other two tales, plus with a nice heart to heart with Tsathoggua.

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