

Hastur, the King in Yellow (Mythic)

Description

“King am I, whom emperors have served. Mine to rule, your unborn thoughts. Witness now, the Yellow Sign” – *The only recorded words of Hastur, the King in Yellow.*

A bizarre entity from beyond the known realities, the being titled Hastur is a reality-shattering force with power rivalling that of the gods. A gigantic figure cloaked in a yellow of burnished gold, Hastur is vaguely humanoid in appearance, though the air of alien madness it exudes unsettles any who witness it. Every aspect of the godlike being is unnatural. A twisted perversion of reality itself, the creature’s four arms and neck display sickly pulsating flesh, while its head is shrouded in a pallid mask of illuminated metal. Its eyes are hollow voids which stare across dimensions unseen, witnessing incomprehensible realities. The shadows around the creature writhe with an obvious malice, indicating a hateful form beyond what the eyes can observe.

Background

The King in Yellow. Unspeakable One. Thane of Carcosa. These names and many more attempt to give some description to this cosmic entity of enigmatic power. Hastur embodies a chaotic madness that seeks to bring the universe closer to total entropy. Hailing from the city-eating metropolis of Carcosa, Hastur spreads its infectious tendrils across the multiverse, planting seeds of madness that lead to vile cults in its name. It is unknown if Hastur came into being, or simply exists eternally as a universal constant. Hastur’s only discernable motivation beyond spreading its madness is its affinity for the arts. Plays, portraits, and sculpture often accompany the presence of Hastur and its cult, its madness inspiring unsettling and alien works in countless creative minds. Hastur wields terrifying power over reality and thought, and what little information exists about its abilities indicates its power is of divine strength or beyond. Only those of supreme power could hope to challenge the entity when it appears. Even then, its maddening form may only be a manifestation of some greater force, lurking beyond the boundaries of existence.

The King in Yellow’s power is godlike in scope, warping the very fabric of reality with its presence. As a Great Old One, Hastur’s power is a primordial force beyond manipulation or control. Those that seek its favor form profane cults or in the rare case of Warlocks, select it as an otherworldly patron. These servants always seek to bring pieces of their world to Hastur. This process is destructive and horrifying, as Hastur’s city-devouring realm of Carcosa hungers for the extravagant metropolises of sane worlds. Distributing its madness far and wide, if the cult of Hastur manages to infect enough of the population, their dark master may pull the entire city and population into Carcosa. There, the souls of countless civilizations exist in eternal madness, reveling in the horrific artistry which has irreparably twisted their minds.

Playing Hastur

Hastur is one of the mightiest foes an Epic character can face, with layers of complicated abilities and heinous effects that can ravage a party in a few short turns. Like all Mythic creatures, Hastur is designed to be more dangerous than he needs to be. This means as a Dungeon Master, you have the opportunity to have it make in-character combat strategies according to its personality (instead of attempting a perfectly-optimized massacre) and are not severely punished if you make a mistake or tactical error while managing its complex statistics. Additionally, several of Hastur's abilities are open to your interpretation as a Dungeon Master. Hastur's final level of Yellow Mania, in which an affected character must attempt to commit suicide with their actions, should be something you coordinate with your player and what you feel is fair, with the ideal outcome being an in-character method that is both devastating and appropriate. Feel free to make this effect (and abilities like it) as powerful as you need it to be to keep the encounter challenging. Keep in mind Hastur is a telepathic enemy and the atmosphere of the encounter can be amplified considerably if you accompany its most powerful abilities with terrifying whispers and mental threats. How you handle Hastur's defeat should be very import to your encounter. The players are battling a Deific level threat after all, and whether it merely defeats Hastur instead of slaying it, the victory should be significant to the world at large.

Personality

Hastur has difficulty understanding mortal sentiments and feelings, its mind alien and bizarre. In combat, Hastur strikes a balance between dealing damage and ravaging its opponents' minds with harmful effects. The creature prefers to affect opponents without any levels of Yellow Mania, enjoying seeing their minds shatter before its power. Enemies that deal considerable damage in a single instance draw its ire, as such a hard dose of reality is extremely discomfoting to the Old One. These unfortunate souls are often subject to some of its most fierce abilities, such as its Epic spells, and quickly find themselves crippled and insane.

Death Throes

When Hastur is slain (or his form defeated, depending on your campaign setting) it lets out telepathic laughter that can be heard by every being on the plane. Creatures hearing the laugh become eternally cursed by a mysterious effect that cannot be removed by any known means. If an affected creature would gain a level of the Insanity Epic condition or suffer a bout of madness from another source, it instead gains a level of Yellow Mania instead.

Regional Effects

Reality to Hastur is as ephemeral and changeable as one's own thoughts, causing it to warp the landscape in frightening ways. If Hastur is on Carcosa, these effects apply to the entire realm, otherwise their range



is always within 20 miles of Hastur's current location. Those within either area suffer the following effects. These effects are considered Deific in strength, contesting even the might of the gods.

- If a non-Epic creature rests, it must succeed on a DC 33 Wisdom saving throw or suffer one level of Yellow Mania (See traits). Hastur gains awareness of any creature with one level or more of Yellow Mania within the affected area.
- By spending one minute of uninterrupted concentration, Hastur can cast any non-Epic spell of its choice with a range greater than self at any point within the affected area. Hastur must be aware of the presence of creatures to target them with a spell cast in this manner, but it need not see them (even if the spell would ordinarily require that it do so).
- Once per hour, Hastur may issue a telepathic command to a creature with an intelligence greater than 5 within the affected area. When that creature would take a long rest, it must instead spend that time creating a work of art using any tools it has available, or suffer two levels of Yellow Mania.

Hastur, the King in Yellow

Large Aberration (Great Old One), Unaligned

Armor Class: 30 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 3,503 (226d10 + 2,260)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 120 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	19 (+4)	36 (+13)

Saving Throws: Str +16, Dex +17, Con +22, Int +20, Wis +16, Cha +25

Skills: Arcana +32, Religion +32, Insight +28, Perception +16, Deception +37

Condition Immunities: blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, unconscious

Epic Condition Immunities: insanity, traumatized

Senses: Blindsight 30 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages: telepathy any creature on the same plane.

Challenge: Mythic 10

Traits

Madness of Hastur. Hastur's abilities inflict a unique Epic condition called Yellow Mania, which is measured in six levels. An effect produced by Hastur can give one or more levels of Mania, as specified

in the effect's description. Yellow Mania is measured in six levels and is an Epic condition. If a creature would be immune to the Yellow Mania condition, it loses that immunity and instead gains Epic Advantage on saving throws against effects that would cause it to gain levels of Yellow Mania. A creature suffers the effect of its current level of Yellow Mania as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering 2 levels of yellow mania loses all resistance or immunity it has to psychic damage, cannot regain hit points in response to taking psychic damage, and may only use diagonal movement.

Abilities, effects or spells that would remove Yellow Mania instead reduce its level by 1. All Yellow Mania effects end if a creature's Yellow Mania level is reduced below 1.

Level	Effect
1	The affected creature can only use diagonal movement.
2	The affected creature loses all resistance and immunity to psychic damage, and cannot regain hit points in response to taking psychic damage.
3	The affected creature's sight and other senses are reduced to 15 ft. They are Blind beyond that radius.
4	When an ally leaves the affected creature's threatened space, it must take an attack of opportunity against that ally (if able).
5	The affected creature must spend its bonus action each turn drawing the Yellow sign on surface or medium readily available.
6	The affected creature must spend its action(s) on its turn attempting to commit suicide.

Unearthly Grace. Hastur moves with an otherworldly air, granting him the following benefits:

- Hastur ignores difficult terrain, and may take a Dash and Disengage actions as a single bonus action.
- If Hastur is prevented from taking an action (including bonus, legendary, and mythic actions) as the result of a condition or Epic condition, he may spend 30 ft. of movement to take that action.

Infectious Madness. Hastur's spells and abilities induce madness. If a creature fails a Death, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw against Hastur's abilities, actions, damage, and spells, the creature gains one level of Yellow Mania. If a creature would gain a level of the Insanity Epic condition while in combat with Hastur, it instead gains a level of Yellow Mania.

Out of Touch. Hastur barely registers reality as we know it. If Hastur takes 25 or less damage from a single instance of damage (such as a single attack), it instead takes no damage.

Old One's Resistance: If Hastur fails a saving throw, it may spend the use of a Legendary Action to succeed instead. If Hastur is under the effects of a non-Epic spell, it may expend the use of a Legendary Action to end the effect.

Spellcasting. Hastur is a 30th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 33, +25 to hit with spell attacks). When Hastur would deal damage with a spell or magical effect, he may choose to have it deal psychic damage instead of its normal damage type. Hastur does not require material components for spells, may speak the spell's verbal components telepathically, and does not need to maintain concentration on spells (concentration spells persist for the duration or until dispelled or dismissed). Hastur can innately cast the following spells, casting spells below 7th-level as 8th-level spells:

At will: *hideous laughter*, *harm* (psychic damage), *mass suggestion*, *phantasmal force*, *synaptic static* (XGE)¹

9/day: *feblemind*, *globe of invulnerability*, *planeshift*, *psychic scream* (XGE), *teleport*

Epic Spells

Tier 1 (7 slots): *antimagic ray*, *dimensional mastery* (SIG)², *ethereal nightmare*, *magic bullet*, *night terror* (SIG)

Tier 2 (6 slots): *arresting singularity*, *determinism*, *infinity room* (SIG), *mortifying phobia*

Tier 3 (5 slots): *soul harvest*

Actions

Revel in Madness (Recharge 5-6). Hastur uplifts those with madness, destroying their minds as their lunacy brings glory to its name. Each creature with a level of Yellow Mania must succeed on a DC 33 Intelligence saving throw or take 36 (8d10) psychic damage per level of Yellow Mania they possess. A successful save halves the damage.

Multispell. Hastur casts two non-Epic spells.

Overwhelming Presence (Recharge 5-6). Hastur asserts total authority over the minds of creature around him. Each creature in combat with Hastur that it is aware of automatically fails its next saving throw against its spells or abilities. This effect lasts until the start of Hastur's next turn.

¹ Content found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything, used under the Open Gaming License

² Content found in Spells of Inspired Genius (Free Epic Legacy supplement available here: <http://www.2cgaming.com/epic-legacy-new-content.html>)

Multiattack. Hastur makes three tattered lash attacks.

Tattered Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 38 (6d10 + 5) magical slashing damage and the creature is pushed up to 50 ft. away from Hastur.

Mythic Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Hastur takes a Mythic action to cause one of the following effects.

- **Active Hallucinations:** Hastur vanishes and reappears in a space it can see within 80 ft. In addition, six illusory copies of Hastur are created at spaces it can see within 80 ft. The illusions function as Hastur does, and act on its turn, but their actions have no effect on other creatures. If damaged, the illusions are destroyed, but otherwise are indistinguishable from Hastur until they interact with another creature. If they are not destroyed, the illusions disappear at the next initiative count of 20.
- **Present the Yellow Sign.** Hastur' presents the Yellow Sign, an eldritch glyph that heralds its profane power. All creatures within 30 ft. that can see Hastur must succeed on a DC 33 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains 2 levels of Yellow Mania, or 1 level on a success.
A creature can avert its eyes automatically succeeding on the saving throw. If it does so, until the start of its next turn it suffers Epic disadvantage on attacks made against Hastur, and Hastur gains Epic advantage on attacks and saving throws made against the creature and its effects.



Figure 1: The Yellow Sign

Legendary Actions

Hastur can take four legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Hastur regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cast a Spell. Hastur casts a non-Epic spell.

Cast an Epic Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Hastur casts an Epic spell.

Lash. Hastur makes a tattered lash attack.

Violent Paranoia. Hastur instils a maddening paranoia in a creature it is aware of, forcing the creature to make a DC 33 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to consider all allies as enemies. The creature most likely still considers Hastur a primary threat, but will not make considerations to avoid including allies in harmful areas (such as those produced by spells), and will actively defend itself if approached. The extremity of this effect should be determined by the characters personality and the Dungeon Master. A creature may repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

Unholy Offering. Hastur demands tribute from a creature he can see. That creature must succeed on a DC 33 Charisma saving throw or choose a single spell or magical effect not produced by Hastur currently affecting only them. That effect ends immediately, and Hastur regains the use of its spellcasting feature, or the use of a Tier 1 Epic spell if the ended effect was produced by an Epic spell. If the creature fails its saving throw by 5 or more, all magical effects currently affecting only it end immediately, and Hastur gains uses of his spellcasting or Epic spellcasting accordingly.

Tactics

Hastur is an Old God. It does not do battle so much as simply walk amongst its enemies, taking actions to reave their minds as a painter would splatter a canvas. Hastur's only goal in combat is to induce madness. The being would simply walk away from a fight once its foes had succumbed to madness or surrendered to its will. Vengeance, pain, and frustration are not emotions it recognizes, nor seeks to draw out of its enemies. Each of Hastur's abilities is detailed in this tactics section, along with their suggested uses and how to optimize them when you need to deliver a devastating blow. Hastur should focus enemies who best resist his maddening effects. The longer a character must battle under the effects of Yellow Mania, the better. Enemies who can reduce or cure Yellow Mania are the only ones that drive Hastur to anger, and it lashes out at these creatures with intent to kill. Hastur makes efforts to avoid enemies in direct combat, using its Tattered Lash attacks and Unearthly Grace to keep away from dangerous melee opponents. Keep in mind Hastur needs its legendary actions to automatically succeed on saving throws, so be wary about running out before players expected to force saving throws have taken their turns.

- **Mythic Actions:** Hastur has two Mythic actions, both of which have a defensive application, while only one can be used to injure enemies. If Hastur can avoid foes with his mobility or finds itself subject to single powerful hits, it uses Active Hallucinations action to confuse and dilute attacks against it. Any attack or spell wasted on dealing with the illusions created by this ability buys Hastur time to spread his madness further. If its opponents prove proficient in dealing with the host of illusory copies after a few uses of this action, Hastur will prefer instead to use its Present the Yellow Sign action. This action presents those facing Hastur with difficult choice. If you need to give the party at least some levels of Yellow Mania, this action will give you that immediately. However, this action leaves Hastur open to attack, so it should not be used if the party can risk

gaining Yellow Mania for the chance to deliver devastating damage. Alternatively, if the party has high levels of Yellow Mania, this action can be used to force them on the defensive as they avert their eyes and become unable to target Hastur. Depending on the composition of the party, this effect can be crippling or mild. Clerics may enjoy the opportunity to suffer no harmful effects and heal the party, while Barbarians bemoan the loss of attacks they can make.

- **Actions:** Hastur has a variety of actions, two of which must be recharged before using again. You should aspire to have at least one of these actions recharging at all times, and think about how you want to structure that round around their use. Revel in Madness can be devastating against foes who have high levels of Yellow Mania, so is best saved for opportune moments for overwhelming damage. This works part curly well if the players are choosing to ignore the Epic condition and rush for damage. If the party is doing very well at making their saving throws and resisting Hastur's attempts to give them Yellow Mania, its Overwhelming Presence action can guarantee not only a level of Yellow Mania if the right spell is used, but ensure powerful effects off of its legendary actions. This ability should be used carefully, as subsequent abilities are the only way to guarantee meaningful use. Hastur has many spells that can be used to not only have the effects of the spell, but increase levels of Yellow Mania as well. The ability to cast two per turn allows it to pressure out a *counterspell* from a dedicated spellcaster. Spells like *feblemind* and synaptic static have excellent effects against the right targets, so choose carefully. Hastur's arsenal of Epic spells should be used to strike with overwhelming power. You should familiarize how each of these spells work, as they are all very powerful and be used to devastating effect. Notable is Hastur's ability to cast *magic bullet* as a Tier 3 Epic spell, and other magic such as *dimensional mastery* which can be used to manipulate the battlefield. Hastur should only use his Multiattack action if it has no other way of dealing with melee enemies.
- **Legendary Actions:** Hastur's legendary actions can be used to support a battlefield dramatically affected by the results of his actions and Mythic Actions. Keeping in mind Hastur's ability to apply Yellow Mania, its legendary actions are best placed to make a bad situation worse.
 - **Cast a Spell.** Much like Hastur's action, this can be used to befuddle and single out specifically harmful enemies. Keep in mind which spellcasters have regained their reaction, and potentially use this action to bait out their cast of *counterspell* (or worse).
 - **Cast an Epic Spell.** Because it costs two actions, this should be used very carefully. Depriving Hastur of its ability to automatically succeed on saving throws by running out of legendary actions can easily happen if misused. Especially if the spell gets countered by a *reverse magic* Epic spell.
 - **Violent Paranoia.** If a character is being extremely helpful to their allies, especially if they are removing levels of Yellow Mania, this is your best response. This ally becomes very

difficult to aid, and instead turns its actions toward Hastur at best, or its allies at worst. If Hastur's defenses are very effective against this character, so much the better, causing the character to become nearly impotent until the effect is removed.

- **Unholy Offering.** If ongoing protective spells and effects are shielding players from the worst of Hastur's abilities, this can force a player to remove helpful magic, and help Hastur out in turn. Spells like *foresight*, *haste*, and powerful Epic spells are prime targets, made all the better if the target has a particularly low Charisma saving throw.
- **Lash.** Pesky paladin nipping at Hastur's heels? Send them flying right before he takes his turn, forcing him out of position and away from allies that so desperately need his aid. Primarily for melee enemies, using this legendary action can help set Hastur up for a very powerful turn.