



DOMAINS  
- of -  
DREAD

By William W. Connors & Steve Miller

## Dedications

For James and Amy Wyatt.  
Sometimes new friends are the best friends.  
—William W. Connors

This book is dedicated to my friend Christian Rojas.  
Words cannot express my loss.  
—Cindi Rice

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## Introduction

If you look at the credits, you'll find that Steve and I are listed as the designers of this product. If the truth be known (and it's about to be), the credit for this book is not so easily divided.

Tracy Hickman wrote the original RAVENLOFT® module for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, and from that source was drawn the idea of a game line that would serve as a cross between gothic horror and medieval fantasy. In 1989, Andria Hayday and Bruce Nesmith were given the task of turning that single, thirty-two page adventure into an entire game world. They created the Mists, the domains, and everything else that is Ravenloft over the course of the next few months.

In the wake of their work, others stepped into the shadows and joined the RAVENLOFT team (known as the Kargat). The most influential of these (at least by word count) would be David Wise, Lisa Smedman, and myself. Each of us has done our best to create works that hopefully live up to the high standard established by the original *Realm of Terror* boxed set.

Still, the RAVENLOFT campaign setting is a shared world. Over the years countless authors, editors, artists, and directors have contributed to the line. With each new perspective came new ideas and new nightmares. We've come up with new methods, characters, and story lines. Some we've put into print, and some we've put on hold for now. Over the last few years we've added some new faces to the RAVENLOFT team; foremost among them are Cindi Rice and Miranda Horner, the editors of this book, and Steve Miller, my co-author. It is humbling to discover how much better they know the lore of Ravenloft than I do. Without them, this book would be far less than it is.

The publication of this book begins a new era for the Demiplane of Dread. While most game revisions are made to correct flaws, we've always been pleased with the existing rules. Thus, this book focuses on expansions far more than revisions. *Domains of Dread* is by far the most ambitious product ever attempted by the Kargat. It presents not only the RAVENLOFT campaign setting and the creatures (good and bad) who live there, but also rules for playing characters native to the Land of the Mists.

We have some exciting plans for the Demiplane of Dread. Let's just say that there are dark times ahead in Ravenloft—times that will cause folk, even the Vistani, to look back on the Grim Harvest and Grand Conjunction as the good old days.

Enjoy,



William W. Connors



By some standards. I'm not very good at running the AD&D® game. Many players come to the gaming table expecting at least one high-body-count fight per game session. For some reason, though, I never seem to get around to them. In the twenty months I've been running my current campaign, there have been a grand total of five notable combats. One reason for this is that combats bore me. I'm much more interested in story-telling, character development, and role-playing. That's why the RAVENLOFT setting appealed so strongly to me, first as a Dungeon Master, and later as an editor and designer for TSR, Inc. The RAVENLOFT setting, if used to its full potential, is all about characters. From the player characters to the darklords, every character in the Demiplane of Dread has a story, and when that story intersects with that of the heroes, tragedy, terror, and high drama invariably follow.

If there was one weakness I saw in the RAVENLOFT setting as presented in its first four years of existence, it was that the official setting smacked entirely too much of *The Village* from the television series *The Prisoner*. More often than not, unless the Dungeon Master made certain elaborations the setting wasn't really designed to support, campaigns would invariably revolve around escaping the Demiplane of Dread and returning home. That is why the addition of native player characters was so important. When I came to work for TSR in 1994, I started agitating to make RAVENLOFT more of a "home base." The heavy-hitters involved with the line agreed with me, and you're holding the result.

Thanks go to Bill Connors and Harold Johnson, who were the Kargat control agents when I started writing blunt memos about what I felt was "wrong" about TSR's approach to the RAVENLOFT setting. They could have slapped me down, but they chose not to. In fact, Bill became the primary force behind what we hope will open new horizons for RAVENLOFT players everywhere.

Thanks also go to Andria Hayday, Bruce Nesmith, and Tracy Hickman for laying down the tracks for me to follow. I can truly say that without their efforts, I wouldn't be typing these words—or any others for TSR, Inc.

I also need to mention my fellow gamers on the Internet RAVENLOFT mailing list. Their comments and feedback were invaluable while working on this book.

Finally, I want to thank Cindi Rice for her attention to detail and her insistence on keeping us to the highest standards of quality. Bill and I may be getting the top billing, but without her, this book wouldn't be what it is.



Steve Miller