

DUNGEONS DRAGONS[®]

THE BOOK OF VILE DARKNESS[™]



DUNGEON MASTER'S BOOK

Robert J. Schwalb





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Evil Unearthed

"I have examined this book, perused its pages, and inspected the reflections of those despicable authors who have added their peculiar insights into this most foul work, yet I refuse to see this tome as evil. This book is just a book. Where evil exists in regard to this tome is in the intent behind its use. I can imagine how a wretched man with darkness in his heart might find the contents here instructive to feeding his vile ambition. Yet can we not also see how a virtuous man might scan these same pages for insights into how he might triumph over that same darkness? This book is a tool and nothing more. Do not be put off by the sharpened edges and the curious odors wafting from its pages."

—Shemeshka the Marauder

SOMETHING ABOUT evil fascinates us, but who can say what turns a person into a monster, what compels an individual to commit unspeakable acts? This tome pulls aside the veil to reveal evil as it manifests in the worlds of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** roleplaying game.

In the D&D® game world, the *Book of Vile Darkness* is considered by many to be the most evil and blasphemous of all tomes. It is a catalog of wickedness, a repository of wisdom for those in service to evil, and a compendium of all things foul. The tome is an infection, a dark presence that uses temptation and corruption to bleed into societies. Handling the manuscript corrupts the innocent, and its lore destroys as it spreads like cancer through the minds of its readers. Thus, this sourcebook shares the damnable book's title. And in its pages you will find everything you need to make evil worthy of its name.

RALPH HORSLEY





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PRODUCT OVERVIEW

This product includes two books and a foldout battle map. The book you hold in your hands is intended for the Dungeon Master (DM), and it contains everything you need to place evil on center stage in your games. It offers extensive advice about building villains and running campaigns for evil adventurers. It also includes an assortment of tools to test and shock your players. It concludes with an adventure that explores what might happen when heroes come across the *Book of Vile Darkness*, and it includes combat encounters that use the battle map.

The second and smaller book is a guide for players interested in creating and playing evil adventurers. Since not every DM is keen to run a game featuring evil adventurers, it's ultimately your decision whether the options presented in the player's book are available to your players. Evil campaigns can be fun and interesting, but they often end badly—with a pile of dead characters as the only reward for your trouble. That said, you might find evil adventurers provide a refreshing change of pace to your group's normal roleplaying experience.

Before you turn the page to explore the wickedness piled inside, please know this product in no way aims to glorify evil or encourage deviant behaviors. Instead, these books are designed to give you a little nastiness with which to darken your games and present unforgettable challenges to your players.

A final warning: If you use this material, be prepared. Your players might never forgive you.

OTHER RESOURCES

The Book of Vile Darkness is a toolbox for showcasing evil in your games. With it, your villains come to life, environments ooze corruption, and, ultimately, you will defeat your players' expectations. What this book is not is a comprehensive overview of evil, in all of its incarnations, found in the various D&D® settings. There are plenty of great sourcebooks that do this already. *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead™* provides an in-depth look at undead, while *Demonomicon™* does the same for demons. For information on the gods, the planes, and their inhabitants, the *Manual of the Planes™*, *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea™*, and *The Plane Below: Secrets of the Elemental Chaos* all offer great insight. Finally, the *Monster Vault™* and *Monster Manual®* series of books also provide information on various evil creatures beyond this product. In short, this book works best when used in conjunction with your other sourcebooks to create truly vile creatures and encounters of your own design.

THE BOOK OF VILE DARKNESS

"There is not a moment in the long years of my life when darkness did not shroud my thoughts. Looking back through the veil of time, I recall well those early lessons, living a life apart from others due to the stain my family bore upon their souls. We were untouchable, outsiders, cursed, a people known for consorting with the forbidden. Such a life brought great suffering and want, yet I believe the hunger I felt and the resentment brimming in my soul laid the foundation for the greatness I have since achieved.

"My mother's identity shaped my earliest life. I recall well her sacrifices, the mewling cries of small animals dying beneath her sacrificial knife. I remember her horrid coupling with things that bore no resemblance to natural creatures. She was stern and cruel, yet she was the greatest teacher I have ever known. Though I have no love for her and was gladened when the people burned her alive for consorting with fiends, I owe her a great debt. Without her, I would not be who I am today.

"I mention these memories not out of some maudlin need to explore my origins or as some justification for the actions I have taken in my mortal life. Rather, I bring them up here, in this work, to explain this manuscript's purpose and to reveal to you the power and wonder residing within darkness.

"Before any legitimate discussion on the nature of evil can begin, it is first necessary to dispense with the misapprehensions about evil commonly held by those moralizing proselytizers who seek to redeem the corrupted, to save those who have fallen into shadow, and to foster virtue in all they meet. Evil is not an absence of good. It is not a choice. It is not some crime, such as murder, theft, or deviance. It is not service to a reprehensible master; nor is it devotion to some dark power. Evil is one of two forces in the cosmos, an agency locked in eternal struggle against its antithesis. This war has only two sides, the light and the dark. And the whole of creation is both their battleground and the prize for which they vie. Do not be deceived into thinking a middle path will present a way to rise above the struggle. Only good and only evil exist. And not even a hair's width of space separates them.

"My mother understood this. She embraced her nature. She welcomed the darkness into her soul and profited from it. And though she found agony and death for her allegiance, her legacy lives on in me and my works.

"This, then, is why I wrote this book, why I labored to complete my studies on evil and preserve its legacy for all time. This book I leave as a testament to my service to evil and also as a guide to others who would follow my steps into the vile darkness. These contents exist to understand evil's myriad expressions, to learn from them, and to use them. And though I have embraced the darkness, I know my understanding of it is not yet complete. Therefore, I leave this book open to others to add to its lore with a goal of creating a more