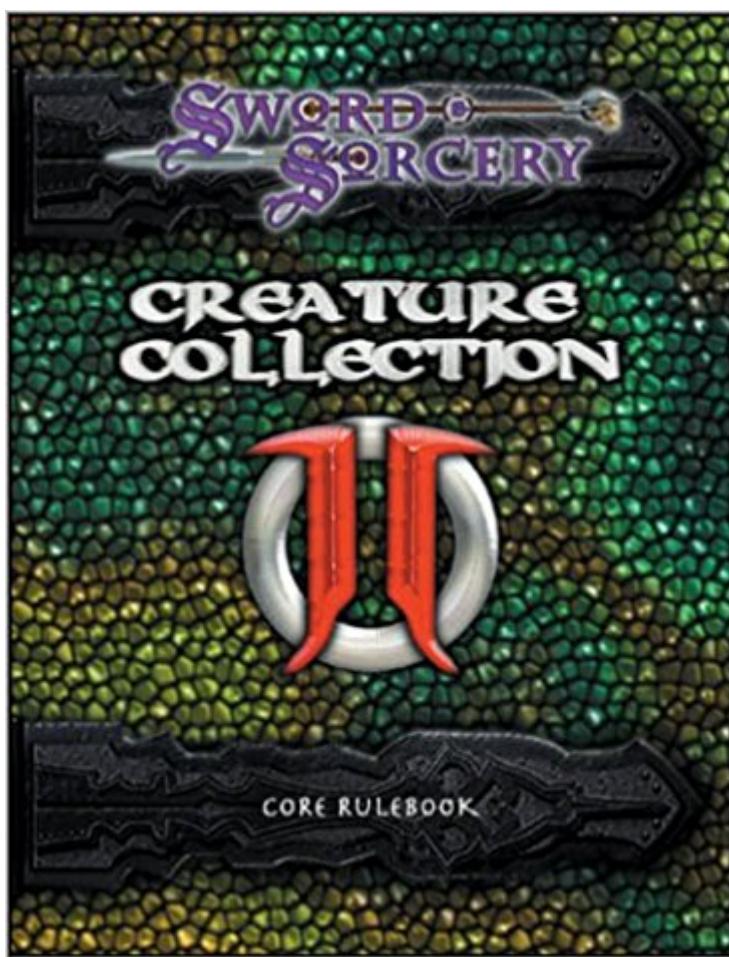


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Sword & Sorcery Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie (Core Rulebook)



Synopsis

CREATURE COLLECTION II: DARK MENAGERIE THE TWISTED LEGACY OF DEAD GODS

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Customer Reviews

Well, I was pleasantly surprised when this arrived at my door. The d20 Open Gaming License looks like it's off to a good start. I was not impressed with the initial Creature Collection and didn't even

buy it, but this one is of MUCH better quality. The black and white artwork is generally very good with the occasional lacking picture. Just a brief listing of the pros and cons of this manual: Hundreds and hundreds of strange and deadly monsters, all fully detailed and versatile in all types of climates, from cities to swamps to deserts to oceans. As mentioned, most of the artwork is very good and a great visual aid for players so they know exactly what it is that is about to kill their characters. Cons: Virtually all of the material is heavily rooted in the Scarred Lands campaign setting. This in and of itself isn't bad, but a lot of the details will be hard to mesh with other campaigns. Much of the descriptions are ultraviolent and lend a very dark tone to the book, but that probably won't be a deterrent to most readers. But if all you want is the picture, a brief blurb and the 3E stats,(like me) this book is for you. That said, i don't know much about Scarred Lands aside from reading the CC2, but it looks like a DANGEROUS place to live. The world is full of murderous, grotesque monsters intent on slaying all life, with the ruminations of Gods and Titans thrown into the mix to make it even more dangerous. The VAST majority of these creatures were created by gods and titans both living and dead, but they can still be adapted to individual campaigns without too much trouble. I look forward to CC3 and hope that Sword and Sorcery Studios can outdo themselves with the next one. They're one gaming company to keep an eye on as they grow, and they've earned this DM's respect.

I love Sword & Sorcery Studios. I've loved 'em since they came out with the Creature Collection 1, before the official Monster Manual came out. They're a high quality publisher, backed by one of the biggest companies in the biz, White Wolf, and it shows. This product is of great quality, much better than the first Creature Collection, which was admittedly mediocre in several departments. There are a huge range of monsters and other assorted things tailored for the Scarred Lands setting, but most if not all of them can be dropped into any setting with little if any change. Also, you get a wide range of different sorts of monsters, because the book was not just written by a few individuals. Rather, they had open writer calls, so anyone could send in a permission form and their own monsters to be included in the book, so you get the cream of the crop from the collective minds of the entire D&D community.

More monsters, nastier monsters, weird monsters. Few "good guys", but who needs 'em? I want to see more from SSS on the Carnival of Krewes. Whenever I need to freak out the players, this book comes out. If you like Call of Cthulhu and want a little more of that flavor in your campaign, this book does it. SSS continues to crank out hi quality stuff for DMs. I don't think I'd use their setting,

but they give you a lot of inspiration to do your own thing. Any of the setting "specific" monsters in here can be put in your own setting quickly. The "specifics" just flesh out the monsters more, but my experience is that players aren't necessarily gonna care.

This book is good. Really good. It shows what the Open Gaming License can do. The monsters in this book are for the most part creative and interesting. Swords and Sorcery Studios obviously put some thought into a lot of the monsters. True, there are monsters in the book that lack the pizazz that you would want in a campaign of heroism that Dungeons and Dragons is suited to. Yet with 300 monsters or so, it would be irrational to expect them all to be perfect. I have to complaints with the book, each of which cost the Creature Collection II a star. My first gripe is a personal one, but I think it's significant. The CC2 is in black and white. While this is usually issue, I feel that in role-playing, hardcover books should come in color. You may disagree, and if you're happy with black and white, then consider this book a four star supplement. Gripe two is more significant. Whoever came up with the challenge ratings (CR) for the monsters has either never played the D20 system (...). They are way off. There are monsters in there with CRs of 5 who I would pit my not-so-buff group of 1st level PCs against without any fear for their lives. On the other hand, there are monsters who have CRs way lower than they deserve. Example: The "Time Killer" has a CR of one, yet can use a touch attack to send players ahead in time, thus separating the group, and its touch attack also ages players 1d10 years. It also has a sizable number of hit points. I would have reservations pitting 4th level PCs against this monster. Two notes that are neither pros nor cons: The book is a bit campaign specific (for the SSS campaign "Scarred Lands"), but with minimal work the DM can change the monsters to any campaign. Also, this book is very dark. Lots of undead and grisly aberrations. You could call them demons or devils and have all of the Planes fleshed out with evil. If you want some scary monsters, here they are. Overall, good, but not the MM.

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