



BEYOND COUNTLESS DOORWAYS

A Book of Planes

BY MONTE COOK, WOLFGANG BAUR,
COLIN MCCOMB AND RAY VALLESE

Uses the Third Edition rules, including updated material from the v. 3.5 revision.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Editing: Sue Weinlein Cook and Ray Vallese

Production: Sue Weinlein Cook

Cover Illustration: rk post

Interior Illustrations: Kevin Crossley, Eric Lofgren, and Tyler Walpole

Cartography: Ed Bourelle

Proofreading: Michele Carter

Cover and Interior Page Design: Peter Whitley

Playtesting: Michele Carter, Sue Cook, Bruce Cordell, Jesse Decker, Erik Mona, and Chris Perkins

For supplemental material, visit Monte Cook's Website: <www.montecook.com>

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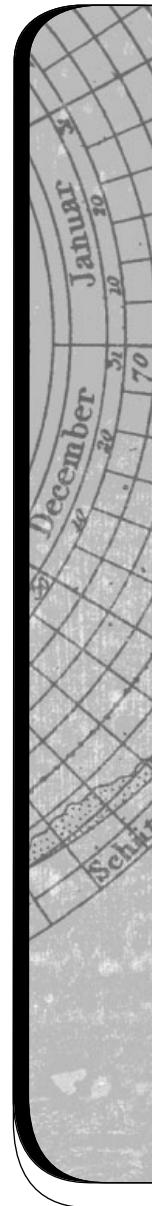
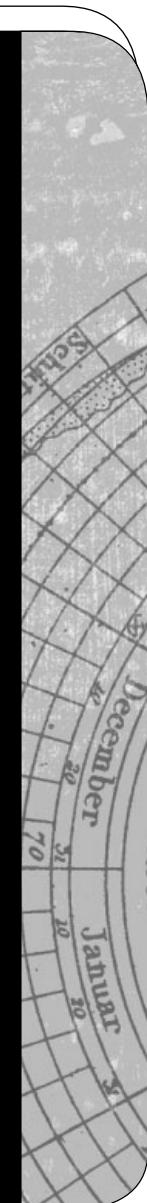


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Foreword

It's always wonderful to hold in your hands a new creation, filled with the promise of good adventure, an abundance of clever ideas, and even just a bit of sly wit. It is even more wonderful when you are holding (as in my case) a work that is done by people you know and trust. And finally, that promise is even more justified when you hold in your hands a work put together by as skillful a team as this one, people who are not only creative and talented but are writing in a world and a setting they really enjoy.

But enough of all my blathering about how good this book is. You can judge that for yourself without all my hyperbole—as well you should. Nonetheless you'll have to excuse me for my enthusiasm. The planes have always held a special meaning for me, ever since I created the *Planescape*® setting. It was, and has always been, an opportunity for unbridled creativity. In the planes, designers can stretch their imaginations to create colorful, wondrous, and bizarre worlds for you to visit. They can create places and characters to enthrall you as you read.

However, this is not just a literary exercise. Planes need to be more than just oddities of description, even ones as strange and curious as the Sundered Star or the Maze. This is a game. The most wonderful places ever imagined do precious little good if you can't have a good adventure there. The talent shown in these planes is in the possibilities that exist for experience, riches, and the chance to bash some heads. “Dull” is not a word you want to hear describing your adventures, so these planes are anything but dull.

But making a setting rich with the potential for good adventures hardly lets a creator off the hook. It is still up to the writer to make that potential come alive. And that is where you come in. You are part of this creative team, even if you don't realize it. Now, the task can seem daunting. Your players face so many challenges, it can be hard to know where to begin. So, to help you make the most of the material in this book, here's some unsolicited advice.

Don't make surviving the elements the goal. Some planes are extraordinarily harsh. They'll suck the life energy out of you or shred your skin in howling winds without the right protections. Don't make players spend all their time worrying about the elements. Yes, they need to find a solution to the problem, but once they do, let them get on with

the real adventuring. Use the environment as a dramatic addition to another challenge—the same way a science fiction movie suddenly remembers that space is a vacuum just as the alien monster appears.

It's not just about monsters. The planes are filled with exotic, powerful, unique, and dangerous beings. It is easy for planar adventures to fall into the trap of sending the party off to kill Lughead, 187th Demon-Lord of the Abyss. But let's face it—given enough time, firepower, and healing spells, your players can kill anything. And after they've done that once or twice, where's the challenge? Now, you could make unlikely monsters (“Go kill Lughead, the Immortal Demon-Lord.”). That's quite the challenge once, but twice is unfair.

Instead, remember it's all about personalities. Planar beings have problems too. Maybe the yama of the Eighth Court of Hell is failing to punish the deserving. Evil-doers are coming back into the world with their souls unpurged, a situation that simply will not do. It falls to the player characters (PCs) to find out what's going on. (Why them? That's another problem, and a good source of adventure.) Has the yama turned traitor to his cause? Has he been bribed to look the other way? Is he being blackmailed

with some terrible secret? Or is he just disconsolate because his First Wife has run off with the Monkey King and his heart is broken until she returns? Remember, you are sending the party off to exotic places. Have exotic adventures!

Not all that glitters is gold. The planes have a reputation as vast storehouses of exotic treasures, gold, magic, and all the other things your players covet. When they go out to the planes, they naturally expect plunder beyond their wildest dreams. Show restraint and they think you're a cheap SOB. Reward them lavishly and your game just goes to pieces. What's a DM to do?

*I get carried away
with the possibilities.*

”

Sample file

Well, not every reward has to be in coin. Planar beings have a lot of powers, some of which could prove quite useful. Suppose they could call in one favor from a minor Lord of Hell? A treasure beyond price, to be sure, but one that needs to be used very, very carefully. One wrong word in the asking, and they will be regretting things for a very long time. As you can see, there's more to rewards than just coins.

Once you go, you can go back again.
Finally, don't think of a visit to the planes as a once-in-a-lifetime trip (unless, of course, there's a really messy death involved). There's no reason why characters can't go back or why new friends (and enemies) can't drop in for a visit. After all, you've gone to the trouble of adding the planes to your game, so make the most of it. Just imagine: exotic characters popping in with urgent requests from another world, hideous assassins sent for revenge—that sort of thing never happens in the movies! The point is, you have a gold mine of material, so don't use it once and just throw it away!

But enough with the advice. There's far better of that in these pages, anyway. It's just that I get carried away with the possibilities. (How about a plane where every morning is literally a new day and no one remembers the days before? What kind of adventures could you have there?) Of all the worlds and settings I ever created, none excited me ever so much as the planes.

And that might have been the end of it, but for the designers you'll read here. They already have long experience shaping and guiding this creation and now they add more. As much as I started the world of *Planescape*, Monte, Wolfgang, Colin, and Ray came to it and found something in it that they liked. They claimed it as their own and took it in directions I never expected, but always with creativity and imagination. And it still continues, to this day.

So, feeling a little like a proud parent, here you go.

David "Zeb" Cook
February 2004

About the Authors

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. For Iron Crown Enterprises he worked on the Rolemaster and Champions games as an editor, developer, and designer. In 1994 Monte came to TSR as a game designer, where he wrote or co-wrote nine Planescape products, including *Dead Gods*, *Hellbound: The Blood War*, and *The Planewalker's Handbook*. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the Third Edition of Dungeons & Dragons, authored the Dungeon Master's Guide, and designed the Book of Vile Darkness and the d20 version of *Call of Cthulhu*.

Wolfgang Baur is a writer and editor because he daydreamed too much as a child, and he still sometimes hopes that he'll get to sail a pirate ship around the Horn or see a dinosaur. Though he earned a degree as a chemist, he never used it much. As a writer and GM, he has a morbid streak deep enough to bury bodies in, which he used while writing big chunks of *Planes of Law*, *Planes of Chaos*, and *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil*. He has written about 50 other game books and articles but he's not keeping count. Wolfgang lives in Seattle.

Colin McComb started as a designer at TSR in 1991. While there, he worked on Dragonlance, Basic D&D, and Dark Sun, but he's proudest of co-authoring the Birthright campaign setting and his Planescape work, especially *Hellbound: The Blood War*, *On Hallowed Ground*, and *Faces of Evil: The Fiends*. In 1996, he moved to the RPG division of Interplay, which later became Black Isle Studios, where he worked on the game *Torment*. He later moved to Detroit with his wife, where they are currently working on ideas for a console gaming title. He also claims to be writing a novel.

Ray Vallese didn't know much about roleplaying games before joining TSR in 1994. Some people say he still doesn't. Regardless, he edited, wrote, or co-wrote a number of titles for the Planescape line, including *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil*, *Faction War*, *Something Wild*, *Hellbound: The Blood War*, *Dead Gods*, *Faces of Evil: The Fiends*, and the novelization of the computer game *Torment*. As a freelancer, he's edited loads of stuff for Wizards of the Coast, including *Star Wars* and D&D books and the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* website.

About the Illustrators

Cover artist rk post received his BFA from Northern Illinois University in 1994. In 1996 he garnered a staff artist position at TSR, Inc., where he illustrated many Planescape books, including *The Great Modron March* and *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*. He moved out to the Seattle area when Wizards of the Coast purchased TSR, but he has worked as a full-time freelance illustrator since 2000. You can buy rk post's collected works in the hardcover art book, *Postmortem: The Art of rk post* through Cartouche Press (www.cartouchepress.com). Check out his new and continuing work at www.rkpost.net.

If you like d20 System products, chances are you've run across the creative work of writer, illustrator, and cartographer **Ed Bourelle** before. His artwork and maps have appeared in products from Malhavoc Press, Bastion Press, Fantasy Flight Games, Mystic Eye Games, Sovereign Press, Sword & Sorcery, and more. Learn about him at his website www.skeletonkeygames.com.

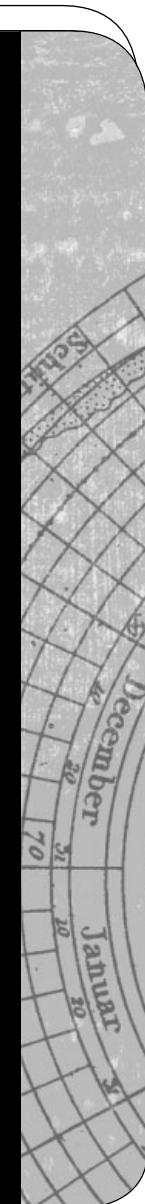
Born in 1972 in Leeds, England, **Kev Crossley** learned early on that a monster lived in the abandoned house down the street—after that, he saw monsters everywhere. He drew monsters all the way through school, then went to art college and university, where he was told not to. After he got a job in computer games, people started to pay him to draw monsters. Moral? Art college and university were a waste of time.

Illustrator **Eric Lofgren**'s early influences include comic book art, the oils of Frazetta, and the inks of Berni Wrightson. Upon discovering roleplaying games, he schooled himself in fantasy art. After years of working other jobs to sustain himself while drawing away evenings and weekends, he decided to take the plunge, illustrating full time in the RPG industry. See more of his work at www.ericlofgren.com.

Years ago, **Tyler Walpole** spent a good deal of time in school being scolded by his teachers for drawing when he should have been paying attention in class. Today, many of those same teachers are happy that the self-taught 27-year-old is able to pursue his illustration career full time. He lives in Des Moines, Iowa, with his wife Petra and son Keegan, and co-owns a comic book store.

Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is Monte Cook's game imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products exhibit the mastery of the 3rd Edition rules that only one of its original designers can offer. Coming soon from Malhavoc Press, look for *Mystic Secrets: The Lore of Word and Rune*. Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at www.montecook.com.



Through the First Door

"Worlds beyond worlds, my friend. So many unknown kingdoms, distant lands and unreachable shores that it takes even an explorer's breath away. Yes, I must admit it—even the most jaded among us is captivated by what lies beyond these countless doorways."

—Adamar Courein, The True Explorers

In this product, we're going to talk about cosmology a lot. Cosmology is the planar landscape of your campaign world. Beyond the kingdoms, lands, oceans, and mountains, it is the larger universe—or multiverse—outside the boundaries of the actual world. Where do demons come from? Where do the celestials live? Where can you go using a *plane shift* spell? These questions are addressed by your world's cosmology. Many people assume that they must use the cosmology described or implied in the Core Rulebooks, but that's simply not true. You can create any kind of cosmology you want with your game.

Beyond Countless Doorways is a d20 game product that provides a brand new cosmology for your campaign setting, as well as descriptions for a number of worlds and planes that you can use together or individually (no matter what your campaign's cosmology is like).

Beyond Countless Doorways owes a great deal of its inspiration to the writings of Michael Moorcock. This isn't for any one specific idea—this book doesn't describe the realms of Arioach, Xiombarg, or the fierce grahluk—but instead for a general look at the concept of a multiverse. Moorcock's collective work describes a cosmology that has a virtually infinite number of worlds and planes, some much like ours, and some very different. It is this basic inspiration that fuels this book.

A PLANESCAPE® REUNION

This product represents a reunion of creators and talent from a few years back. Originally, TSR published a campaign setting called *Planescape*®, dealing with the mystery and majesty of the planes and the people who lived there. It was an original D&D® setting, to say the least. It was as much about ideas, imagination, and belief as it was about fighting monsters and gaining treasure.

The authors, editors, proofreader, and cover artist in the credits of this book are some of the same people who made this setting happen and continued to support it with sourcebooks and adventures. While unfortunately not everyone who ever worked on a *Planescape* product is represented, many of the driving forces behind the line's real innovations are here in this book. It has been wonderful for us all to get to work together again, in most cases for the first time in many years. There's absolutely nothing like getting creative people together and seeing what they all come up with, working alone and as a group.

To be clear, though, this is not a *Planescape* product. You won't find references here to the specific places, characters, or other aspects of *Planescape*. What you will find is the same embracing of wondrous ideas, the grandeur of unearthly planar locations, and imaginative and evocative writing. Fans of *Planescape* will find similar chillingly horrific hells, beautiful and amazing heavens, and everything in between.

OVERVIEW

Most of *Beyond Countless Doorways* is a gazetteer of fascinating planes ready for exploration and adventure. Within these pages, you'll find:

Chapter 1: The Countless Worlds. The first chapter offers you a backdrop for the planes in this book (and any planes of your own creation). You don't have to use the material in this chapter, but it might give you a good starting point.

Chapter 2: Avidarel, The Sundered Star. This chapter presents a world where the sun has died and all is dark and cold. Within its confines, however, Avidarel offers the spark of hope that perhaps it could be restored to its former glory.

Chapter 3: Carrigmoor. One of the last cities of a destroyed world, Carrigmoor's portals once made it a hub for planar trade. Now, devastated by plague, it festers in unchecked corruption, protected from ghoulish predators and the harsh elements only by a jeweled dome.

Chapter 4: Curnorost, Realm of Dead Angels. Where do angels go when they die? This plane, Curnorost, offers the answer to that question, detailing a strange and somber plane of lost treasures and forbidden knowledge.

Chapter 5: The Crystal Roads of Deluer. This chapter presents a plane of elemental earth where crystalline roads connect floating spheres of gemstones and rare metals. Deluer is a difficult plane to enter, as its precious minerals are well guarded.

Chapter 6: Dendri (Expansion 11). War rages on this small moon that once was choked with web-strewn rain forests. An invading army of formians tries to exterminate the native aranea, raze all the forests, cover the world with hive-cities, and turn Dendri into their latest conquest. But the besieged spiderkin refuse to go gently into the night.

Chapter 7: Faraenyl. This pocket plane of splendor and enchantment, where each of the four seasons holds sway over its own lands, seems an idyllic place for travelers invited to revelries



Sample file

