



Menzoberranzan: Boxed Set

R.A. Salvatore

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Home of Drizzt Do'Urden and famed city of the drow of the Underdark...

Ruled by the feared and respected Houses and their Matron Mothers, Menzoberranzan is a place of great nobility and great treachery. The priestesses of Lloth, the Spider Queen, demand (and receive) complete respect from the citizens of this mighty city. But what of the common folk - the drow of non-noble birth, the humans, and others? What is their lot in life, in this magnificent den of intrigue?

Three books in this boxed set explain the ways of Menzoberranzan in detail. Book One: The City gives the reader a tour of the streets and districts, a wealth of information on various practices and customs, and an overview of daily life for each class of citizen (and non-citizen). Book Two: The Houses presents all eighteen major and minor Houses of the city, including the Matron Mothers and their immediate families, as well as any important advisers and associates. Book Three: The Adventure gives players a chance to take their characters into the web of deceit and intrigue woven by the denizens of this famed city.

Additionally, this boxed set includes:

Four connecting poster-sized maps of the city proper;
one poster map of the House Baenre compound;
a poster showing the rivalries and alliances among all eighteen major and minor houses; a 16-page House Do'Urden retrospective and the collected essays of Drizzt; twelve cardsheets containing in-depth statistics on main characters from Houses Nurbonnis and Millithor, and small maps for use in the adventure; and a full-color poster of the stunning box cover art by Jeff Easley.

Menzoberranzan: Boxed Set Details

Date : Published December 31st 1992 by TSR, Inc.

ISBN : 9781560764601

Author : R.A. Salvatore

Format : Boxed Set 224 pages

Genre : Games, Role Playing Games, Fantasy, Dungeons and Dragons, Forgotten Realms, Gaming, Sports and Games

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From Reader Review Menzoberranzan: Boxed Set for online ebook

David Sarkies says

Drizzt's Home Town

26 August 2013

I'm not going to say that this was necessarily one of my favourite products, but other than the rule books, and some of the more general accessories, this was one product that I seemed to get some value for my money. As I was reading through Menzoberranzan I was developing an adventure that would make full use of the box set and effectively send the players on a journey around Menzoberranzan and adjacent parts of the Underdark. I believe that it was one of the few campaigns that I ran where we managed to complete it.

This box set is simply a further addition to the many other products featuring the drow. I believe that in second edition there was a race book, this box set, and another product dealing with the Underdark in general but with some emphasis on the drow, particularly since when you mention the word Underdark in a Dungeons and Dragons setting people seem to automatically think of the drow (despite there being other races down there, including the immensely cool Mind Flayers – though for some reason they seem to stand out in the Dungeons and Dragons setting – to me they seem more at home in Call of Cthulu).

This particular product deals with one of the many cities of the Drow that are found scattered about the Underdark (and also goes to further expand that adjacent region). Mind you, it is not that Menzoberranzan is the only city, or even the biggest, drow city in the Underdark, but it is the one that is probably the most well known because there is an entire novel in the Drizzt series is set there. Anyway, any place that can be considered the home town of Drizzt is probably going to receive more attention than it otherwise would have.

Sometimes I wonder whether it would be cool getting paid to write stuff like this, and in a way it probably would be, but then I wonder if it is actually adding anything to the collection of human knowledge. My response to that is 'probably not'. The reason that I say this is because in reality it is a game, and even if people buy it, they are not necessarily going to read it, and even if they do read it, it is not going to sit with them for the rest of their life unlike a play like, say, Hamlet, or the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the end this product is a game, and while it may offer enjoyment, and a form of escapism, to the owner and his or her friends, it does little more beyond that.

CHIN8CHIN says

Ah, Menzoberranzan.

...always struck me as really comfortable. Well, at least my own kind of 'comfort'ahaha! I would love to see Menzoberranzan and grab a coffee with Mother Matron Yvonne Baenre, and of course, my love, Drizzt Do'Urden.

Menzoberranzan is a 'sacred' place to me as a reader & listener (audiobook) and only a handful of surface-dwellers have ever been down there and lived to talk about it. It'd be sacrilegious to let hundreds of thousand of surface-dwellers to go there and "live to talk about it". The violent, underground society that Drizzt Do'Urden grew up in, in which betrayal is commonplace, and even expected. The justice system is also disturbing, since the rule is, you can go ahead and massacre an entire family - as long as you succeed.

The world is rife with insane wizards, genocidal masterminds, rampaging monsters, warfare and complete and utter psychopaths who go around the world solving 'problems' by specialising in killing anything that moves.

Tetra says

This is probably my favorite of all D&D boxed sets. It does a brilliant job of blurring the line between protagonist and antagonist (the players could be either or both), and illustrates a place where the society is interesting enough to create incredibly detailed plots and character development/relationships without ever having to leave. Perhaps the best part is that Menzoberranzan is described as a smaller city from other places in the Underdark, allowing for its politics and drama to be even more unique in the D&D multiverse.

It could be argued that a 'backwater' place such as Menzo is just a myopic look at the vast possibilities that a place like the Underdark could bring. I would say that the level of detail and ironic humanist vibe that this work creates makes one realise that our world might not be as different from theirs as we think.

The box set contains 3 books and a whole bunch of maps. The books are, respectively, about The City, The Houses, and The Adventure. Most of the material is a backdrop. The adventure isn't great, and has two possible beginnings: the players as surface-dwellers, or the players as drow. As a huge fan of the drow I would strongly recommend the second over the first unless this is part of a larger campaign. Then again, if I were a surface-dweller you might not be able to convince me to leave!

Francisco Becerra says

The legendary home of Drizzt Do'Urden, this boxed set details the wonders and perils of this powerful drow stronghold. Full of political intrigue, dangerous plots and creatures, deceptions in every corner, this is an incredible campaign scenario, beyond the novels.
