

Everybody knows about Dungeons and Dragons! That Tabletop game where you roll some dice, eat some Cheetos and pretend to be fantasy dudes killing dragons? It's been a staple of nerd culture for almost 40 years.

Dungeons and Dragons nerds, like a lot of other nerds, abhor change: Whenever there's a new edition of D&D released there are always going to be throngs of angry nerds who decry it as the coming of the antichrist.

The term grognard (A nickname that has its roots in the french term for an old soldier) was first coined to describe these roleplay conservatives sometime back in the 70s or 80s but has, over the past decade or two, mutated to refer not just to roleplayers with an unhealthy fear of new editions of games but to encompass all Dungeons and Dragons players with terrible opinions. And that is what we're going to be looking at.

A few quick notes before we begin: **Runic** helped me compile a lot of these and good lord he did a good job.

This document is also quite long because RPG Dorks are fucking verbose. Lots of long, long posts about elves are inbound.

[KK's note: Let's kick things off with some batshit insanity]

http://www.story-games.com/forums/discussion/comment/189095#Comment_189095

I'm very interested in the topic and personally have a view of the hobby as a shamanistic pursuit. That conception drives my GMing. That said, pardon me for being brief and in a bit of a hurry, but..

The act of gaming is infused with ritual. If we go looking, we might miss the things that are right in front of us. Specific phrases, etc. are all good to consider, but the very basics are already ritualistic. We have ritual objects. The dice resolve things for us and are invoked in a very ritualistic manner. We have sacred texts which outline how we conduct our ritual. We have holy days when we attend ritual (oddly, our gaming group has one solid gaming day and it has always been sunday). We have ritual roles. It's just there in a very strong sense.

- Joachim Buchert -

[KK's note: This is a rather infamous, and utterly hilarious, bit of grognard]

<http://lotfp.blogspot.ca/2008/06/i-hate-fun.html?zx=f27909357b8a4659>

I Hate Fun

I hate what I like.

I like cookies and McDonald's and chocolate. I like Godzilla movies and all those fucking direct-to-video horror movies that only an idiot would look at and think, "Gee, let's rent this!" I like sitting at the computer for hours on end playing Civilization IV.

It's shit. It's all shit. It doesn't enrich my life in any way, but it does turn my brain off, quickly, conveniently, easily, cheaply. No effort. What it all does is separate myself from *living* life and reduces it to *passing time*. It distracts me and detaches me from the only thing I have – life – and therefore it is no good. Instead of *doing*, and *being*, all too often I am seeking sensory stimulation. Artificial feelings, stimulated most effectively through passively consuming things that other people have done.

The very idea of wanting to be entertained is an exercise in self-nullification.

I want more. I want that *doing*, I want that *being*, and I want it in a way that gives my life significance. I want engagement in the things I do, and I want meaning in the things I engage with. I want all the feelings that entertainment artificially instills in me, but I want them to be genuine.

Engagement and meaning is commonly attributed to those terrible things known as *other people*.

I can't socialize. I won't. It's embarrassing enough to know that I waste substantial periods of my life seeking and accepting entertainment, being mentally comatose instead of being active and involved in my own life. How am I supposed to be exposed to other people behaving this way and have a shred of respect for them? I want to just shake them. "We are real people, we are together! We don't have to be alone, dead in mind, vacant in spirit! We should do, we should *create*! Support each other in our times of weakness and make our mark in the world, for we are *Human*!"

But no. Much of our interactions with others is simply wasting more time, being entertained, sometimes being entertained by discussing entertainment which has been previously experienced. Maybe everybody even gets entertained together, focusing their attention on *something* while under the impression that they're spending time with someone else. Nobody really discusses anything, nobody explores ideas together, nobody fucking does anything in their spare time with each other. Individual pools of waste are flooded by entertainment to become great lakes of worthlessness.

The problem is made all the more frustrating by the fact that people realize this. They know they are watching crap, but they watch it "because nothing else is on." They know that eating another bag of potato chips is against their best interest and could even contribute to the ending of their lives, but those things just tastes so good, don't they?

People settle for garbage because it is convenient to do so and we have all been trained to think that "effort" is "work," and "work" should be reserved for those times when you're laboring for the benefit of someone else in order to collect your paycheck. Work and effort outside of employment is a waste of time, so relax, sit back, and passively consume entertainment – you deserve it after all of that hard work you've done!

People have convinced themselves that they have no time. Today's lifestyle is busy, on-the-go, so today's entertainment had better be as fast-paced and compact as possible to deal with it!

This cycle of disempowerment and uselessness has crept into every facet of society, and it is no good. Change is constant in life, but not all change is progress. For all of the pressure placed on people, the final responsibility for their lives is theirs alone. Being influenced by others is a choice that is made. And rising above all of the negative, defeating influences is a choice to be made as well.

Deny passive entertainment. Demand to be engaged, enriched, and fulfilled by your hobbies and by the people you choose to associate with.

Reject convenience for convenience's sake. It is all good and well to do things for yourself faster and better. It is no good to hand the doing over to somebody or something else so you are no longer putting in the effort at all. Know the difference and what it means to your life.

[...]

People want to be entertained by their role-playing, people want to sit down and get what they want out of it every time, and they want it quickly. They don't want to work for it, and they don't want to risk that it won't happen when they try to play.

This is how I've come to interpret people when they use the word "fun" in relation to role-playing games. People wanting quick-fix, feel good entertainment exactly as they like it with as little effort as possible.

And I hate it.

Fun, in the context of RPG discussions, is like some Orwellian inversion of meaning (speaking of which, how big of an example of this is a certain internet forum's use of the word *badwrongfun*? It shuts down discussion and makes it clear that thinking that anything is important is foolish - no criticism or education allowed!). So much so, that I think that people who talk about "fun" in RPGs are destroying the hobby. Because fun ruins RPGs, much like it ruins everything else that requires time, imagination, and a fair bit of concentration.

Think about how often you see people on internet message boards talking about things which "get in the way of their fun." What do they mean by that, really? Are they looking for the real satisfaction or the quick fix?

This is a particularly insightful read, talking about the "tyranny of fun" and how it cheapens role-playing games. It's also why having an attitude of live and let live doesn't work – those who demand everything easy and quickly will always outnumber those that don't, and pretty soon a hobby that was custom-made for the studious and imaginative and thorough now belongs to an entirely different caste, while those of us that the hobby was created for are left on the fringes, told that we're just not compatible with today's gaming, and sometimes, even today's life in general.

Fuck that. *Fuck that*. This hobby is *ours*. These other types can come and play and we'll welcome them with open arms and show them the way if they ask, but to dictate fast-food mentality in my imaginative tools... that means *war*.

"Tyranny of fun" nails it – role-playing companies, in their doomed efforts in ignoring the anomalous nature of role-playing's mainstream popularity of the 80s, target the type of people that aren't well-suited for role-playing to buy their products. Because let's face it... it takes a certain something odd to be a real role-player. "Nerd" and "geek" and such are not terms of endearment, they are insults, but they do prove the point that we're not normal everyday types. Now being different (or even abnormal) isn't a negative thing – don't confuse it with the mythical catpissman or lawncraper – as it doesn't preclude us from having a job, friends, and girlfriends (before we complain that I'm being sexist by assuming most gamers are male... first, *fucking duh*, of course we are - look at the source material, and second, what gamer girl ever had a problem finding a social group to fit into?). But pretending we're normal and just anyone can pick up this hobby and enjoy it, without making wholesale changes to it, is simply nonsense.

[KK's note: This is a fellow called Captain_Commando. Back in 2009 he was unemployed and having trouble finding work at fast food places. Then he came up with a brilliant plan: "I'll be a professional Dungeon Master!". His first attempt didn't go so well but he decided to give it another shot with a foolproof business model]

<http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?447741-Professional-GM-Possible-Return>

Professional GM: Possible Return

For those of you who are unaware, I'm a New Yorker who was about to start a horribly planned business called "Caravan of Blades" back in early March. The business was a pay-for-play Dungeons and Dragons 4e campaign. I wasn't thinking clearly. My father had recently passed away of a heart attack and the experience and aftermath were a bit

traumatic (I discovered the body that night). I needed to get a job and picked a bad idea for making money.

Fortunately I put a stop to the horror on the first day when I snapped back to my senses.

Unfortunately despite job-hunting since then I still haven't gotten hired. Yesterday featured an interview at the local Burger King yesterday which I think went very badly. I'm having serious doubts about being able to get a job. My resumé sucks, so much that it might be impossible for me to get anything due to local competition being fierce and better qualified in practically every case.

I'm handing in some more applications over the next couple of weeks, but I'm starting to feel very desperate as well as very pathetic.

I'm contemplating another try with paid game mastering. This time with a plausible sane business plan.

This time practically everything would have to be done differently.

This might be just a false alarm but I'm mulling this over nonetheless.

This will be just brainstorming for now. Actually going through with this would be a last resort. I'm open to suggestions.

So to start things off.

1. This will NOT be a pay-for play campaign. This time I'll be a game master hired by the hour. No sitting around simply hoping for people to show up. I'll be able to cancel in case of emergency.

2. I'll charge \$8/hour + tip for my services. It will be relatively inexpensive if my clients are paying as a group. The tip is not mandatory.

3. I'll run 1-shot self-contained adventures for DnD 4e. They can be from a menu of prewritten original adventures I'll offer or published adventures or custom adventures tailored to the clients' preferences (with an extra service charge).

4. I'll advertise my services to local meetup groups and specific local businesses. The local DnD Meetup Group for example has over 800 members, many without a regular group or unable to find games that fit their schedules.

5. My primary hook will be convenience. For example, if someone is planning a special birthday party featuring a DnD game, and no one has the time to prepare a game, that's where a hired GM might be considered. I don't have to try to be the best. I just have to run a good fun game and be available. I'll be providing most if not all the gaming materials.

6. I'll have a web site tailored for the business instead of mooching off another website that is focused on something else altogether.

7. I'll scout out every location that I can find that is conducive to gaming to give clients a broad range of places to choose from if they have no specific one in mind.

8. All of my original 1-shots will be tested and refined through the local meetup group's meetup events.

9. I'll create a relationship with the local privately-owned game store(s) and comic shops. Cross advertisement and possible space rental/reservation.

[KK's note: Captain_Commando's attempts at professionally GMing did not go so well. I wonder why]

<http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?442760-Professional-GM-Methodology-and-Theory>

CHAPTER I. SPECIAL GAMING MATERIALS

Aside from the common gaming materials used, you must also add more. Extra gaming materials, no matter how cheap the cost, can add significantly to the image of production value. Some can also be used to produce an added dimension to the gaming experience.

To clarify, common gaming materials other than the rules books include dice, miniatures, dungeon tiles, printed maps, washable map, and game master's screen.

A. Game Master's Mask

As the game master, there is a level of separation between yourself and the player characters. You are not quite one of them. You are everyone else in the game world. This does not mean you are their adversary in the flow of game play. Rather you are the gate keeper of possibilities while they (the players) are the seekers. You provide the consequences of the party's decisions, for better or for worse. As long as you are sensible and do not give unduly favor or punishment to one player over the others and vice versa, you can maintain a good mood among the group.

The game master's screen is a common tool that helps to emphasize the roles of the game master and the players. This difference can be a good thing if you are running the session as a show rather than an exchange between friends. You can take it further.

For my sessions, I planned to wear a mask to hide my face. I chose a mask similar to the one used by the phantom of the opera, except that it covered both sides. White and expressionless to erase my appearance of humanity and partially detach the players from the notion that I am anything but the concept of the storyteller. It also creates an air of mystique, drawing the players' attention further into the story you tell.

It is important that you accompany this mask with a more subtle mask. The "true game master's mask". You must act more confident and add that to your voice when you narrate.

Act like you know something that the players don't, especially because you do. You can go so far as to change the accent with which you speak, as if putting on the physical mask also changed your persona into that of "the game master".

Wouldn't that remove an important aspect of GMing by taking facial acting out of the equation? On the contrary. If used in a certain way, the game master's mask can actually enhance one's expressive acting. This is explained further in Chapter II Section C: Dramatic Timing.

B. The Stars of Fortune

In Dungeons and Dragons 4th edition, players can spend "action points" to take an extra action during their turn or activate some other effect depending on their feats, class features, powers, or magic items. These are rare, special moments of glory that the players' characters experience as a stroke of luck, passion, or genius.

I decided to add to the distinction of actions points as being "special" by adding a visual, tactile sensation. I would use bite-size plastic silver stars to represent the action points. It would remind players of the existence of their action points and give them a feel of extravagance as pretty, shiny objects often do. It would also have been fun to toss them into a bowl when they "spent" the points. Two points! (the audience cheers)

[KK's note: Next up meet RPGPundit. RPGPundit is a pompous douche with big opinions about Tabletop games. He also has the habit of pontificating for pages on end about the theory behind Dungeons and Dragons and calling people who don't agree with his ideas about RPGs "The Swine"]

<http://www.therpgsite.com/showthread.php?t=4771>

The Swine are any people for whom RPGs have, as their primary purpose, the conveyance of some kind of sense of personal self-worth. This need for gaining self-esteem out of RPGs manifests itself in creating and aggressively promoting the concept that RPGs are either "art" or "intellectual pursuit" rather than a mere game, and usually implying that someone who participates (to them it would not just be "playing") in an RPG is doing something of inherent value with their lives. In order to create this illusion, *the value of "art" or "intellectual" has to totally superimpose itself over "fun" and "play"*.

Likewise, and here's the insidious part, in order for the Swine to be able to gain this sense of self-worth from what any sane person would consider a meaningless game (meaningless good fun, but still utterly meaningless and certainly not self-validating) the *Swine must attempt to utterly destroy the concept that RPGs should be played for fun as a mere game, and must promote the concept that they (the Swine) are the special elite who truly understand RPGs, and actively work against the popularity of RPGs.*

So the Swine have it as part of their make-up, conscious of the fact or not, the destruction of the RPG industry, and indeed of the hobby as a hobby or as play. All this for their own selfish, low, contemptible ends.

Now, only a few of the Swine are the truly incorrigible willfully evil kind that have no real interest in RPGs as a game, as play, or as fun, and want only to fulfill some kind of sick psychosis. Sadly, the vast majority of the Swine were hapless rubes, the willing or unwilling fools that bought into the foul creeds of the real Swine in the 1990s when the Swine took over the entire ideological basis of the Gaming industry; hence that era being what I've called gaming's "generation of Swine". Most of these gamers had come into RPGs playing D&D and having a great old time, but let themselves be hoodwinked into thinking that how they were playing RPGs was "wrong" or "stupid", and in their desperate desire to appear as sophisticated as the Swine appeared (and only the very young and impressionable, or the terminally stupid, could fail to see through the Swine's cheap two-bit artistic posturing and pathetic pseudo-intellectualism), they let themselves be brainwashed into thinking that playing story-based games where nothing happens and the players are cheerleaders for the DM's (or the game designer's) brilliance were somehow more fun than blowing up buildings or cutting orcs in half. Fortunately, with each year in the last six or so, there have been less and less people fooled by the Swine, some of the lost generation have even reformed themselves, and the damage is slowly being repaired. Slowly, the hardcore Swine are being pushed more and more to the margin, leaving only the most extreme cases to continue arguing meaninglessly in places like rpg.net and the Forge, still pretending that they are the ones who matter.

There is obviously some kind of deep psychological explanation for why the Swine are like this, which I won't pretend to be able to analyze, except to look at the most basic probable cause which is that people who become Gamer Swine are the ones who don't have enough going for them in the real world or in their real lives to give them some kind of a sense of validation. I mean, I sure as fuck don't need to play RPGs as a way to make myself feel smart, or to pretend I'm doing meaningful work. I play RPGs as a way to get away from that shit; that shit being what I do in the real world, in my real life. I have a strong suspicion that the majority of the Swine don't have much of a real life.

Let's hope that (mixed with my original essays on the Swine in the first entries to this blog) this definition ends up clarifying the issue somewhat, and providing a better breakdown of what the Swine are all about.

RPGPundit (february 18th 2006)

<http://www.therpgsite.com/showthread.php?t=13703>

So, What Have I Learned?

So lately at theRPGsite the disloyal opposition of Pundit-haters have been particularly rabid, going out of their way to make use of a clarification I made on the Help section regarding Forge games as an excuse to launch an all-out assault on the site, starting threads in explicit defiance to what I'd set as policy, using the Help Section as a weapon to attack the site and my person, and generally being assholes.

Meanwhile, I was becoming extremely frustrated with the total failure of the rest of the posters on theRPGsite to either a) stand up to these assholes or b) show any support at all for me when said assholes accused me of being "as bad as RPG.net moderators" (who have banned thousands of people and regularly close threads they don't like) for not banning, not closing, but moving a thread; or comparing me to Ron Edwards, who doesn't allow ANY free speech on his site at all, closing and

forbidding any thread he doesn't like, because I suggested speech about Forge games should go in off-topic.

So finally, in a fit of pique, I decided to "quit" for 24 hours, leaving the other mods in charge. I wasn't sure what they would do, or what would happen. I really hadn't thought any of it out, so I'm not going to pretend that there was a brilliant planned "object lesson" here.

But as it turns out it was a good call because after that I have come to learn certain things.

For starters; my Mods are wimps. In the private mod forums they call for the banning of this guy and that guy (the "guy" in question usually being Cavscout) but when I give them carte blanche to do whatever the fuck they feel like, they don't actually ban anyone. Ah well...

Second, my mods had some good ideas. Brett closed down Off-Topic, in what he had intended to be a lesson to everyone about just how much free speech I allow on the site. A few people noticed, some didn't like it, and others continued with their anti-off-topic crusades from earlier times. Anyway, Off-Topic is back now.

They moved some threads, and those threads will stay moved where they are, we'll see how that goes.

Third, they closed some threads in Help. I think that's probably a wise idea. Like I said, some people are using the "Help" forum as a weapon against me or against the site, and that's not what its there for. When a topic gets answered, it needn't be closed right away, but when its clear that the thread isn't productive in any way anymore and is serving only a springboard for those who are here to attack the site, fuck that.

And fourth, posters started to express some appreciation for what I do (which is nice and all) and, much more importantly, started to respond to the Swine's lies and maneuvers. That's what I was hoping to see.

As to what I have learned personally from all this, its that there is a subset of people out there that will attack me no matter what I do, all the time, guaranteed. If I ban someone, they'll attack me for being fascist tyrant; if I don't, they'll attack me by disrupting the site in the hopes of ruining it for regular posters. If I move a thread, they'll attack me by claiming I'm censoring; if I don't move it they'll take advantage of that by flooding forums with propaganda.

So if I've made a mistake, its that I've been spending far too much of my time trying to justify myself to assholes who I have no need of justifying myself to, and who are not looking for any justification on my part, they don't want any answers, or any change, they just want to destroy. Because really, the only thing that could ever possibly satisfy them would be this forum collapsing and vanishing so that they could say they were right.

So what that tells me really is that in the community, the Polis that is theRPGsite, there are those who are really citizens, who's concerns should be listened to, and there are those who are "barbarians", forces who only want to see this place's destruction, and those do not need to be listened to or catered to in any way.

I will no longer be justifying myself. I know myself, and I know how much I value free speech. I've valued it enough to let a gang of utter shits who aren't worthy of shining my shoes throw insults and

abuse and even threats at me on a day-by-day basis since I took over this site, to publicly attack me in ways that would not be tolerated on ANY other rpg forum, because of how much I care about free speech.

And people will continue to have the right to criticize. I also have the right to listen to those criticisms if they're legitimate and ignore those criticisms if they're coming from a pack of dogs who will never be satisfied but with the taste of flesh.

And if a dog becomes sufficiently rabid that it is a danger to the Polis, that dog will meet my knife.

RPGPundit

Currently Smoking: Lorenzetti Tempesta + Hearth & Home's Beverwyck

[KK's note: Let's break things up with some good old fashioned Japanophilia]

<http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?454448-100-catgirls/page2>

Yep! 😊

Anyway here's my first Noblis char, took longer but was also funner then I expected, Noblis is a great setting to make characters in. I have lots more ideas, this is the most straightforwardly cat girl one.

(and yes her name is Japanese/English(Latin?) pun, sue me)

Meganeko - Baronet of Catgirls

(first number is the rating; second is number of Miracle Points)

Aspect 2 5

Domain 1 5

Relm 0 5

Spirit 4 13

Gifts

1 point - may guise as a cat instead of a human in areas inhabited by cats, may communicate to cats when so guised, does not raise the cats intelligence.

Restriction: Respects young or female beings that wear glasses. (respects how? not sure)

Limits: Light touch, Manifestation: Distractions, Catnip

Affiliation: The Wild

Meganeko hails from a world that was once far from the earth, her Emperor(sp?), (who goes by Susan Honda, or Honda Susan, these days, he likes the sound and insists it is a manly name) is a refuge from a world unmade by the Excrucians. The move has been hard on him and he brought her with him as a futile reminder of his former home. But the

methods he used to escape is slowly but surely erasing even Meganeko memories and records. The remainder are vague and inconsistent relying on contradictions and impossibilities. All that she really recalls, is a vast savanna that was somehow also very small and shadowed and not flat at all, the festival of the hunt of the Sylvantrope, showing off sleek muscles, and lush bossums, and sharp claws, and glossy fur, and a young female who wore glasses, her memories keep trying to slot their bond into something that makes sense, a sister, a daughter, or a friend, or a hated enemy or a lover, but truly she knows that it is bond that no longer exists in all the worlds. But out of respect for that lost bond she took her current name and gives those who wear glasses some significant leeway.

Each year Catgirls become more and more of Earth, and her memory of her home fades. This fear is what keeps her from bonding closer to her domain, or more precisely keeps her from being able to tie her domain into reality closer. However she is not a reflective sort and her Imperator's close regard allow her to burn brightly with a high spirit the rituals of the Noblis, pour out of her as instinctively as her purr or her smile,

<http://www.story-games.com/forums/discussion/8966/anyones-game-chef-thread-judges-warned/p1>

[...]

I've been wanting to write a game based on Yotsuba-to! for a while. A "fantasy of perfect childhood" game, basically. That seems like a good idea. I've also wanted to make a game that can be played one player or more.

So you have the Girl. She's five, not yet in kindergarten, and totally into everything. She goes out, meets friends, and has adventures.

You have the Dad, who the girl tells about her adventures and sometimes goes with her.

You have Friends, who vary by adventure.

Basic adventure should be "go to a place, do several activities, go home." You should be able to have scary things happen and also to fail at some things, but not at everything. Failure should be a chance for more role-play, not less.

[KK's note: FPlus singularity moment]

<http://forum.rpg.net/archive/index.php/t-446601.html>

So, someone on my Friends list has a friend of theirs link to Bad Dragon (<http://www.bad-dragon.com/>) in a comment. For those who don't know and don't want to click on the link, Bad Dragon apparently is a bunch of people who make draconic dildoes, complete with pornographic dragon-on-dragon artwork of the respective dildoes' flesh equivalents in use.

The first thing that goes through my mind, while looking at the site, is, "wrestling those dragons down to take penis casts must be one heckuva dangerous job. I hope those adventurers have resurrection coverage in their insurance."

And then I think, "That would be a wonderful D&D game concept."

Now I have to find some kind of group to inflict this upon. Who's up for the game, and who's going to bring the Funyuns and Mountain Dew?

- Mel

<http://www.ash-official.com/forum/details.aspx?categoryid=f6&topicid=107f6524-7f59-4fc6-a593-dc7be9cc7b8f&p=2>

Gentlemen-

I spend a lot of time planning games. One of the things I count on is people being prompt. While I won't go so far (yet) as to require an RSVP, it is a little tiring for people to assure me of their attendance only to have them blearily answer their phones at game start-time, having just woken up. I don't want to fight for your attention, either you care about adventuring and exploring the ruined world of Athas or you don't. So, starting this upcoming game, the game will start at 1pm. I will not call you, or chase you down, or anything else - at 1pm, the game will start. If you cannot be there at 1:00, and show at least a tiny modicum of respect to me and your fellow gamers, please do not attend.

Secondly, this is "Dungeons and Dragons". Not "Dungeons and Dragons and Texting and AIMchat." When you arrive at game, I will confiscate your cell phone. Matt, my roommate, will probably be watching golf in his room, he will set all your phones in front of him. Should one of them ring, he will answer it, and, should a family member be dying or gravely ill, he will come and fetch you. Otherwise, he will state that you are otherwise occupied. Alternately, if you don't want Matt acting as your secretary, you may simply turn your phone off. Again, if you are so pressed-on for your company that you must stay in constant contact with the world outside of the game, go do that instead.

I am trying to create an immersive world that features you - the players, a group of heroic adventurers, friendships forged in battle, banded together to defeat evil - taking on unique challenges. This does not work if everyone is continually late, distracted and eager to get out. If there is anything I can do to make your experience better - from speak louder, to give you more stuff to do that your class does well, to totally resetting the campaign to be in Forgotten Realms, anything at all, please let me know, and I will try to accommodate you.

Thanks,

Your Friendly Neighborhood Dungeon Master

<http://www.therpgsite.com/showthread.php?t=20868&page=14>

Gygax tended to make the weaker humanoid races' females & young entirely noncombatant - but still Evil, of course. It would probably make more sense to make Gygaxian Orcs weaker versions of the males (as he did with eg bugbears & other stronger humanoids); as with my chimp analogy they can fight, but not as well as the males, being sexually dimorphic species.

With Gnolls I tend to reject the Gygaxian approach and treat them more like real-world hyenas, so the females are actually bigger and stronger than the males - **and have a pseudo-penis, so unless they're in oestrus they're not easily distinguishable from the males by non-gnolls.**

The original post doesn't seem to be available but a repost of it can be found at:

<http://forums.somethingawful.com/showthread.php?threadid=3098558&userid=0&perpage=40&pagenumber=33>

[KK's note: This one is about Magic: The Gathering and is a little jargon heavy but I feel it makes up for it by being very angry and poorly spelled]

R&D what have you done!!!!

You trying to change OUR game in some kind of pokemon sh....t!!! You taking away tons of combat tricks, changing the way how we played from ages!!!

You said bla bla bla - rules were changed since 6th edition WRONG!!! 10 years ago we had half of cards and tricks we using today. Why you decided to change something for better 10 years ago and now you reversing those changes?!?!?!

I mean all others changes are fine (they trying to simplify the game flow, attract new players, get rid of confusing situation) -

BUT PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH A COMBAT DAMAGE!!!

last but not least - why the hell u made a creature like Dauntless Escort if we cant use it ability whenever it could be usefull? (block, damage on stack, sacrifice - save my creatures - kill you dude..

SHAME ON YOU WIZARDS!!!

[KK's note: This post is fucking massive so I've had to chop out large chunks of it for brevity but I would definitely recommend reading the whole thing. It is amazing...]

http://tao-dnd.blogspot.ca/2013_08_01_archive.html

Sex and D&D ... the Steamy Edition

[...]

So here we are. People still like sex. The porn is still everywhere. Homosexuality hasn't been crushed. Television and movies are full of nudity and kink. All the morality proscription failed in the extreme. Rule 34 reigns supreme. But four guys sitting around a table playing D&D can't deal with one of them saying he'd like to have sex with an Elven princess without being labeled a "goofy horndog."

Baffling.

[...]

The "uncomfortable" argument is a powerful one. It transcends the table, it reaches out to the whole D&D internet, where Roger and many others sneer in disgust at the idea of a player choosing to step into the shoes of a HUMAN BEING. Yes, by all means, hack things to death. Yes, gloat over gold. Please, here, the door is wide open for any mind fucking game-playing you'd like to do with other players or the DM. Yes, welcome to the land of megalomaniacs, narcissists, gluttons and the pompous. "But we don't do that other thing."

The moody, dangerous Pirate Captain heads down to the beach, bottle of ouzo in hand, mourning the loss of her dead husband, whom the party briefly knew and whom they buried. The player character watches her, well aware of how violent she can be, how deep her feelings - and though she's been described by a male DM, the description is compelling, *just like every description of a strong female character in a book or story written by a man has been since the dawn of time*. And the player would like to do something. He's interested in where events might go if somehow this NPC were induced to be more than just a momentary distraction, but an ally too. But how to approach her. She seems to disdain everyone and everything. But clearly she is filled with passion. What to do?

Like any fighter girdling on a sword and stepping up to a lion, daring to face the thing in its lair, he marches forward and without any weapons at all. He knows she probably carries a dagger. He knows she's murdered men before. But he wants to believe there's more than that. He tells the DM he seizes her by the arm, and turns her around. He's a fighter, he's fifty pounds more than her, and the DM rolls a die. "I tell her to stop being stupid," the player tells the DM. "I tell her

she cannot mourn his death forever. She's destroying herself with liquor and this endless sorrow. I shout at her, tell her to be alive now, to recognize that her dead husband would not want her to stay like this."

"She fights you," says the DM, and the player realizes that her hand might in that moment reach for the dagger she has hidden. "I hold on tight." The DM pronounces that the player is successful. The woman doesn't speak, and asks if the player says anything else. The player, daring, says, "I tell her that her husband left her." The DM rolls a die, says the woman breaks free and punches the fighter. He takes a point of damage. "DAMN YOU!" the woman says. The fighter doesn't give in. "He gave you all he had and now he has left you. He's left you here, alone, and you know that there's nothing else he can give you!"

A roll. The DM says the woman stands her ground, furious, trying with all her strength to hold herself together, but clearly she's too overwhelmed to speak.

The fighter says, "I speak to her very gently. I tell her she's not alone. I tell her there are others here who won't leave. Who will fight with you, win with you ... and die WITH you. If you will open your eyes."

She looks at the fighter. The DM announces that she is overwhelmed. He says that the woman lifts a hand, half-heartedly, towards the fighter.

The fighter responds, "I seize the hand. I use it to pull her tight against me. If she makes no protest, I kiss her hard. I make her understand I've meant every word."

The DM says she doesn't fight. She gives in. She yields. The fighter says, "I press her down to the sand. I'm very careful not to push too hard, not to hurry. I want her to understand that this is not sex, this is me caring for her. I want her to understand that I'm willing to be there for her."

The DM judges the moment, chooses 2d6, decides that if it's a 7 or more, then she returns the feeling; if it's a 6 or less, she has merely weakened, but she is still thinking about her husband.

The DM rolls a 9.

"She understands," the DM says.

[KK's note: Some gold Runic dug up on the grognards.txt tumblr]

<http://grognards.tumblr.com/post/37595948817/if-you-dont-have-ability-scores-then-how-you-can>

If you don't have ability scores, then how you can say that you are actually tough, smart, strong, etc, etc, etc. I mean, you could just say it , but if you actually can't back it up, well, you're really not.

And I'm not sure how you could play a game where you are smart, strong, etc, etc in play, without some sort of rules advantage over average.

Beyond that, I've always played the other way around - I roll dice, then come up with a character concept around those dice rolls. Otherwise you can get into a rut, like people who play the same characters game after game after game.

<http://grognards.tumblr.com/post/37927807437/there-are-minor-alignment-spoilers-for-my-group>

There are minor alignment spoilers for my group below, read at your own risk. The process for calculating the following involves adding each persons level, charisma reaction adjustment, and alignment modifier together. Then, Chaotic and Evil values are made negative. Then the totals for law/chaos and good/evil are added excluding neutral values to get a numerator. Then the totals are calculated as absolute values to get denominators. Then you divide out the fraction and check a table to find the party alignment.

The point of all this was that I was convinced that the party had a lawful evil drift, and it turns out, the party is straight up neutral. This might have to do with the extreme numbers of wildly divergent alignments. Right now external pressures are keeping these things in check, but once those (eventually) disappear, there will certainly be some conflict.

- Numerator total for LAW/CHAOS = 29
- Denominator total for LAW/CHAOS = 93
- Numerator total for GOOD/EVIL= -17
- Denominator total for GOOD/EVIL = 97
- LAW/CHAOS is .31182
- GOOD/EVIL is -.17525

Checking table 4A in the GMG, the party alignment is true neutral (with a drift towards lawful and evil).

If you just take the actual PC's, you end up with $(22/51)(-13/52) + \text{LAW/CHAOS}$ is .43137 + GOOD/EVIL is -.25 Leaving the party with a group alignment of lawful neutral (with an evil drift)

The table is quite simple. Anything over .33 is Lawful, anything under -.33 is Chaotic. Anything between is neutral. The same is for Good and Evil.

[KK's note: More gold care of Runic]

<http://crossplanes.blogspot.ca/2012/04/w-is-warduke.html>

My first exposure to Dungeons and Dragons was through the toy line from LJN in 1982. The first two figures I got were Warduke, the Evil Fighter and Strongheart, the Good Paladin. This toy line fired my imagination and made me want to play DnD. The closest I got was absorbing the Monster Manual at a local B. Dalton's.

Soon after, the Dungeons and Dragons cartoon began airing on CBS saturday mornings. DnD, Thundarr, and Herculoids are my "holy trinity" of cartoons. While I won't say that DnD or Herculoids stand the test of time (but Thundarr sure does), they are ingrained in how I think of fantasy and the fantastic. They form a foundation for what action and adventure mean to me. These cartoons are the root of my love for Science-Fantasy. My adventures should entertain and if I'm having a good session, not only get your brain working, but maybe let it work like it did when you were a kid for a few minutes.

To this day, its very hard for me not to give a group of new PC's, some cool magic item, like in the cartoon. And how can you look at Warduke and not be inspired to produce a great villain? You look at Warduke and you know he's not your friend and he's going to (try to) kick your ass. If your lucky enough to defeat him, his whole outfit screams that he has sweet, sweet magic items. Who doesn't want to wear that helmet? Its got to give a bonus of infinity + 1 on Intimidate checks!

The best part of all of this, is that I still have my Warduke figure. He's like a sacred talisman, and holding him let's me connect with my childhood. It helps me remember what DnD felt like before I played it and reminds me how it should assualt my player's senses. They should be able to see, smell, hear, taste, and touch my adventures. Warduke let's me remember how to make that happen. If your one of my players, blame his helmet.

I didn't actually play DnD for almost 10 years after my Mom bought me Warduke, but the first character I made was a Fighter. His name was Garamond and he never got that helmet.

<http://forums.somethingawful.com/showthread.php?threadid=3098558&userid=0&perpage=40&pagenumber=1987#post405098635>

I. Feel. Nothing. But. Rage...

I have read this book and the new Vampire books, since that point I have felt a cold rage enter my heart. I find the new game mechanic's too simple, and the met plots ridiculous...

I feel betrayed by WW because THEY HAD MY BUISNESS, I gave up playing D&D to experience a superior gaming system, and genuine robust storyline's of morality and choices of falling into darkness.

Now it's White-Wolf, The Sell-Out. Nothing that made WtA and VtM the magnificent and inspiring table tops RPG's that the where is in these new products. I think WW looked at what Wizards is doing (D&D) and tried to copy it, but D&D has had 30 yrs to perfect and make it's system. WW had an original system, but have fallen onto mediocrity, and that makes a bad game...

Don't ever buy this if you are a fan of the old system. You will most likely hate it. If you are a new player I recommend playing D&D, it's a whole lot better..

<http://www.sonic.net/mary/DejaLew-dir/rants/gygax.html>

It has always seemed to me, that Lewis (and perhaps Aquinas et al before him? :-) was doing all sorts of odd things to the word 'omnipotence.' How is it that we people in the street feel held in the palm of an 'omnipotence' that some philopshers say is impossible for even God to have? (And we feel it without hardly thinking at all :-)

Now to Gygax, who is often credited with inventing, not only his own secondary world of Greyhawk and the Dungeons & Dragons rule system, but the whole concept of Fantasy Role Playing Games. Story goes, that a gamer went to heaven, saw someone rolling dice, and said "Is that--?"

St. Peter: "No, that's God, He just thinks He's Gary Gygax."

Anyway, suppose Gygax is refereeing and running NPCs, and a player's character gets eaten by an orc NPC, and the player complains "Gygax is playing too rough."

The Sort of Person Who Writes Books on the Problem of Pain responds: "He had to. The orc made its roll to hit."

Player: "But why did Gygax put so many orcs in that room?"

TS: "He had to. It's in the notes on Greyhawk."

P: "Why did he put so many orcs in the notes?"

TS: "He had to. The rules state that for a party of X level you need X number of orcs."

P: "Why did he make the rules so harsh?"

TS: "He had to. This is a wargame, Mr. Jones."

P: "Why did he work up a war RPG instead of < name of some later RPGs >?"

TS: "This is the only game in town, and the only town. So shut up. QED."

Some Hindu philosophers have some more words for 'God' which might clear this up a little, and I wish I understood them. :-) I think it's something like:

Brahman* = Gygas as game inventor

Brahma = Gygas as author of Grayhawk, world creator

Krishna = Gygas as NPC walking in the world, Aslan, etc.

*BTW, 'brahmin' is a different word, means human of clerical caste

<http://forums.somethingawful.com/showthread.php?threadid=3098558&userid=0&perpage=40&pagenumber=1994#post405171805>

Brothers and sisters, my message to you today is a simple one: do not trust the white man bearing gifts.

Fifth edition has been announced (to no one's surprise, which has got to be some sort of record for a holder of the D&D license), although they are calling it a new "iteration". Wizards of the Coast wants to do open playtests, and have the fans give feedback and shape the development of the game. Their goals seems to be inclusivity, catching the largest amount of fans possible. And they are going to use the Forgotten Realms to catch the gamers, though it remains to be seen

Now if I was a wanker I would link back to a post I made some time ago about how WotC could start acting like a responsible producer of D&D products and win back the fans. But I'm not. You know why? 'Cause all that shit I wrote was obvious. All the shit I wrote would be in the introduction of a report by a marketer, with the real meat being everything else. If I could see it, Wizards of the Coast could see it.

But back to my sermon, let me tell you a history lesson. When the white man first set his foot on this new world, he brought with him the disease. The indigenous people had no resistance to the disease, and so they died by the thousands as the disease ran rampant. At first the white man came bearing gifts and friendship, and his disease. But once the numbers of the indigenous man were small, they came not with gifts but with guns and cannons.

So remember, WotC may be nice to you now, they may promise you the keys to the mansion in Bel-Air, but once they win back a majority of the fans, they are going to come after you. And you must resist, because what was made and what is being made is beautiful, and we cannot let the good works be forgotten.

[KK's note: And let's close things off with this one. It is absolutely enormous but I could not bring myself to cut it down further as it's all gold]

<http://geek-related.com/2009/04/20/hot-girl-on-girl-action-in-our-dd-campaign/>

Hot Girl On Girl Action In Our D&D Campaign?

In our last Curse of the Crimson Throne episode, my character Annata had a surprise sexual proposition from her friend Laori. I was faced with the decision of whether or not to give in to the frenzied cries of “We want slashfic!” from my fellow party members. I made my decision, but as I reflected on the thought process I went through to arrive at it, I started to consider the nature of that process.

For some reason, there is very little talk out there about how people actually conduct character immersion in role-playing games. I suspect it's the minority that do it at all; many people deliberately reject it and even those who talk about in-character play seem to equate it to things like “using funny voices” or other trivia that reveal that they don't really understand what immersion, in my opinion, really is. I wanted to share the method behind how I run “in character” and hopefully get some insights from others out there who do the same.

[...]

Our group met an odd woman, a “Forsaken” elf (Annata's not 100% sure what that means) named Laori, and have adventured with her on and off. She's a cleric of Zon-Kuthon (think the Cenobites from Hellraiser). Normally that would be “bad,” but her and her organization's goals align with our heroes'. And more than that, she's likable. She's a happy, peppy, and perky (if evil) S&M Gothchick. Sarenrae's faith is very ecumenical, and her personality is a lot like

Annata's, so they took to each other quickly and became friends. All the guys think (from a distance) that she's hot; here's the somewhat anime-looking artist's conception of Laori in her spiked chainmail catsuit:



Anyway, last session Annata and Laori were chattering away and kinda out of nowhere, she lets me know that she wouldn't mind getting more intimate with me. Annata does like Laori; she's a peppy chirpy cleric too and she definitely saw her as (platonic) girl-friend material, but this was a surprise twist she didn't see coming.

Interesting! So here's a peek into how my thought process went. I admit it's a mix of true immersion and metagame thinking about my character's personality, but I find that necessary because you seldom have enough information about the fictional world to avoid the "meta" totally.

First, my immediate reaction was intuitive, a quick reaction based on my conceptualization of Annata's personality. Is it completely out of the question? No. Is it a slam dunk? No. I could see it going either way.

I made a quick roll. I like to use dice in these kinds of situations. Some people object to this and think any kind of personality mechanic, even an informal appeal to fate like this one, is "roll-playing" and not immersion. But in my opinion, the only way to truly simulate real feelings in game is to add *somerandomization*. In the real world, attraction and the like don't follow any automatic rules. You don't control who YOU are attracted to. You may have a "type" but the factors that go into it are too many to be deterministic. If she had been propositioned by some random person she didn't know or didn't like, then I wouldn't make a roll. If it was some guy she was totally into, then probably I wouldn't roll either – unless in my opinion the situation was off enough that she might react poorly. In this case, I did what I usually do – a d20 roll, higher means more positive, with vague modifiers applied mentally. Think of it as the other person making a Charisma check. She's made a handful of checks like this over the course of the campaign, when she's met someone and I want to know "is chemistry kicking in." So I made the roll. My gut was "if this isn't real high, there's no way." I don't set hard thresholds and results (too much work! The whole intuition plus roll happens in 5 seconds total), but in this case my gut said 1-5: Disgust, rejection, breaking off friendship; 6-10: Rejection, no explicit breaking off of the friendship but she won't trust her afterwards; 11-15: Rejection but with friendship not severely affected; 16-20 Maybe, intrigued – not "Yes," but "She'd think about it."

Roll result – 18. That's pretty high. Certainly not high enough for a good girl who has always thought of herself as straight to drop trou on the spot, but enough that after politely extricating herself, she found the idea unexpectedly intriguing and churned over it in her mind afterward in traditional woman-hashing-over-a-relationship fashion.

Here's the mental path I went through. Annata has been pretty staunchly straight so far; she was interested in two guys back in Korvosa (Grau, who was a bit of a project for her, and Vencarlo, a sophisticated older gentleman who ended up being the local equivalent of Zorro).

Now, she is in love with Vencarlo, or thinks she is (it's her first time in love). But he hasn't reciprocated much, and since they both blew town she's not sure if they'll ever meet again. And she feels emotionally vulnerable, being away from Korvosa and all. She's heard of such things (woman on woman) but never thought about it herself. What would Sarenrae do?

Meta-thinking comes in here. I'm not sure if Sarenrae is for or against that kind of thing. One of the problems with fantasy religions is that there's usually a lot undefined in terms of expected behavior of parishioners. Is premarital sex OK at all? Is homosexuality? This is hard because these should be game "facts" and not subjective, which means I have to engage in metagame thinking. I decide that Sarenrae's faith is probably not strictly against either, though general societal conservatism that would look down on both would be present.

Back to fully in-character. Annata has often meditated upon the beauty of the goddess as part of her religion, though (it was the beauty of a statue of the Dawnflower that drew her when she was a street urchin). Annata has gone through several emotional states in the campaign; when the group left Korvosa for the wilderness she transitioned from her current gig as somewhat strident wound-tight freedom fighter into a bit of a depressed martyr complex, but recently their time with the Shoanti barbarians ended up being kinda "Spring Break"-ey and she got to relax and party and open her mind, so she is in an experimental and confident kind of mood generally. Laori is clearly a little S&Mey, which isn't something Annata conceives herself as into, but she is pretty submissive and I can see the dynamics of a top/bottom relationship working there. And finally, Annata is worried she might be embarrassed if the other guys found out – it might diminish her stature as a spiritual leader in the party, generate jealousy, or just get her razzed more. In the end, a lot of mixed feelings that don't call for clear action one way or the other.

She thought over it long enough that the sheer weight of the analysis took some of the edge off – she's not going to act on it (and probably won't mention it happened). But she took it well enough that it won't affect her friendship with Laori, and that means she might try again, and if it does it's got a chance of going farther. I'm pretty comfortable that this is a realistic reaction – I've known a couple people over time who have been tempted (sometimes successfully,

sometimes unsuccessfully) by a daring and insistent gay friend.

I haven't gone into my method for how I play female characters; that's a big topic and only peripherally relevant. (Nor do I feel like I need to justify it; the people who are "against" crossgender play are wrestling with deep-seated emotional problems IMO.) But suffice it to say the thinking through the various pros and cons I go through above is my attempt at a female approach to analyzing relationship issues, as opposed to the more... elemental typical male response. (In this case, I am guessing the other two male PCs' reaction would be "Hell yeah!" tempered only by explicit or implicit fear that Laori would be the "top".) I wish I could do it more completely "in character," but I find myself having to pepper the thought process with little meta-thoughts a lot.

I'm interested in how other people work through in-character issues. (I know some of you don't, and think this is all weird, and say D&D is just for combat-n-fun... Feel free to not respond then.) Do you use pure immersion ("I *am* Annata, and I think this..."), metagame evaluation of your character's personality ("Annata has this in her background so she'd probably react this way..."), randomization ("I roll d20 and... Annata likes it!"), something else I haven't thought of, or a mix of these? And if a mix, in what proportions?

Probably one missing element is metagame group dynamics. "Would the other people at the table feel weird about this?" I almost totally omit that. Either I'm a role-playing purist, or I'm just a narcissist that doesn't give a good goddamn what other people think, but there it is. Another is the narrativist approach, determining if this would make for a good story or not and deciding on those grounds. I do keep that in the back of my mind a little I guess... If I think it would generate a shit story I'd steer away from it out of fear of "ruining the game for everyone". I also try to remove "What I the player think about this" as much as possible. Do I the player think Annata-on-Laori action would be hot; do I believe homosexuality is right, etc – I deliberately firewall that away (as much as is possible) in favor of my character's personality and beliefs. Or worse, what someone else thinks – I have little tolerance for people who interject with "Well, a good character/cleric/woman/etc. would..." I politely encourage folks like that to

close their filthy gobs. And lastly, “acting.” Immersion is akin to method acting, but in my mind the more commonly defined RPG actor stance – “using voices” and dramatic turns and flourishes – have jack crap to do with real in character play.

Thus after thinking about it, I’d have to say my pet “in character” thought process mix is:

- As much immersion as I can (50%)
- Metagame evaluation to fill in the gaps where I can’t fully immerse (35%)
- Randomness where I think that human feelings should not be deterministic (10%)
- A shade of “will this derail the story” in the back of my mind (5%)

I’m really interested in hearing other people’s method for “deep IC” play!