

## **My Ode to Fortnite: Why You Should Stop Talking Smack**

Ah, Fortnite. The very mention of it can ruffle many-a-gamers feathers. We are knee-deep in Chapter 5, Season 3, and the online smack talk is certainly amped-up. The biggest complaint this time around is the addition of suped-up cars. Fortnite, well known for its business arrangements with massively successful IPs, has served us a fair dose of the *Mad Max* and *Fallout* worlds this season. Crazy, modded vehicles can flatten opponents before they can even *think* of the words “chug splash.” It’s not hard to imagine the cry-fest this has inspired for high-ranking gamers who loathe Fortnite’s penchant for evolving its Battle Royale mode. But for me, this is one of the main reasons I love the game so much: it never ceases to keep me on my toes, forcing me to constantly adapt to new skill sets.

### **The Fortnite Franchise Frenzy**

*Marvel, DC, Avatar, Terminator, My Hero Academia...* these are just a few franchises Fortnite has managed to get their hands on. Popular characters from these properties are constantly added to the game along with elements from their story worlds. Cars loaded with deadly additions this season like the spiked bumper and machine gun turret are direct references to *Mad Max*, in perfect time for the premiere of the film *Furiosa*. Nuka Cola bottles can be found across the desolate wasteland map. This aligns with the release of the new hit show, *Fallout*, on Prime.

The developers at Epic Games are very crafty, knowing this tactic of attracting gamers with their favorite fandoms will keep and bring in new players. But it also irritates many people who find it a cheapshot kind of marketing device that’s ultimately all about the Big Buck. Some also say it shows a lack of creativity. Fair enough. They may not be so off base there. But that doesn’t diminish my pleasure one bit. Epic is a massive company. Making money is going to be a major goal – this is ‘Merica, after all. As far as creativity, the game as a whole astounds me with how vivid and detailed it is. And I love seeing the fandoms come to life in-game – even when it is odd to see a gun-wielding Superman.

### **Fortnite With Friends**

Fortnite's Battle Royale remains their most played mode. But one of the ways Epic ensures things stay fresh is by adding new creative game modes — and you guessed it — usually involving more major IPs like their Lego, Main Stage (their Rockband mode), and Rocket League Racing modes. However, one thing about Fortnite that will never change is the social aspect. Playing with friends is one of the most appealing parts of the game. Gamers in teams often don skins of the same theme or fandom. They emote together. They laugh. Endlessly. My friends and I have come up with our own words for things in the game, such as “bestie” for loot llamas and “horsies” for any rideable animal.

### **Fortnite Forever (Or At Least a While)**

The haters can hate all they want. They certainly aren't going away anytime soon. And neither is Fortnite. Disney just signed a massive deal with Epic and is investing a whopping \$1.5 billion so they can create a “games and entertainment universe” from fandoms such as *Pixel*, *Star Wars*, *Avatar*, and *Marvel*. According to Newzoo, as of March 2024, Fortnite ranks number one for desktop and laptop players. As of March 2023, the game boasted an impressive 500 million players worldwide, an increase of 100 million players since May 2021.

The smack-talk is inevitable, I suppose. When there is so much love for something, the world seems to do its best to try to balance that out with hate. Personally, I don't want to waste my energy hating on things others find pleasure in. Why do that? If something isn't my jam, I just leave it be. I don't troll chat rooms anonymously whining about things I don't even like. But that's just me. With billion-dollar contracts and a record-breaking number of players, the critics are just going to have to deal with Fortnite sticking around.

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