

## Episode 0: The Man Behind the Curtain

Hi. I'm Daniel (he/him). I am the writer and one of the voice actors for A Paladin's Bargain. Welcome to the show. This episode is what they call a "Session Zero." I am here to give a little overview of what's to come.

A Paladin's Bargain is a dark comedy, full cast, audio drama podcast, set in the world of Dungeons and Dragons. There's a lot to unpack in that.

To start: there are three basic types of D&D podcasts.

Didactic podcasts talk about or teach you how to play the game. My favorite is Matt Colville's epic Running the Game series on YouTube.

With live play podcasts, you hear every dice roll it as it happens. The prime example is, of course, Matt Mercer's massive series Critical Role.

A Paladin's Bargain is the third kind: It's a scripted story told by actors, with sound effects to flesh things out. These are "theater of the mind" shows; the action takes place between your ears. This episode will be the last time you will hear someone (other than the announcer) speaking directly to you. The next time you hear me, I will be Sir Rowan Lawson. There are over a dozen voice actors who have brought their time and talent to make this project a reality. We also have an amazing director and a production staff and an audio genius, all of whom I can't say enough nice things about.

So that covers "full cast," and "audio drama podcast." Comedy? You get to decide yourself. As for the "dark" part: Content warning! This podcast contains: vulgar language; alcohol consumption; slavery, racism, and sexism; violence, injury, and death, in manners that some listeners may find disturbing. There are also two references to a non-sexual form of child abuse. Listener discretion is both advised and encouraged. Full transcripts are available at our website, [www.paladinsbargain.com](http://www.paladinsbargain.com). This podcast also contains sexual innuendos of various denominations, excruciating puns, and more dad jokes than are really necessary. It also contains spiders.

The representation of spiders; no actual spiders were downloaded or harmed in this recording. Beyond the content warning, the coarse language averages out to about one F-bomb per episode. That means every episode is approximately PG-13, but if season one became a movie, it would be rated R. (Hey Netflix? Call me.) I'd say that it's nothing worse than what your kids would hear around a D&D table, but they're your kids.

And finally, although Dungeons & Dragons celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2024, I know there will be a few people listening who have never played. (Hi, Mom!) For those folks:

The stories of Dungeons and Dragons are set in a fantasy world with knights in armor, swords, and castles. It's like the Lord of the Rings with fewer racial stereotypes or Game of Thrones with far fewer sex scenes. There is no reason to get into the mechanics of how the game works because they all happen off-mike. What you need to know about the world where this story happens is:

Magic is real. There are many types of magic, each available to the different professions. We've done our best to obviously flag when that takes place and the script plus the sound effects should give you a good clue as to what happens. Again, it's a radio play. Let your imagination off leash for a while.

The world has different types of people. In game lingo, these groups are called fantasy races or a character's origin. In either case, we're talking about groups of beings who are distinct variants of the generic human shape like elves, dwarves, and orcs. Some listeners may be unfamiliar with recent fantasy additions such as:

Canidae, which are dog-like people. Think of the standard Hollywood werewolf with the snout, tail, and fur, up on two legs.

In a similar vein, if Canidae are dog-like people, Tabaxi are cat-like people.

Tieflings are originally from "other planes of existence." They have horns, tails, and hooves. I know what you're thinking, but just like real life, people get free will. If there can be good and evil Humans, there can be good and evil Tieflings... or Orcs. I'm just sayin'.

Speaking of evil, we need to talk about lawyers for a minute. A Paladin's Bargain is categorized as unofficial Fan Content, which is permitted under the Fan Content Policy of Wizards of the Coast. It is not approved or endorsed by WOTC, and portions of the materials are their intellectual property, copyright Wizards of the Coast LLC.

For the rules lawyers: this show does include some instances that may not match what happens at your table and that's OK. Please do not get your chain mail in a knot if my characters do something that your DM won't allow. Sorry!

Back to the scary kind of lawyers: WOTC's Fan Content policy also says that we cannot require payments or subscriptions to access the Fan Content we create. However, we can accept tips and donations. Visit our website at [www.paladinsbargain.com](http://www.paladinsbargain.com) for more information. But whether you give or not, this content is free, which is a good thing. I started this project as a labor of love, to give something back to my community. D&D has been a part of my life since I was about eleven. I won't say how long ago that was, but Reagan was president; the first time. I have a lifetime full of friendships and happy memories because of this game, and both the friends and the game have helped me through dark times in my life. I hope that this podcast entertains you, makes you think, and maybe, if it's a dark time in your life, I hope it can help you to know that it will get better. I wrote this for my community and, if you're listening, that makes you a part of the community too. So thank you, and thank you for listening. Enjoy the show.

BARTENDER

So, uh, you gonna order something or just keep talking to your imaginary friends there?