

Monthly Newsletter

NO ONE
LIKE YOU

May 2025



Time to Gear Up!

This last month has been amazing, it is so great to see that everyone is enjoying the new website. It has opened so many doors for us as a group and I hope you all are able to share it with pride as something you are part of!

With the month of May we will be having a change up in campaigns! This is always something I look forward to because it means 2 things!

BOSS FIGHTS!!! And Friends Returning to the Battlefield!!!!

In the world of D&D it gets no sweeter than Boss Fight Night! So as those days get close try your best to be supportive to our friends as they do all they can to keep their parties going!

I know this has been a rough round on the Strahd group after losing multiple player characters and fighting in one of the hardest and infamously deadly fights in the campaign, well done!

With the change of campaigns, we will have the return of Tyranny Of Dragons with DM Ginga_Chris and Tales of Chult with DM Cloud. Both of these groups have different things to bring to the table!

Tyranny of Dragons is a small group and that means they have to be tactical. The players all joke and the RP of this group is really what sets them apart. The DM has a more open world, free play DM style that really makes it something fun! Plus they deal with dragons in this one so it is great!

Tales of Chult is a really large group with highly specialized PCs in a world that has lots of environmental factors. The players have deep ties to the Characters they play and oh it shows! The DM for this is Cloud and he brings a stern and focused approach to running this group! Also Chult has Dinos for days!!

Mandy xoxo

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Fellowship News

Drink

Tech Review

Field Notes

Mini Builds

Monster
Knowledge

Member
showcase

Papa Sparkles
Presents

Random
Rants





Fellowship/Cult News

With the change of the guard I was in hopes to make some new Promotional videos but yall know what that means!PROMO VIDEO TIME!!

My goal is to get all the promo videos in by the 15th so I can get working on them for next month! This is so I wont feel so crunched getting it all done!

Last session dates

Imperial Magpies May 8th 8pm CST
Curse Of Strahd May 12th 8pm CST

Please do your best to show up and support the other groups!

Starting Session dates

Tyranny Of Dragons May 15th 8pm CST
Tales Of Chult May 19th 8pm CST

Along with the One shots I am trying to get us started on some all-stars. This is to get a chance to bring out some of our old friends and let them have a fun time even if it just for 1 day!

We will still be having our Levny groups coming out on Tuesdays for One shots! and anyone is more then welcome to join us!

If anyone is interested in joining!
<https://rpgsidebar.com/player>

Any skill level is welcome to join!



Druid Craft

- 1 1/2 ounces of Bourbon
- Branch Water

Instructions

- 1.Fill the highball glass with ice cubes.
- 2.Pour in the liquor.
- 3.Top with Branch water.
- 4.Gently stir to combine.

*Branch water is stream or creek water, but just water works!

JOIN US

If you have something you would like to add to the group or share in the newsletter, please send me a Message! I would love to be able to get it out there! Also if you have a subject you would like to write about monthly? Lets do it!

If you have gaming screen shots! Art? just send it my way and I will get it in!!

-Mandy!

Why Fantasy Grounds is the Ultimate Virtual Tabletop for RPG Adventures

By Sparkles_Mandy

Fantasy Grounds is a top choice for a virtual RPG tabletop due to its robust features and flexibility, making it ideal for both new and seasoned players. Here's why it stands out:



1. Deep Automation for Streamlined Play:

Fantasy Grounds automates complex game mechanics like dice rolls, character sheet updates, combat calculations, and spell effects. This reduces the burden on the Game Master (GM) and players, letting you focus on storytelling and roleplay—perfect for a newbie-friendly D&D experience. For example, initiative, attacks, and modifiers are handled with a click, saving time during sessions.

2. Extensive Game System Support: It officially supports over 50 game systems, including D&D 5th Edition and Pathfinder, with over 3,000 licensed products. This vast library includes preloaded modules, rulebooks, and adventures, minimizing prep time. For your Barovia one-shot, you could use official D&D content like Curse of Strahd with drag-and-drop functionality for monsters and maps. The CoreRPG ruleset also allows custom games, fitting any homebrew ideas.

3. Immersive Features for Roleplay: The platform replicates a physical tabletop with virtual dice (praised for visibility by users), character sheets, and grid-based maps with line-of-sight and fog-of-war options. These enhance tactical combat and immersion, crucial for grim settings like Barovia or any other location. The integrated chat system supports private messages for secret roleplay moments.

4. Customization and Community Support: Fantasy Grounds offers extensive customization, from character sheets to maps, letting you craft unique experiences like if you wanted a Wraithbound Abomination encounter. The community contributes unofficial rulesets and extensions, and resources like Fantasy Grounds Academy on Discord provide newbie-friendly training. This support is great for learning the platform's interface, which has a steep but rewarding learning curve.

5. Flexible Licensing and Cross-Platform Play:

The free demo lets players join games, while the Ultimate license (post-February 2025) allows GMs to host for free demo users, reducing costs for your group. It supports Windows, Mac, and Linux, ensuring accessibility across time zones, which suits online live sessions.

6. Reliability and Offline Use: Unlike browser-based VTTs, Fantasy Grounds is a standalone app with unlimited local storage, avoiding connection issues common in web-based platforms. This reliability is key for consistent sessions, whether you're running a one-shot or a campaign.

Why It Suits You: For your D&D 5th Edition play, Fantasy Grounds' automation and official content make running an adventure smooth, especially for new players. Its customization supports your creative ideas (like my Wraithbound Abomination), and the chat system fits text-based roleplay, complementing any play format. While the upfront cost (\$39-\$149 or \$4-\$10/month) and learning curve are considerations, the time saved and immersive experience make it worthwhile.

Comparison to Alternatives: Compared to Roll20, Fantasy Grounds offers more automation and licensed content but is less beginner-friendly due to its interface. Foundry VTT is more modern but lacks Fantasy Grounds' extensive official catalog. For any needs, Fantasy Grounds balances ease of use (once learned) with depth, ideal for both structured D&D and custom storytelling.





Field Notes – Golden Vault Assignment #001 (Complete)
Subject: The Murkmire Stone & the Varkenbluff Infiltration
By EndYourStreamTV

I was contacted by an old friend.
A shadow, a whisper—something from
the life I keep trying to leave behind,
even though I know I never truly will. He
warned me, as he had before, of a
looming threat. The old boss. The one
who ruled me with fear, illusion, and
false promises.

But this time, there was a silver lining. A
chance.

He offered me a golden key and a
music box—both clearly magical, both
undeniably sentient.
A gift, and a warning.

Join the Golden Vault, and be spared
from what's coming.

Strict instructions followed:
Tell no one.
Not friends. Not allies. Not even myself,
if I could help it.

A few hours later, I felt the signal—
something pinged in my pocket. I
opened the box, and the voice spoke:

An eldritch horror, mistaken for a
historical artifact, was about to be put
on public display in the Varkenbluff
Museum of Natural History.
The Murkmire Stone—actually an egg
—would soon hatch, releasing death
or something worse. Only Dr. Cassee
Dannell believed the truth.

Our mission was clear:
Infiltrate the museum.
Steal the egg.
Deliver it to the doctor before the
horror within awakens.

No time to waste.

In the town square, I met Amanita—
she agreed to join the job without
hesitation. As we walked, we spotted
Vaelith, acting strangely.



GRIMS
RARE
FIND



NEW
IRON
FRIEND!



ARK
LIFE!



DINO
DAD!



WE ALSO HAVE
SERVERS

WE HAVE 2 ONLINE SERVERS
OFFERING BOTH ARK AND
MINECRAFT!!



Tales from Levny cont.

She unlocked a door built into a crumbling wall with a peculiar key, revealing a hidden town that shouldn't exist.

A bag was dropped at our feet with explicit instructions: Don't open it until we were inside.

We passed through the doorway. Once inside, we opened the bag and found Reinora, asleep and curled up like forgotten laundry. She woke up, took stock, and got out—good as new. I kept the bag. Could come in handy.

We found Ciorra in a bar and laid out the plan. New clothes were issued—disguises for the infiltration—and we set off toward the museum.

Things began well.
Distractions were placed.
Guards were manipulated.
Key cards acquired.

I found the director's office and started digging for information... and treasure. But whatever guarded that place wasn't natural. Doll? Golem? Something in-between. We brawled. Hard. I got in a few good hits, but the thing didn't seem to care.

When retreat was the smart move, I took it. Slid toward Amanita's waiting hand under the door—and was pulled through in a cloud of mist. Still not sure how that worked. Don't care. It worked.

We were escorted upstairs. I slipped into a familiar skin—Jonathan Alexander Vanderbilt the Third, a name as polished and false as a noble's teeth. I engaged a fake heiress in pleasantries while casing the joint.

Then we found it.

The Murkmire Stone.

Upon closer inspection, we could see the horror moving inside, pressing against the shell like breath behind glass. The crowd of elites began to leave, and I leaned in hard with my persona. Convinced the museum curator I was a philanthropic investor trying to launder my image. She bought it—gave us everything we needed.

That's when Amanita, bless her soul, said, "Fuck it."

She grabbed the egg and ran.

Ciorra did what barbarians do best—smashed through the curator and the front doors, leaving a trail of chaos behind her.

We ran. Full sprint.

We made it back just in time.

Too close.

Dr. Dannell neutralized the egg before the thing inside could escape. We were rewarded and, just like that, walked back through the door into Levny.

Mission complete.

Secrets intact.

But this is only the beginning.

The Golden Vault owns a piece of me now. And in return, I own a piece of something larger than I ever imagined.



Some Little Tips to survival on MINECRAFT by MiniCloud

With unfamiliar terrain and dangerous mobs lurking nearby, taking your first step into the Overworld in Survival mode can be challenging. To get through it you'll have to prepare yourself for the unknown dangers ahead. But were to start? Well let me show you. Let's get started.

step 1 EXPLORE: Survival mode pits you against the elements. You can roam the land to uncover the secrets around you but watch out for cliffs lakes of lava trust me!

step 2 BATTELE MOBS: Explosive creepers and bow-wielding skeletons patrol for unsuspecting players to scare. So be prepared to face down- or run from- these mobs.

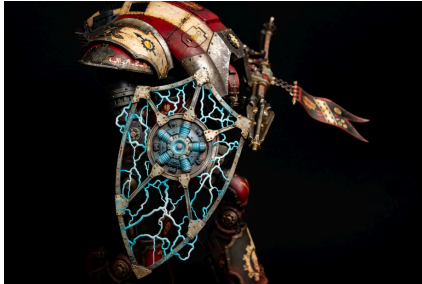
So now you know some little tips about MINECRAFT.



SERVER PETS



Send in yours by May 19th
to Mandy in the server!



Lux Mortis
by Gosuqt

For those who don't know Gosuqt is an award-winning painter of miniatures, Thank you for sharing them with us!



So you want to fight a monster?

By GrimGrixis

This month we are going to discuss, the twilight crusades, the escapades of the night, and the glitter fuckening that has happened to two specific monsters in general. So let's talk werewolves and vampires. Contrary to the popular series of movies we all know, and hopefully agree is terrible, werewolves and vampires are a staple to any sort of horror masterpiece. One depicting the brutal savagery of the beast, and the other the delicate temptations of what would seem to be the higher class. Now what's different between a werewolf and a vampire, well a lycanthrope or werewolf, is someone that has been cursed, bit, or passed through the blood, the essence of the wolf. Werewolves typically transform by force every full moon, and are a danger to all those around them, some master the ability and can shift at will. So breaking down in dnd lore what werewolves can do. Well firstly, a fight with a werewolf is dangerous, these creatures can completely shift the inner workings of a party just on one pc's failed constitution save. Werewolves in dnd are sometimes known to hunt in packs, making them a very viable threat to a low level party solo, or even a higher leveled party with multiple. When dming as a werewolf, it's good to note that the brains of the creature can heavily relate and bounce off of what the human side of the beast is. For example, a lumberjack made werewolf would have a much easier time hunting down a party in their own woods. It makes for a very interesting game of cat and mouse if you are a DM that likes to taunt and work from the background to mess with your party.

Now werewolves are generally melee, hand to hand, or claw in this case, fighters. They will get up in your face and try to rend your flesh from bone. When facing down these creatures it is smart to understand what are their weaknesses.... but, more to follow on that. Another fun thing that a DM could do with a werewolf is having it be the head of a pack, this can be of other werewolves, or even normal wolves and dire wolves. After all, they are still a pack mentality creature. This epitome of pack tactics made bare through the violent nature of these beasts, makes finding and sourcing out a werewolf some what easier than that of say a vampire. In human form werewolves may have features and habits that reflect the beast stewing inside and could very well give pointers to what they are to any party paying close attention. Maybe the human has a voracious appetite, consuming meat before it's even cooked. Maybe the glint of the wild follows in their eye and they seem on high alert constantly, even so, maybe their physical form has undergone changes in light of the beast. Either way, there's one more important note to discuss on werewolves, their weaknesses. Of course your werewolves of dnd have the classic novel weaknesses of silver, but what you may not realize is that they take much much less damage from your normal swords and boards characters, suddenly your barbarian is a little puppy next to the werewolf bearing down on him.... so how do you fix that?! Well magic of course, when facing lycanthropes or any kind of throe for that matter, the more magic the better.





So you want to fight a monster? cont.

Now of course sometimes there are special little monstrosities brewed by your devious DMs but those are a case by case kind of scenario, all in all, the more magic you hit it with the better. So to cap the discussion of werewolves into the cave, heh puns! Werewolves are a pack creature, fighting better together than alone, but a lone werewolf can still cause many many issues. Their bite is that in which they can spread their curse, and to fight em, well hope your magic missles can do the trick before they kill too many of your party members. But alas, how the time flies when you find a good discussion piece! So for next month's issue of "So you want to fight a monster?" We will discuss the part two of our classic moonlight monsters! Vampires!!!



Member Showcase!



ShrubTheDM

We asked a few questions to get to know Bus just a little better!

Favorite color?

Black/Silver/Red

Tell us about your hobbies?

DnD, offroading, kayaking

Any pets?

2 Dogs

What is your favorite style of game, and what got you into it?

RPGs, table top or videogames



If you would recommend a game to someone in that style, what would you recommend?

For TTRPG, DnD 5e, for videogame either Skyrim or the Fallout series.

What's something interesting that people wouldn't guess about you?

I am blue/green color blind



Getting New Stickers!

We got new stickers!!

The first in the 2025 Sparkles_Mandy for another year of amazing content creation!

The second was inspired from our own Ginga_Chris and his PC Tim Uthy. Who said that during his one month break he "did a 5k for legless games" After that we had to make it a thing! Well done!

Dungeon Alchemist

AI-powered Fantasy Map-making

Draw entire maps in seconds!

As seen on Kickstarter

Writers Guild

Thanks for all of your work to bring this newsletter alive!

Interested in being part of the Guild? ask Mandy!

ESTD 2022

SIDE BAR

PRODUCTIONS



Poisoner: The Feat

By GetOffMacCloud

Because what every high fantasy adventuring party really needs is an enthusiastic apothecary with unresolved trust issues. If that's you then you've probably taken Poisoner, haven't you? How daring. While your friends are out there swinging swords, casting fireballs, and making lifelong memories, you've decided to bring ointments to a dragon fight. Bravo.

Well, then, let's examine the perks of this disturbingly specific lifestyle choice:

Proficiency with the poisoner's kit – which is essentially a set of mildly suspicious jars, a suspiciously stained spoon, and an even more suspicious recipe titled "Grandmother's Last Supper."

Ignore poison resistance – Marvelous! Now when you coat your blade in a vile, viscous ichor made from fermented frog bile and powdered spite, it actually does something... unless, of course, the creature is immune, which, in this universe, includes roughly everything except halfling mailmen.

Coating a weapon in poison as a bonus action – Because nothing screams "epic hero" like stopping mid-battle to do light chemistry.

"Hold please, Mr. Bugbear, I need to decant my doom into this vial."

"Oh, take your time, sir, I'll just maul the bard while you prep the vinaigrette."

Homebrewed poison dealing 2d8 damage and disadvantage on Con saves – Ah yes, the "Deadly Mucus" special. It's all fun and games until you spend three rounds trying to rub it on your arrow while the ranger asks why you didn't just aim for the eyeball.

And let's not forget the rich moral texture it adds to your character. Nothing builds party cohesion quite like the cleric discovering that you've laced all your daggers with something called Widow's Froth. Because if your idea of roleplay is being the one person no one wants to share rations with—congratulations. You are now officially That Party Member.

In conclusion:

Poisoner is the feat for people who looked at traditional combat and said, "No thanks, I'd rather play darts with anthrax." It's subtle, stylish, and occasionally effective—just like using a teaspoon to dig a moat.

Take it if you enjoy spending your gold on boutique venoms that most enemies shrug off and your party members eye warily. Because who needs trust when you've got tinctures of treachery?

Cheers. Drink up. No, you first.



Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) Inspired Streaming.

By Papa Sparkles

(D&D) games have been around for over 40 years, becoming increasingly popular, especially with the rise of streaming platforms like Twitch, YouTube, and others. One of the primary reasons people stream games is to entertain and engage an audience. D&D is inherently dynamic and filled with unexpected moments, from dice rolls that change the course of the game to the improvisational nature of storytelling and roleplaying. These aspects make D&D an exciting and unpredictable form of entertainment for viewers. Streamers can build a community around their games, allowing fans to interact, offer feedback, and become invested in the characters and stories. With the live, interactive nature of streaming, online D&D adds an extra layer of excitement as the game unfolds in real-time.

Streaming Dungeons & Dragons is a way for players and Dungeon Masters to share their love of the game with others, whether for entertainment, community-building, education, or professional growth. The combination of creativity, social interaction, and the excitement of live gameplay makes D&D a perfect fit for streaming platforms. By engaging with audiences and showcasing unique adventures, D&D streamers are helping to shape the future of tabletop roleplaying games and expand the reach of D&D's influence on global gaming culture.

Some of the key reasons why people are drawn to play D&D are because D&D provides players with a unique opportunity to express their creativity and offer an escape from the everyday world. The game allows for freedom in storytelling, where players can explore different personalities, moral choices, and imaginative scenarios.





Next months
Deadline
May
19th

Join the Writers Guild!

Why Join?

- Collaborate & Create: Work with fellow writers to build immersive D&D campaigns, characters, and lore.
- Feedback & Growth: Share your work and receive constructive feedback to level up your writing skills.
- Inspiration Galore: Participate in writing prompts, worldbuilding challenges, and D&D-themed events.
- Friendly Vibes: Connect with passionate storytellers who share your love for fantasy and adventure.
- Showcase Your Work: Publish your stories in our guild newsletter or on our dedicated platform.

Who Can Join?

Anyone with a passion for fantasy writing and D&D—whether you're a seasoned DM, a novice writer, or just love creating epic narratives!

How to Join

Visit our website at <https://rpgsidebar.com> or DM us on X @sprinkles4mandy to sign up. Your next legendary tale awaits!

Join today and roll the dice on your storytelling adventure!

JOIN US

Here is a big thank you to our guild members

GetOffMacCloud
GrimGrixis
SexyySlothh
EndYourStreamTV
Papa Sparkles
Gosuqt
MiniCloud



D&D Streaming cont.

Many enjoy crafting complex characters, designing their adventures, and contributing meaningfully to the narrative. This immersive experience helps many players unwind and enjoy a fantastical escape. Because D&D is inherently a social group game, the collaborative aspect brings players together to solve problems, defeat monsters, and navigate challenges. It also fosters a strong sense of camaraderie. The bonds formed over long, engaging sessions are long-lasting, as players share memorable moments in and out of the game. Ultimately, D&D is a game, and it's meant to be fun. The unpredictable nature and player choices can create dramatic shifts in the story and keep things exciting and dynamic. Whether players are battling a fearsome dragon, discovering

treasure, or engaging in humorous banter, the enjoyment factor for many is the game's primary draw.

D&D has a rich cultural history; for many, streaming is a way to celebrate and promote the game. Streamers are often passionate about D&D's impact on popular culture, whether through sharing homebrew content, discussing the game's lore, or showing how it has evolved over the years; streamers are often passionate about D&D's impact on popular culture.

Streaming allows them to celebrate the game's legacy, connect with long-time fans, and introduce new players to the world of tabletop RPGs.



Random Rants w/Mandur

Lets Talk About Backstories!

So this should be good! The one thing that players use to ruin a campaign more then I feel anything else. I know this is a bold statement, but it is truly how I feel on the subject. As always it is not my goal to make any friends in these subjects and feel free to let me know what you think about it. If any of this applies to you or a time in your D&D past that is ok! You can just not do it in the future! Lets get into it!

So, you are making a PC (goodie) and you know the setting of the campaign you are going to play in! Perfect!

Do you?

A. Search on google for the "BEST CLASS IN (insert campaign or location)"

B. Think of what you would like to play, maybe ask the DM if anyone in the party has high hopes of playing a set class in this campaign.

Then you and the party get together and pick your classes. After some conversation you settle on a Paladin for this campaign.

Do you?

A. Look up "MOST OVER POWERED PALADIN BUILDS"

B. Start thinking of the PC as a person do you want them to have goals? did they have a job? family?

From there you roll stats and pick your race. Then you get to make your backstory. Now it is during this time a lot of people start trying to get one over on the DM.

Examples:

"oh, I know that I picked an evil race (because I wanted darkvision) but my pc is different and special"



"Oh, I don't mind a class with a God, or a Patron I am just not ok with any faith aspect of my PC"

This is common in the games I have played in! When a DM says, "come up with some ideas for your PC", this isn't plan what you are going to do or else. Think of a voice you like and can do consistently or what a PC could be afraid of. I have been shocked to see how many players come to DMs with fully build PCs and get upset cause it won't work.

Also, this isn't even bringing up the fact this is extremely rude to DMs. Think of it, you come in with this whole idea and what are they going to say no? Some DMs are afraid to say no because they don't want to lose players or make them mad cause after all they are playing the game too. We as people should try to work together to build and form a strong and united party that can learn and do things together.

Often times what I see is a lot of different people all wanting to bring their own "center stage" energy and it really takes down the fun and all needless drama. Now all of this goes with the same saying "ALL DMS ARE DIFFERENT" and some might want you to write you soap opera drama piece that rips the team apart. They might think it is fun to have players to busy doing dumb shit they never leave a single room (easy prep if you ask me)!

Thank you for reading!