

Monthly Newsletter

REACHING
YOU NOW

July 2025

It is burning up here and I hope the summer has found you all well! I am so glad we are all back with another great newsletter to share with all of you!

Over the last month we have has such a great response from all of the new people being introduced to our newsletter. I honestly could not be prouder. When I put out our first ever issue in May of 2024 this was all a dream. A bunch of people coming together to share. The fun part it was not just sharing about Dungeons and Dragons it was sharing about all kinds of thing paintings, music, TTRPGs, video games and other hobbies. It was a dream to have them all together and sharing the same space.

It is my hope that as time goes on with this wonderful adventure, we gather more friends along the way. With that in mind please take the time to let them know. I know hearing people enjoyed the articles I have worked so hard to put together it really makes my day. So here is a free and easy way to make a difference, let them know you took the time and enjoyed their article.

Going forward we have had a busy summer already and I do not see it slowing down any time soon. Our newsletter has been growing every month and with the addition of our website we are currently reaching over Two thousand people every month. Well Done!



SPARKLES_MANDY

I am personally already dreaming of our Fall and Winter issues. If anyone has anything they would like to add even if it is just for one issue, please let me know and I would love to work with you to get add it in the mix.

As always, I want to thank you all for joining me on this wonderful journey, it is something that truly brings me joy and I am so thankful for all of you. Keep being amazing!

Mandy xoxo



In this newsletter
you can expect:

Fellowship/Cult
News

Drink

PC Stories

Monster
Knowledge

5.5 Edition

History

Game Review

Member
showcase

Random
Rants





Fellowship/Cult News

July is always a good month for us because it is time for our Summer Break! Our channel will not be streaming during this time, but we will be getting some background work done!

If you are new to our group, we take two breaks in the year (2 weeks off for regular campaigns and 3 weeks off for Mandurlorians) this is to help make sure we all get some well earned time off. Also if I am being honest it is a great reminder of how much I personally love playing with all of you! Because after the first week off, I am itching to get back at the table!

I hope you all have a wonderful summer break, love you guys and please be safe in all your fun and travels!!

We have some Big News coming in the FALL!!!

SUMMER BREAK

Here comes our first of the 2 big breaks we take in the year!

JULY 5TH-20TH

I hope you all have a fun and safe summer break!!
We will be seeing you soon!

 -Mandy



Bloodfire Elixir

- 1 oz. dark, spiced rum
- 1 oz Campari
- 1 oz. sweet vermouth

Instructions

- 1.Fill a mixing glass with ice.
- 2.Add the rum, Campari, and sweet vermouth to the mixing glass.
- 3.Stir for about 20-30 seconds, or until the mixture is well chilled.
- 4.Strain the mixture into a rocks glass filled with ice.
- 5.Garnish with a slice of orange or a twist of orange peel, if desired.

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Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame

By EndYourStreamTV



My name is Xaretul.
I have walked this earth for a hundred thousand years.
Once, my name was etched into the stones of temples, chanted by millions beneath star-drenched skies. I was a god of strength, of secrets, of shadows and resolve. But time is a cruel eraser, and even divinity fades when the prayers cease. The Reckoning came. Some gods ascended, becoming distant stars in the celestial firmament. Others perished, their names lost to dust.
I did neither.
I remained.
Bound to the earth, not powerful enough to ascend, too stubborn to die. A whisper of my former self, drifting like wind through forgotten ruins, unseen and unremembered.
A thousand years passed.
Silence. Emptiness.
And then—
A spark.
A tremor of power bloomed in my chest, faint and flickering, but unmistakable. Not enough to shape a body or cast miracles... but enough to feel.

Hope.
I followed its trail like a moth to a dying flame. Through the alleys of the modern world—steel and smoke and soulless glass—past wealth that turned its face away, and into the cracks of the city where suffering nestled.
There, among crumbling concrete and rusted gates, I found her.
A little girl, no more than eight years of age, hunched beneath a flickering streetlamp, clutching a worn leather book. My book. My scriptures, forgotten by time. She struggled with my name—Xaretul—her small mouth shaping syllables not meant for her tongue. After many failed attempts, she gave up with a sigh and said:
"I'm going to call you Xar, if that's okay. And you'll be my god. I like you."
And just like that, the spark in my chest bloomed. A pulse surged through me. My fingertips tingled with long-dormant energy.
She rose, book in hand, and walked through me—unable to see, yet unknowingly cradling the remnants of a god in her words. (cont on pg 5)

NEW
SHIP



DINGO
KILLS
MIN-CLOUD
CHICKEN



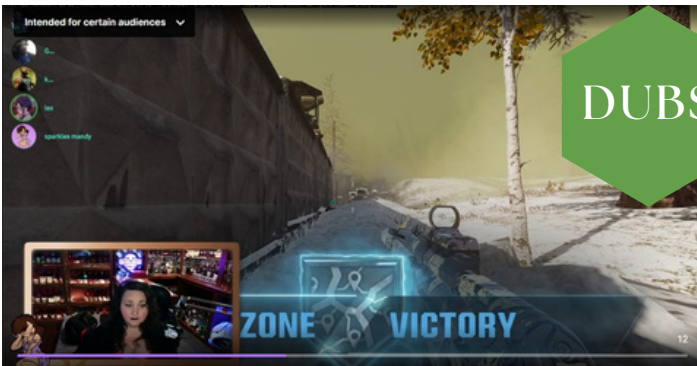
DINO
GANG!!!!



LFG
GINGA



DUBS



PROXI
FINAL
KILL



FROM OUR SERVERS

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

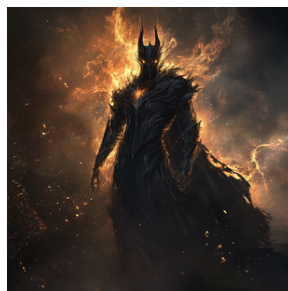


Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame (cont)

By EndYouStreamTV

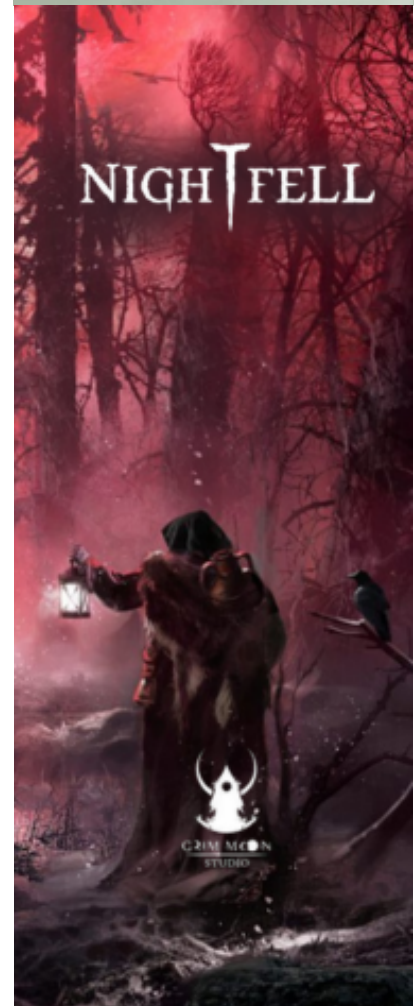
I followed her, unseen, feeling her hunger twist in her belly like a serpent. It filled me with a rage I had not known in centuries. This child was mine now. My follower. My believer. And I would not fail her as I once failed others. Her home was barely a shelter—its roof gaped open to the sky, its door hung crookedly, whispering with every gust. Inside, a boy waited—her brother, no more than five. “Sissy, did you find any food?” Her eyes glistened, but she shook her head. “It’s okay,” he smiled weakly. “I love you anyway.” I watched as she opened my book and began to read to him by the cold, dead fireplace. Her voice wavered but pressed on. My stories—once spoken by oracles, now breathed anew by a child in tattered clothes. He listened, rapt. And when her voice faltered from exhaustion, he tucked her in and whispered: “It’s time for bed, Sissy.” If I had a heart, it would have broken. He remained awake by the hearth, his tiny frame shivering in the night air. Then, in a whisper like wind in autumn leaves, he spoke. “Mr. Xar... I don’t know if you’re real or if you can hear me, but please help my Sissy. She always gives me the biggest piece when we have food. She said you’re her god, and I want you to be mine too.” He placed a single copper coin on the hearth. A child’s offering. The wind stirred. The house groaned. And I felt it—his belief, his pure, honest faith—flow into me like sunlight through cracks in stone.

I reached out. And this time, I could touch. The coin dissolved into my palm, and with it came power—no longer ancient and grandiose, but raw and innocent. This was not the strength of nations. It was stronger. With trembling will, I shoved my spectral hand into the cold fireplace. Flame roared to life—soft, golden, warm. The boy gasped in wonder, curling closer. I felt the cost immediately. The mote within me dimmed. [1:50 PM] But I wasn’t done. I left that broken home and drifted into the dark fields beyond the city, scouring the earth. I found a bush heavy with berries, a grove of windfallen fruit. I gathered them into an old basket I shaped from wind and will. My strength wavered—I felt myself thinning, unraveling. But I made it back. I placed the food on their stoop just as my form collapsed into dust and light. I clung to the smallest sliver of power—just enough to hold on. Because they believed. Because they needed me. And I would not leave them. Let the world forget me. Let the heavens turn their back. I am Xaretul, the forgotten god. But to a girl who reads in the dark, and a boy who offers a coin from empty pockets—I am Xar. And I am theirs. And that is enough.



Chill Vibes
for
Campaign Prep

@TheCafeDM
on
YouTube



Seris Vey

Character Writing
By SexySlothh



Name: Seris Vey

Race: Umbral Human

Class: Fighter

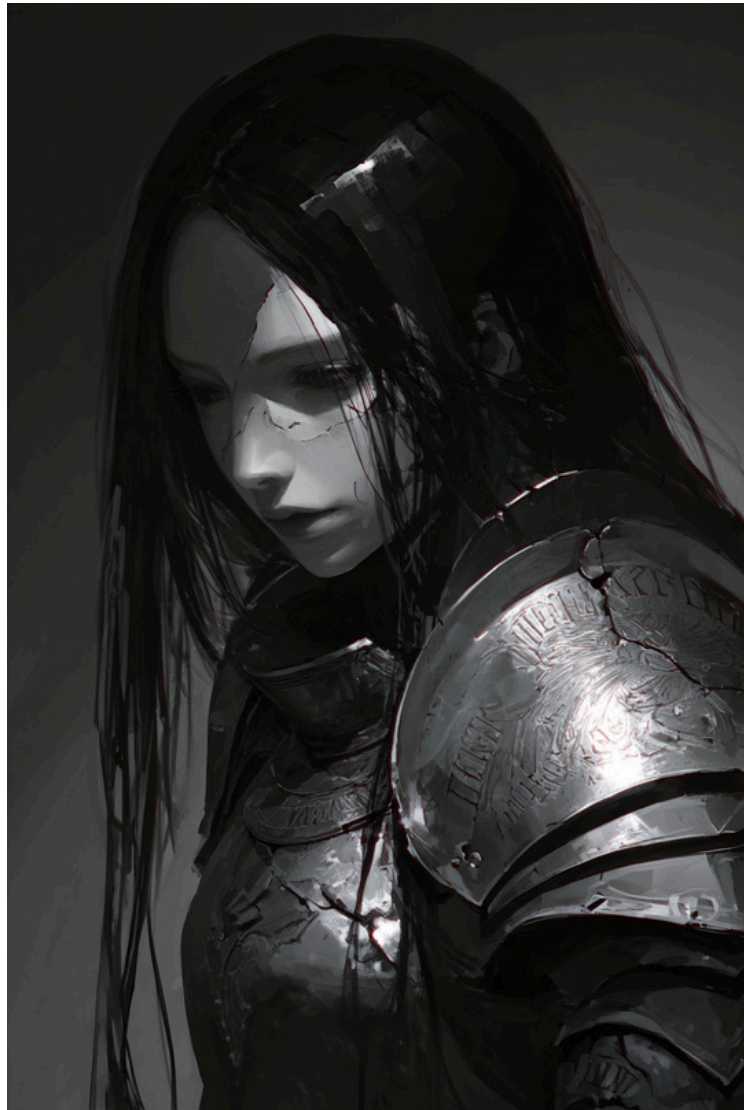
Background: Haunted One

Backstory:

Once, Seris Vey was a soldier; loyal, dutiful, and ordinary. Born to a family of blacksmiths in a borderland village, she took up arms not for glory, but to protect the fragile lives built in the shadow of constant war. She was pragmatic, clever, and fast with a blade. But none of that prepared her for the horrors beyond the veil.

During a campaign in the depths of the Whispering Wilds, her battalion pursued a cult that vanished into an ancient ruin, something old and half-swallowed by time. Seris led the charge into the darkness. That's where the world split.

A mirror-thin seam between realities tore open, and Seris was pulled screaming into the Shadow Realm, a cold, suffocating reflection of her world, where light was alien and time unraveled. Years passed. Maybe centuries. Her memories became unstable, looping and twisting. She learned to survive in a place where predators wore the faces of loved ones and whispers carved wounds deeper than blades.



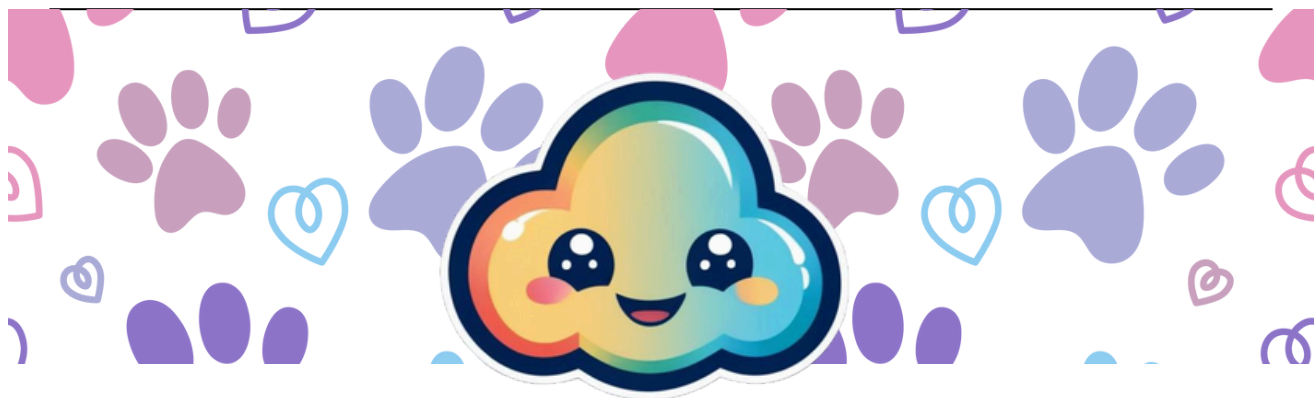
She emerged... changed.

Now back in the Material Plane, Seris Vey is no longer entirely human. Shadows cling to her like loyal hounds. Her eyes glint too dark, and when she speaks, there's a delay, like her voice is catching up from somewhere else. People flinch when she passes. Animals refuse to go near her. She doesn't blame them.

She wanders now, alone by choice and necessity. Trust doesn't come easy, and sanity comes even harder. Most days, she can keep a lid on the crazy. But most isn't always. She talks to her own shadow. She sharpens her sword while whispering apologies to enemies she hasn't killed yet. She fights with terrifying precision, because out there in the darkness, hesitation means death.

Still, she has purpose. She's hunting something. A name she can't quite remember. A voice that promised to let her go... and lied. Until she finds it, she keeps moving. Keeps fighting. Keeps the madness at bay one scar at a time





Some Adorable Tips on Dogs By MiniCloud

Ever wish you could talk to your dog? Welp, now you can!

TUGGING ON THE LEASH

Do you walk your dog, or does he walk you? If your dog strains so hard against his leash that you have to run, experts say two things are happening. One in a dog's world, one of you must lead. The other must follow. Show your dog you're the leader. Second, if your pup is so strong you can't hold back, give him or her more exercise. Dogs really need four basic things: exercise, stimulation, rewards and affection. After all, dogs were bred to work. They once herded cattle, hunted ducks, and pulled carts- among dozens of other tasks. Now, most are unemployed couch cuddlers!



MiniCloud with doggos

Training Tips

- 1: teaching your dog sit 1: catcher your dog's attention with a treat
- 2: As she or he follows the prize with her or his eyes your pup will lower its butt the moment their butt hits the ground say "sit" in a firm tone
- 3: praise your pup! stroke its back and give her the treat.
- 4: Say ok or all done with an enthusiasm's voice
Now you know some adorable tips on dogs

A note from the editor

For those who are new Mini-Cloud is the 10 year old daughter of our DM Cloud and she has been a wonderful working with her. Every month I get so excited to see what she will come up with next!



*ad space
Available*



email rpgsidebar@gmail.com



Tip for GMs: Think about the Box

By W. Adam Clarke



Good Afterwhenever, everyone. While last month we focused on ways to make a campaign more dynamic and memorable for players, this month I want to give your GMs, DMs, and whatever other titles we're going with something to chew over:

There's a very good chance you're leaving the most memorable part of your encounters unexplored.

You can find a thousand sources giving you new monsters, or telling you new ways to focus on the monsters, or ways to better describe the monster- and all that's good. But, I want to challenge you to do something further with your encounters. Rather than trying to think outside the box, I want you to think about the box. Specifically, the place the encounter takes place.

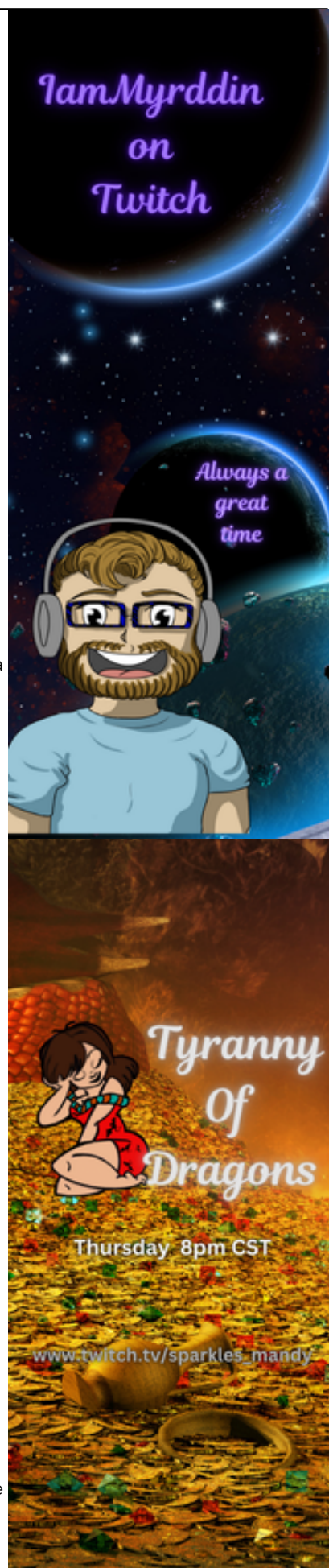
Let's go with the old classic: a dragon. Now, you can spruce up the dragon, sure, but more importantly, I want you to take the time to really think about where the party is going to interact with the dragon.

Fighting a dragon in an open field is a different battle than in a dungeon tunnel, which is different from in a lair they've prepared for 100 years knowing adventurers are gonna come try to steal their gold.

If a monster is intelligent, or even just crafty, it's going to use the terrain to its advantage. Most likely, it has home field advantage in this fight (unless it's seeking out the party). That means it knows its terrain, knows how to trick the PCs, and might have had time to prepare.

This is all to your advantage. Firstly, because it will make the fight more memorable. Many low level PCs have had to battle a bugbear. Less have had to battle a bugbear in a swamp, where it has laid traps in the murky water, and it uses its strength to pull up and hide in the trees, moving undetected above the party. And the less a group of players have seen a thing, the more memorable it becomes

So, think about the box. Bandits could have traps, small hidden dugouts, ways to move from tree to tree or ruin to ruin.
(cont on pg 10)





Tyranny Of Dragons Drops!

With the Tyranny of Dragons campaign in full gear! there is no time better for a merch drop!

We are also so excited to have a new hat in our line-up! This one we make in house and ship it right to you!



SERVER PETS



Send in yours by July 21st
to Mandy in the server!

Tip for GMs: Think about the Box (Cont)

by W. Adam Clarke

A powerful creature's lair should be festooned with glyphs, wards, and magical apparatus to make the fight harrowing. Spend time on your big bad's description, for sure, because that sets the tone... but spend more time on their lair, because the PCs will hear the description once, while they need to deal with the lair every turn.

A Black Dragon with acid pits in its lair to grasp and drop plate mail covered fighters into. A Bone Devil with trails of magma or walls of fire crisscrossing the chamber. A Rhemoraz or Yeti in a lair so cold the PCs must begin their turn with a Con save or suffer disadvantage from the cold. These are all ways to make monsters be able to punch well above their CR.

Once you get a knack for it, the lairs will begin to define themselves in your mind.



Also, once you get a reputation for it, your players will start spending some of that well earned gold to prepare for dealing with the chamber instead of just the monster... which helps you solve yet another common problem at the table at the same time.

Anyway, that's all for now. Give lairbuilding a try, and see what it does for your games. Good luck, and see you all again next month!



W. Adam Clarke
Can be found on
[SingleStepGaming](https://www.singlestepgaming.com)





Approaching into DM Territory

By Skyline

As a player of D&D for almost five years, it hasn't interested me to be a dungeon master until this past year when my second In Person campaign ended this past spring... This group has been playing together when we started college and it's always been a fun time to play with them and get to know their play styles, how they RP, and overall comfortabilities and strengths. We're all incredibly close which is why I trust them with me being a new DM starting a campaign with the book and multiple guidelines! But even with the guidelines, watching how others run this campaign and reading all the books I can get, I know there will be days where I mess up or need to take some more time to go over certain aspects, during and outside of session. However, I know this group is understanding as we have gone through two new DM's previously, which gives me confidence and the trust to make mistakes, and get better as Dungeon Master, player, and storyteller. With that in mind here were my first steps as to becoming a Dungeon Master!

1~ BUY THE BOOKS!

Just like when I first started playing Dungeons and Dragons, the first thing I did was buy the latest players handbook! It was 5e at the time and I didn't even realize there were previous editions with VERY different sets of rules and mechanics to the game. In this case, I bought the Dungeon Masters Guide and then eventually got the hardbook copy of The Wild Beyond the Witchlight (the campaign I'm going to be running) I tried the visual copy but it was much better reading through it and going through pages this way! Along with this I also got the Dungeon Master's kit, which filled me with excitement at the idea of taking myself and my close friends through a new story.

2~ READ THE BOOKS.

I'm not sure why a lot of people get the books and just don't read them! Yes it makes for great decoration (trust me this is someone who collects dice and is a certified dice goblin), but it actually serves a purpose for more than just aesthetics. Even in the sections you might not look at a lot, there is still important information or just cool facts that you will be able to recognize later on in campaigns or oneshots. Of course everyone has a different learning style so if videos or audiobooks are better by all means! But having at least read the book once I believe is key to not only being a player but a DM especially.

3~ Practice!

Now in a perfect world, I think it would be best to practice with at least one person, especially one who's played D&D before. Ideally also someone who's been a DM before, that way you get a new perspective on how to go through checks, RP, and how to set up a scene/new area. For me I practiced with my dad, who's an old school player, but was still eager to see how I narrated, gave out ability checks/saves and going over different situations. Along with practicing stuff from the book, I also practiced my narration of what I've written myself and going over what it means with him, and he's an english guy so he's also very knowledgeable in that department! Eventually I would love to run a practice session with a group, just to see how I can approach different situations in the campaign, but one thing at a time...

4~

Writing... Now as an art person myself, one of my creative outlets includes writing! And while it isn't my main form, I enjoy every little thing I write because it allows me to have creativity in an easy and fun form (when writer's block doesn't hit that is).

(cont on pg 13)



Member Showcase!

QweenSav

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

Favorite color?

Lavender

Tell us about your hobbies?

Art, Crochet, Horse Riding, and Archery!

Do you have any Pets?

Yes, one orange cat named Franklin

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

I love RPGs, specifically ones that are adventure or open world based. I love all of the possibilities you have access to in games like that



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

I would recommend Skyrim or Red Dead Redemption 2.

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

I played trumpet for about 8 years in high school and college band



Grilling
WITH
GINGA

Saturdays
on
twitch

twitch.tv/ginga_chris



Approaching into DM Territory (cont)

By Skyline



Writing all this so far has been very a fun process, there's so much room for creativity and interpolations with how to insert characters and their backstories into this story. I'm taking the experience I've had with my characters and how they've been worked into the story and how their endings turned out as well! As a person I usually enjoy good endings and I'm a sucker for those, but I'm more than willing to work with my players if they have other ideas in mind.

Currently I have written the epilogue and other guidelines/plot points I have for the characters that have been submitted to me. All organized in a google doc in different sections, highlighting and colors included, this allows me to have fun in the organization process and make it easy for me throughout the campaign! I'm looking forward to writing the rest of the arcs for the characters and what it will bring~

5~ Having fun :)

It wouldn't be a game without having fun, and even just writing and practicing all of this has been very enjoyable! This excitement includes buying a new set of dice, getting some cool cards from the campaign, printing out maps and tickets, and reading what my players bring to me with their characters. Even though I won't be playing as a player, I recognize I am an important aspect of the campaign. I need to be able to drive my players through the story without backs eating or railroading but also being in control of the world and not letting them go too far or being overpowered. Not that I think I'll have a lot of problems but being prepared is always the best thing in my opinion, and it's up to me to be able to give my players a great time and let them tell their stories. Overall I'm very excited and looking forward to being a new part of a game that's held a lot of my excitement and passions for the past few years! If there's any other new DM's or people who may be interested, I hope these steps I took resonate with you!



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Mamertine Prison (Rome, Italy)

The Real Dungeons Truth is Stranger Than Fiction

By Papa Sparkles

Papa Sparkles selected five notorious real dungeons, famous for their documented brutality and historical significance. These dungeons were known for their appalling conditions, infamous inmates, and lasting notoriety.

Mamertine Prison (Rome, Italy)

Beneath Rome's St. Joseph of the Carpenters Church lies a subterranean chamber that the Roman Empire utilized to imprison political adversaries. The Tullianum, located on its lowest level, links to the Cloaca Maxima sewer, resulting in abhorrent conditions.

Infamy: Held figures like Vercingetorix and possibly Saint Peter before his crucifixion under Nero. Prisoners faced starvation, strangulation, or being dumped into the sewer. Its brutal environment and high-profile captives made it a symbol of Roman cruelty: A specific example of the prison's horrors is the imprisonment and execution of the Gaulish chieftain Vercingetorix in 46 BCE. After leading a rebellion against Julius Caesar, Vercingetorix was starved, chained,

and left in near-total darkness before being publicly strangled during Caesar's triumph. This slow, dehumanizing ordeal, culminating in a brutal death, exemplifies the prison's infamy. The combination of psychological torment, physical suffering, and the disposal of bodies into the sewer made the dungeon particularly gruesome.

Tokat Castle Dungeon (Tokat, Turkey)

Beneath Tokat Castle lies a concealed tunnel network that functioned as a dungeon for the Ottoman Empire. It was dark, cramped, and disorienting, isolating prisoners within its confines.

Infamy: Vlad III (the inspiration for Dracula) was held here as a child hostage in 1442, an experience that likely shaped his later brutality. The dungeon's connection to Vlad's legend and its psychological terror cements its grim reputation. The worst thing that happened at Tokat Castle Dungeon was likely the imprisonment of Vlad III of Wallachia (Vlad the Impaler) in 1442.

(cont on pg 16)



Mandurlorians

Sunday 5pm CST

www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy

ESTD 2022
RPG
SIDE BAR



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



So you want to fight a monster?



By GrimGrixis

Last month we finished out the dynamic duo of vampires and werewolves, this month, at this point in time we must delve into a creature that could be partnered, controlling, or even making these monsters. Today, on this fine and beautiful day we are going to discuss hags. Hags range from a variety of types, they adapt to their environment and embrace the chaos surrounding them before they add to it with their own malevolent twist. Hags are known for a twisted source of sorcery and magic, a specimen with corruption at heart hags twist those they need to their whim. These malevolent ladies practice the dark arts through plentiful curses, a twisted environment, and magic built to tear those who oppose them apart mentally. Hags are creatures of trickery, savagery, and cunning all wrapped into one destructive package.

When facing hags you have to understand one specific thing. Everything is not as it seems, the world around a hag begins to twist and morph into their own fantasy. Some hags will try to hide their malevolence behind an illusion, waiting to strike once a unaware party is in too deep. If you manage to break through the trickery and illusions some hags make, expect them to fight tooth and nail to retain what they see as theirs. Hags will break down a party starting with whom they see as the weakest link, targeting the ones that can hold a party together and tearing them apart little by little. Hags are viciously vile, some more melee oriented while others will fly and stay above the battlefield, causing mayhem while their servants fight the party. All in all hags are not to be taken lightly, from a variety of magic ranging from deadly spells, and curses galore, at any level a hag can cause a party trouble and mayhem. So keep your wits about you, keep your swords sharp, and spells at the ready. If you have to face a hag, well.... best of luck!!! Next month!!! BLIGHTS!!!!



Tokat Castle Dungeon (Tokat, Turkey)

The Real Dungeons Truth is Stranger Than Fiction (cont) By Papa Sparkles

At around age 12, Vlad was held hostage by Sultan Murad II in the dungeon's secretive, labyrinthine tunnels as a political pawn to ensure his father's loyalty. The psychological toll of prolonged confinement in this dark, isolated, and oppressive environment is believed to have profoundly shaped Vlad's later brutality, including his infamous acts of impalement.

Spilberk Castle Dungeon (Brno, Czech Republic)

Originally converted from storage casemates in the 18th century, this Habsburg prison housed political prisoners, cuffed to damp, dark walls, earning it the name the "dungeon of the nations."

Infamy: Known for torturing dissidents until 1961, it was one of Europe's most feared prisons. Its long history of suffering and modern tourist stays (without electricity) highlight its enduring infamy. One particularly horrific episode involved the imprisonment and execution of Italian Carbonari revolutionaries in the 1820s. These political prisoners, part of a secret society opposing Habsburg control, were tortured, starved, and left in near-total darkness, with many dying from disease or execution.

The psychological and physical torment, combined with the dungeon's role in suppressing dissent, made these events especially grim. Spilberk's reputation as a symbol of Habsburg oppression stems from such atrocities.
(cont on pg 18)





Single Step Gaming

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MON	7pm	Voyage of the Argoy (SE Campaign/Jeritea)
TUE	8pm	Light in Darkness (Simulacrum/W. Adam Clarke)
WED	7pm	To Be Determined (Hidden in the Dark/Jeritea)
THUR	8pm	Salvage Inn (Salvage Inn/Mordia)
FRI	8pm	Small Fashions (Simulacrum/W. Adam Clarke)
SAT	7pm	Cyberpunk 2020 (Cyberpunk 2020/Adam)
SUN	7pm	To Be Determined (Daggerheart/Morath)

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Spilberk Castle Dungeon (Brno, Czech Republic)





Inspiring Leader AKA: “The Pre-Battle TED Talk” By GetOffMacCloud

Inspiring Leader lets you give a stirring speech that grants temporary hit points to up to six creatures within earshot. Once per short or long rest, you can uplift your buddies with the raw power of your charisma and motivational rhetoric stolen from a fantasy Pinterest board. To take this feat you must have a Charisma score of at least 13, because you can't inspire anyone if you sound like a soggy boot reading a tax form.

To perform this feat, you must spend 10 minutes delivering a rousing speech (or a war chant, or a group hug with vibes). Afterward, each affected creature gains temporary hit points equal to your level + your Charisma modifier.

That's it. No rolls. No saves. Just pure, concentrated leadership juice.

What do you get for your rousing 10 minute impersonation of Tony Robbins?

Free Temp HP: This is budget Aid without the spell slot.

Stacks with everything: It's not a concentration spell. Stack it with Bless, Shield of Faith, Bardic Inspiration, and an unreasonable amount of player optimism.

Perfect for Short Rests: Give your pep talk before the next deadly encounter. It's free padding for squishy party members who die when the DM sighs too hard.

But it does have requirements. The speech itself requires 10 Minutes. You're not pulling a Winston Churchill mid-fight unless your enemies are politely waiting for your motivational podcast to end. For 10 minutes of effort, you can boost 6 creatures, not just players, but creatures. Your paladin has a squishy spectral mount, bam take some temp HP, you're wizard's familiar keeps getting mushed before he be a conduit for that Touch of Death spell, bam take some temp HP. If you have a seventh guy, sorry, no soup for you, the limit is 6.

This is an optimum feat for not everyone. Who should take it?

Paladins: You already have a cult following, might as well give them temp HP to worship you with.

Bards: You were already giving monologues unprompted. Now they're useful!

Sorcerers: If you have high Charisma and no shame, start every day with “I Have a Dream” but about evaporating kobolds.

Warlocks: Great for patrons who demand showmanship. Bonus points if you quote your eldritch sugar daddy mid-speech.

Great feat if you like speeches, temp HP, or pretending you're Aragorn at the Black Gate. Bad feat if you're allergic to charisma, words, or social interaction.

Best used dramatically. Bonus points if you open with “Let me tell you a story...” and end with “...and that's why we will not die today!”



Pontefract Castle Dungeon (Yorkshire, England)

The Real Dungeons Truth is Stranger Than Fiction (cont) By Papa Sparkles

Pontefract Castle Dungeon (Yorkshire, England)

An extensive subterranean system constructed atop an Anglo-Saxon burial ground, where inmates etch their names into the dark pit walls.

Infamy: Held Richard II (Shakespeare's "Pomfret") and saw heavy use during the English Civil War. Destroyed by Cromwell, its misery-filled history and royal connections make it one of England's most notorious dungeons. The worst thing that happened at Pontefract Castle Dungeon was likely the imprisonment and probable murder of King Richard II in 1400. After being deposed, Richard was moved to Pontefract Castle around late 1399. Held in the dungeon's grim, subterranean chambers—carved 35 feet into the bedrock, damp, and pitch-black—he is believed to have been either deliberately starved to death or violently killed by early February 1400.



Palace of the Inquisition Dungeon
(Cartagena, Colombia)

Palace of the Inquisition Dungeon (Cartagena, Colombia)

The Spanish Inquisition utilized a dungeon from the colonial era, located within a mansion, to imprison and penalize those accused of heresy, and included a "denunciation window" for sentencing.

Infamy: The psychological and physical torment of Inquisition methods, combined with its role in religious persecution, made it a chilling symbol of oppression, preserved today as a haunting historical site. The worst things that happened at the Palace of the Inquisition Dungeon were the systematic torture and execution of approximately 800 individuals, primarily Jews, Muslims, and other non-Catholics, during the Spanish Inquisition. The dungeon, built under the orders of Philip III, was designed with thick walls and acoustic principles to muffle victims' screams, ensuring their suffering remained hidden. Prisoners faced brutal interrogations, often involving devices like the rack or water torture, to extract confessions of heresy. Many were burned at the stake or died. The "denunciation window" symbolized the final, dehumanizing judgment, where victims were sentenced to death or further punishment.



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RPG? Check. Survival? Check. Zombies? Check. Building/Crafting? Check. Achievements? Check. Sandbox? Check. Mod Supported? Check and check! Difficult AF? Oh hell yeah!!



By OldManGeras



Title: 7 Days to Die

Publisher: The Fun Pimps Entertainment LLC

Released: 2024

Amount of time played thus far: 34 hours

Estimated time to finish: 350-400 hours

tl/dr: =[7.5/10]=- Fun zombie survival with a lot of crafting options leading up to a massive zombie attack every 7 days.

From the publisher: 7 Days to Die is an open-world game that is a unique combination of first-person shooter, survival horror, tower defense, and role-playing games. Play the definitive zombie survival sandbox RPG that came first. Navezgane awaits!

Story: So Haley's Comet just passed over us, and turned people into either dust or zombies. Your job, if you choose to accept this mission, is to survive by going to the mall for a shopping spree while the army hides in an underground bunker. And find out who outscored you in the Tempest arcade game. Wait, that's the premise for the movie Night of the Comet from the early 80's with the awesome Catherine Mary Stewart. Oh well, it's close enough. In 7 Days to Die (also known as 7D2D), you wake up in the middle of nowhere with absolutely nothing but the clothes you are wearing, and zero skills other than how to gather rocks, sticks, grass

and punch things. And then you die before you realize you need to make a stone axe. Then die again. These zombies are tough! Hitting them in the head doesn't do it this time, get ready for lots and lots of hits. Oh, side note, when you finally get them down, they're going to get back up so don't fall for the 'oh, I killed it and I'm safe' because 'wtf it's getting back up!!' will happen. There you go, that's the entire story. Now, I've only played a bit over 30 hours, but honestly, no story is needed.. just survive however you can. But wait, is that really all there is? Oh no, friends. The game publisher wants you to know exactly what you're getting into by making the name tell you what will happen on day 7. You will be doing everything you can because in 7 days, get ready for a non-stop attack of zombies. That's right. You have 7 days to get ready to try not to die. Every 7 days, a new rush of zombies will come at you full force so make sure you have a shelter, weapons, bandages, food, water, medicine.. all the good stuff comes at you!

Art Style: Here's where it gets tricky. The art style isn't bad. It's actually pretty good. BUT (you knew this was coming), it's basic and repetitive. And you won't care about that at all because you're just running from house or car to the next one to try and find stuff to craft. BUT (yes, a second one) there are mods out there that are incredible and make the graphics and world around you so much better! And that's great because you want the developers to focus on the game itself, not spend 6+

months and millions of dollars trying to come up with a new way to make a bed sheet wrinkle (yes, I'm looking at you, Star Citizen). Now the game released last year after being in Early Access for over 11 years, but some of the glitches that you expect in a beta are still there. Zombies randomly appearing where there weren't any 2 seconds ago, you being pushed through walls/doors and not breaking them, repetitive patterns of movement, etc. And the looks and actions of zombies are repetitive (see mod section below).

Gameplay: Ok, we have a lot to cover in this section, as there is a lot in the game. Before we break this down, let's get one thing out here: this game is very different in single-player vs multi-player. You will struggle in single-player as you don't have anyone else helping you. And that's a great thing! Playing with your friends helps make this game a lot easier. Now, that being said, I'm going to start with one of the key parts of the game that most people don't talk about - what makes this an RPG.

RPG Mechanic - You know how in an RPG, you go around killing things to get XP, then work on some sort of skill tree to get better at killing things so that you can grow the skill tree so you can kill things to.. yeah, you get the picture. That's in here. And it's a very big part of the game.

(Cont on page 21)



Next months
deadline
July
21st

New friends always welcome

Thank you to all of our Guild members!

Our writers guild has been doing amazing, and it feels like it just keeps growing! This is something I could not be happier about. If you would like to add something to our newsletter you are more than welcome to join us. It is so nice to see all of these amazing minds working together to make something different. So if you are in a different group and just want to partner up and share what your group has been up to we would love to have you!

EndYourStreamTV
SexySlothh
GetOffMacCloud
Papa Sparkles
Mini Cloud
Gosuqt
Skyline
SingleStepGaming
OldManGeras
TheBurlyEarl



RPG? Check. Survival?
Check. Zombies? Check. Building/Crafting?
Check. Achievements? Check. Sandbox? Check.
Mod Supported? Check and check! Difficult AF?
Oh hell yeah!!



Afraid you're not ready for an area or building you took a fetch mission for? It'll show you the difficulty before you go into that structure. Inventory Management? Heck yeah. You can't carry everything you find, so you'll be placing storage crates to hold your stuff. I mentioned fetch quests - we have vendors that we will be working with to complete missions, which help you level up and get equipment. While they're repetitive, as you go to the next vendor, the difficulty grows. So while you may have a quest to turn on the generators in a building starting at 10PM, depending on your level and area, it may be a non-stop group of zombies who come at you because the noise is attracting them.

Skill Tree - Want to be able to jump or fall and not worry about damage - better focus on Agility. Want to heal faster? Fortitude. Do more damage? Strength. You get the picture. And within each of those areas, 9 to 10 different specializations. Don't worry, you'll be grinding and leveling up a lot, so those precious few points matter will add up. The points are gained when you level up, which happens when you kill zombies, so get hacking!

Base Building - You know that game where you get to mine then craft things and places to live? In here, you get to build a base somewhere and decorate it as much as you want. I'm not going to get into specific details here, but instead let me give you some each tips for early game.

1 - do not get attached to your house the first dozen hours or so in the game. You will be building a temporary location, as you can only have 1 'active' house at a time, and as you level up and move to better areas, you'll be wanting to build there. 2 - You know how I said you'll be moving to better areas? That means more equipment to find, more blueprints (see crafting below), more enemies. But better houses. Because you'll soon be able to just take a house that already exists in a town, fix it up, put up barriers to prevent the zombies from breaking in (yes, they can break through walls and doors to get to you because braaaaaaiinnnnssss). And that's pretty awesome! Found a house with an underground shelter and generators for power? Heck yeah! Or maybe the army base is nearby and has a lot of concrete walls to slow them down! Or you want to build your own! All valid options for you.

Crafting - You know what games need more of, a way to actually increase knowledge to craft stuff. Not just the 'oh, you level up and gained a skill point and now you know how to create an electrical generator automagically'. And how did the developers for 7D2D do it? Very easy - as you explore, you'll find blueprints for some items, but more importantly, you'll need to read magazines and books to learn about things! That's right, you're going to go into every single mailbox, magazine stand, bookcase, cars, duffle bags - looking for those magical pieces of pulped wood that contain words that will help you learn

stuff. Hungry? Hope you found some cookbooks that show you how to make some pie, and you have found the ingredients for it. Want to get better with a specific weapon? Hope you found the magazines that tell you how to train and get better with it. And you'll find yourself just running around trying to find all of these.. because there are a lot to find - over 1000 magazines and 98 books to find.

Exploration - You're going to do a lot of running around until you learn how to build a motorcycle or vehicle (crafting, my friends.. all crafting), and there's a lot to explore. What helps this stand out from the 'run in this direction until you get to the mission' is when you get injured from the fights. Broken bones will slow you down, bleeding makes things blurry to see, fractures impact you, stamina runs out when you try to run for a long time. You'll find yourself putting down storage chests in each town you find just to store important stuff without having to run back to your house every time.

Mods/Community - One of the biggest communities out there for mods and support, you'll find everything from Quality of Life changes (make those thunderstorms more realistic, ability to have different colored storage chests) to reskins that actually make the game have a real story and make sure you never get bored (Cont on Page 23)



Writers Guild

We are so excited to have a new member of our writers guild

You can catch him on Twitch at theburlyearl

Don't Sweat The Recipe



I'm Brad Harris, the backyard pitmaster and recipe creator behind Don't Sweat The Recipe. Thanks for your interest! Born in California and raised there as well as in central Florida, my wife and I reside in central Alabama with a child away at college and a pomeranian who refuses to be normal.

I never thought about cooking until meeting my wonderful wife, whose creativity and artistry in the kitchen encouraged me to explore my own interests of the same. Once the bug bit, I became fascinated with what made good barbecue so good. Years later, I am still learning and will continue to do so. I also have a fondness for making food as sinful as I can. Butter, bacon, heavy cream, they're all friends of mine.

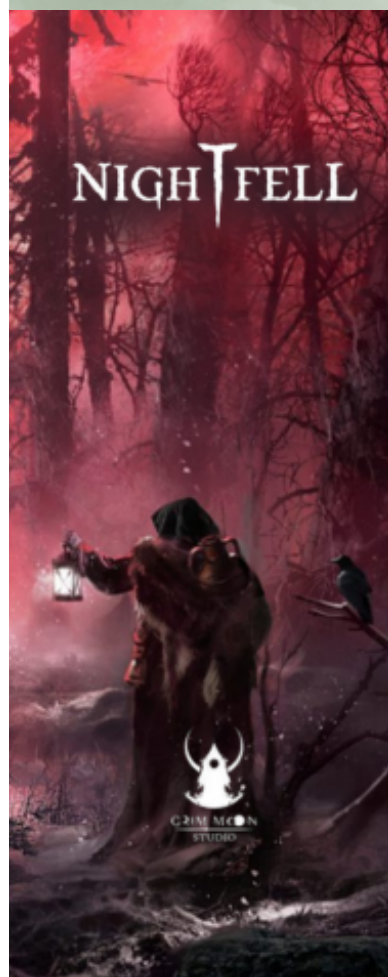
I enjoy grilling and smoking all year long. The winters are relatively mild here, and while the heat and the humidity of an August in Alabama might scare some, this won't keep me from doing some outside cooking. Nothing beats seeing the smiles of friends and family as they delve into a perfectly cooked 2" medium rare steak or take a bite of a wonderfully smoked, tender baby back rib. I love it! And while it may be convenient to run up to the local BBQ joint for a pound of pulled pork, I will always opt to throw on a couple of butts and smoke it myself. It's better, cheaper, and more satisfying every single time.

As a college football fan, this has also led me to make crazy delicious finger foods and appetizers that lend themselves well to any social gathering, especially game day. In the end, food is entertainment, and this is something that I very much enjoy.



Chill Vibes
for
Campaign Prep

@TheCafeDM
on
YouTube



RPG? Check. Survival? Check. Zombies? Check. Building/Crafting? Check. Achievements? Check. Sandbox? Check. Mod Supported? Check and check! Difficult AF? Oh hell yeah!!

you'll find a massive number of mods available for the game. Taking a quick look at Nexus, there are over 5,400 mods listed as available for the game. The game has been out for a number of years, and the community has continued to grow and support the game.

Steam Deck: Does it work on Steam Deck? Yes. But you want to framelock down to 30FPS and lower the graphics settings. Bad part - the game does not support Steam cloud saves, so if you play this on another device, you will need to manually copy the save over to the deck to continue the game then back again.

Audio: Audio is... ok-ish? Music is decent, but the zombie sounds are repetitive, and not always indicative of where the zombies are. So you may hear zombies to your left, but it's actually behind you or maybe above you on the second floor of the house. yet somehow you can clearly hear it through the concrete walls as if it were next to you. But it's not all the time, and seems to depend on the type of building or location. At least it gives you clues that there are zombies nearby, so that's good.

Achievements: Plenty of achievements in the game, most are very easy to get (make a bedroll, bandage yourself, level up to rank x, die y times) but some require significant grinding (I'm looking at you, travel 1000km and craft 5000 items). 43 achievements are available in the game to grind, but honestly you're going to be playing the game and unlocking most of these naturally. Best guide I've found is on TrueAchievements with a full walkthrough available for all you hunters out there.

Value: So the current price on Steam is \$45USD after being raised last year from \$25USD. Since the price increase, the lowest Steam price is has been \$29USD though a number of secondary markets have it for ~\$20USD. Is it worth the current full price? Based on the number of hours you'll put into the game and the variety of skills and mods available, I'd say yes if you're into the zombie survival style game. But with the large number of sales that Steams run, I'd say wait until it goes on sale.

So let's break it down:

--[7.5/10]--

--[**Graphics**]--

- ☐ You are in heaven
- ☒ Good
- ☐ Decent
- ☐ A 2 year old made them 30 years ago

--[**Gameplay**]--

- ☒ Is it live or memorex
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Decent
- ☐ Get an etch-a-sketch

--[**Audio**]--

- ☐ Eargasm
- ☐ Good
- ☒ Decent
- ☐ What? I can't hear you..

--[**Audience**]--

- ☐ Everyone
- ☒ Adults
- ☐ Teens
- ☐ Nappy time!

--[**PC Requirements**]--

- ☐ Potato Potatoe
- ☒ Decent
- ☐ Expensive
- ☐ Frontier or Fugaku are needed

--[**Difficulty**]--

- ☐ 3X + 1
- ☒ Challenging
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Can you color within the lines?

--[**Grind**]--

- ☒ 400 hours in and almost through the tutorial
- ☐ Average grinding needed
- ☐ Only if you care about leaderboards
- ☐ No grinding needed

--[**Story**]--

- ☐ There is no life other than this game
- ☐ Great
- ☒ Decent
- ☐ Tetris has more story

--[**Game Time**]--

- ☒ Time has no meaning, only this game exists
- ☐ 40+ hours
- ☐ 20-40 hours
- ☐ Press start and you're almost finished

--[**Price**]--

- ☐ Worth the price
- ☒ If it's on sale
- ☐ If you have extra money
- ☐ Just throw your money in the trash

--[**Bugs**]--

- ☐ Smooth as silk
- ☒ Early Access game-level bugs
- ☐ It's annoying but playable
- ☐ Starship Trooper has less bugs





Kimchi Fried Rice (Kimchi-bokkeumbap)

By Brad Harris

If you've never had kimchi fried rice before, it's time to give it a whirl. Super flavorful, easy to throw together, and can be served as the star or as an amazing side dish. You gotta try this!

Why You Will Love This Recipe

We've said it once, and we'll say it again. Easy and delicious is what makes a great recipe. No fancy ingredients that are hard to find. But man o man, does it make a tasty dish. You can add a protein to it (as we did) or just serve as a vegetarian option. The kimchi brings the heat and a slight crunch that goes perfectly with the soft texture of the rice. The color is amazing. I just really can't say enough about this dish.

Point is, you're gonna end up with a fabulous dish in less than 30 minutes that will rival any similar dishes you will find out and at a fraction at the cost. Win, win, and win!

What Is Kimchi

Kimchi is a super popular Korean dish that's basically fermented vegetables, usually napa cabbage and radishes. It's mixed with seasonings like chili powder, garlic, ginger, and sometimes salted seafood. The result is this amazing spicy and tangy flavor that's kind of addictive.

People in Korea eat kimchi with pretty much everything.

It's a staple side dish but you can also find it in all sorts of recipes. The fermentation process not only keeps the veggies from going bad but also packs them with good-for-you probiotics. It's loaded with vitamins A, B, and C and is great for digestion and boosting your immune system. There are tons of different kinds of kimchi, depending on the region and season, so you can always find one that suits your taste. Whether you like it super spicy or just a little kick, you should find one to your liking at the local grocery store. So if you've never had kimchi and are hesitant, don't be. It tastes amazing. It'll open up your recipe game to so many other options.

Ingredients Needed


For a full list of ingredients and their amounts, see the recipe card below. This recipe does include 5oz of pork (we used a single pork chop, diced). If you want to omit it, or use something else, feel free. You can also check out the

Variations down below for other ideas.



(cont on pg 25)





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Kimchi Fried Rice (Kimchi-bokkeumbap) cont.

By Brad Harris



How To Make Kimchi Fried Rice

Add a tablespoon of a neutral oil (canola oil, avocado oil, vegetable oil, etc) to a large skillet over medium high heat. Once simmering, add the diced onion, the whites of the green onion, and the diced pork to the skillet and cook for approximately 3 minutes until the onions start to lighten. Add the garlic and the ginger to the skillet, stirring to combine, and cook for another two to three minutes until the onions are translucent.



Add the kimchi, the kimchi juice, gochujang, dark soy sauce, and black pepper. Cook until the kimchi becomes softened, about two minutes. Reduce the heat to medium low and add the rice. Mix to combine well and allow all the juices to be absorbed by the rice, about 3 minutes.

Add another tablespoon of oil and the sesame oil to the skillet and increase the heat back to medium high. Cook, occasionally stirring, until the rice starts to stick a bit, about 4 to 5 minutes.



Remove from the heat, garnish with green onions, and optionally a fried egg and gim (roasted seaweed), and serve.



You're gonna have a hard time finding a better tasting dish for the money and time spent. This is a great fried rice recipe that goes beyond the fried rice with peas and carrots. In my book, it's next level.

(cont on pg 26)



Kimchi Fried Rice (Kimchi-bokkeumbap) cont.

By Brad Harris



Tips

Day-Old Rice: Using day-old rice is key for the best texture. Freshly cooked rice can be too moist and can lead to mushy fried rice.

Heat Levels: Adjust the amount of gochujang to control the spice level. If you like it milder, start with half the amount and add more to taste.

Prep First: Have all your ingredients prepped and ready to go before you start cooking. The process moves quickly, and it's easier when everything is within reach.

High Heat: Cook the fried rice on high heat to get that nice, slightly crispy texture.

Variations

Vegetarian Version: Swap out the pork for tofu or mushrooms for a delicious vegetarian version. Tofu should be pressed and diced, while mushrooms can be sliced.

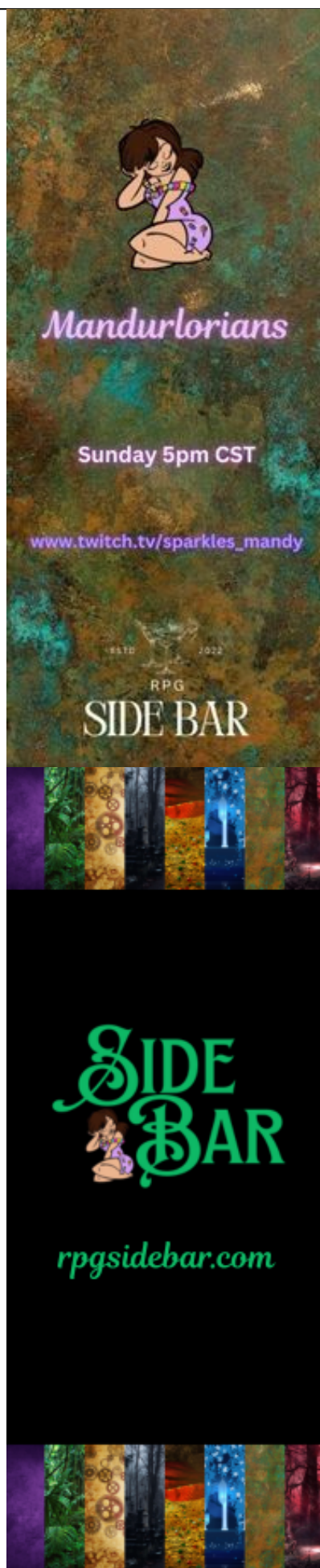
Different Proteins: Feel free to use chicken, beef, shrimp, or even leftover rotisserie chicken instead of pork.

Extra Veggies: Add extra vegetables like bell peppers, peas, carrots, or spinach to pack in more nutrients.
Kimchi Type: If you're not into super spicy food, look for a **milder kimchi**. There are many varieties available that range in spice level.

Cheese Kimchi Fried Rice:

Add some cheese on top and let it melt before serving for a cheesy twist. I took some of this rice, added a slice of American cheese to it, and wrapped it in a tortilla. Yeah, it was good!

*For the Full Recipe card
click the Icon*



Random Rants w/Mandur

Lets Talk Table Etiquette!

In my opinion, the best things about playing Dungeons and Dragons is getting to work together with a party. Not only do you get to do some major problem solving, but you also get to build lasting friendships. This core is what makes it all work, now along with that it is something I try to bring up often is table etiquette. You would be surprised how many people have never had conversations about table manners in Dungeons and Dragons! So here is just a few things I think all players should follow to have a better time at ANYONES table. Now going into this I am going to need you to leave your ego at the door because we can all do better!

Audio and Video

These are so important and literally drive a party crazy. Take time to talk to you DM (or for people on my channel me) and ask "hey how is my audio and video honestly?" Do not ask in a big group or in front of other players. Give the DM or streamer a chance to have an honest conversation about what can be changed. Some people like a blur on discord calls some streamers, like me don't. Cameras for recorded content are so important. Audio is even more important, ask if you easy to hear? If you do a voice, does it work with your mic settings. A player with a bad mic can make other players dread a session and should be addressed right away. If it is campaign group I would ask about every 3 months if you need to dial anything in or things you can change.

Teamwork

Here is a fun one! Did you know D&D is a group game? See some people do not understand that. This can lead to campaigns ending and DMs giving up on a group. Try not always be the one talking. I personally make a check list of all the other players and make sure I am talking everyone on the table. It is really sad to see some players get ignored and this can cause some major issues. We have to find a way to work together in this and find the best solution. Rule #2 always "Don't be an Asshole"



Leave your drama out of the game

I get it! You think it would be really fun to play this trauma filled PC and rip the whole campaign a part because it is all about you, right? wrong! Not everyone in a party wants to spend all of their time doing RP about your family or lover issues, most of us just want to play the story the DM is telling. If you want to tell your story go be a DM, until then sit back and buckle up buttercup it isn't about you.

I think this party needs some romance!

Umm you better talk to the DM before you add that shit. Some DMs do not want that in their sessions I personally know many DMs that this is not welcome, and this is not one of those "well we will just do it and if the DM has a problem he will say something" that kind of attitude is extremely rude.

In the end if you are looking to add things to the table it is always important to talk with the DM. Seems silly to have to say but I find myself saying it a lot. If you have anything else you would like rants on please let me know!

Thank you for reading!

