



**SIDE
BAR**

Issue #18
February 2026

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Contents

Player News	4
Channel News	4
Xaretuls	5
Server Pics	6
PC Building	11
SingleStep Writing	12
Server Pets	13
From my Forge	15
Member Showcase	16
MiniCloud	18
Minotaurs	19
Usurpation	21
Cover Monster Build	24
Just a Game	26
Recipe	27
Dark Sun	29
Random Rants	31



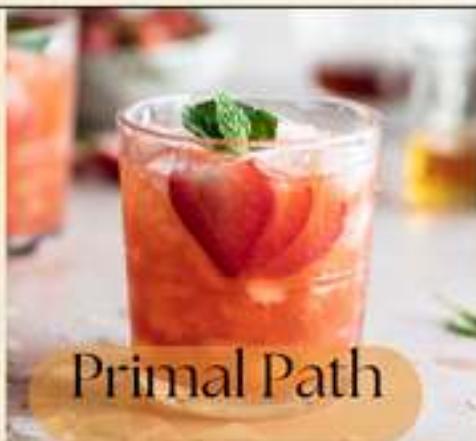
Fellowship/Cult News

2026 in Action!

This Month we have so much going on! Campaigns are kicking in to high gear, One shots are in fully swing with a fancy new schedule, and Charity streams are giving back!

Greyhawk is showing us a new world of adventure that leaves us waiting for the next session. Ginga is doing a great job closing out the amazing Tyranny of Dragons campaign.

Thankfully, as of now we have had no PC deaths so we can keep our fingers crossed!



Primal Path

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 oz Strawberry Vodka
- 1 oz Cranberry Juice
- ½ Lime, quartered
- 2-3 Strawberries
- 1/2 oz Simple Syrup

Directions

Step 1 Add strawberries, lime, vodka, simple syrup, and cranberry juice together and Muddle

Step 2 Strain into rocks glass filled with ice!

Step 3 Enjoy

Our Charity Table

January, we kicked off our charity tables with raising \$150 for K9s for Warriors!

Charity Night this month is on February 18th at 8pm CST. Slots have been filling up fast so plan ahead and book with Mandy.

One shots! The One shots have taken on a life of their own! These aren't your regular one shots these are actual groups taking on campaigns with side plots that can actually help the live campaigns!

Want to see them? check out
@rpgsidebar on  **YouTube**



Want to learn
D&D?

Join our One Shots!

If you are trying to find a table
that meets your needs and
works for you?

**Reach out, We might know a
table that is looking for
someone just like you!**

**Email us at
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From The Channel

This year we were lucky enough to be asked to be apart of

Greyhawk Megastream Fundraiser Event

This event works to raise money for St Jude Children's Hospital.

The event will be February 19th -22nd

Our Time slot will be:

**Friday February 20th
@ 8pm CST**

NEW RELEASE

DISTROKID

THE ANCIENT

NOW AVAILABLE

Spotify

Apple MUSIC

YouTube

Card Packs:

We are making more cards craft able!

also, If you buy cards look into Streamloot subscriptions! It is 5.00 a month and you get 2 free card packs a month! so it makes your sub cost basically \$1.00!

Emotes: With love in the air, we added some new festive bunnies along with a new animated emote this month!



Hey! are you looking for
players?

Trying to promote your
channel?

Just want to send a shout out
to an amazing member
of your group?

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and affordable!

send any questions to
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Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame

Chapter 8: The First Step

By EndYourStreamTV

The fire had long since burned down to embers when I stood, my form shifting and flickering in the dark. The children slept soundly, the warmth of the fire still lingering in their dreams. I knew they would be safe for a while, but I could feel it, the pull to move forward, to test the limits of the power I had begun to regain.

I would leave, just for a short time.

The world outside was vast, untamed, and I needed to test myself, my abilities. To ensure I could protect them, all of them, I needed to know where my power truly lay.

Kira's Journey

Kira woke before the others, as she always did, her mind already heavy with thoughts of what came next. She had been given a role, a responsibility she hadn't asked for but couldn't refuse. She was the High Priestess of a faith born of shadows and light, and she knew the weight of that title would grow heavier with time.

But Kira was no stranger to burdens. She had carried her family's sorrow for years, even before Xaretul had come into their lives. And now, with her new purpose, she found herself both excited and terrified. She had to be strong. She had to lead.

She stood, the silver and gold band on her arm glimmering in the morning light. She had taken to wearing it constantly, letting its weight remind her of the bond she shared with Xaretul. The power within it was subtle, but it was there, humming beneath her skin like a heartbeat.

Her gaze fell on the sleeping faces of the others. Arian, his ring gleaming in the low light. Nicholas, Calean, Garuth, Auriel, and Sandra, each of them was still coming to terms with their new reality.

Kira knew they needed her. But it wasn't just her responsibility to lead them; it was her duty to understand them. To help them grow.

And so, she sat beside the fire, the soft crackling of the embers a comfort as she closed her eyes. In her mind, she saw the path ahead, uncertain, winding, but full of possibility.

"I will not fail you, Mr. Xar," she whispered to herself, to the stars, to the sky. "I will be everything you believe in. I will make you proud."

Arian's Path

Arian was awake next, though it was only moments after Kira had stirred. The boy moved silently, his footsteps light as he approached the edge of their small camp. He looked out at the vast expanse of wilderness around them, the trees standing tall and strong like silent sentinels, the wind whispering through the leaves.

Arian's heart beat faster as he thought of the future, of the role that was now his. Warrior of Faith. He had never asked for such a title. But the moment Xaretul had placed the ring on his finger, he had known. This was his purpose. To fight for those who could not defend themselves. To stand tall when others were too afraid to rise.

He had always been afraid. But now, that fear felt different. It didn't control him like it once had. Now, it pushed him forward, driving him to be more than he ever thought possible.

HELL
DIVING



TRIGGER
HAPPY TANK



MINI
CLOUD



CLOUD,
JIN, AND
GRIM



VIKING!



MANDUR
TANKS!!



POST YOUR PICTURES IN OUR
DISCORD GAME SCREENSHOTS CHANNEL
TO MAKE
THE NEXT ISSUE OF REALMS

FROM OUR SERVERS

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

Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame (cont)

By EndYouStreamTV

The gold and silver band gleamed on his finger as he clenched his fist, feeling the cool metal against his skin. It was a symbol of his bond with Xaretul, a bond that transcended anything he had ever known.

"I'll protect them," Arian said quietly, almost to himself. "I'll protect all of them, just like Mr. Xar would."

He turned back toward the camp, his heart swelling with determination. He was ready. He wasn't just Arian anymore. He was something more.

Nicholas's Trial

Nicholas was younger than the others, but there was something about him, something resilient and strong, that made him stand out. Despite his small stature, there was a warrior's spirit inside him, a tenacity that could not be ignored. But that strength was tempered by the fear that had once ruled his life.

Fear of the world. Fear of being abandoned. Fear of being forgotten.

But here, in this new world, those fears didn't have to control him. He had learned that much from Kira and Arian. They had shown him that fear could be fought, could be faced head-on. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it.

Nicholas stood at the edge of the camp, his fists clenched, his chest rising and falling with each breath. He wasn't like Arian, not yet. He didn't have the same strength, the same unshakable courage. But he had something else, a quiet fire,

one that would grow with time.

"I'm not scared anymore," he whispered to the wind, his voice soft but firm. "I won't be."

The Other Children

Calean, Garuth, Auriel, and Sandra each had their own burdens to carry, their own stories to tell. They were still unsure of their place in this new world, still learning the ways of faith and power. But their hearts were open, their minds eager to understand.

Calean's sharp eyes missed nothing. He watched Kira, watched Arian, always studying, always thinking. He had not yet found his place, but he would. He knew that.

Garuth, the smallest, had already proven his courage. He was afraid, yes, but he was also determined. He had been through too much to turn back now. And Xaretul's promise had given him hope. He would be part of something bigger, something that mattered.

Auriel, slender and observant, had a quiet strength. She didn't speak much, but she listened. She understood more than most, her mind sharp and perceptive. She had the heart of a leader, even if she didn't yet know it.

Sandra, the youngest, still bore the weight of her grief. But she had a keen sense for danger, for what was right and wrong. She was the protector in her own way, watching out for the others, even if she didn't yet realize it.



Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame (cont)

By EndYouStreamTV

As a Whole

Together, they were something new. They were more than a group of lost children. They were a family now. A family bound by faith, by hope, and by the love they all shared for their god, Xaretul.

As I watched them, from the shadows, from the edges of their camp, I knew that they were ready. Ready to step out into the world. Ready to start their journey. They were not just my followers anymore. They were my family, my future.

But first, I had to test my power. The world was waiting. And it was time to step into it.



8th Annual 24 hour GREYHAWK MEGASTREAM FUNDRAISER EVENT



February 19th -22nd 2026

St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital



One Shot Recap



By Dragon Teacup

An odd group finds themselves together in the Town of Salvation - right off the coast of the shattered nation of Cyre, now known as the Mournlands. They are all scavengers, come together to work odd jobs here to earn coin. Klink, Vult, Mary, Zephyrine and Ryth speak to Halfstead the barkeep, name themselves The Subs, and pick up their first job - to locate a stolen relic for Mother Johanah.

They meet their competition - the leader of The Grey Dogs, the woman with all the red flags, Cali Alren, whom Zephy seems to know. The Subs meets Mother Johanah who thinks one of the Salvage brokers Zodor Tarnev took "The Silver Arrow of Truth". After speaking to Zodor directly he admits a Changeling named Wist tried to sell it to him but Zodor sent them off into the Mournlands. The Subs travel through the grey fog, navigating to a abandoned elemental artillery piece - a giant gun.

They get attacked by weird goblin-like creatures with multiple arms and mouths, and a scorpion with a silver arrow for a tail and a body made up of other bodies. A battle ensued with Vult almost dying, and Klink demolishing the Scorpion with his hammer. The group rescues Wist, who gathers up salvage for them and gives The Subs a Dagger - he owes them a favor.

The group gets paid by Zodor for the scrap firstly, and then Mother Johanah helps to cure some exhaustion before giving them 20 silver arrows. The Subs head to a local inn for the night, taking a nice long rest before they tackle the job board tomorrow.



Building a new PC for a Guest Night!

By Sparkles_Mandy

Strength

10

0

Dexterity

14

2

Constitution

14

2

Intelligence

10

0

Wisdom

11

0

Charisma

16

3

Months ago I was asked if I could make a guest night! This will be on the Twitch channel Haavok_RPG, where He has a Strixhaven campaign that has been running for a long time. With the new year I told myself I was going to make time to visit other tables and leave the safety of my D&D bubble. I also get asked how I put my characters together, so let's build this guest PC together.

On Haavok's table they use a 27 point buy system, meaning all the base stats are a 8 and then you have 27 more to play with! With that in mind I am going to dive right in. I personally love small PCs and with that the smaller the better, I talked with Haavok and he said I could bring in a Humblewood race for this build. We will be building a Hedge it is basically a Hedgehog

So first thing I do is have an idea of what I want her to sound like for this we are going to have a new voice I haven't done before. I am going to name her Janine Melnitz as a nod to the voice we are going for. Since we aren't going to be in this campaign every session, I am more open to doing a silly that could be found a little annoying to some.

I see our little Hedge as like office staff a lady in the background pushing papers. She should be played as bossy and also nosy, as a Hedge she can speak with bugs so she should know all the goings on in the school. I don't see her doing this in a mean way just as if she is making sure everyone is safe and taken care of. She will be slightly elitist, being a sorcerer, she would see casters with the requirement of needing to study and actually needing a book as fundamentally lesser in talent and skill.

Backstory for this lady is simple; she is from a fancy family and is a daddy's girl. The subclass for this Hedge is clockwork soul, so I am going to use this as she likes things her way (she is spoiled). I am going to leave a lot with this open because it is a guest spotting PC and I want to make sure she blends in with the group well.

This is going to be a fun time bringing this lady to life for the session. If you would like to see how this build actually plays out feel free to catch the session I guest in!

March 6th @8pm CST on Twitch

Haavok_RPG



Don't Build Worlds, Build Bookends



Single Step Gaming

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step

By W. Adam Clarke

Good Afterwhenever, everyone. Your friendly neighborhood Game Dev, AP Runner, Streamer, and Author you've never read W. Adam Clarke again. This month, I want to speak to all the GMs about one thing you really should change in order to make your campaigns more likely to wrap well... and it's going to ruffle some feathers. So, here we go!

Alright, so, has anyone noticed that while 100% of your campaigns begin, about 20% of your campaigns (or less!) wrap successfully? Sure, we all know that scheduling is the biggest ever of BBEGs... but I'm here to tell you it's not the only reason.

It's because we all spend about 80% of our effort building the world, and only about 20% of our effort building the campaign... and then only a small portion of that planning the ending.

I know, I hear you. It's fun planning out the backstories of your world. It's great to know who the last 17 Grand Masters of the Eternal Order of Goodness were, and when the town that

your party began in was formed, and all the other lovely little details we all put into our world designs. But... have you ever noticed that a great deal of that never reaches the players, and when it does, it's usually nuggets you drop on them, not because they ask? As GMs, we often focus a great deal on setting the stage, and focus too little on what is actually going to happen in the campaign itself.

Here's a thing that took me far too long to learn, and it's singlehandedly changed the result of my campaigns: Stop building worlds, and build bookends. Rather than spending 80% of your effort setting the stage, and only 20% on the campaign and the end chapter of it, I want you to think about splitting your time evenly: making matched folders of work. The first folder is the backstory, the world building, all those things you feel you need to make the world immersive. The second folder is THE END GAME: build your final sequence. Don't just hope that the party stays invested until the end. Build reasons for them to be. Go ahead and write 2,000 words on the history of the kingdom...

IamMyrddin
on
Twitch

Always a
great
time

Single Step Gaming

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

All times Eastern

MON 7PM	TYRANNY OF DRAGONS	RE CAMPAIGN	GM: Jeffries
TUE 8PM	SPINESFUR	DAWNBREAKER	GM: Adam
WED 7PM	CHILDREN OF ELYSIUM	BLADES IN THE DARK	GM: Jeffries
THU 8PM	SALVAGE INC	SALVAGE UNION	GM: Morgan
FRI 8PM	SMALL PACKAGES	Stimulogram / SE	GM: Adam
SAT 7PM	Cyberpunk 2077	Cyberpunk 2077	GM: Adam
SUN 7PM	REMANNTS	Daggerhand	GM: Morgan

Join us on our channel
[youtube.com/@singlegaming](https://www.youtube.com/@singlegaming)



Join the Quest

The beacon has been lit! On the 1st of the month we have our clips drawing!

All you need to do is take a clip to be entered in our give away!

For every 5 people who take a clip in the month we will draw a name! Those name get Mandur mail!

Here are some of our past winners!

Best of Luck!



SERVER
PETS



Send in yours by February 16th
in the SideBar pets channel!

13



Don't Build Worlds, Build Bookends (cont.)

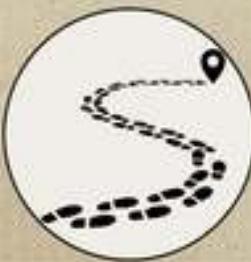
by W. Adam Clarke



but then put 1,000 words into the villain and WHY they're the BBEG, and then 500 words into the cult/faction they lead and some of the lieutenants, and 500 words into the location itself where the final battle will be. Paint a more complete picture of where you want the game to go, and not just the setting.

Since doing this, my campaign completion rate is nearly perfect. Amazingly, if players are more invested in the story and not just their own characters, they'll be more apt to find ways to get around the Scheduling BBEG, because they're more invested in killing your Final Boss in the game. Build your antagonists. Build your settings. Build your challenges. Make the things your players won't see for a year or two as equally colorful and awe inspiring as the things they only really see for the first month. This will ensure the game stays fresh and exciting. Even if you're the only person who knows those details, and you have to sit on them for months or years... when the PCs run into them, they'll be fresh and new and exciting, and just as well planned out as the start of your campaign.

I challenge all of you to try this, and stop by either Mandy's stream or ours at Twitch.tv/SingleStepGaming and let us know how it goes! We love hearing about your successes too, and you might just find a couple tricks we don't know yet as well! Good luck, and may all your dice be crits. See you next month!



W. Adam Clarke
Can be found on
SingleStepGaming

SIDE BAR PRESS

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DUNGEONS MASTERS
For Dungeon Masters

Grim Grixus

Saturday Squad Night 8pm CST
GrimGrixus on Twitch

From My Forge to Yours

By EndYourStreamTV

Homebrewing magic items is one of the fastest ways to make a campaign feel personal. A single, well-crafted item can hint at lost civilizations, reinforce a character's identity, or turn a routine dungeon into a story your table will repeat for years. It's also one of the quickest ways to accidentally warp your game. A "simple" cloak that grants constant advantage, a sword that stacks too many additives, or a utility item that invalidates exploration can quietly push a party's power curve off a cliff. The good news is that item design isn't guesswork, it's a craft, and like any craft, it improves with a clear framework.

This series is built to give you that framework.

Before we talk numbers, rarities, or specific mechanics, we need to define the foundation: **setting**, **rule set**, **rarity**, and **power scaling**. These aren't separate checkboxes; they're four gears in the same machine. Turn one without the others and things grind.

Setting is where balance begins, because setting determines what "normal" looks like. A low-magic frontier where a +1 weapon is a legendary relic will treat magic items as plot devices, objects with names, histories, and consequences. A high-fantasy metropolis with enchanters on every corner treats items like equipment upgrades. If you don't decide which world you're building for, you can't judge whether your item is a treasured artifact, a convenient tool, or a casual purchase. Setting also shapes tone: a whimsical fey trinket should feel different from a grim relic forged during a divine war, even if the mechanics are similar.

Next comes the **rule set**, the physics engine your item lives inside. Different games (and even different editions of the same game) value bonuses, action economy, and resource management in very specific ways. An effect that seems minor on paper can be enormous if it bypasses concentration, stacks with common





Member Showcase!

JayBlurr

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

Favorite color?

Teal & Purple

Tell us about your hobbies?

TTRPGs, Video Games, Karaoke

Do you have any Pets?

Two currently, Tuxedo Cat named Ozzie, and Golden Retriever named Thea. I had a Dachshund named Kobe who past away last year after being with me for 13

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

RPGs and Strategy Games. I like games that allow me to play how I want to play and I find a well thought plan to outplay an opponent more satisfying than quicker reactions or a better aim

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

Warcraft 3, An RTS game with some of the best lore and story, mechanics easy to learn but hard to master, and many ways to achieve success through tactical and creative solutions

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

I played baseball when I was younger. I was a pitcher and not half bad. I have some headlines and photos in the local newspaper where I played and even got interviewed for a TV news article...for the Philippines though...

**Anything Else?**

My real name is Jerald, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HM2efv2e58&list=LL&index=169> (link to that news article I'm in)



From My Forge to Yours
(cont.)
By EndYourStreamTV

features, or repeats without meaningful cost. This is why the same item may be fair at one table and oppressive at another. Your rules determine what's rare, what's spammable, and what the party can already do without your help.

Then we have **rarity**, which should be more than a label. Rarity is a promise to the players about frequency, impact, and tradeoffs. Common and uncommon items often shine best when they offer new options rather than raw power: small utility, niche bonuses, or flavorful mechanics that reward creativity. Rare and very rare items can reshape encounters, but they should do so in ways that still preserve spotlight balance across the party. Legendary items should feel like campaign pillars—powerful, yes, but also earned, storied, and often tied to complications or responsibilities.

Finally, **power scaling** answers the question: “When does this stop being fun?” Scaling isn’t only about bigger numbers; it’s about how an item grows relative to character features, spell access, and encounter difficulty. A level 3 party gaining flight is different from a level 13 party gaining flight. An at-will effect is different from a limited-charge effect. And an item that improves consistency (advantage, rerolls, save bonuses) can be more impactful than one that improves damage.

In the articles ahead, we’ll break each of these pillars down into practical tools: how to choose the right baseline for your world, how to avoid action-economy traps, how to use rarity as a balancing lever, and how to scale items so they stay exciting, without stealing the game. Because the best magic items don’t just make characters stronger, they make the story sharper.



The Mandurlorians

Live
5pm CST
On Twitch

YOUR STORY ISN'T OVER
ROLL IN

Charity Night

3rd Wednesday of the month

\$15 per spot

\$10 of every spot
goes to the Charity
Message Mandy
for a spot!

KS FOR WARRIOR

Cool Greek Myths



By Mini Cloud

Prometheus: Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus were Titans, members of race of giants. At the beginning of time the gods fought an amazing battle with the Titans to decide who could rule the universe. The gods won. Most of the Titans were destroyed.

The gods created Earth out of the dead Titans. Their bones became the rocks and mountains. Their blood became the sea lakes and rivers. Their eyes became the stars, and their hair, the grass and trees. Prometheus and his brother fought alongside the gods. And in their reward was the task of filling the world with animals.

Living forms already crawled the earth but they were pale and shapeless creatures. Zeus, the ruler of the gods, asked Epimetheus to give all of the creatures a gift and Prometheus to inspect them.

Epimetheus eagerly handed out gifts, to some he gave the gift of flying, some received the gift of swimming, others received sharp teeth and claws. Others received the ability to run fast, dig deep, and to jump high. Some got scales and shells, the lion's mane, the zebras' stripes, the elephant's trunk, the peacock's tail, and the leopard's spots were all received by Epimetheus.

At last, all the gifts had been handed out. Epimetheus called for his brother to come look over what he had done.

"This is good work," said Prometheus. Then he noticed two weak, naked creatures crawling on the floor. "What about these? These are human beings. Don't you have a gift for them?"

"I never noticed them...I forgot all about them," stammered Epimetheus. "What can we do? I've given all of Zeus's gifts to the other animals. There is nothing left."

"We must find something," said Prometheus, "If we don't, they will be the lowest, miserable creatures on Earth."

continue- next newsletter

□□ Thank you for reading my article! □□

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 wonderful to work with. Every month I get so excited to see what she will come up with next!

FOR SALE

ad space Available

email: rpgidebar@gmail.com





So you want to fight a monster? This month, we are going to talk about mythology again! Minotaurs! This topic is brought up simply because of what this month's monster is, a minotaur with a secret... Minotaurs originate from Greek mythology, originally described as a half-man, half-bull creature, whose head is that of a bull and the rest of its body is that of a man. Now, D&D, in general, shifts them to be humanoid bull-like creatures, which still fits the bill. But minotaurs are interesting in the sense that they may not always be evil. So let's dive into how you would fight them. They are a pretty basic kind of creature to tussle with, boasting minor combat abilities. What makes minotaurs truly terrifying is their horns. Once they get moving, in a straight line, they can add damage to their gore attack, and at low levels, where you would find these creatures, that would be devastating. The only other cause for concern from a minotaur is that they commonly wield great axes that cause massive amounts of carnage and damage. Now, let's talk about an interesting trait of the minotaur: their labyrinthine recall. This ability allows them to always recall any path they travel, so put the party in a maze that a few minotaurs have travelled through, and you suddenly have a high-stakes chase and a party panicking to get out! This one trait alone adds a lot of versatility to the minotaur itself, suddenly you can have a band of marauders and thieves that is able to follow any path as long as they've travelled it once, suddenly you have a hit squad that may be tracking the party, and depending on how well travelled they are as minotaurs... well... the party may have some trouble on the horizon. All in all, I think that minotaurs are a fun lower CR monster; they can be used to create suspense, cause mayhem, and overall give life to your adventure.

From one DM to the players,
GrimGrix



GREYBEARD GUILD
on **Twitch**
DMGeezerJim & DM GetOffMacCloud
Discussing 50 years of D&D lore,
tactics, and classic adventures



SATURDAY NIGHTS
11:30 PM TO 1:30 AM

twitch.tv/getoffmaccloud



"Come learn some shit"

-DM Cloud

Check Out past sessions
on
rpgsidebar.com



Next months
deadline
February
16th

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Papa Sparkles	DMGeezerJim
Mini Cloud	
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Skyline	
SingleStepGaming	
OldManGeras	
TheBurlyEarl	





The Great Usurpation

Why Hell is Swapping Armies for Accountants

By GetOffMacCloud

The Silence of the Frontier

Travelers trekking the Black Road toward Parnast generally steel themselves for the authentic, grit-under-the-fingernails squalor of the Savage Frontier. They expect the honest filth of mud-slicked roads, the pungency of livestock, and the jagged tension of a region perpetually recovering from dragon-fire and giant-wars. What they find instead is a scene of unsettling, sanitized perfection. The Frontier's mud has been purged, replaced by cold, bone-white marble; the air no longer carries the scent of woodsmoke, but is instead thick with a cloying, artificial lavender, the olfactory equivalent of a burial shroud. There are no screams, no smoke, and no clashing steel. There is only a terrifying, industrial silence.

The Nine Hells have arrived, but the legions of pit fiends have been checked at the gate in favor of something far more efficient. This is the

"Great Defalcation," a systematic, industrial soul-embezzlement orchestrated by Glasya, Archduchess of Malbolge. Rather than squandering infernal capital on a messy, high-overhead siege, Glasya has deployed the Society of the Velvet Hand to perform a silent audit of the living. It represents a chilling paradigm shift in planar conquest: a hostile takeover masquerading as a civil service. In the "Osseian Pact," Hell has realized that it is far more profitable to balance the books of a world until there is nothing left than it is to burn it down.

The Bureaucracy of Damnation

At the heart of this occupation is the "Divine Audit." The Society of the Velvet Hand presents itself not as a cult, but as a stabilizing merchant conglomerate. Its origins are deceptively mundane, tracing back to the high-society perfumeries of Silverymoon, specifically *The Gilded Lily*, where its founder, the

disenfranchised elven diplomat Valerius "The Weaver" Thalel, first sought to blend hellish efficiency with mortal bureaucracy.

The Society's agents, charismatic bureaucrats known as Justiciars and gauze-wrapped technicians called Weavers, offer the war-weary people of Parnast a chance to "unburden" themselves of guilt, trauma, and stress. In a region where survival is a daily agony, the promise of spiritual relief is a more potent weapon than a hellfire blade.

"The Society must operate like a velvet glove, hiding a fist of iron underneath. We do not pillage; we manipulate the market until the village has no choice but to sell itself to us."

By framing soul-harvesting as a necessary "stabilization" of assets, the Society bypasses traditional defenses. The villagers of Parnast do not flee from the auditors; they queue up to sign their contracts with a sigh of relief, offering their very essence as collateral for a peace they cannot afford.



Braknor Skullrend



By GrimGrixx

Braknor began his tale much like any other adventurer. He sought the wonders of the world and wanted nothing more than to explore the broad horizons beyond his tribal grounds. So he gathered his supplies and trekked forth, not knowing what his life would become and not knowing how twisted his fate was. Braknor started his work in the local villages, as a craftsman, he was able to find small work. Fixing ploughs and tools, Braknor made a small fortune with his hard work and dedication, and with that he got his gear to adventure.

He set out to begin righting the wrongs he saw in the world, meeting up with a band of like minded adventurers, they struck the path stemming corruption and darkness wherever they may meet it. They fought all manner of vile creatures, from giant spiders, to goblins, to minor devils and demons. However, their actions did not begin to go unnoticed... for where light fights the dark, greater darkness begins to watch. Braknor and his band did not know the events they had set in motion, and the last fight of their lives lay before them one fateful night.

Braknor had received a tip from a small hamlet, a black knight was claiming territory and causing the woe and destruction of these people. So they party struck out to face this knight, but they were vastly unprepared for what came to be. The knight met

them in the field, and one by one Braknor watched as his party fell, the friends he had made stripped of life and light. Left standing alone against the darkness the knight took one final swing and then the sword stopped barely kissing the nape of his neck, it was at that moment Braknor was given an offer, one to serve the knight and his master, to bring about the end of his old self and in the forge of hellfire become something new, and thus the pact was struck.

Braknor had found new purpose, serving the dark biddings of the black knight he once sought to end, Braknor soon garnered a second name. From the fires and ash of the hamlet he once sought to save, Braknor Skullrend was born. The hellfire leaping from his axe and eyes, bargaining nothing but death and despair to those who would oppose him. In the fading of light, darkness consumes, but sometimes the darkness is a cruel mistress, and it takes the good and twists it into a greater evil. They say Braknor Skullrend still wanders these plains, and should you come across him beware, he is not who he once was, and you best be prepared to fight for your life.



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The Great Usurpation

(cont)

By Tora @
GetOffMacCloud

The Aesthetics of Erasure

The horror of Parnast lies in its unnatural equilibrium. The village has been transformed into a "marble tomb," a process facilitated by local assets like Baron Griselda. At her tavern, The Golden Tankard, the "cleansed" populace is kept docile with Equilibrium Ale, a sedative that ensures the "liquidated assets" remain compliant while their marrow is siphoned.

Hanging 300 feet above the town is the Baatorian Sluice, a monolithic obsidian shard that acts as a planar straw. It drinks the Shining Mythal, the golden celestial light that once protected the Savage Frontier, and uses that stolen energy to fuel a literal "rebranding" of reality. This is the "Copper Bleed": a phenomenon where trees, soil, and flesh turn into brittle metal and stone. This is not mere decay; it is the physical manifestation of Glasya's plan to graft her infernal abattoir, Cuproset, directly onto the Material Plane. In this New Parnast, beauty is merely the aesthetic of liquidation.

The Physics of Emotion

The Society's most insidious tool is the "Noise Tracker." In the cold logic of the Great Defalcation, humanity, specifically magic, defiance, and strong emotion, is categorized as "Noise," or spiritual friction that reduces the efficiency of the harvest.



When an individual exhibits too much creativity or resistance, they generate "Noise." If they hit the Level 10 threshold, they are marked for "Stabilization." This process involves the Weavers using "Stitch-Magic" to drive copper needles, or Defalcating Spiles, into the earth to extract soul-marrows. Only a few "noisy" souls remain, such as Grizmek Ironbeard at the Iron Marrow smithy, whose stubborn grief acts as a mechanical error in the Society's perfect ledger. To the Velvet Hand, a human life is not a soul to be tempted, but a data point to be smoothed over.

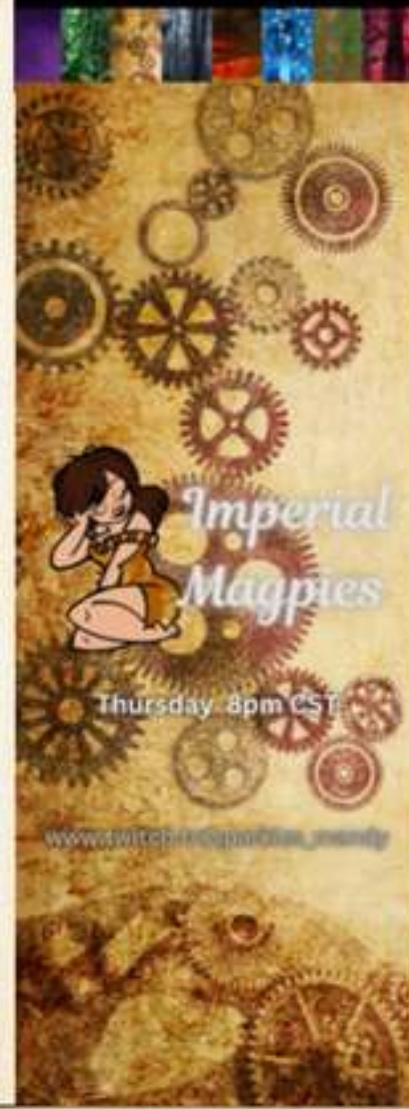
The Ethics of the "Hollow Victory"

The "corporate" cruelty of this operation is enforced by the **Argent Sentinel**, a "White Menace" sent from the layer of Cania to shepherd these soul-assets and eliminate interlopers. This enforcer ensures that the flow of marrow continues toward the Processing Nodes, high-altitude plateaus that serve as the physical ledger-books for the operation.



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BAKNOR SKULLREND

Large fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 125 (14d10 + 70)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Charge. If Braknor moves at least 10 feet straight forward and then hits with a gore attack on the same turn the target takes an extra 2d10 piercing damage. If the target is a creature it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed back up to 15 feet away and be knocked prone. If the creature is unable to move the 15ft due to an object in the path, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for one round.

Labyrinthine Recall. Braknor can perfectly recall any path he has traveled.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, Braknor can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls he makes during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Magic Resistance. Braknor has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Braknor makes two greataxe attacks, he can choose to replace any number with a gore attack.

Infernal Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or construct, it must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose 6 (1d12) hit points at the start of each its turns due to an infernal wound. Each time Braknor hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 6 (1d12). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a

successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Gore. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Blasting Slam (Recharge 5-6). Braknor slams his greataxe into the ground and channels the energy of the Nine-Hells through the attack, all creatures within 15 feet of Braknor must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 27 (6d8) fire damage and be stunned, half as much damage on a successful save, and no stunned condition.



The Great Usurpation

(cont)

By Tora @
GetOffMacCloud

When investigators finally reach these nodes to halt the ritual, they are met with a devastating moral dilemma. Destroying the copper rods of a Processing Node stops the siphoning and releases the stolen souls to their rightful afterlives. However, the physical bodies of the "Cleansed" back in Parnast are tethered to this machinery. Shattering the node saves the soul but kills the body instantly. The "victors" are left not with a liberated village, but with a silent museum of marble and lavender. Hell ensures that even a tactical defeat results in a total loss of mortal assets.

Parnast Was Only the Pilot Program

The most terrifying discovery, found in the records of the Defalcator-General currently stationed in Llorkh, is that Parnast was merely a "minor obstacle." The ledgers reveal that the village represented only a tiny percentage of the total projected yield. Parnast was a proof of concept, a pilot program for a continental audit. The Society of the Velvet Hand is already expanding into the larger cities of the Delimbiyr Vale, moving from frontier outposts to major economic hubs. They are siphoning soul-marrow on a scale that could eventually facilitate a total hostile takeover of the North, rebranding the world in the image of Cuproset.



The Ledger of the Future

The Great Defalcation teaches a grim lesson about the evolution of evil. The most dangerous threats to our world are no longer those that scream from the shadows or batter down the gates. They are the threats that arrive with a smile, a contract, and a sophisticated plan to unburden you of your worries. As the Society of the Velvet Hand continues its work in the Delimbiyr Vale, we must ask ourselves: would we recognize the "Velvet Hand" in our own lives? Would we realize our souls were being audited before the final stabilization began, or would we simply sit back and enjoy the cloying scent of lavender as our world turned to stone?



**Chill Vibes
for
Campaign Prep**

**@TheCafeDM
on
YouTube**

It's Just a Game, part 2

By DMGeezer Jim

Panic sets into their eyes as they do the mental math, "Guys, That thing flies at 60 feet, it's gonna move and dash, catch up with me, and then I'm gonna die alone down this hallway".

The group slumps in their chairs, chins resting on hands as tension and disappointment fill the air - great planning and great luck undone in one moment (as they see it). The elven cleric, with one last-ditch effort, proposes, "ok I can use my last 5th level slot on Banish, or I can save it for Raise Dead. If this goes sideways, we are all down anyway, so one spell doesn't matter."

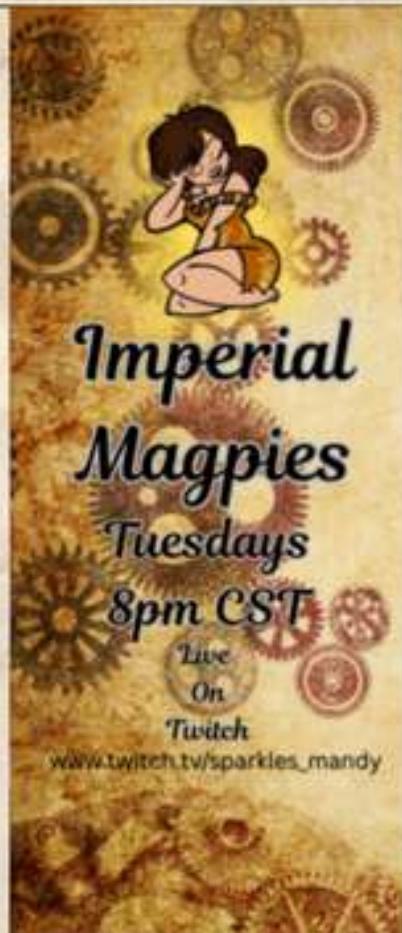
The party holds their breath, my Efreeti facing a DC19 spell save on their side - on my side is magic resistance and a +9 to save.

I am already a step ahead, worried about the next part of the encounter; the dwarf cleric likely dying, or at least losing concentration of the spell. That would have two now-freed elemental beasties closing in on the party from behind, sandwiching the remaining 5 players in a hallway with a mad Efreeti and lots of fire, and...it's just going to be bad. I mindlessly toss the dice, trying to figure out a way to salvage the moment, having already succeeded on this saving throw twice already. However, in the midst of all my thoughts, my worries are broken as the table screams, curses uttered, cries and yells echo in the room and into the shop beyond, and I focus back on my dice.

"EAT SHIT DM - FUCK YEAH AND F - YOU - DIE BITCH DIE" and several other ensuing descriptors of their excitement ring in the air. See, I had rolled a 7 and a 9 (with advantage), and the +9 gave me an 18. The party now knows there is NO threat, that they can sit there in the tunnel, curled into the fetal position for 10 rounds, and they would be safe, it would be over, that they survived and won. I couldn't help but to cheer alongside them, a big grin crossing my face. That moment, that one die roll, having 6 people suspended in time, watching the feelings show on their faces, hearing the emotions in their shouts, that is the "ideal" of what this game can be. We also have to remember in those moments, they aren't cursing us out as people, or even DM's - they are jeering the bad guys, the enemies.

I believe that this moment happened because, in that encounter, I focused on the idea that we are playing a GAME. The party had the encounter beat; it was just a matter of a few more rounds of combat and probably a PC death or two, followed by some sort of resurrection, and a return to normalcy. The encounter would have been fun, but likely not memorable. Rather than playing out the fight, I tried to find a way to build on the party's focus and tactics, raising the stakes and tension.

(Cont on pg 00)



Italian Sausage Stuffed Shells



By Brad Harris

Take it up a notch or two with these fabulous Italian Sausage stuffed shells. Each shell is stuffed with savory Italian sausage and an amazingly melty blend of three cheeses. The easy-to-make homemade marinara sauce brings it all together for that perfect bite!

Why You Will Love This Recipe

One of the main reasons I love this stuffed shells recipe is because it takes familiar ingredients and mixes them up into a totally amazing eye candy dish. Of course, it tastes amazing using everyday ingredients but visually, it just pops.

The whole family is going to love this dish and is very easy to modify to your particular likes. Want more cheese, no problem. You want to use ground turkey instead of Italian sausage, no big deal. It is super versatile without sacrificing taste.



Ingredients Needed

Nothing crazy here, including the homemade marinara sauce (see below). Simple ingredients making a fabulously tasting and visually appealing dish.



How To Make Italian Sausage Stuffed Shells

- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Place a large pot over high heat and boil the shells in salted water until about 2 minutes from al dente. Remove from the heat, drain, and run cold water over the noodles to stop the cooking. Drain again well and set them aside.
- In a large skillet over medium high heat, add 1 tbsp of olive oil (or your preferred oil to cook with). When shimmering, add the Italian sausage to the skillet. Add salt and pepper (to your preference) and Italian seasoning to the Italian sausage. Break it up into large pieces and allow them to brown up a bit before breaking into smaller pieces.

(cont on pg 32)



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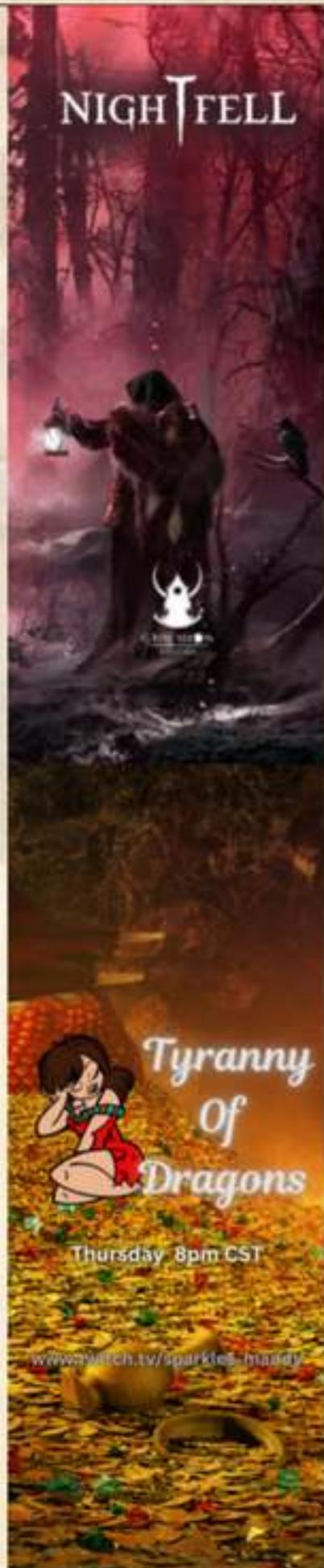
It's Just a Game, Part 2

By DMGeezerJim



I tend to try and minimize dice rolling (luck) when I can, but I think it is very important to let the dice tell the story in key moments. I don't think most players are sitting with bated breath, waiting for the next line of dialog or exposition, but they are definitely watching the dice roll. The encounter and the decisions that were made by everyone - players and DM alike - gave us one of those key moments, an opportunity for one last gamble by both sides. If the Efreeti makes the saving throw, it pounds on the fleeing cleric, freeing the two other elementals to engage the party, and possibly results in a TPK. A "smart" play would have been to engage the other Cleric, keeping them from being a factor, but I'm not trying to WIN this fight - I'm trying to build a challenging encounter and create a memorable moment.

I think GM/DM's need to look for opportunities like this to play WITH our characters and their plans within combat. We can play both sides - we can try to kill our PC's within their plans; we should be willing to walk past the hidden rogues and rangers, we should group 12 goblins in a 30-foot circle down range from the wizards, and we should let the zombies surround the clerics. We want our players to use their abilities and have their moments, and with creative play, we can accommodate those player choices and still have tense, exciting moments and encounters. DM's should always maintain a challenge in their encounters, and if the PC's get themselves into a situation that is lethal, we should ultimately play those encounters fairly as well. But never forget, this is a Game; as much as we love to build worlds and weave intricate stories, we never want to lose sight of those gameplay moments; we should always look for opportunities for our players to cheer themselves on!





The "War World" Origins

Here is the continuation of how Athas was forged, as told by its creators.
By Chase Street

Killing the "Tolkien" Tropes

The creators have spoken extensively about their "anti-Tolkien" agenda. They initially wanted to remove elves, dwarves, and dragons entirely to make the world truly alien.

The Marketing Pushback: TSR marketing insisted that a D&D product needed familiar races to sell.

The Malicious Compliance: The team brought them back, but "warped" them. They made Elves into nomadic, untrustworthy long-distance runners; Dwarves into hairless, obsessive workers; and Halflings into feral, jungle-dwelling cannibals.

The Dragon: Most notably, they decided there would only be one Dragon in the entire world—and it was a terrifying, god-like engine of destruction rather than a monster in a cave.

Why It Is "Forgotten" in 5e

In today's 5th Edition world, Dark Sun is conspicuously absent. While settings like Ravenloft and Spelljammer have been updated, Wizards of the Coast (WotC) has been

transparent about why Athas stays in the vault:

"Problematic" Themes: In a 2023 interview, WotC Executive Producer Kyle Brink explicitly stated that Dark Sun is "problematic" by modern standards. The setting's core themes—systemic slavery, genocidal "Cleansing Wars" in the lore, and forced breeding (the origin of the Mul race)—are difficult to reconcile with the current brand's push for inclusivity and safety.

The Survival Mechanics: Dark Sun was designed to be "Nintendo Hard." It encouraged "Character Trees" because death was so frequent. 5e is designed for heroic fantasy where players are very hard to kill, which clashes with the "thirst-and-despair" gameplay of Athas.

Psionics: The setting relies heavily on Psionics being as common as breathing. D&D 5e has struggled to implement a robust Psionics system that satisfies the "old school" feel while remaining balanced.

(cont on pg 31)



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Italian Sausage Stuffed Shells

By Brad Harris

- When the sausage is about halfway done (about 5 minutes), add the chopped onion and mix to combine. Continue to cook until no red remains. Drain, if needed.

Add the minced garlic and mix to combine. Cook for an additional minute until the garlic becomes fragrant. Place the cooked Italian sausage in a paper towel lined bowl and set aside.



- Add half the marinara sauce to a 9x13 casserole dish. Stuff each shell with a heaping tablespoon of the Italian sausage and cheese mixture and place into the casserole dish. If you have extra mixture, just keep stuffing the shells. It'll fit! We could fit 31 shells in our 9x13. You may have a couple more or a couple less.



- In a large bowl, add the ricotta cheese. Also, add half the mozzarella cheese and romano cheese. Reserve a bit of the Romano cheese to top the shells later. Stir well to combine. Add the (cooled) Italian sausage to the cheese mixture and mix well to combine.



- Add the remaining marinara sauce to the top of the stuffed shells, then top with the remaining mozzarella cheese (and Romano cheese). Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil, and continue to bake for 10 more minutes until the cheese is nice and melty!





The "War World" Origins (cont)

Here is the continuation of how Athas was forged, as told by its creators.
By Chase Street

The Battle System breakdown...

While Dark Sun was pitched to the TSR board as the "Battle System World," it very quickly evolved—or perhaps "escaped"—into something else entirely.

The reason it doesn't feel like a wargame setting is that the creators essentially pulled a "bait and switch" on TSR management to protect their creative vision.

1. The "Bait and Switch"

When Timothy Brown and Troy Denning were tasked with creating a world for the 2nd Edition relaunch of BATTLE_SYSTEM, they realized that a world designed purely for mass combat would be narratively thin.

They used the "War World" mandate to get the budget and the "blank check" for a new setting, but as soon as they started brainstorming with the artist Brom, they became far more interested

in the sociology of a dying world than in the mechanics of 100-vs-100 unit combat. They kept just enough "war" in the pitch to satisfy the executives, but they shifted the focus to "survival at the edge of a blade."

2. Why the Battle System was Abandoned

TSR did not officially "abandon" the Battle System during Dark Sun's development; rather, the market abandoned it.

The "Box Set" Era: By 1991, TSR was moving into the "Setting Box Set" era (Ravenloft, Planescape, Dark Sun). They found that players were buying these sets for the lore and the "vibe," not for tactical wargaming.

Early Integration: If you look at the very first Dark Sun modules—like DS1: Freedom and DS1: Slave Tribes—they actually did include Battle System stats for the NPCs and tribes. However, feedback showed that almost no one was actually using them. Players wanted to play the gladiators in the pit, not the general moving the pit-slaves like chess pieces.
(cont on pg 33)



Italian Sausage Stuffed Shells

By Brad Harris

- Remove from the oven and allow to set up for 5 minutes. Garnish with fresh basil or Italian parsley and serve. Optionally, add a sprinkle of Romano cheese as well (nothing wrong with that at all).



I think if you give this a whirl you will make this homemade stuffed shells recipe a regular for you and yours.



How To Make A Simple And Delicious Marinara Sauce

- We always recommend making a marinara sauce if possible. It will be better and give you total control of what goes in it. This quick recipe is so easy and is better than any bottled stuff you get off the shelf.
- The ingredients are simple. All you need is a can of crushed tomatoes, olive oil, onion, garlic, sugar, salt, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes. For the full amounts and instruction, see the recipe card.
- In a saucepan over medium heat, add 1 tbsp of olive oil. When shimmering, add the grated onion. Cook until the onion starts to become transparent, about 5 minutes. Adjust the heat if need, to avoid browning the onions.
- As this is cooking, add the kosher salt, sugar, red pepper flakes, and Italian seasoning to the crushed tomatoes. Mix them well to combine. I just add this stuff to the can of crushed tomatoes and hit it with an immersion blender.
- Next, add the garlic and cook for another minute, until the garlic becomes fragrant. Add the tomato sauce (with all the other ingredients) to the saucepan. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes.



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The "War World" Origins (cont)

Here is the continuation of how Athas was forged, as told by its creators.

By Chase Street

The Cost of Miniatures: Battle System was a miniatures game. Metal was scarce on Athas, but lead/pewter was expensive in real life. Asking D&D players to buy hundreds of miniatures for a single campaign was a high bar that the average 90s teenager couldn't clear.

3. The Shift to "Personal War"

Troy Denning and Tim Brown realized that "War World" worked better if the war was intimate. Instead of the Battle System's grand scale, they pivoted to the Character Tree system. Since the world was so deadly, they assumed your character would die. This created a "war of attrition" against the DM.

The "war" became:

- The Sorcerer-Kings vs. The People: A cold war of oppression.
- The Defilers vs. The Land: A biological war.
- The Player vs. The Environment: A war against thirst.

A vertical purple and black advertisement. At the top is a logo featuring a stylized dragon and the text "YOUR STORY ISN'T OVER ROLL IN". Below this is the text "Charity Night" and "3rd Wednesday of the month". Further down is the text "\$15 per spot" and "\$10 of every spot goes to the Charity Message Mandy for a spot!". At the bottom is a logo for "KS FOR WARRIOR" with a stylized "K" and "S".

A black sidebar with the text "SIDE BAR" in a large, stylized green font. Below the text is a small icon of a dragon. At the bottom is the website "rpgsidebar.com".

Random Rants w/Mandur

Lets Talk Manners!

As always this is one of my favorite subjects to write about but this time, I am going to approach this from a different angle. I have been doing more guest spots; I love it and getting a chance to play with new people and different DMs is amazing. So here is a list of the things I would NEVER do

I hear it now "but Mandy it wasn't like that" or "I think that is about me"

Honestly, it isn't I have been in this space for years and nothing I will bring up isn't anything I have seen once or goes to different games also. So here we go!

List of things I am not going to do:

- **Self Promote!**- it is rude, I don't go into other channels talking about my channel this IS poor form.
- **Insult the channel I am a guest at!**- Rude, for me this is a sure way to not get invited back. Also, why go somewhere to just be unkind?
- **Make comments about any money!**- This isn't something we should do live or in servers
- **Farming viewers or players!**- A quick way to get on the outs with any group

Now, of course if you are guesting in a channel for an interview, yes you are going to promote yourself. Even then I will try to talk about the things we do that isn't the same as the channel I am in.

Example) (both of us stream D&D) "Over on my channel we have silly things like OnlyFeats and Deck Pics, that we as a group love to laugh about!"

I will always maintain respect for the channel I am in, if it is in a stream, chat, or discord server.

Having manners is always something in my control



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