



REALMS

SIDE
BAR

Issue #21
May 2026

Credits

Lead Designer/ Producer/ Editor/ Graphic

Art: Sparkles_Mandy



Developers: GetOffMacCloud, GrimGrixis



Cover Art: sacredArtsDesigns

Made With



Usage Notice

All content published in Realms Magazine and created or distributed by RPG Sidebar, including but not limited to text, images, maps, logos, character designs, stat blocks, narrative material, mechanics, and digital assets, is the intellectual property of RPG Sidebar and its respective contributors unless otherwise noted.

Unauthorized reproduction, redistribution, adaptation, or commercial use of this material—whether in part or in whole—is strictly prohibited without express written permission. This includes reposting, republishing, or modifying content for use in public or private campaigns, digital products, or promotional materials.

The names "Realms Magazine" and "RPG Sidebar," along with their associated logos and branding elements, are protected under applicable copyright, trademark, and intellectual property laws.

We aggressively defend our rights and will pursue legal action against any individual or entity found to be infringing upon our intellectual property.

If you are interested in licensing content, reprinting materials, or collaborating, please contact us at rpgsidebar@gmail.com.

All articles are here thanks to our wonderful Writers Guild

EndYourStreamTV	Coffee&DragonsRPG
SexySloth	DMGeezerJim
GetOffMacCloud	ChaseStreet
Papa Sparkles	CritCrafters
Mini Cloud	BluePhoenixRPG
Lindsay_Lou	GrimGrixis
Skyline	JimKBones
SingleStepGaming	Bruengall
OldManGeras	
TheBurlyEarl	





REALMS

Contents

Player News	4
Channel News	5
Xaretuls	6
Character Writing	10
New game, who you?	13
Character Deaths	15
Theros	16
NPC Build	18
Member Showcase	19
Mini Cloud	20
Wanna Fight a Monster	21
D&D for Newbz	23
Dark Sun	24
Cover Monster	25
Ravnica	27
From My Forge	30
Recipe	32
Game Review	33
Astromundi	36
Comic	40
Random Rants	41



Fellowship/Cult News

May in full swing!

We have another busy month! with the addition of our first "Server Only" campaign. The Caffeinated Chronicles will be serving freshly brewed sessions the first two Wednesdays of every month at 6pm CST.

Also, we will have our first YouTube only campaign. This campaign will be our first time stepping into the world of Humblewood.

Greyhawk UNV: Field studies will also be having its first sessions this month on some select Tuesdays. If you would like to join contact Mandy.

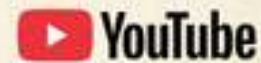
Our Charity Table

April, We had a guest, Nick from K9s for Warriors! It was so great having him with us and together we raised \$702.00!

Charity Night this month is on May 20th at 8pm CST. Slots have been filling up fast so plan and book with Mandy.

One shots! If you would like to join in the fun contact Mandy or Cloud! It is from one shots we pick most players for campaigns!

Want to see them? check out @rpgsidebar on



Manhattan



Ingredients

- 2 oz. Whiskey (preferably rye for its spicy character)
- 1 oz. Sweet vermouth
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- Maraschino cherry (for garnish)

Directions

- Fill your mixing glass with ice.
- Pour the whiskey, sweet vermouth, and bitters over the ice.
- Stir the mixture gently for about 30 seconds to chill and dilute the drink slightly.
- Strain the cocktail into your chilled martini glass or over fresh ice in a rocks glass.
- Garnish with a maraschino cherry.



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
rpgsidebar@gmail.com





From The Channel

In the Channel, we have had so many great changes recently. With 3 campaigns starting in April, we have 3 new overlays and we will have some new one for the month of May!

It is also that time of year when I start thinking on how to plan out our Summer break so please keep an eye out for more information on that.

We will also have some new Items showing up in our merch shop. I do not have a set time for the drops but, if you are an oversprinkled member in the server you will be first to know!

Card Packs:

As a Streamloots Partner, we make a 90-10 split on all cards purchased. That's why it's a great way to support streamers!

Emotes: This month, we will be adding foxes for steps in Humblewood! 5 will be added to the channel on the first.



NEW RELEASE DISTROKID

NOW AVAILABLE

Spotify MUSIC YouTube



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?

Getting an ad with us is easy and affordable!

send any questions to rpgsidebar@gmail.com



Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame

Chapter 10: The Weight of Leadership

By EndYourStreamTV

The morning had arrived with a cool breeze sweeping through the camp, the sun barely rising above the horizon. Kira and Arian sat together at the edge of their campfire, the soft crackle of embers in the silence around them. Their journey had only just begun, and yet already, the weight of their roles felt heavier than anything they had known before.

Kira was the first to speak, her voice quiet but steady. "

Arian... do you ever wonder if we're ready for this?" Her eyes were distant, her thoughts clearly elsewhere, but she wasn't talking to herself, she was talking to him. Her brother. Her first follower. The one who had stood by her side through everything.

Arian, ever the optimist, shrugged and grinned.

"We'll learn as we go, won't we? Besides, we've got Mr. Xar with us. We're never really alone." He patted the ring on his finger, the emblem of the black sword and the fire mask gleaming in the morning light. "We just have to be the people he believes we can be."

Kira smiled, though it didn't quite reach her eyes. She glanced at the others, Nicholas, Calean, Garuth, Auriel, and Sandra, all of them still learning to find their place in this new world. The responsibility of leading them weighed heavily on her heart.

"You're right," she said softly. "We just have to believe in ourselves as much as they believe in us. But sometimes it feels like... like I'm not enough. I have this power, but I'm still just me. What if I fail them? What if I fail Mr. Xar?"

Arian leaned forward, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"Then we'll pick ourselves back up. You're not alone in this, Kira. We're a team. And I believe in you, just like Mr. Xar believes in us."

Kira looked at him, her little brother, the boy who had always looked up to her. And now, they were both leaders in their own right. She had to be strong, not just for the others, but for herself. She had to be the High Priestess she was meant to be, not the scared girl who had once lived in fear.

Kira's Path

Kira stood before the others, her heart pounding in her chest. Today, she was going to do it. She was going to lead them. The weight of the title she had been given, High Priestess, felt real now, its significance hitting her harder than she had expected. She wasn't just the keeper of Xaretul's heart. She was the leader of his faith, the one who would carry his message to others.

She had been reading the book, the one that Xaretul had left for her, every night. It wasn't just stories; these were the lessons of a god, his teachings, his wisdom. And she had to make them real. She had to bring them back to life for the others.

"Alright," Kira said, standing tall. "Today, we're going to take the first step. We're going to teach the others about what Xaretul has shown us. His love, his power, and the faith he's given us."

She looked out at the others, who stood in a circle around her, their eyes full of questions, full of hope. (cont on page 9)



PLATE UP!



NEW GAMES



ROCK LIFE



CATS & CUPS



ORDER UP!



WZ WINS



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

One Shot Recap



By Dragon Teacup

The Subs wake up extra early to take on a new quest - Cash Only, no questions asked. The Subs...asked questions. As they approached Big Mo, the giant Warforged Collusus in the scrapyard, and rang the bell, an old man named Evanezzer came out to ask them for help. Under Big Mo was a tunnel, and there were some rumours surrounding it. Get in, find out what's what, and get out. Well, a poison spray trap, a bunch of naked bodies covered in flammable material, and a sudden assault from some thugs is what apparently awaited The Subs. Zephyryne unfortunately fell in the battle. In the next room, a Doctor named Constor Kiggenblatz was able to revive Zephy by giving her a new metallic heart, at the cost of some of her flight speed, and brought her back to the land of the living. As the Subs graciously accepted a level up and left the tunnel, the Subs found Evanezzer riddled with arrows, dead.

This recap is from one of our Friday one shot sessions! If you would like to roll into the fun?

Or hop in watch it live!

*Join the SideBar
Discord!*



If you would like to follow Dragon_Teacup and keep up with the rest of of the Dump Stat check them out on Twitch!



Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame (cont)

By EndYouStreamTV

Sandra - The Unseen Protector

"You all have been given a gift, a blessing. And it's time we share that gift with others. We won't just be followers anymore. We will be the ones to guide others toward the faith that has saved us."

The children nodded, their expressions a mix of uncertainty and eagerness. Kira could feel their uncertainty. She had it too, but she wouldn't let it stop her. She couldn't. Not when they all looked to her for guidance.

"We start small," she continued. "We spread the word, we help those who need it. We show them the love Mr. Xar has shown us. We're not just building a faith, we're building a family. And family doesn't abandon each other."

Arian's Path

Arian watched Kira, his sister, take her place as their leader, and something stirred within him. He had always admired her strength, even when she didn't see it in herself. But now, seeing her stand before them, he knew she was exactly who they needed. And he, he had his own role to play.

It wasn't just about being a warrior. It wasn't just about fighting and protecting. It was about more than that.

Arian had always been the one to jump into action without thinking, but now, with this new title of Warrior of Faith, he realized he had to be more than a protector. He had to be a guide, someone who showed others how to stand up for themselves, just as Xaretul had done for him.

Later that day, Arian found himself standing beside Nicholas, the youngest boy, watching as he fumbled with his makeshift practice sword.

"You don't need to be perfect, Nicholas," Arian said, his voice light but encouraging. "You just have to try. And keep trying."

Nicholas looked up at him, eyes wide. "But I don't know how... I'm not like you. Or Kira. I'm not... strong enough."

Arian smiled, kneeling down to meet his eye level. "Being strong doesn't mean being the biggest or the toughest. It means having the courage to stand up when it's hard. You've got that courage, Nicholas. I can see it."

Nicholas hesitated, looking at the sword again, but this time, he raised it with more confidence.

"I'll try," he said, his voice small but firm.

Arian nodded, his heart swelling with pride. He had been given the title of Warrior of Faith, but it wasn't just about the sword, it was about teaching others to be strong in their own way, to stand up for each other and themselves.

"I'll always be here to help," Arian said, standing tall again. "Just like Xaretul is always here for us."

(cont on page 11)



Chill Vibes
for
Campaign Prep

@TheCafeDM
on
YouTube




PATREON

Magic Items, Maps, and
Monsters!

And One Shot Adventure
Every Month!

Patreon.com/Sparkles_Mandy

MADE BY
DUNGEONS MASTERS
For Dungeon
Masters



Althiera Skyrend



Character Writing

By SexySlothh

Race: Astral Elf

Class: Retired Fighter now Armory owner

Althiera Skyrend had once measured her days in heartbeats, each one a wager against death. Now she measured them in coin, conversation, and the slow polish of steel.

Her shop clung to a narrow curve of Sigil's impossible streets, wedged between a door that never opened twice to the same place and a bakery that sold bread which whispered secrets when torn. Above her door hung a simple sign: Skyrend Armory. No flourish, no boasting. Those who needed her would find her.

The bell chimed as a trio of adventurers stepped inside, still smelling of soot and poor decisions.

Althiera didn't look up immediately. She ran an oiled cloth along the edge of a longsword, checking for imperfections by touch alone.

"Welcome," she said, voice steady, low. "If you're bleeding, try not to drip on the shields."

The tallest of them, a tiefling with one cracked horn, laughed nervously. "We heard you've got gear that doesn't fail."

Althiera set the blade down and finally met his eyes. Hers were a pale gray, like stormlight seen through ash. "Everything fails," she replied. "The question is whether it fails before you do."

They shifted, uncertain. She rose, her movements economical, betraying none of her years but all of her experience. The scars on her arms weren't hidden; they were a ledger written in flesh.

She guided them through the shop, pausing at pieces that mattered. Not the flashy, over-enchanted nonsense that sang too loudly of magic, but the quiet, dependable tools of survival. A breastplate balanced to turn a killing blow into a bruise. A dagger that kept its edge even in the choking dust of the Lower Planes.

Boots that would not betray their wearer on slick cobblestones or stranger terrain.

"Where are you bound?" she asked.

"Outlands," the tiefling said. "Then... wherever the job takes us."



Althiera nodded once. She handed the smallest of them, a human girl barely into her twenties, a short sword. The girl took it awkwardly. Gesturing for her to give it a swing, it is a bit awkward but she obliges. "Again," Althiera said.

The girl blinked. "I didn't—"

"Hold it like you intend to live," Althiera cut in.

There was no harshness in her tone, only certainty. The girl adjusted her grip. Better.

Althiera allowed herself the faintest hint of approval. "Good. Remember that. Weapons aren't for winning. They're for not dying long enough to find another way."

The tiefling glanced around. "You ever miss it? The fighting?"

For a moment, the shop seemed quieter, the distant hum of Sigil pressing in. Althiera returned to the counter, picking up the longsword once more. "Every morning," she said. "And every night, I'm grateful I survived it."

They paid, thanked her, and left, the bell chiming once more as Sigil swallowed them whole. Althiera stood still for a while after they were gone. Then she reached for another blade, preparing to sharpen it, while waiting for the next group to enter her shop...



Xaretul: The Forgotten Flame (cont)

By EndYouStreamTV

Sandra - The Unseen Protector

Kira and Arian Together

That evening, after the day's lessons and practice, Kira and Arian sat together by the fire, watching the others practice what they had learned. The camp felt different now, alive with purpose, filled with the whispers of faith and the steady steps of children learning to trust in their god and in each other.

"Arian, do you think we're doing the right thing?" Kira asked quietly, her voice still tinged with uncertainty.

Arian looked at her, his expression serious for once. "I think we're doing the only thing we can do. We're showing them what we've learned. We're showing them the love Mr. Xar has shown us."

Kira smiled at him, her heart swelling with pride. "You're right. We're not alone. Not anymore."

They sat there together, the fire crackling softly between them, as the night stretched on. They were beginning to understand what it meant to lead, not through power or authority, but through love, through faith.

And together, they would carry Xaretul's message, spreading his light to the world, one step at a time.



LIVE SESSION

Sundays 5pm CST

twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy



PATREON

Magic Items, Maps, and
Monsters!

And One Shot Adventure
Every Month!

Patreon.com/Sparkles_Mandy

MADE BY
DRAGON MASTERS
For Dungeon
Masters





One Shot Recap

By EndYourStreamTV

The day began beneath a bleak and miserable sky, with rain falling over the graveyard like the world itself was mourning. The party had made camp outside the cemetery, hoping to rest before attempting entry into the crypt. But sleep brought little peace. They awoke to the sound of the dead moving in the dark, more than there had been the night before.

Just outside the shack sat a new face.

Uncertain whether this stranger was friend or foe, Tavax immediately readied an eldritch blast. Fortunately, the newcomer spoke as an ally, offering assistance in the party's quest to enter the crypt. With another blade, or body, added to their number, the group moved toward the graveyard's front gate.

At first, stealth favored them. The rain, the darkness, and the mud helped conceal their approach. But fortune is fickle, and several members of the party lost their footing in the slick earth. The silence was broken. The gates of the graveyard opened. The dead stirred.

And combat began.

The paladin, in a manner only a paladin could truly manage, charged straight into danger with no regard for life, limb, or basic strategy. Brave? Certainly. Wise? Not even slightly.

The undead swarmed. The cleric burned through healing magic as quickly as the dead could tear into the party. When her healing was spent, only damage remained. The barbarian, cleric, paladin, paladin-ranger-thing, and warlock fought against the rising tide of corpses, each strike buying only a few more precious moments.

As the battle turned against them, Tavax saw the result becoming painfully clear. In a rare moment of loyalty, or perhaps tactical investment, he shielded the paladin from harm. Then, with survival taking priority, he began to fall back.

Some battles are won in the field. Some are better discussed later in a tavern.

Tavax called for a tactical withdrawal and moved to safer ground, hurling eldritch blasts from afar as he retreated. One way or another, he was getting out. The party? Well... if necessary, they could serve as valuable distractions.

When the group finally extracted itself from the graveyard, the air was heavy with more than rain. Disappointment lingered over them. A party affiliate had fallen. The new ally was dead.

But death, in this cursed place, rarely means the end.

Unbeknownst to the party, their fallen companion would rise again, not as a friend, but as a necromancer. Another problem for another day.

From within Tavax's bag, Zari, his best friend and benefactor, screamed in anger, furious at his performance and his failure to complete what had been promised. With wounds fresh and morale shaken, the party retreated to Marais d'Tarascon.

Another day. Another fight. The dead still walk. And the crypt still waits.

Until next time, friends...

The dead walk this plane in groups amassed,
Some are moving slowly, and some are moving fast.
Don't blink your eyes or lose your place,
Or among the undead may be your place.



New game, who you?



(AI image for campaign use)



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, let's look at things from a player perspective. Something that happens when you expand your hobby past your own small group of friends: playing at a new table.

If anyone's wondering about the inspiration for this article... I'm doing it myself on the channel on Monday nights. Let's hope I don't need that reroll anytime soon! It's normal to be apprehensive playing in a new group- whether online, at your FLGS, or someone else's at-home table. Even more if you're newer to the hobby. So, I want to share a few tips and tricks that have helped me in the past, and hopefully will this month!

1- Don't take it seriously.

Remember you're there to have fun, and so is everyone else. They know you're new, there's going to be group in-

jokes you don't know, there might be things the GM does differently than you're used to, etc. Yes, you're going to stick out for a while. Yes, that's also fine. Likely they expected it, so don't worry about it.

2- Keep it Simple.

Try to play something you're comfortable with- don't stray outside your comfort zone with that first character, because the table itself likely will be. Stay to ideas you're comfortable and experienced with. Personally, I like to avoid playing magic casting classes on a new table because of their complexity. Give yourself less to have to focus on, so you can keep your attention on the new people and their methods of interacting.

3- Try to fill a gap. If you're joining an existing table, odds are they have assigned roles. Even if your preference is a role that's already filled, try to find something they don't have and focus on that.

Making yourself "useful" is an easier way to endear yourself to a new group, while making yourself "redundant" will make it harder to do so.

(Cont on page 17)

Jam Myrddin
on
Twitch

Always a
great
time



SINGLE STEP GAMING
twitch.tv/
singlestepgaming

PROGRAM SCHEDULE
ALL TIMES EASTERN

Sun 7pm Spinespur
Blades in the Dark

Mon off
(Watch us on Sparkles_Mandy)

Tues 8pm Neonheart
Daggerheart

Wed 8pm Indie Spotlight
Stoneburner

Thurs 8pm Throwback Thursday
All Humans Must Be Entertained

Fri 7pm TBD
D&D 5E

Sat off




SERVER PETS



Send in yours by May 18th
in the SideBar pets channel!





How to play your character to an epic death...



By Bruengall

Many players figure out how to max their characters and make them an effective tool to crush the dungeon. Picture this: you have created your cleric. Perfected his spells. Gained incredible armor and a magical hammer for proactive healing (dead enemies can't do damage). You have not only survived a few adventures but have thrived. Now your party finds itself in a graveyard, against an overwhelming number of undead and a witch casting spells. You know this is going to be a rough fight, and you might not make it out. What do you do?

As a player, I ran into this very situation. The smart move would have been to stay back. Let others go in first. My character had already established a hatred for the undead. What I would do and what my character would do are two different things. My character walks forward, holding his holy symbol in front of him. He ends up ahead of the party. He casts turn undead. DM says roll a d20. Natural 20, my cleric destroys the 3 shades. The most deadly of the undead, but it leaves my character open for a fireball from the witch. My character is barely standing. I heal up nearly to full next turn, but now the zombies are on me. I go down, with my holy symbol stretched out before me. Our wizard runs away when I go down. The remaining two-party members can pick off the witch and then finish off the undead. It was an epic death as taking out the shades gave the party a chance, but cost my character his life.

The death was the first death in that campaign and established my character as a tragic hero. His armor and weapon were brought to his brother by the fighter and rogue who remained from the party. The brother takes up the armor and weapon, swearing to find the cowardly wizard who ran away.

Playing your character in a way that, as a player, you know is bad but true to the character can create an epic moment or even an epic death. It can create emotion and dialogue for the remaining players. Playing your character truthfully can also produce incredible moments where a lucky roll of the dice has you making a precarious leap for a killing blow, if the roll goes bad, your party is probably done, but if you get lucky you are the hero. Either way, it will create an epic moment.

Take as second to think, what would my character do? If your character's parents died at the hands of giants, you might not be able to back down from a group of frost giants, or maybe your fear of the giants causes you to pause before overcoming your fear. Maybe your father was famous for taking on a group of orcs, and you are trying to live up to his name regardless of the overwhelming number of orcs you face. Is your character trying to impress another party member to the point of taking reckless actions? Your backstory, your adventuring history, and the party you are with should influence your character's actions, whether good or bad.

Simply put, don't be afraid to play your character the way you design the character. Your design is important; you made the character with a backstory for a reason. Don't change the way you play the character due to your knowledge as a player. Your character's backstory may make them do things that you know are not the brightest idea. Blind rage, jealousy, hatred, or fear established in your past should influence your character. It may bring an epic moment that gets talked about by you and the other players for years (or decades for those of us that are older). So next time your rogue that has been touching everything in the dungeon comes to a strange-looking lever ... pull it ... and let the dice decide.

Jam Myrddin
on
Twitch



Live session

Every Other
Thursday 8pm CST
[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)





I don't know how everyone's journey to nerdism started, but mine was all sparked by the mythologies of the ancient world; the biggest of those was Greek Mythology. Now, in my earlier years, I came from a more humbler beginning than most and was not able to start playing D&D until my army days, so I had another well known nerd fix, Magic: The Gathering. So imagine the feeling I got when I heard, that WotC MTG was releasing a new plane whose basis was the spark that lit the fire to create yours truly, as he is today: Theros [THS]*. This article is, hopefully one of many more that I will write, to give you some lore and background to the plane so that everyone can have a little bit more to add to their campaigns and knowledge. The first bit of Theros' rich lore is the Age of the Titans.

The plane of Theros is the world of mythological Greece remade in MTG fashion, abiding by its magic system that revolves around its 5 core mana group system: Plains (white), Island (blue), Swamp (black), Forest (green), and Mountain (red). The plane is split into 3 realms: mortal realm, Nyx the starry realm and home to the gods, and the Underworld. In its ancient history, the plane was dominated by massive titans representing primal forces of chaos; Kroxa (Death's Hunger) fear of death and its never ending need to consume, Uro (Nature's Wrath) the incarnation of natural disaster, Phlage (Burning Wind) a whirlwind of fire, and Skotha (Eternal Dark) the darkness in the night sky. The mortals, who were powerless to do anything, lived in constant fear and utter turmoil, turned to prayer, and from

that most basic of calls of need was birthed by the gods.

The old tales say that the sibling gods, Klothys (Destiny) and Kruphix (Horizons), it is hard to say what spurred the birth of the two, it is an important note to relate is that in Theros most of the tales were orally kept and passed on so much is hard to part from fiction and hard historical truth, but it is said that once these gods were birthed and humans were capable of imagining a world beyond the horizon they saw and could believe in a destiny outside of the misery and turmoil they lived that spurred on the next generation of gods: sun-crowned warrior king Heliod (God of the Sun/White), deep dwelling leviathan Thassa (God of the Sea/Blue), bleak-hearted Erebos (God of the Dead/Black), the bronze-blooded smith Purphoros (God of the Forge/Red), and the keen-eyed hunter Nylea (God of the Hunt).

Imbued with the incredible power granted to them by the faith of the people, the gods battled the Titans and sealed them away in the Underworld. Klothys volunteers to become a jailer to the Titans' prison deep in the depths of the Underworld. While Erebos rules the realm of the Underworld beyond death, Klothys acts as an eternal seal to keep the Titans trapped in their eternal Prison. Thus, ending the age of the Titans. I hope you all enjoyed this article, and I hope to bring you many more.



New game, who you?

(cont.)

by W. Adam Clarke



4- Just be friendly. Actively listen when possible, and find your way in a new social landscape. Remember that if you have 6 weeks of gaming experience or 6 years, to this table you're "the new person." First day at a new school vibes. I'd expect they're going to just be happy to have more people to play with, or you wouldn't have been given a seat in the first place. Don't walk in with an ego, your street cred isn't going to be worth a copper. Show them how you play, don't tell. Be friendly, have fun, and make your stories.

5- No game is better than a bad game. Keep in mind, not every group plays the same way. Maybe you vibe, maybe you don't. If you do, great, have a blast together. If you're not feeling it, talk to your GM about why (just not during the session). If it's something that can be worked out, awesome. If not... don't play where you're not having fun, or keeping others from not having fun.

There you go folks! If you want to see this article in practice, join me on Mondays at Cloud's table. In the meantime, wish me luck!



W. Adam Clarke
Can be found on
SingleStepGaming



Live session
Mondays 8pm CST

twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy



Selko Vorr

NPC Build by Brad Harris



Overview

Selko Vorr is a low-ranking enforcer for the Shadow Thieves operating in Crimmor—a streetwise rogue tasked with reminding independent operators that crime in this city comes with a price. His job isn't to kill; it's to warn, to watch, and to make sure the guild's cut is paid. When necessary, Selko can disappear into the alleys as quickly as he arrives. Selko's primary role is patrolling the taverns, dockyards, and marketplaces where out-of-town rogues and would-be thieves might try to work without the guild's permission. He often initiates contact with subtle thieves' cant and leaves it to others to decide if they want to pay the toll—or face the consequences.

Appearance

Selko is a lean man in his early thirties with a shaved head, sharp cheekbones, and a tattered green scarf always tied at his belt—a subtle marker for those who know the signs. His leathers are dark and travel-worn, and his quick, careful movements suggest a man who's never fully at rest. His smile is small but rarely sincere.

Personality

Guild-Loyal. Selko's loyalty to the Shadow Thieves is firm—he knows the price of stepping out of line.

Patient Watcher. He's not quick to draw steel. He prefers to observe, approach, and corner his targets socially first.

Deadpan Humor. His jokes are dry, his threats quieter still.

Calculated. Selko rarely overcommits. He sizes up situations carefully, always with an eye for an exit.

Duties & Influence

- **Shadow Thieves:** Selko enforces the guild's control over Crimmor's criminal activity. He ensures that no rogue operates outside the guild's authority.
- **Dockside Enforcer:** Much of his time is spent in the dock districts, taverns, and warehouses where smugglers, fences, and pickpockets often drift in.
- **Low-Level, but Known:** Selko is no lieutenant or high-ranking figure, but his name is known among street-level thieves and dock workers.

Plot Hooks

The Guild's Eye: Selko begins shadowing a suspicious newcomer, reporting their movements back to his superiors.

Favor for a Favor: Selko offers protection or valuable information in exchange for small services or payments that strengthen his local position.

SELKO VORR

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0)	DEX 17 (+3)	CON 12 (+1)
INT 13 (+1)	WIS 11 (+0)	CHA 14 (+2)

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant

Senses Perception 12

Skills Stealth +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Perception +2,

Insight +2, Deception +4

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword (Melee Weapon Attack). +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Dagger (Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack). +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.





Member Showcase!

Gummybear4460

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

Favorite color?

Pink & Black

Tell us about your hobbies?

Besides DnD and Gaming... I've always enjoyed hunting, fishing, grilling and gunsmithing.

Do you have any Pets?

Yes I have two Doggos Penny which is a jack russel terrier and Abby which is a some type of collie/shepard mix.

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

I love FPS i believe it was Big Red One that got me into them the story's those games told were like the ones my grandpa told us when we were younger so it was a way to kind of connect.

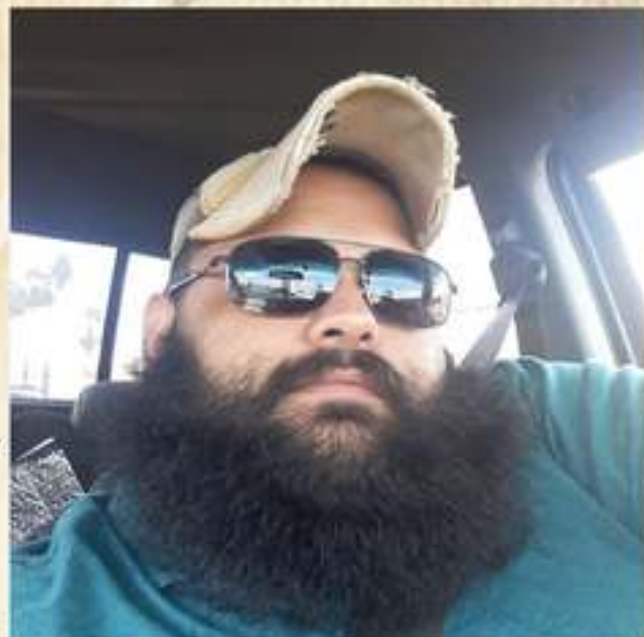


If you would recommend a game to someone in that style, what would you recommend?

it it was strictly on story line I would say both Call of Duty World at War and Black Ops 2.

Anything Else?

I am completely honored to be a part of this Fellowship and even more so to be this months highlight member. I feel if it wasnt for some of the member of said cult I dont know where I would be but it would not be good. The Mandur, Grimm and Cloud are some of the most amazing people I have ever met and although I dont say this as often as I should "ya'll Kick ass and I love yall from the bottom of my heart thank you for this amazing ride." P.s. Dont forget to check the schedule at the rpgsidebar to keep up with the great adventures and wild shenanigans a Mandur and Co. have in store for ya.





Hello, so I recently started reading about the all famous realms of D&D! And yes, for me that's been an amazing time and also, I think it's an amazing way to open up your imagination in one of the most fun ways! If you don't agree with my opinions, I'm new to this so sorry but also, tough. And also, thanks to the one the only @GetoffMacCould for letting me play in April or I honestly would not really be interested or give it a chance, so thank you!

Birdfolk

and the second bird is a Gallus the funny thing about the name is that Gallus means chicken in Latin, and it looks like a chicken! They most commonly found in little villages and also most likely of bird folk to be chillin' with humble folk. They also love gardening and respect nature so the moral of the story don't litter or vandalize nature with a Gallus around (or at all) to save your butt, your welcome. Always eager to lend a hand, Gallus are often seen organizing community gatherings or assisting neighbors with their daily tasks. Like little helpers, their cheerful demeanor and infectious laughter make them beloved members of any village, spreading joy and camaraderie wherever they go. Whether it's sharing stories over a warm meal or tending to the community garden, Gallus is the heart and soul of their communities, weaving connections that strengthen the fabric of Humble wood, but despite that, they have no patience for rudeness, which I think is fair. So, as a person who is starting their first D&D campaign thanks to DM @Gettoffmaccloud I'm very excited about starting it and also interacting with these Amazing characters!

Next is my favorite bird of bird folk: The Luma



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 rpgsidebar@gmail.com



So you want to fight a monster? Well, guess what, you're in luck cause this month we get to talk about monsters as a concept across the multiverse. Now, what does that mean... well, in light of the other article I will be writing this month, let's dive in. Monsters across the multiverse may not act the same within each world. For example, minotaurs in one world may be seen as evil creatures while in other they serve the militaristic order like the Boros Legion of Ravnica. So, taking that into mind, as a DM and as a player, it is our responsibility to learn the ins and outs of how monsters act within the world. It has the opportunity to bring fun and a diverse inner workings to any campaign, and it could rewrite how some monsters get viewed. Another example I can easily place is goblins, most of the time, they are shifty, evil, self centered little bastards, BUT some worlds have them established differently, and this goes across the board, however, of course, goblins are of course, evil shifty bastards, so not the greatest example. Monsters in general allow a DM to bring terror and fun to a campaign solely by taking the chance to learn about how they act in each world, one of my more recent favorites is the lore DM GetOffMacCloud established for the Gregorian Goblins within one of the woods (can't remember the name), for the new Greyhawk campaign saga he is taking our group on. The Goblins believe it to be the best of luck to get stabbed on Tuesday. Once, at minimum... this has breathed a new life into goblins and it has genuinely made me laugh and smile, and I find the use of it to be truly creative, so players challenge your DMs to have fun, see what they can do to make the monsters themselves have more life, but beyond that, roll well and have fun!



From one DM to the players,
GrimGrixis





Check Out past sessions
on
rpgsidebar.com



SATURDAY NIGHTS
11:30 PM TO 1:30 AM

twitch.tv/getoffmaccloud



"Come learn some shit"
-DM Cloud



Next months
deadline
May
18th

Join the Epic Quest: D&D Writers Guild Needs YOU!

Are you ready to weave tales of valor, magic, and mystery? The D&D Writers Guild is calling all bards, scribes, and storytellers to craft legendary Dungeons & Dragons adventures!

Thank you to all of our Guild members!

Currently looking for
Request writers
Research writers
Artists

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| EndYourStreamTV | CoffeeandDragonsRPG |
| SexySloth | BluePhoenixRPGs |
| GetOffMacCloud | CritCrafters |
| Papa Sparkles | DMGeezerJim |
| Mini Cloud | ChaseStreet |
| Lindsay_Lou | GrimGrixis |
| Skyline | JimKBones |
| SingleStepGaming | Bruengall |
| OldManGeras | |
| TheBurlyEarl | |

Lindsay Lou's



Part 2: So you're a Goblin, now what?

(If you missed Part 1, you can read it in the most recent issue of Realms, #20)

Now, the important thing is not to panic. What you're experiencing is completely normal (probably). You impulsively bought a set of dice online because they were shiny, and you like shiny things. You received said dice in the mail, and now you find yourself holding them as a precious lil' baby bird cupped in your hands. Picking up one at a time, you inspect each of the seven dice that came in this particular set; you know what the cube-shaped one is because you also have a gambling addiction - I mean, love playing Yahtzee. You may have heard of a "D20" before as well, so that must be the dice with 20 sides; simple enough...but what about the other five? **Why is one of them so pointy?**

You get on the interwebs and start learning about the different kinds of dice and what they mean for TTRPGs and other games that use them. Soon, you realize that you have no freakin' clue what any of those explanations mean. Why do I need damage points? For what, emotional damage? Structural integrity? Do I report this number to my insurance agent? Still confused by these dice and their secrets, you set out to learn more about the game specifically, and hope that the dice will make more sense as you go.



As you begin your search into D&D history and mechanics, you have a brief moment of clarity where you ask yourself, **"Why am I like this?"**...but you quickly move on from such silly inquiries.

Soon-ish, you get a better grasp of the functionality of these precious gems; this one determines the damage points inflicted for this type of weapon used, or this one tells you the hit points you might get back if you're injured or dying, and so on.

To be fair, it's still complicated, and when you're about to be judgmental regarding the specificity of the uses, you remember that you own just as many makeup brushes that each serve a specific purpose to apply things to your face - so who are you to judge? So, instead of being critical, you set a goal to learn more and maybe acquire a new hobby. Who knows, it could be fun, and you might have an opportunity to get even MORE dice. Yes...yes...



Come back next month for Part 3 -
When a Theater Kid Meets the Nerds.



When Athas Meets 5E: Why Dark Sun Is a Hard Sell Today

By ChaseStreet



Dark Sun was never designed to be comfortable. It was designed to test players morally, mechanically, and narratively. When it launched in 1991, it deliberately pushed against the safer, high-fantasy norms of the time. In 2025, that same design philosophy is exactly what makes it both fascinating and difficult to reintroduce.

To understand the tension, we have to look at where the friction actually lies, and there are 5 main areas:

1. **Slavery as Central Villainy**

There's no way around it: slavery is foundational to Dark Sun. It fuels the economy. It defines the Sorcerer-Kings. It begins the first published adventure.

That makes some modern players understandably uneasy. Slavery is not abstract fantasy evil; it is tied to real-world history and trauma. But in Dark Sun, slavery wasn't included for shock value. It functioned as a narrative engine. It created a moral clarity in a world without gods or traditional alignments. If the setting stripped away divine good and evil, it made sense to have them replaced with systemic oppression.

In older editions of D&D, villains were often unambiguously evil. Tyrants were tyrants. Slavers were slavers. The fantasy allowed players to confront that evil directly. There was something cathartic about toppling a despot who deserved it.

Modern design trends often favor nuance, corrupted heroes, misunderstood antagonists, and morally gray conflicts. Those stories are powerful in their own way. But Dark Sun wasn't interested in gray. It was interested in chains and particularly in breaking them. The challenge for a modern table isn't whether slavery is evil. It clearly is. The question is whether a group is prepared to engage with that theme intentionally, respectfully, and with open discussion. Dark Sun requires players to be willing to buy into that discussion and to be mature about it.

(cont on page 26)



ONE
SHOTS

FRIDAYS

Join the
Discord to
sign up!



PATREON

Magic Items, Maps, and
Monsters!

And One Shot Adventure
Every Month!

Patreon.com/Sparkles_Mandy

MADE BY
DUNGEONS MASTERS
For Dungeon
Masters





GORZAK THE FLAYMASTER

Medium fiend (Gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (plate armor)

Hit Points – (18d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9, Wis +6

Skills Deception +4, Intimidation +4, Perception +6, Survival +6

Damage Resistances fire

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Gnoll

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Appetite for Conquest. When a creature within 10ft of Gorzak makes a death saving throw he may take his reaction to roar forcing all enemies within 60 ft, to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Gorzak, at the start of their turn they may reroll the save, ending the condition on a success. Additionally, Gorzak has advantage to attack any creature that is frightened of him.

Aura of the Commander. As long as Gorzak is not incapacitated, all gnolls within 30ft, gain a plus 2 to their attacks. Additionally, they have advantage on Wisdom saving throws against the frightened condition.

Tactical Leader. As a bonus action Gorzak commands up to three gnolls within 60ft to make a weapon attack against any target in their range.

Yeenoghu's Hungering Curse. When a creature is cursed this way, they begin to suffer from the Hunger of Yeenoghu, they must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw whenever they are near the corpse of another creature, should they fail, they immediately consume as much of the corpse as they can, once they consume five corpses this way, they begin to transform, their features become more gnollish and they are quicker to anger. When they consume ten corpses this way the transformation is fulfilled and they transform into a flind. Once fulfilled, this curse cannot be reversed except by a

wish spell, however as long as the curse has not been fulfilled it can be stopped with a spell like greater restoration

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gorzak makes three attacks with the Warleader's Spear.

Warleader's Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10ft., one target, *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. On a hit the target must make a DC 15 Constitution Saving throw or they are cursed.



Why Dark Sun Is a Hard Sell Today (cont.)

By ChaseStreet



2. A Lethal World in a Heroic Edition

5E D&D assumes durability. Characters are resilient. Healing is plentiful. Death is reversible. By level five, most parties feel powerful.

Dark Sun assumes fragility. Water is scarce. Metal is rare. Weapons break. Resurrection is a myth. The desert kills without malice or mercy.

In 2E AD&D, this lethality fit the rules system. In 5E, it runs counter to player expectations. Spells like Goodberry, Create Water, and Tiny Hut trivialize survival mechanics that were once central to Athas.

To bring Dark Sun forward, a Dungeon Master would need to make intentional mechanical adjustments. Not to punish players, but to preserve the tension that defines the setting. Without that tension, Athas becomes aesthetic rather than existential.

3. The "No Gods" Problem

Clerics in 5E are strongly tied to divine domains and pantheons. Faith is visible. Deities are active. Athas has none. Divine magic comes from elemental forces or strange pacts. There is no benevolent sky-father waiting to intervene. The Sorcerer-Kings monopolize both arcane power and religious authority.

For players accustomed to choosing a god and a temple, this absence can feel disorienting. But that disorientation is intentional. Dark Sun removes cosmic safety nets.

There is no holy rescue, only survival.

(cont on page 28)



Mandelver

LIVE SESSION

Sundays 5pm CST

[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)



Merch?



[rpgsidebar.store](https://www.rpgsidebar.store)





By GrimGrixis

As you may have heard through the grapevine, there is the potential for a new campaign in the world of Ravnica. So before that kicks off, I want to try to establish some ground lore and mechanics for how the campaign and world would work. Now that being said, we are first going to start with a history lesson on the world.

Starting at the very beginning of the world, there were ten guilds, in short, the guilds are lead by a Paran, basically the Don and leader of the guild, now 10,000 years ago the world was torn asunder by war and chaos, all the guilds were vying for power, waging war to try and become the top dog guild, after the first 10,000 years of war, the Guildpact was formed, a peace treaty bound within magic and might, that held the law and word of Ravnica's peace. And so another 10,000 years of peace followed, then in 10,000 ZC, the world shattered once more, the Guildpact was destroyed, and chaos erupted into the sprawling metropolis of Ravnica. Peace was only found in 10,075 ZC after the planeswalker Jace Berlen found the Implicit Maze created by Azor the Paran, the founder of the Azorius Senate. After solving the maze's trials and puzzles, Jace Berlen became the Living Guildpact; thus, any law he verbally confirmed would be thus magically unbreakable. However, Jace is hardly ever seen on Ravnica, and that is where our adventures will be taking place, in the chaos of the Guilds and their underground wars for supremacy and power.

So let's get a quick round-up recap of the guilds!

Azorius Senate: The Azorius Senate functions as the government of Ravnica, operating through legislative, judicial, and executive branches under the leadership of the sphinx Supreme Judge Isperia.



(cont on page 31)

*A New Era
of RPG*

**SHADOWS
-PARK**



Coming Soon



Live session

*Every Other
Thursday 8pm CST
[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)*



Why Dark Sun Is a Hard Sell Today

(cont.)

By ChaseStreet



4. Race, Biology, and Modern Philosophy

Dark Sun was built on harsh biological logic. Muls were bred for labor. Half-Giants were magically engineered. Halflings were apex predators rather than pastoral hobbits. Thri-Kreen were alien and fundamentally inhuman. Modern SE design emphasizes individual choice over biological determinism. Species are no longer defined by moral alignment or fixed ability penalties.

Dark Sun, by contrast, embraces the idea that biology and magical engineering shape culture and capability. That isn't inherently incompatible with modern design, but it requires careful framing. The setting isn't saying people are born evil. It's saying the world itself is broken, and people adapt to survive within it.

5. The Power Fantasy Gap

Modern D&D leans into empowerment. Players are heroes. The story arcs toward triumph.

Dark Sun arcs toward endurance.

Hope in Athas is rare. Victory is costly. Even overthrowing a Sorcerer-King does not restore the oceans.

This tonal difference is perhaps the greatest hurdle. Athas is not escapism in the traditional sense. It is confrontation, ecological collapse, tyranny, and scarcity.

For some tables, that is compelling. For others, it may feel exhausting.



Wednesdays 6pm CST
In Server Only



Live session
Mondays 8pm CST

[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)



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! Clips can be taken in live sessions or from the VODs whatever works for you!

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

Here are some of our past winners!

Best of Luck!





Rarity

by EndYourStreamTV

Rarity is one of the most misunderstood tools in homebrew magic item design. Many creators treat it like a sticker you slap on after the fact, common, uncommon, rare, very rare, legendary, when the item is already written. But rarity should be doing real work. It's a signal to the table about how often items appear, how much impact they have, and how strongly they can bend the story and the rules. When you use rarity deliberately, it becomes a balancing dial you can turn without gutting your coolest ideas.

At its core, rarity answers three questions: How frequently could this exist in the world? How easily can it be replaced? How much does it change the play? A common healing charm that stabilizes someone once per day might exist in bulk because it's practical, repeatable, and limited. A legendary sword that chooses its bearer and awakens ancient oaths shouldn't be something you can buy another copy of next week. If the item's concept implies uniqueness, consequence, or rarity of materials, the rarity should match.

A helpful way to think about it is as follows: low rarity expands options; high rarity expands outcomes.

Common and uncommon items shine when they open new approaches without rewriting encounters. They give players tools: a lantern that reveals invisible ink, boots that silence footsteps for a minute, a charm that grants advantage on a single persuasion attempt.

These are exciting because they encourage creativity, but they don't become the answer to every problem. If you design low-rarity items to be reliable but narrow, you get the best of both worlds and players feel clever for using them, and you don't have to redesign your campaign around them.

As you climb into rare and very rare, the item begins to influence the structure of scenes. These items can swing combats, bypass obstacles, or introduce powerful movement and control options, but they should do so with clear boundaries. Charges, attunement, limited durations, and situational triggers matter more here.



(cont on page 34)





Ravnica (cont) By GrimGrixis

Boros Legion: Serving as Ravnica's standing army, the Boros Legion is led by the angel Aurelia and pursues the cause of righteous justice, rather than merely enforcing the law.

House Dimir: House Dimir is an espionage organization that specializes in secrets and information, operating entirely behind a public facade of messengers, investigators, and archivists.

Golgari Swarm: Lurking in the undercity, the Golgari Swarm processes the city's waste and tends to the new life that emerges from death and decay.

Gruul Clans: Raging against civilization and its defilement of the natural world, the Gruul Clans are a loose alliance of destructive raiders led by the cyclops Borborygmos.

Izzet League: The Izzet League is a guild of scientists and engineers who build and sustain Ravnica's infrastructure while conducting wild, explosive experiments in elemental magic.

Orzhov Syndicate: Controlled by a cabal of ancient spirits called the Ghost Council, the Orzhov Syndicate is a sinister combination of a church, a bank, and an organized crime family.

Cult of Rakdos: This demonic cult acts as the cruel and bloodthirsty jester of Ravnica's culture, using dark satire, violent performances, and blood and fire to skewer the powerful and embolden the weak.

Selesnya Conclave: Led by three dryads fused with a manifestation of the world's soul, the Selesnya Conclave seeks to bring nature and the city into a harmonious, peaceful balance.

Simic Combine: Under the leadership of Prime Speaker Zegana, the Simic Combine applies magic to the life sciences, striving to magically hasten evolution so that all creatures are perfectly adapted to their environment.

With this in mind you begin to see the scope and ideologies each of these guilds follow and uphold! So tune in next month and we will discuss more on the world of Ravnica!



A Humblewood Adventure for a Young Hero

A YouTube Exclusive



Live session
Mondays 8pm CST

[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)



Grilled Bourbon Chicken

By Brad Harris



This bourbon chicken has the flavors of that food court bourbon chicken you might know. I mixed it up by grilling it versus doing it on the stovetop. We love the caramelization and bits of char you get on the grill that you can't duplicate on the stovetop.

The sauce comes together almost immediately and packs tons of flavor. It's sweet with a great umami flavor that works great on chicken. Also, adding a bit of heat to this is as easy as adding an ingredient or two (see Variations).

So, outside of combining some ingredients and tossing them in a saucepan, you're done in the kitchen. It's to the grill for a quick cook, and dinner is served! Easy, flavorful, and not boring!

Ingredients Needed

The ingredients call for the usual suspects of Asian cooking—some garlic, ginger, hoisin, etc. Nothing on here will be challenging to find at your local grocery store. See the recipe card below for a complete list of ingredients and amounts.



How To Make Grilled Bourbon Chicken

In a mixing bowl, add the cornstarch and water. Whisk to combine well. Next, add all the other sauce ingredients and whisk them together.



Cook the sauce over a medium to medium-high heat. This has a fair amount of sugar, so it's important to whisk often. Bring it to a simmer for about two minutes, whisking, until the sauce is thickened and will coat a spoon. Set aside.



Cut the chicken thighs into your preferred size. I usually get about three cuts out of one thigh. If you prefer smaller bites, cut them smaller. Skewer the chicken thighs and place them onto your grill over medium heat.



(cont on pg 38)

Sexy Slothh



Sundays:
12pm-2pm CST
Thursdays:
6pm-8pm CST

twitch.tv/sexyyslothh

SIDE BAR

rpgsidebar.com



Ah, Hastings, always you are full of the charitable feelings for the young ladies who are beautiful, hmmm? As for me, I am always full of the charitable feelings to the old ladies that have the maladies.



By OldManGeras



Title: Agatha Christie - The ABC Murders

Publisher: Microïds

Released: 2016

Amount of time played thus far: 3 hours

Estimated time to finish: 8-12hours

tl/dr: -= [5.7/10]=-solve a murder as only Poirot can do and ignore the music and animations.

From the publisher: The ABC Murders is an adventure and investigation game adapted from the classic Agatha Christie novel. You are the famous private detective Hercule Poirot and, once again, you find yourself up against a mysterious serial killer who goes by the name of "ABC".

Story: In The ABC Murders, you play as Hercule Poirot, who is being taunted by a mysterious killer who sends Poirot a letter before each murder with clues following the alphabet. Get it? That's the ABC part of it. Your job is to connect these seemingly random crimes, uncover the true motives and stop the pattern. You never know with lunatics, do you? They never look balmy. Sometimes they can look just like you and me. Pretty faithful to the original book in it's retelling and the puzzles are pretty logical and cozy.

Art Style: Cel-shaded style is used throughout the game, giving it a stylized, hand-drawn look with thick black outlines and slightly saturated colors. Looking at the time period of the book (being set in the 1930s), they did a great job giving you that feel of a cozy British town with foggy streets and detailed interiors. Well, well, well, if it isn't Captain Hastings, back from his holidays in the wiles of whatchamacallit. That being said, by using cel-shading, it works on hiding some of the technical limits and locking you into the current scene - just don't pay much attention to the character models who look a bit, umm, too British

Gameplay: Pure point-and-click, that's the best for this type of game. And they do a great job of making it easy for you to find clues and solve puzzles with this style. Most of the time, you are examining the crime scene for details and interrogating suspects to collect clues. How here's where it gets interesting. I can assure you, Monsieur Clarke, that Poirot never permits himself to get false impressions from anything anyone says. They introduce a Poirot 'Little Grey Cells' system, which allows you to drag and drop the items collected into an order and find out the connections, almost like doing a mind-map. Of course, you can choose incorrectly, and Poirot will gently remind you to try again and think logically, but hey, you're a genius, you'll figure it out. Now let's talk pain points. #1 - Full screen only. That's right, regardless of resolution, this game only does full screen. Heck, even if you go and manually edit the Unity config file, upon starting the game, it resets it back to Full Screen. And the speed of gameplay is slow. Poirot doesn't run, the speech is slow and sometimes skipable. Long pauses between conversations. No settings to speed it up. Sad, but I suppose it's trying to have you feel more immersed in the story.

Steam Deck: Steam lists this as Playable on the deck, but honestly you will have no issues running this at max settings. I don't suppose it means anything but an old woman who kept a tobacco and newspaper shop in Andover was battered to death last night. You will have issues with the text being small, but hey, it's a small screen so you're used to that by now.

(cont on pg 35)





Rarity(cont)
By EndYourStreamTV



A rare item can absolutely be strong; the goal is to prevent it from being strong in the same way in every situation. Variety keeps balance healthy. A wand that dominates one specific enemy type is more interesting (and safer) than an always-on bonus that is optimal everywhere.



Legendary rarity is where you earn the right to break the rules, but not the responsibility to ignore them. A legendary item should feel like a campaign pillar: something that changes the story, invites consequences, and often evolves. This is where you can design awakenings, trials, and "the item grows with the bearer" arcs. The balance lever at this tier is rarely just math; it's narrative gravity. Powerful items draw attention. They attract rivals. They trigger prophecies. They come with expectations from patrons, gods, or ancient forces. If your legendary item grants enormous power with no costs, no complications, and no world reaction, it stops feeling legendary and starts feeling like a cheat code.

Rarity also affects party balance, not just encounter balance. If one character receives a high-rarity item early, you're not only increasing their numbers, but you're also shifting spotlight time. The simplest fix isn't always to "buff everyone else." Instead, distribute rarity intentionally across roles. Give the striker a weapon that gives them a strong moment, give the support a tool that rescues the team, give the scout a utility item that unlocks exploration, and give the face a social relic that deepens relationships. The party feels equally empowered even if the items aren't identical in raw power.

Finally, remember that rarity is a promise about availability and expectations. If uncommon items are everywhere in your world, then "uncommon" is normal, and you should scale your campaign accordingly. If magic is scarce, then even an uncommon item deserves reverence. Your setting and your rarity system must agree, or the world feels inconsistent.

Used well, rarity becomes your most elegant balancing tool. It lets you keep the item's fantasy intact while controlling frequency, scope, and consequences. Don't pick rarity at the end. Let rarity shape the item from the start, and your homebrew will feel sharper, fairer, and far more magical.

Until next time friends... let your forges stay hot and your crafting be swift.



Live session

Every Other
Thursday 8pm CST
twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy



Charity Night

3rd Wednesday of the month

\$15 per spot

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



Agatha Christie - The ABC Murders (cont)

By OldManGaras

Audio: OK, here's where they could have used some money on the budget. Audio is pretty unspectacular. Actually, let's just call it boring. Solid, good voice acting (fully voiced, by the way), but all sound design effects, and music are just a lot of meh. By about hour 2 or 3, you'll turn off the music as it's just repeating what you've already heard a few times.

Achievements: 50 cheevies await your pleasure. And you'll want a walkthrough as there are a number of missable achievements. Expect 2 full playthroughs while going for the hunt of 100%. as a lot of them have to do with completing the mysteries finding using the wrong questions before solving it. Look at this room, Poirot. All that's left of a life: a couple of broken china ornaments, a photograph, a new pair of stockings..

Value: Get it on sale, because while the SRP is only \$15USD, it's normal sale price on steam is \$1.50USD. That's right, 90% off is standard sale price, and that happens every few weeks. Terrible the news nowadays, isn't it? Nothing but this murder business. It gives me the creeps, I don't read it. Even on the other markets, it'll be under \$1. Is it worth the \$1.50? I'd say yes. Is it worth the \$15? Not when I can get it at 90% off by waiting 1-2 weeks.

Movie: Today's quotes come from the classic TV Show 'Poirot', which is based on the books by Agatha Christie. Funny that. This series came out in 1989 and ran for 13 seasons. This particular episode was Season 4, Episode 1, and is regarded as one of the best in that series. David Suchet played Poirot, a role he has done for almost 25 years.

(cont on page 37)



ONE
SHOTS

Frídáys

Join the
Discord to
sign up!

Mandelver

LIVE SESSION

Sundáys 5pm CST

twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy



The Astromundi Cluster Player Lore and Information

By DMGeezer Jim

The Astromundi Cluster: A Brief History

The Astromundi Cluster was one of the first crystal spheres, predating all of the other known spheres by several millennia. During its early existence, the Cluster was a single sun and 3 large planets, orbited by several moons. Early history reports that most of the inhabitants of the cluster were using Spelljammers a thousand years before the "First Cataclysm".

The First Cataclysm began reshaping the cluster into its known form; two of the 3 great planets collided, destroying the massive civilizations in an instant. The collision decimated the orbiting moons as well, resulting in thousands of rocky chunks that eventually stabilized into asteroid belts and small planetoids that maintained orbit. The cores of the two worlds that collided were compacted into a second sun that fell into close orbit of the primary star.

The surviving planet, Astromundi, was the largest of the three, and life continued to develop and prosper there, as the cultures continued to ply the space lanes, trading with the few surviving enclaves in the surrounding belts. Unfortunately this trade was but a fraction of the volume and value of the pre-cataclysm trades, and scarcity increased on the planet. The population of

Astromundi continued to grow, and with no planetary masses to expand to, the empires turned upon themselves.

The Humans of Astromundi, as the dominant race, began purging the nonhumans from the world, resulting in a massive war. The nonhumans called upon dark forces to curse the humans; the humans began having children with horrible deformities, which were then cast out of society. These mutated pariahs found their way underground, eventually stabilizing into a new race, unbeknownst to the surface humans. The Astromundi humans continued to expand into wildspace, searching for new places to explore, settle, and exploit. Eventually, very few of the surviving humans made contact with the "Unbidden", an alien race promising power and conquests beyond imagining; this alliance would bring horrific consequences in the future.

Meanwhile, the Dwarves had continued to survive in the Cluster, building grand citadels among the asteroid belts - many of these still survive to this day, though long abandoned or ruined. The Dwarves maintain a few hidden Citadels among the asteroid belts, are few in number, but still survive.

(cont on Page 39)



Charity Night

3rd Wednesday of the month

\$15 per spot

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



Agatha Christie

The ABC MURDERS

Agatha Christie - The ABC Murders Game Review CONT.

Let's break it down:

--[5.7/10]--

--[Gameplay]--

- My name.. is Neo
- Good
- Decent
- Get an etch-a-sketch

--[Story]--

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

--[Graphics]--

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

--[Audio]--

- Is it live or Memorex
- Good
- Decent
- What? I can't hear you

--[PC Requirements]--

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

--[Audience]--

- Everyone
- Adults
- Teens and above
- Nappy time!

--[Difficulty]--

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

--[Replayability]--

- And nothing else matters
- Every 6'ish months, I play it again
- I played, I conquered, I uninstalled
- There can be only 1

--[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
- It's annoying but playable
- Early Access game-level bugs
- Starship Trooper has less bugs



Grilled Bourbon Chicken

By Brad Harris

Cook the chicken over medium heat, turning often, until the chicken develops some decent color. Apply the sauce generously over the top, then turn and repeat. Continue to do this, building levels of sauce on the chicken.



Cook to your preferred color and char and the internal temperature is at least 165 degrees F. I take our dark meat to 175 to 180 degrees F. We also like some decent char on our chicken as, for me, it imparts a flavor we enjoy. When ready, remove from the grill. Optionally, hit them with any remaining sauce.



Remove from the skewers and serve this sticky, delish chicken with any of your favorite sides. Optionally, garnish with sesame seeds and green onions.



Tips

- For this bourbon chicken recipe ensure your chicken is cut to uniform sizes for even cooking. Skewer them tightly to prevent excessive movement on the grill, which helps in creating an even char.
- Maintain a medium heat to prevent the sugars in the sauce from burning. Turn the skewers frequently for even caramelization and to avoid flare-ups from dripping sauce.
- Apply the sauce in layers, allowing each to caramelize before adding the next. This builds up a rich, sticky coating that enhances the flavor.
- Let the chicken rest for a few minutes after grilling. This allows the juices to redistribute, making the meat more tender and flavorful. Serve with a sprinkle of sesame seeds and green onions for added texture and freshness.



For the Full Recipe Card
and More Check Out
www.dontsweattherecipe.com




PATREON

Magic Items, Maps, and
Monsters!

And One Shot Adventure
Every Month!

Patreon.com/Sparkles_Mandy

MADE BY
DUNGEONS MASTERS
For Dungeon
Masters

A New Era
of RPG

**SHADOWS
- PARK**



Coming Soon



The Astromundi Cluster Player Lore and Information

By DMGeezerJim

The Astral Elves were also busy; enraged by Human ignorance and racism, they worked to help the surviving surface Elves - and not a few Dwarves - off of Astromundi. The Dwarves took in their refugees, but refused to help the Elves with long-term homes. The Astral Elves directed their efforts to depart the Cluster entirely. Within the lifespan of a Human, they had virtually disappeared from the Shattered Sphere (their name for the cluster).

The Mutants - the cursed and mutated descendants of the Astromundi Humans - had begun mastering magic and developed psionic powers. Generations of Mutants developed powers and called out to greater beings for aid and comfort - and a new god answered. The Mutants decided that now was the time to strike, that they would conquer those who shunned them, and spread the darkness of their home across the surface world.

The Mutants emerged from caverns and crevasses, ready to lay siege to their Human oppressors. They arrived late, as huge golden Spelljammers floated above the decimated cities of the surface dwellers; the Unbidden had returned, guided by the Astromundi explorers from generations past. The surface was ruined and scorched, as the Unbidden had conquered Astromundi, killing most of the humans and enslaving the rest.

The Mutants cried out to their unknown god, begging for revenge; the god listened and shattered Astromundi, scattering it across the cluster. The power of the Second Cataclysm banished the Unbidden, leaving a few of their human allies alive. The Mutants were transported to a cluster of moons near a gas giant, and remain hidden to this day, devoted to their religion.

After the Second Cataclysm, the Astromundi Crystal sphere had been remade. Instead of one sun, 3 large planets, and dozens of moons, the Astromundi held hundreds of thousands of asteroids, 2 suns, and several dozen planetoids and lesser moons. Several nebula and gas giants formed as the remains of the two cataclysms cooled. The first crystal sphere had been remade into a new entity.

A few Humans survived the second cataclysm, but were (for a time) trapped and isolated on a few large asteroids or planetoids. The Dwarves avoided the humans entirely, wary of a race that had the capacity to destroy its own homeworld. Eventually the Dwarves established trade, but refused to share the secrets of Spelljamming. The survivors of the second cataclysm developed in unknown enclaves and strongholds across the cluster.

This continued for centuries, and the Astromundi would have remained this way for millennia, were it not for an old resident of the cluster returning. The Elves returned to the Astromundi, but did not recognize it for their ancestral home; they left after the first two worlds collided, and didn't know that Astromundi itself was destroyed. They built settlements, and began exploring their old home, while restoring trade with the Dwarves. (Part 2 in Next months issue)



LIVE SESSION

Sundays 5pm CST

twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy



**Wednesdays 6pm CST
In Server Only**

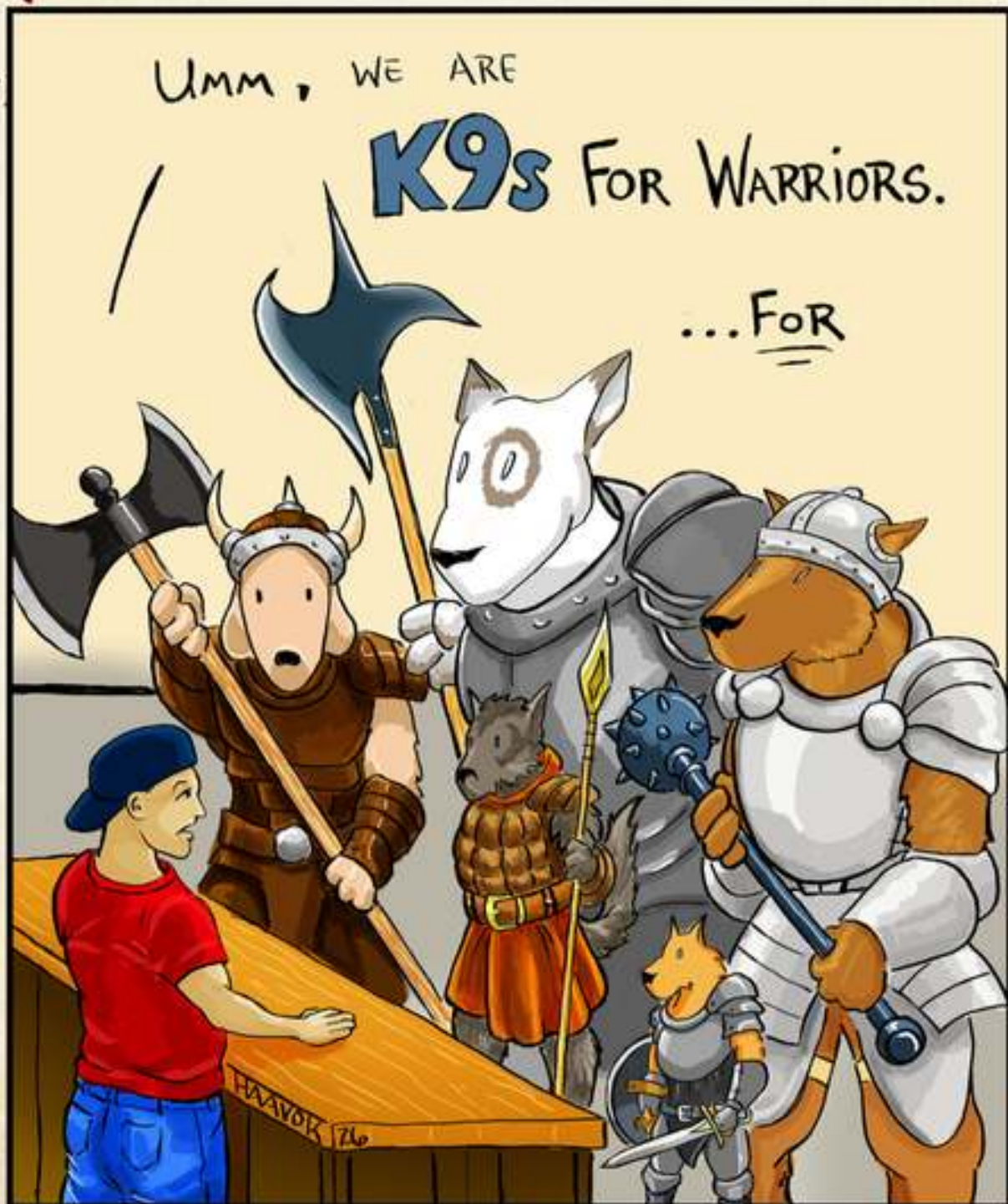




"I had to get it out of my head"

By Haavok_RPG

Some amazing art from our amazing friend



Random Rants w/Mandur

Lets Talk Together!



Hey, we've got a lot coming out and coming up in the world of campaigns. This is a huge undertaking. Take a moment and look at our monthly calendar, and you really get a look at how much we have going on. It isn't just one person, so here are some thanks that I feel need to be said.

We are in month 4 of Grim, Cloud & Jazzy working on the Patreon and it has been amazing! I think all of the work they are doing is really paying off. Thank you, guys, for all the hard work!

The Patreon Members! Thank you, guys, so much! We have been able to add some great things, and that will only grow with time. It has honestly been so nice having a space to bring my ideas and ask questions. This helps me to stress less cause I don't feel like I am just guessing. So thank you for the support in your membership.

The Writers Guild Members, we are on Issue #21 with our new format, and it is still looking amazing and growing. Thanks to everyone who sends in articles; that is what makes each issue something special, and it is only getting better.

For all the players going into new campaigns, I hope you have so much fun and wish you all the best rolls. Remember, campaigns and sessions are what you put into them!

Lastly, to all our DMs, thank you for all of the work you do, getting sessions ready, and making the best stories. You make a difference for all of us. The time and care you all take with your craft...amazing. The effort you take to learn new things and work towards what is best for not just the game but for all of stream also... brilliant. The patience you all have for me and working around what the needs of the channel are, I am so blessed. It is all of the parts together, and with time, we will find more amazing people who can join the group, sharing their talents. What an adventure, I am thankful to get to be part of it.

-Mandy





Charity Night

Every 3rd Wednesday
of the month

8pm CST
[twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy](https://www.twitch.tv/sparkles_mandy)

