Facebook D&D Conversations:

Examining Narrative Argument through D&D Process & Tropes

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Introduction

Narrative arguments with explicit data, claims, and warrants are hard to come by unless in dialogue form, but dungeons & dragons (D&D), a narrative roleplaying game played cooperatively, shows that narrative arguments in the form of plot, metaphor, and world building *can* be complete arguments, with warrant provided via conversation between players. D&D also serves as an interesting investigation in argumentation theory, because it also pulls upon multiple aspects of theory, such as demonstrating the various kinds of argument (e.g. product versus process) and representing a niche field and discourse community. D&D also inhabits a unique space publicly. It's popular enough that Facebook groups discussing the rules and tropes are common, making analysis of repeating themes in arguments easy, as is done later on in analysis here. Because D&D is established under an open gaming license, its rules and materials can be repurposed by the public, allowing open discussion of rule changes and recurring tropes even as the game is incredibly complex in those rules. All interactions within D&D narrative follow blocks of stats called ability scores (separated into six characteristics—Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charism) that determine dice rolls, making narrative loosely based on probability when stats are fixed. At the same time, character decisions determine what ability scores are used and how, so a central element becomes rational argumentation between players so that narrative follows the goals of the party. In short, studying D&D and how its tropes are discussed by players inside and outside the game reveals complex processes of argumentation, with nearly no inhibiting coercion since players decide on the validity of narrative and its path collectively; furthermore, analysis of trends which recur demonstrates those warrants consistently used in making counterfactual narratives that comment on some aspect of the real world.

Base Theory and Understanding How D&D Functions as Argument

Discussing how D&D functions as an object of argumentation requires some establishment of base theories. Namely, D&D can be used as an especially good example of argument as process, product, and procedures, due to its highly cooperative nature. D&D might also be considered a specific niche "field" of argument, as arguments follow very specific conventions that separate its discourse community from others. Toulmin's model helps highlight how D&D creates explicit arguments for narrative, something exceptional narratively, primarily in the separation of data or premises and claims or conclusions from warrants. Because the corpus of literature of D&D arguments comes from social media, the question of public deliberation becomes relevant, such as how democratically representative the corpus is, since it comes from a specific Facebook group that requires admission.

First, argument should be specified as understood as product, process, and procedures, which Daniel O'Keefe's argument_1, argument_2, and argument_0 each translate to. O'Keefe, in his critique of Brockriede's "Where is Argument?" discusses what each of these concepts means. An argument_1, he describes, is argument as understood as product, that is, the claims one makes; he writes, "an argument_1 is something one person makes…Arguments_1 are thus on par with promises, commands, apologies, warnings, invitations, orders, and the like" (70). An argument_2, he further writes, is an argument as understood as a process, that is, the process of argumentation itself, saying, "...an argument_2 is something two or more persons have (or engage in)...Arguments are classifiable with other species of interactions such as bull sessions, heart-to-heart talks, quarrels, discussions, and so forth" (70). From these two, there is then the implied argument_0, discussed in O'Keefe's other writings, the internal process of constructing an argument cognitively, which I liken to argument as procedures; I come to this conclusion from an

understanding of cognition as the penultimate procedure underlying argument, in the sense that cognition requires working through mental steps that are (although often subconscious) theoretically consistent, such as working from language acquisition up through a hierarchy of understanding. O'Keefe also highlights the importance of not eliding "arguments and arguments$_2$, to the detriment of [Brockriede's] characterization of argument" (71).

While I agree with O'Keefe that this separation is useful, I also value looking at how all three kinds of argument are connected, and here I think D&D represents a meaningful artifact in this effort. That is, D&D demonstrates each kind of argument in a very separated way, but the actual articulation of D&D in practice connects each implicitly. Arguments$_1$ appear as discrete elements in D&D narrative—such that most wizards can't fight well because they haven't trained their bodies (e.g. increased their Strength ability score). Arguments$_2$ appear as the D&D progression itself—character choices only progress after all parties have discussed what they want to do and why, and the narrative only progresses after the game master (GM) explains how the environment changes by explaining how and why its nonplayer characters (NPCs) react to those choices. Argument$_0$ then appears in the combination; D&D, with its myriad of rules governing environment, character abilities, and interaction between players and the DM, superimposes a set of procedures for both arguments$_1$ and arguments$_2$. At the same time, because the narrative is always *evolving* and because it evolves *cooperatively*, D&D demonstrates how these three are connected; arguments$_1$ always appear in the context of an ongoing argument$_2$ that is structured by argument$_0$. The primary flaw in this might be that an argument$_0$ doesn't exactly correlate with the specific procedures of D&D; rather, a more specific explanation of the procedures of D&D might be as dialectic that moderates arguments$_1$ and $_2$. Dialectic, the explicit, careful imposition of procedures behind the argument, also represents this element in D&D, as,

just like in the school of Pragma-Dialectics, very specific rules are set for how the narrative progresses, that is, how players interact with each other and the D&D environment.

The dialectical nature of D&D highlights how it could be understood as its own discourse community. Thus D&D as a discourse connects to fields, and may even be considered a field all its own. David Zarefsky writes about persistent questions in defining and talking about fields as an argumentation concept, and he meaningfully identifies the three most pertinent elements in discussion: their purpose, nature, and development.

For purpose, Zarefsky asks two questions, writing, “Does ‘field’ explain how arguments originate?” (56) and “Does ‘field’ serve to compare and contrast arguments?” (57). Both of these relate to D&D as possible reasons for calling it a field; calling an argument part of D&D explains how it came to be, and separating arguments of D&D from other contexts therefore does serve to explain differences between arguments outside of its context and arguments contextualized by it; arguments in D&D always follow certain patterns of organization, because D&D arguments, in originating in the game context, are required by the contextual nature to be subjected to certain constraints. For example, anytime a character argues for the party to do some action, the implicit context of the game’s rules structures what kinds of arguments can reasonably be made, such as the abilities of characters or the statistics associated with characters ability scores.

For nature, Zarefsky asks several questions, the most pertinent ones being, “Are argument fields determined by the argument’s form? (59), “Are argument fields determined by subject matter?” (59), “Are argument fields determined by situational features?” (60), and “Are argument fields determined by the shared purpose of the arguers?” (61). Each of these exist as part of the descriptive nature of “D&D arguments.” Just as game context structures arguments, the reverse is true due to feedback; the game context, while informing play, only becomes

realized because players choose to prescribe to the rule-based constraints on the choices they can argue for and make. At the same time, the subject matter often determines "D&D arguments" as the subject will always be about the intersection of realistic roleplaying and game rules, and arguments often follow fantasy conventions, as well, both narrative and rules-based—black dragons are always dangerous and evil, and casting a spell always requires consulting a manual. Thus, in these ways, we also see how the argument field of D&D is heavily situational, further compounded by the fact that arguers not only share a purpose (reaching a goal in narrative) but cooperatively realize that purpose in the very situational meeting that is D&D game sessions.

For development, Zarefsky asks three main questions, that is, "Do arguers create their own field?" (64), "Are fields different from the public?" (64), and "How do time and historical experience influence the demarcation of argument fields?" (64). For the purposes of this paper, it would be beyond the scope to answer these questions for all fields, but with the specific field of D&D there are answers. In D&D, arguers create the field in some ways while not in others. The base rules of D&D are set by the Wizards of the Coast corporation, not individual arguers, but arguers continue the field by incorporating and confirming their rules through use. D&D would both be partly public and partly private; members of the public make up the D&D community, but that community is relatively niche and a very specific audience. Finally, historical events demarcate D&D in the sense that the term refers to the most recent practices, divided temporally by the publishing of editions. Namely, D&D these days refers to D&D's fifth edition (or "D&D 5e") rule set, and one could argue that D&D 5e is a subfield of the evolving, overarching D&D roleplaying game (RPG) field. In other words, D&D considered as a field *has* developed, and it has a complicated relationship with the public in that nobody in particular owns its procedures and practices.

However, treating D&D as an argument requires explicating one key element emphasized by Toulmin's model that accounts for how D&D narrative can be considered as such: the inclusion of warrants. Toulmin's model separates an argument's warrant from its data and claim, which is an especially meaningful consideration when we think of how narrative can become argument in the strict sense. Wayne Brockriede and Douglas Ehninger outline Toulmin's model three basic elements of data, claims, and warrants. They describe how for this model data "correspond to materials of fact or opinion which in our textbooks are commonly called *evidence*" (102). A claim is "the term Toulmin applies to what we normally speak of as a *conclusion*" (103), they explain. Most important, they explain the warrant, that which functions "to *carry* the accepted data to the doubted or disbelieved proposition which constitutes the claim, thereby certifying this claim as true or acceptable" (103). In narrative, argument might appear as dialogue, such as a conversation between characters, but rarely does it explicate an *explicit* warrant if we consider the narrative as only the metaphors and logic behind the plot and world of narrative.

D&D, then, is unique when viewed through the lens of Toulmin's model, because it supplies an explicit warrant by its nature, creating non dialogue narrative argument. Narrative might outline arguments outside dialogue, if indirectly, by establishing implicit data/premises and claims/conclusions. Take, for example, the idea that dragons are evil. The narrative might describe a dragon pillaging a village. The premise would be that pillaging villages is bad, evidenced perhaps by descriptions of the violence involved, and the conclusion would be that dragons are bad because this is something they do. The warrant would be the "because," but most narrative wouldn't explicitly mention this in such a way that we would consider it strict argument. Rarely would a story's prose stop and read, "Dragons consistently do this behavior,

and because we devalue this behavior as evil, dragons must be evil." Narrative could claim these things, as backing for the warrant, but it would have to be implicit, not explicit, because by its very nature the plot of narrative could always be likened to a claim; indeed, "this is something they do" and "pillaging is bad" are claims in of themselves. It could, for example, be argued that dragons are evil not because they pillage villages, but because they hoard gold; the narrative, in lacking explicit reasons for why it's structured the way it is, establishes an unclear argument.

However, in D&D, a unique situation arises: because the narrative is constructed cooperatively and because the parties involved discuss reasoning between choices (whether that's the player's explaining the reasoning for fighting a dragon or the GM explaining if the dragon pillages) *outside the narrative* in metanarrative conversation, D&D adds an *explicit* warrant behind the outcome of its narrative. That is, players, in convincing each other to fight the dragon, will lay this out explicitly, and, as we will see in the corpus later on, Facebook groups evidence how players return to the topic and discuss tropes outside the game in ways that allow explicit warrants. That is, because D&D narrative constantly evolves and evolves cooperatively, it naturally requires explicit warrants in the metanarrative surrounding choices and the tropes that drive them. Choices made can be evaluated later on, because they then have an in-game effect, and this effect is always discussed because that's the nature of the game: being cooperative, it only functions when all the players and the GM can agree that the effects can be considered realistic in the narrative world, and so naturally conversation follows on how the narrative functions and why.

A final constraint, however, in considering both the given corpus—the posts within a specific Facebook group—and arguments made in D&D broadly, is the question of how democratic deliberation actually is. Within the D&D context, this appears in the procedures of

the game; at any point, there exists a tension, a power imbalance, that has to constantly be navigated. Namely, the GM controls the narrative world, while the players only dictate their own choices and are limited in them. Therefore, the arguments the narrative puts forth are essentially controlled by the GM. This tension is mitigated by the unity of the character's party; if the characters discuss the reasoning behind choices they'd individually like to make, reaching consensus, and if they follow the rules in choosing the right stats, ideally, they will eventually realize narrative that aligns with their reasoning. Yet, the GM still holds primary responsibility over outcomes. However, since the game only functions when the GM and the players are in agreement, there is a democratic element in that, for the game to continue, the GM must convince the players through no coercion that the arguments the narrative represents are valid. For the Facebook group that all the material in the corpus is pulled from, the context is somewhat different. Because the Facebook group requires admission to post and comment, its material might be biased, although, as analysis later will show, this doesn't inhibit discussion from becoming political.

Specific Facebook Posts - Counterfactuals and Stasis Theory

The Facebook group in question under study is *Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)*. As the name suggests, much of the content that appears is humorous, but for this reason D&D tropes are discussed often or implied, through the repetition that occurs from memes and their format. Arguments appear from such conversation, and, more often than not, arguments also appear because members ask questions of other members, such as when they don't understand a trope or meme's format. Because Facebook allows commenting and the ability to comment on others' comments, arguments—in the process sense—often occur, which bring with them explicit warrants for narrative tropes normally explored only through traditional narrative.

Interestingly, another theme in posts was exploration of counterfactuals, such as inversion of traditional tropes or people discussing what would have happened if a character hadn't done X action. Thus investigating these posts revealed how counterfactuals can structure and provide warrants for arguments in a narrative way. Marc Angenot writes on the topic of counterfactual statements, writing, "Counterfactuals are reasoning that starts from conditionals that are contrary to the facts" (2). Such reasoning, thus, normally appears little, as most would not turn *away* from the facts given in making an argument, and the repetition of this kind of reasoning within D&D further demonstrates how it can create unique narrative arguments. It also turns on its head our understanding of a "narrative argument" because, in a sense, fantasy narrative functions as a kind of counterfactual in and of itself. Angenot's description confirms this, when he writes:

> [Counterfactuals] start from conjectural starters that argue about a "possible world" in the sense of a world similar to reality at a given moment with a unique variation, all other things being equal. Reasoning that claims to identify the direct consequence of this variation and measure the discrepancy between it and what we hold to be the real – and which then leads to apprehending this real in another context. The reasoning is articulated in three stages: it starts from a hypothesis contrary to facts supposedly acquired, contrary to "reality", and draws a direct consequence from it – then, clarified or not, he advances the conclusion, namely something that can be deduced by returning to the real world: "if I had turned around, I would have seen it. (2)

D&D represents a construction of that "possible world," and metanarrative discussion of its tropes often comment upon the returned-to real world. For example, in one post, someone wrote about their counternarrative on why goblins and orcs clash with other races. In their narrative, goblins lived communally and orcs raised children together. Goblins shared resources so much to the point of just taking things when needed, which other races would call "thieving," while for goblins, a "thief" would be someone who hoarded objects, akin to stealing from the community. Similarly, orcs, if coming across an untended child, would simply take them home and raise them

themselves, since children were understood to be the responsibility of everyone; other races, of course, would see this as kidnapping. Several comments disagreed, showing the political nature, as limitations of racism and culture are hot-topics within the D&D Facebook community and this group in particular. A post such as this demonstrates how talking about tropes in such a way gives an explicit warrant; in both cases, races clashed because of societal differences. Notably, this person's argument also plays upon stasis theory, namely, the stases of Definition and Policy; their warrants were grounded in the fact that people disagree upon stases, with goblins defining "thieving" differently than others and orcs having a different policy when it came to childrearing. This shows a return to real-world aspects—societal or cultural differences—in this "possible world" counterfactual.

This post best demonstrates this, but other posts also returned to this idea, structuring counterfactual narrative worlds in ways corresponding to real-world factors. Many of these posts are long, so an appendix will follow this essay with screenshots of these posts. For example, Figure 1 shows a post where, while no explicit arguments are made, the poster supplies possible warrants for narrative creation, such as trends in language, culture, and history. Another post, in Figure 2, also harkens back to cultural differences and misconstrued and clashing societies, in the context of Vikings, usually considered barbaric but actually quite complex, as compared to orcs, who are similarly portrayed as violent or evil but could be portrayed differently with the warrant that cultures are complex. Like that post, Figure 3 shows another one also about orcs, again pulling upon stasis theory in discussing differences in cultural policy.

Conclusion

D&D may seem a trite object for analysis, but application of argumentation theory reveals it creates an incredibly unique and complex environment for argument structured

atypically. Narrative arguments fully fleshed out are hard to come by, since explicit reasoning behind plot is rare unless discussed in an author's interview, but in D&D these things occur naturally, both in the process of D&D gameplay and in the culture within discourse communities such as those on Facebook. If considered as a field, analysis of trends shows how a field develops in real time, and due to how popular it now is and its easy translation to social media discussion, one can easily see how it complicates understanding of narrative as supported by explicit argument. As demonstrated by the brief set of Facebook posts discussed, clearly D&D begins a discussion on how to argue narratively. These discussions, meaningfully, by leaning into the counterfactual nature of fiction, help explicate for readers concepts in culture and society that are relevant in the real world.

D&D demonstrates how narrative arguments, often implicit, can become explicit through cooperative storytelling. This paper explores D&D as an argumentation field, linking it to theory like Toulmin's model. It examines how counterfactuals and metanarrative discussions on Facebook shape argumentation.

Works Cited

Angenot, Marc. “Counterfactual reasoning in history.” *Argumentation & Analyse Du Discours*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2020, pp 1-16.

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Appendix

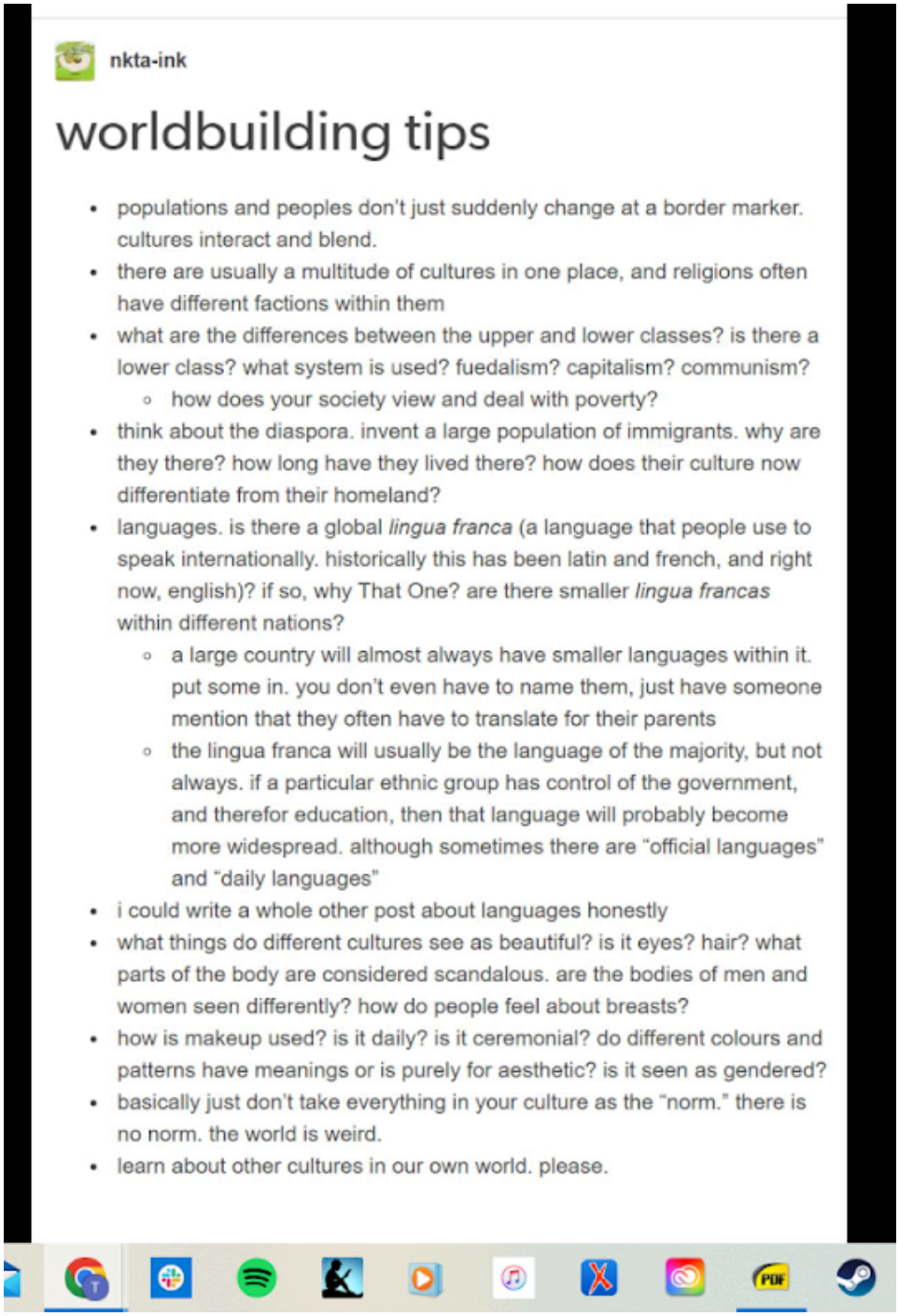


Figure 1


Victor Paul
January 20 ·
When discussing races in D&D, I personally have always liked to draw on historical human cultures. A lot has been posted lately about the changes to evil and savage races, so I'm going to focus on Orcs.
I tend to think of Orcs like I do Vikings.
On one hand, Vikings are known for being a warrior culture. Invading England, France, etc. Raiding monasteries. (Though of course this is regarded as savage while when Europe invaded Jerusalem, it was a holy mission).
Vikings were also farmers. Poets. Some integrated in England, some in Normandy. They were explorers and formed trade routes. Women could own property and get divorced in Norse society.
(EDIT: "viking" wasn't a culture, but something Norse, Danes, and Svea folks did, as clarified by others in the comments. Which is really the point. The Orc raiders who are out there burning your NPC village came from somewhere)
Another example to consider are the Mongols. Literally regarded as a scourge. This is probably closer to how fantasy lore usually portrays Orcs. Nomadic tribes that banded together and wiped out cities.
But the Mongol Empire was vast and complex. They had laws against murder and rape. They tolerated other religions. They were also mathematicians and astronomers.
If you, in your game, want to do a more Tolkien inspired game where Orcs are fodder bad guys, I don't think anyone will complain. I never have.
But if you're constructing (and/or publishing) a complicated, detailed lore, there are a lot of historical influences worth considering.
222
146 comments 3 shares
Like
Comment
Share

Figure 2


Like
Comment
Share
Desmond Dagenhart
September 27, 2021 ·
So, because apparently this is a volatile subject, please, keep it civil.
I have a take on Orcs and a valid argument as to why they aren't truly evil.
Basically, Orcs are a tribal race. They live for battle and are part of a war based, territorial society. To "more civilized" races, they appear as evil because they often kill those who enter their lands.
Despite this, they are an honorable race. They believe dying in battle is the most honorable of deaths. Female Orcs dying during childbirth are treated with warrior status. They raise their young the only way they know how, which is to be a useful member of their war torn society.
The reason Orcs don't take prisoners, and instead choose to kill, is because they value freedom above all things. Slavery and prison are considered cruel and unusual punishments far worse than any torture imaginable. They feel that by killing their foe, they send them to the favorable afterlife. They feel that this is an honor to their enemy.
If anyone was capable of visiting an Orc village without being considered an enemy, they would find families working together to make sure all members of their society are fed and cared for. The few elders are treated with utmost respect and are generally council to the chief.
Orcs aren't looking to cause pain. They are defending their land as warriors, and therefore are not "evil."
Debate politely. I shall be reading and responding to the most interesting comments.
33
78 comments
Like
Comment
Share

Figure 3

Requirements

You have a lot of flexibility in this project: it may be analytical, historical, evaluative. The topic is entirely yours (subject to instructor approval). It may deal with formal argumentation, "street" argumentation, electronic argumentation, disciplinary argumentation, to name a few areas. You may want to follow up on something you've read for your Scholarly Literature Report.

Focused: No matter your topic, it's important for you to constrain your lens to enable you to succeed. You've no doubt talked in other writing classes about tightening the focus, and the same is true here. If you're too general, you'll flounder. Imagine you're really interested in how people argue and come to some decision. Well, that's simply too huge for a seminar paper, and I'd encourage you to narrow the topic in any number of ways. First, be more specific than "people." What about college-aged women, or factory workers, or Silicon Valley startup CEO's? Second, "how they argue and decide" is too broad, so what about "how they decide about capital expenditures," or "how they evaluate movies, plays, or art" or "how they include (or exclude) others."

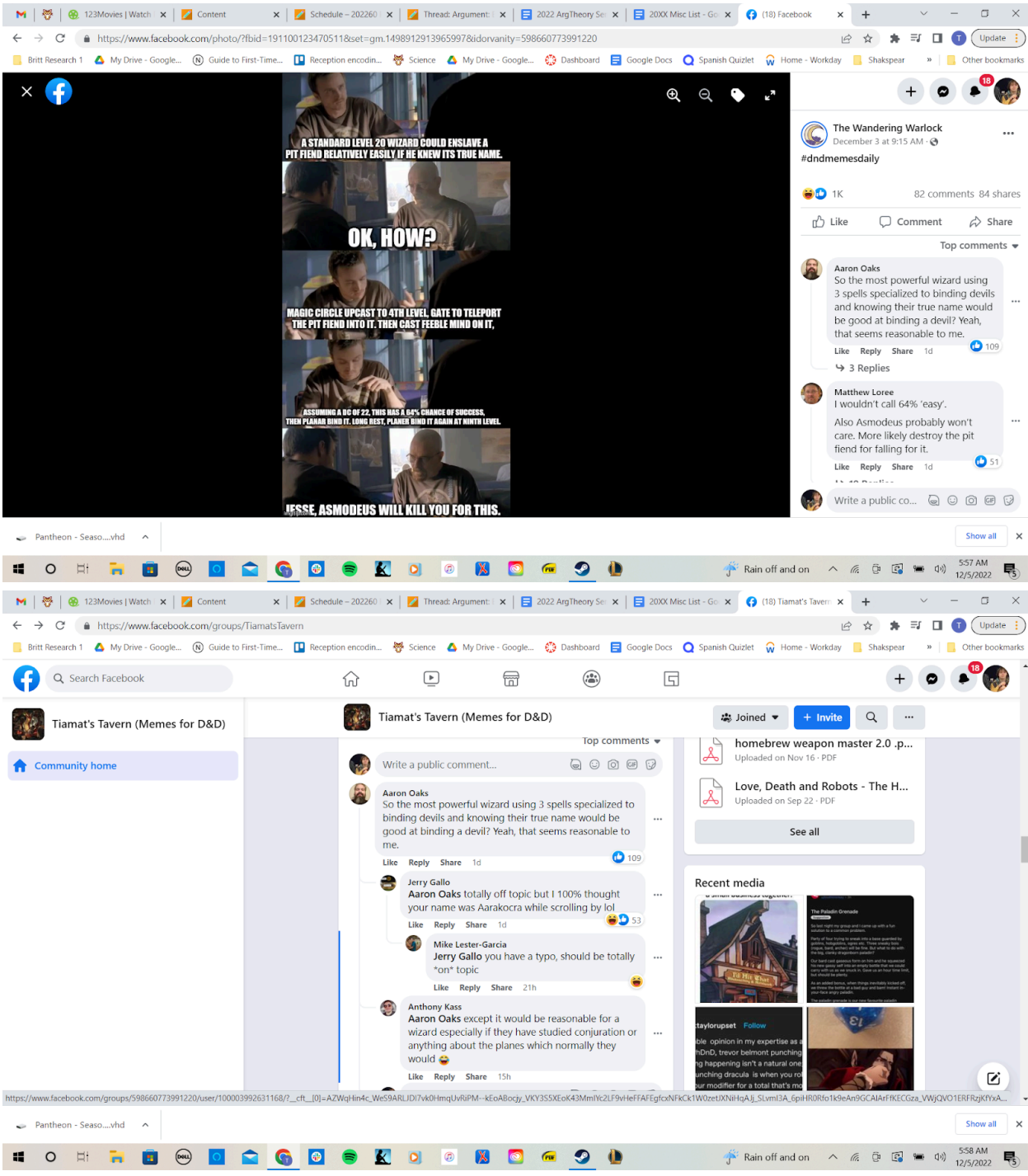
Word Length: 3500 (plus or minus 500) for graduate students, or 2500 (plus or minus 500) for undergraduate students. I expect the document to be written, edited, and formatted for good readability. In other words, demonstrate that you've been learning something in your other Rhetoric classes.

Note: Before you embark on this seminar paper, you will need your instructor's approval. We can discuss a reasonable deadline for this approval. It's not designed to constrain you, but rather to identify productive directions so you don't get lost as you do your work. We will create some topics in the blog for you to discuss your topic and get feedback from the instructor and your classmates.

Outline

I. Introduction
    A. Thesis: D&D works a great focus for looking at what argumentation requires.
II. Body
    A. Process, product, and procedures
    B. Field
    C. Toulmin's Model
    D. Probability/Probabilistic
    E. Multimodality
    F. Social Media - Public Deliberation
    G. Narrative
    H. Demagoguery
    I. Corpus
        1. Stasis theory
        2. Statistics/Percentages
    J.
III. Conclusion
IV. Quotes
V. Corpus

A.


A STANDARD LEVEL 20 WIZARD COULD ENSLAVE A PIT FIEND RELATIVELY EASILY IF HE KNEW ITS TRUE NAME.
OK, HOW?
MAGIC CIRCLE UPCAST TO 4TH LEVEL, GATE TO TELEPORT THE PIT FIEND INTO IT, THEN CAST FEEBLE MIND ON IT,
ASSUMING A DC OF 22, THIS HAS A 64% CHANCE OF SUCCESS, THEN PLANAR BIND IT. LONG REST, PLANER BIND IT AGAIN AT NINTH LEVEL.
JESSE, ASMODEUS WILL KILL YOU FOR THIS.
The Wandering Warlock
December 3 at 9:15 AM
#dndmemesdaily
1K
82 comments 84 shares
Like
Comment
Share
Top comments
Aaron Oaks
So the most powerful wizard using 3 spells specialized to binding devils and knowing their true name would be good at binding a devil? Yeah, that seems reasonable to me.
Like Reply Share 1d
109
3 Replies
Matthew Loree
I wouldn't call 64% 'easy'.
Also Asmodeus probably won't care. More likely destroy the pit fiend for falling for it.
Like Reply Share 1d
51
Write a public co...
Pantheon - Seaso....vhd
Show all
Rain off and on
5:57 AM
12/5/2022

Search Facebook
Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)
Community home
Joined
Invite
Top comments
Write a public comment...
Aaron Oaks
So the most powerful wizard using 3 spells specialized to binding devils and knowing their true name would be good at binding a devil? Yeah, that seems reasonable to me.
Like Reply Share 1d
109
Jerry Gallo
Aaron Oaks totally off topic but I 100% thought your name was Aarakocra while scrolling by lol
Like Reply Share 1d
53
Mike Lester-Garcia
Jerry Gallo you have a typo, should be totally *on* topic
Like Reply Share 21h
Anthony Kass
Aaron Oaks except it would be reasonable for a wizard especially if they have studied conjuration or anything about the planes which normally they would
Like Reply Share 15h
homebrew weapon master 2.0 .p...
Uploaded on Nov 16 · PDF
Love, Death and Robots - The H...
Uploaded on Sep 22 · PDF
See all
Recent media
Pantheon - Seaso....vhd
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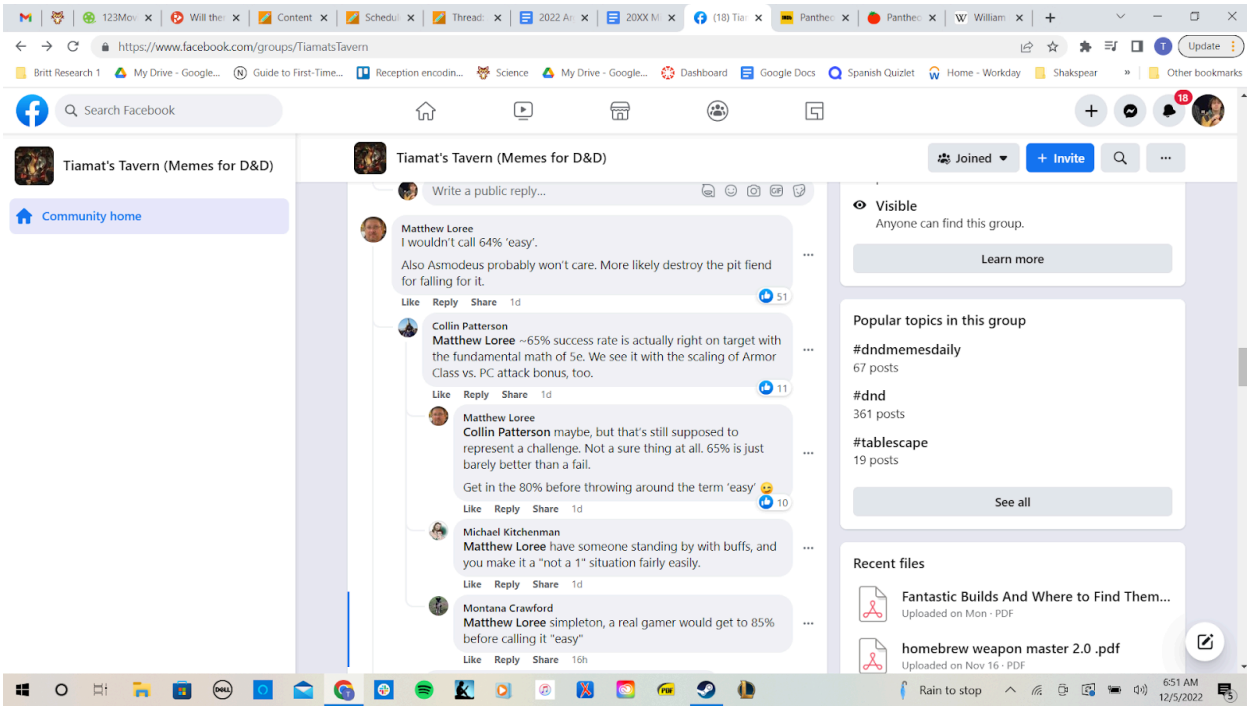
https://www.facebook.com/groups/TiamatsTavern
Search Facebook
Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)
Community home
Joined
Invite
Write a public reply...
Matthew Loree
I wouldn't call 64% 'easy'.
Also Asmodeus probably won't care. More likely destroy the pit fiend for falling for it.
Like Reply Share 1d
51
Collin Patterson
Matthew Loree ~65% success rate is actually right on target with the fundamental math of 5e. We see it with the scaling of Armor Class vs. PC attack bonus, too.
Like Reply Share 1d
11
Matthew Loree
Collin Patterson maybe, but that's still supposed to represent a challenge. Not a sure thing at all. 65% is just barely better than a fail.
Get in the 80% before throwing around the term 'easy'
Like Reply Share 1d
10
Michael Kitchenman
Matthew Loree have someone standing by with buffs, and you make it a "not a 1" situation fairly easily.
Like Reply Share 1d
Montana Crawford
Matthew Loree simpleton, a real gamer would get to 85% before calling it "easy"
Like Reply Share 16h
Visible
Anyone can find this group.
Learn more
Popular topics in this group
#dndmemesdaily
67 posts
#dnd
361 posts
#tablescape
19 posts
See all
Recent files
Fantastic Builds And Where to Find Them...
Uploaded on Mon · PDF
homebrew weapon master 2.0 .pdf
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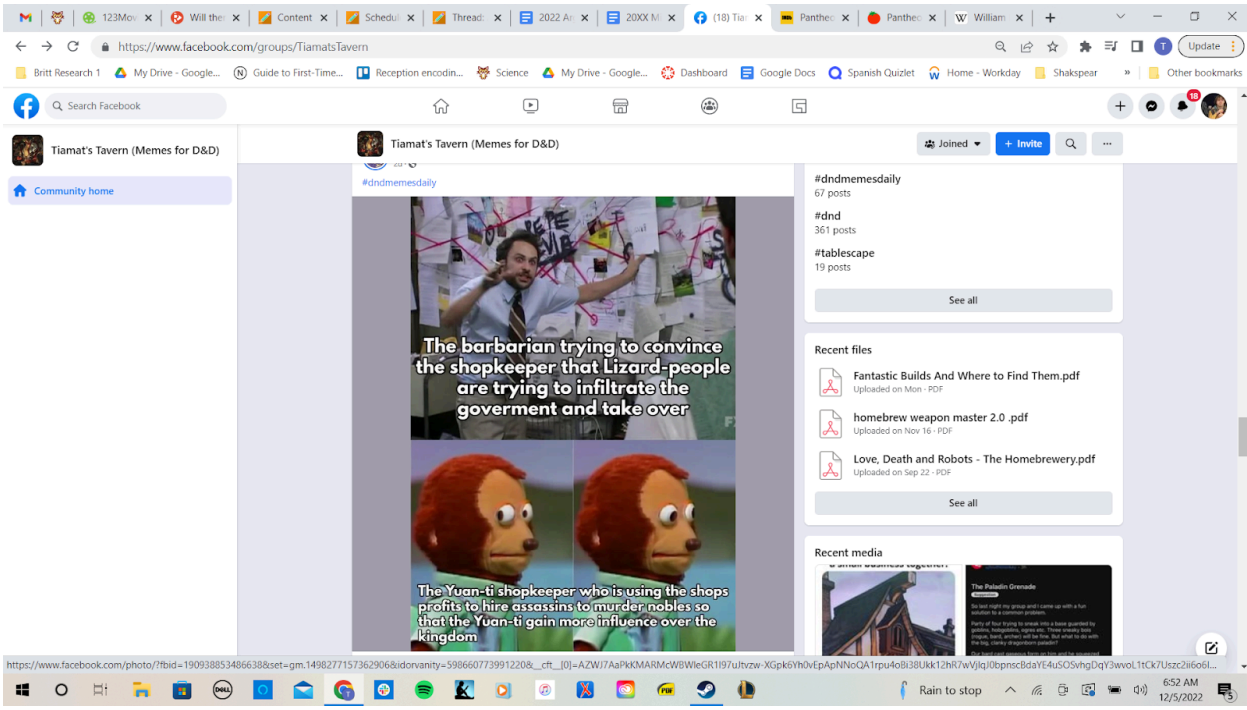
https://www.facebook.com/groups/TiamatsTavern
Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)
Community home
#dndmemesdaily
The barbarian trying to convince the shopkeeper that Lizard-people are trying to infiltrate the goverment and take over
The Yuan-ti shopkeeper who is using the shops profits to hire assassins to murder nobles so that the Yuan-ti gain more influence over the kingdom
#dndmemesdaily
67 posts
#dnd
361 posts
#tablescape
19 posts
See all
Recent files
Fantastic Builds And Where to Find Them.pdf
homebrew weapon master 2.0 .pdf
Love, Death and Robots - The Homebrewery.pdf
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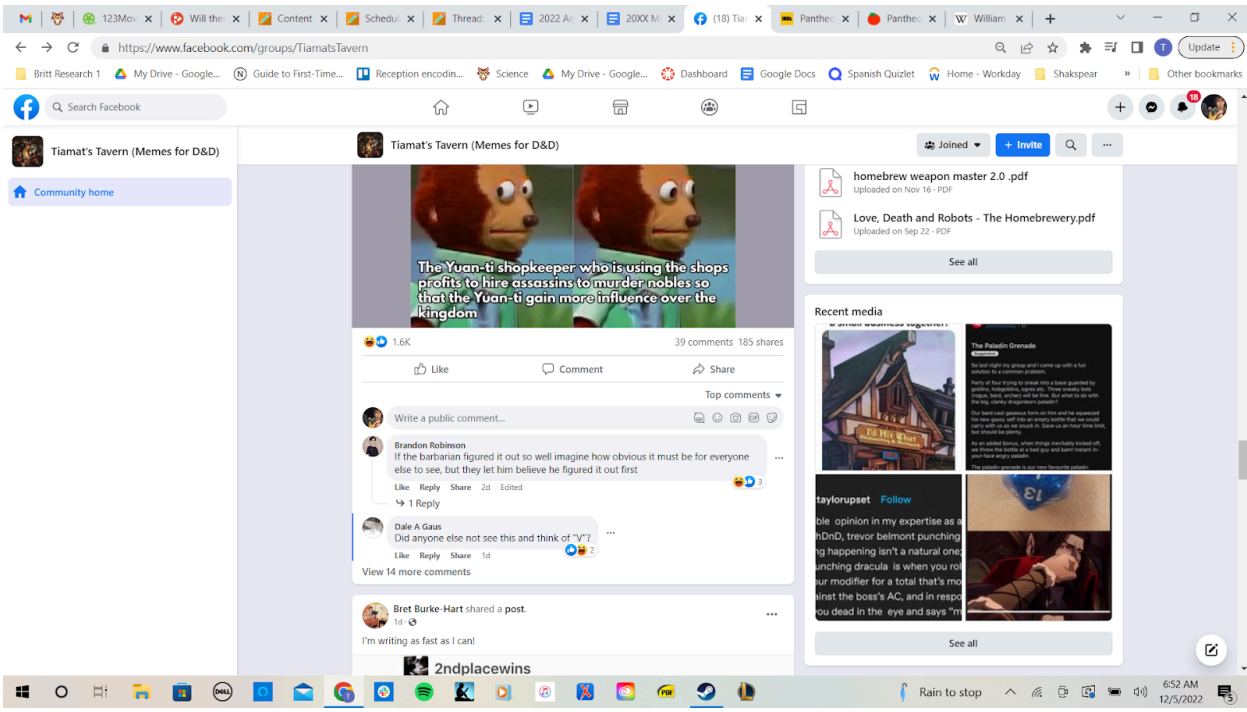
https://www.facebook.com/groups/TiamatsTavern
Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)
Community home
The Yuan-ti shopkeeper who is using the shops profits to hire assassins to murder nobles so that the Yuan-ti gain more influence over the kingdom
1.6K
39 comments 185 shares
Like
Comment
Share
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Brandon Robinson
If the barbarian figured it out so well imagine how obvious it must be for everyone else to see, but they let him believe he figured it out first
1 Reply
Dale A Gaus
Did anyone else not see this and think of "V"?
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Bret Burke-Hart shared a post.
I'm writing as fast as I can!
2ndplacewins
homebrew weapon master 2.0 .pdf
Love, Death and Robots - The Homebrewery.pdf
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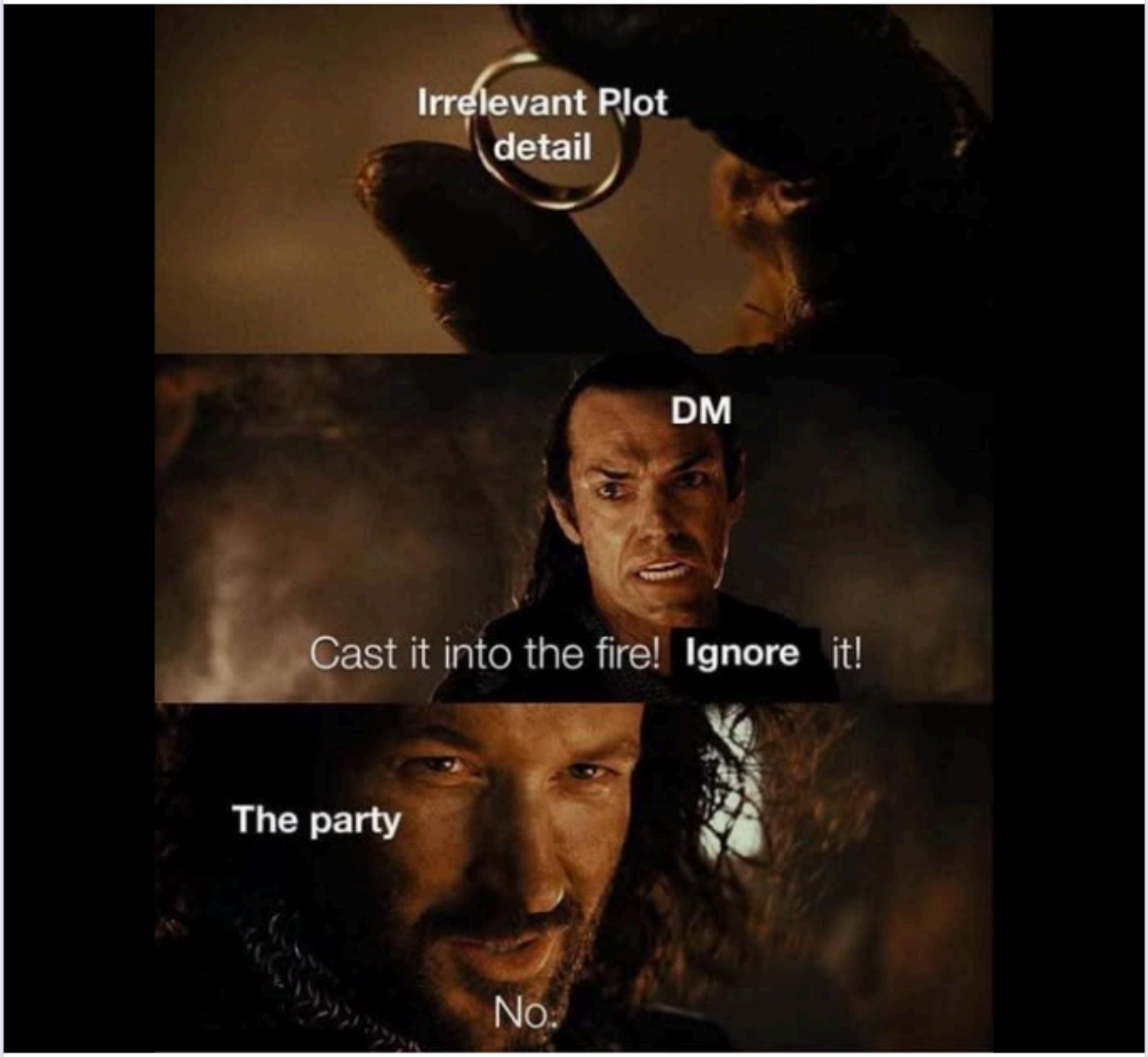
Marshall Scott
December 9, 2024 ·

1.5K 223 comments

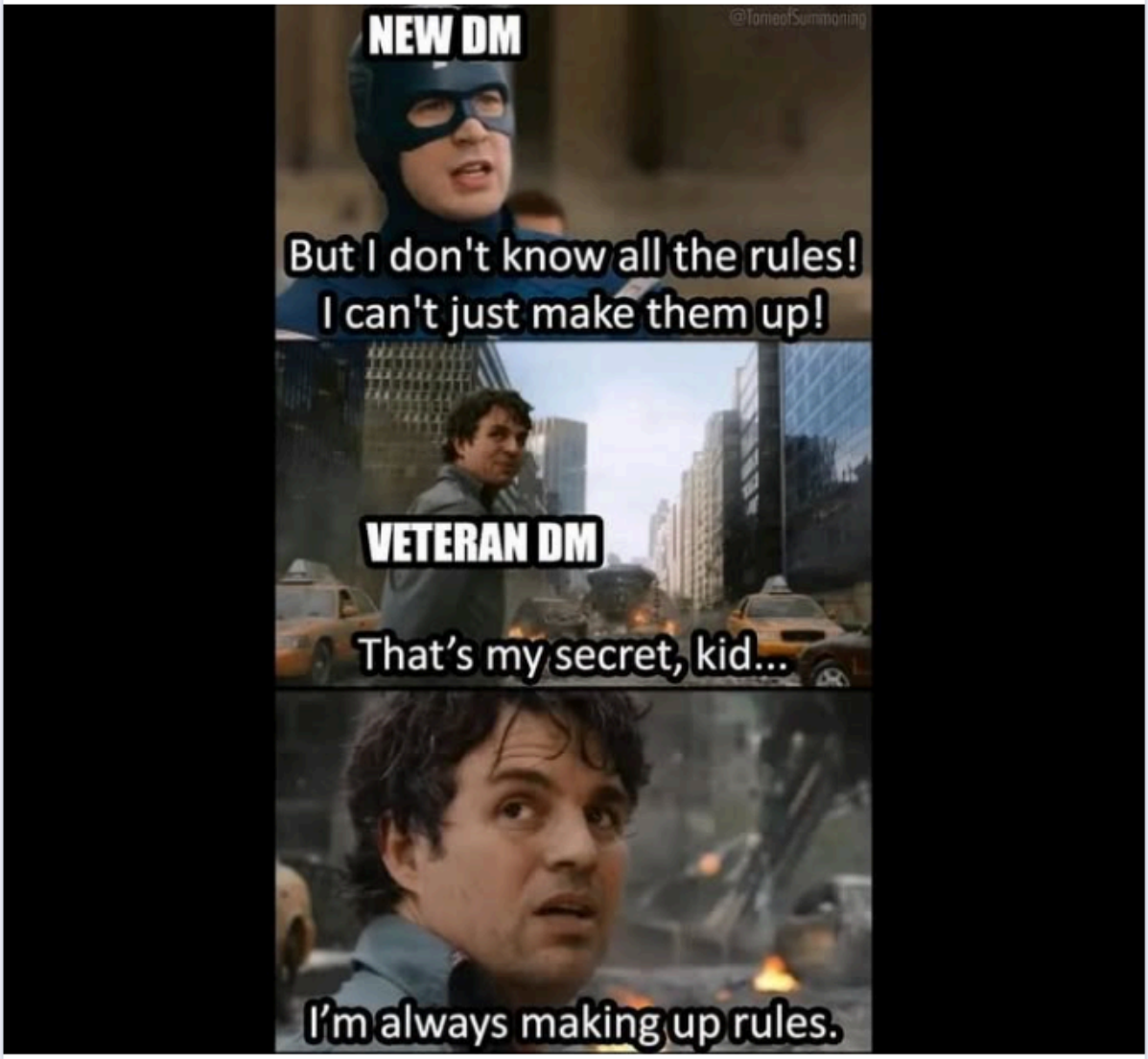
James Winward-Stuart
December 10, 2024 ·

Every. Single. Time.



519 21 comments

James Hardin
December 11, 2024 ·

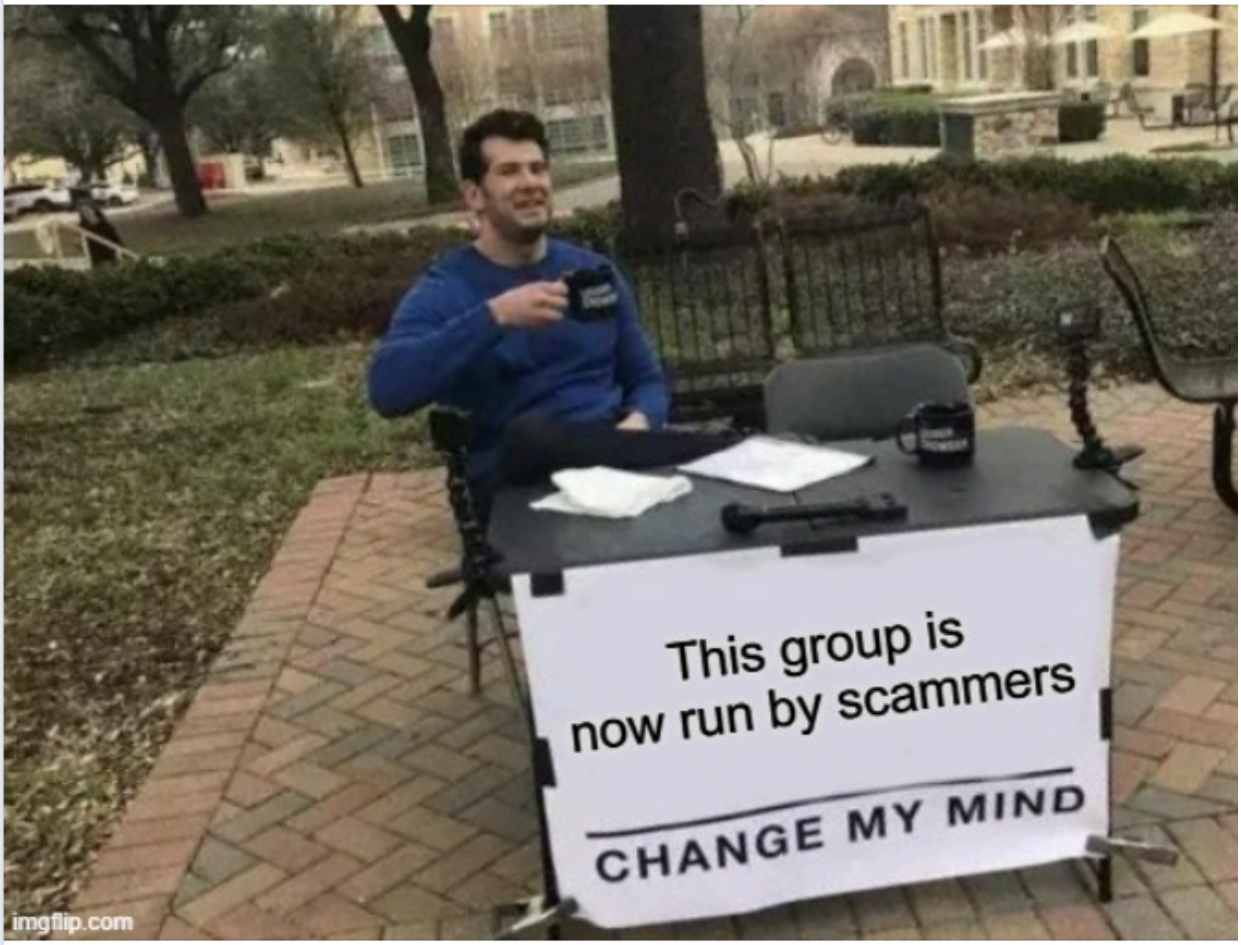


Tiamat's Tavern (Memes for D&D)

December 6, 2024 ·

Question 1 response: "With what, and how do you plan to keep it burning? No guarantee that successfully lighting it on fire will make it do more damage."
Question 2 response: "Are you trying to be stealthy about it? How quickly are you moving? Make a Stealth/DEX/Athletics/etc check to see if you can get to the shelf and push it over before the enemy can respond."
Question 3 response: "Make an Investigation check, DC 12 to determine if you can hit an eye; roll the attack with disadvantage if you fail the check, add an extra d4 of Piercing damage if you succeed."
Reposting the image so I don't feed an engagement farm.

Marshall Scott
December 8, 2024 ·



961 425 comments

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Carl Best
Could I have a slice of context?

Cris Herrera
December 11, 2024 ·

I'm sorry. I just never get to use this.

151 6 comments

James Winward-Stuart
December 9, 2024 ·

D&D. D&D never changes.

226 18 comments

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Dmitri N. Trocha
December 7, 2024 ·
Consequences of an incorrect but good idea
TPK's
DM
Unbalanced Fights
Issues w/ RAW
Evil Dice
Player self-doubt
The wonder and creativity of their players
697
51 comments
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Brady Bowe
December 2, 2024 ·
I was wondering if anyone could give me some suggestions about using gladiators or gladiator games in an adventure. I like trying to insert history into my adventures.

Cesare Verzini

I'm a historian/archaeologist from Italy, I'll try to give my 2 cents here:
1) gladiators were not only slaves/people in debt (typical misunderstanding) but also people that decided to join the arena.
2) gladiators change name on what equipment they have (for example the Retiario used the typical helm + web + trident). Also, they use to fight other specific gladiators because their weapons need to match (the one fighting the retiario use to have a smoother helm to prevent the web to get stuck and put him in a bad situation). This decision was taken for religious purpose and to balance the battle.
3)there were more non lethal fights than actual death in the arena: it's hard to become famous gladiator and losing one in every fight would be a shame. Of course the risk was still high. Usually in late imperial period we start to see prisoners throw at beasts but was not a "typical Sunday event".
4) there were ship battles in the coliseum but those were historical battles acting so they already know which side should win so there were rare casualties (also you cannot use arrows and projectile weaponry to not harm the public).
5) fighting beasts was much more rare than expected for it was quite an unfair fight and do not last enough to entertain people (different thing in imperial period with beasts vs war prisoners).
This is what I just remember at the moment, I suggest to take a look to some books, if interested I could check some names but many of them are in Italian.

14w Edited 27

View all 5 replies

Rob Koper

Anywhere there is a a government where there is a lot of money and a massive underclass, there will be the temptation to entertain that underclass with spectacle. Sometimes it is violent spectacle.

In other settings, gladiatorial combat was used as religious rites, in others it was seen as civic duty or used as a form of traditional corporal punishment. In one fantasy series, I remember it being a proxy for warfare between city-states; instead of costly and destructive sieges and open land battles, the leaders would resolve their differences through contractual gladiatorial combat between city champions.

Another approach would be to have it as an underground fighting pit, but on a large scale, run by crime syndicates. In this version, the battles would almost always be to the death or incapacitation, and gambling on various outcomes would be as much a part of the event as the fight. Or it could be something like a Fight Club or Black Dragon Society kumite (like the 80s movie, 'Bloodsport').

There are a lot of ways to get warrior athletes into a sand-floored arena, fighting to the roar of a bloodthirsty crowd.

14w

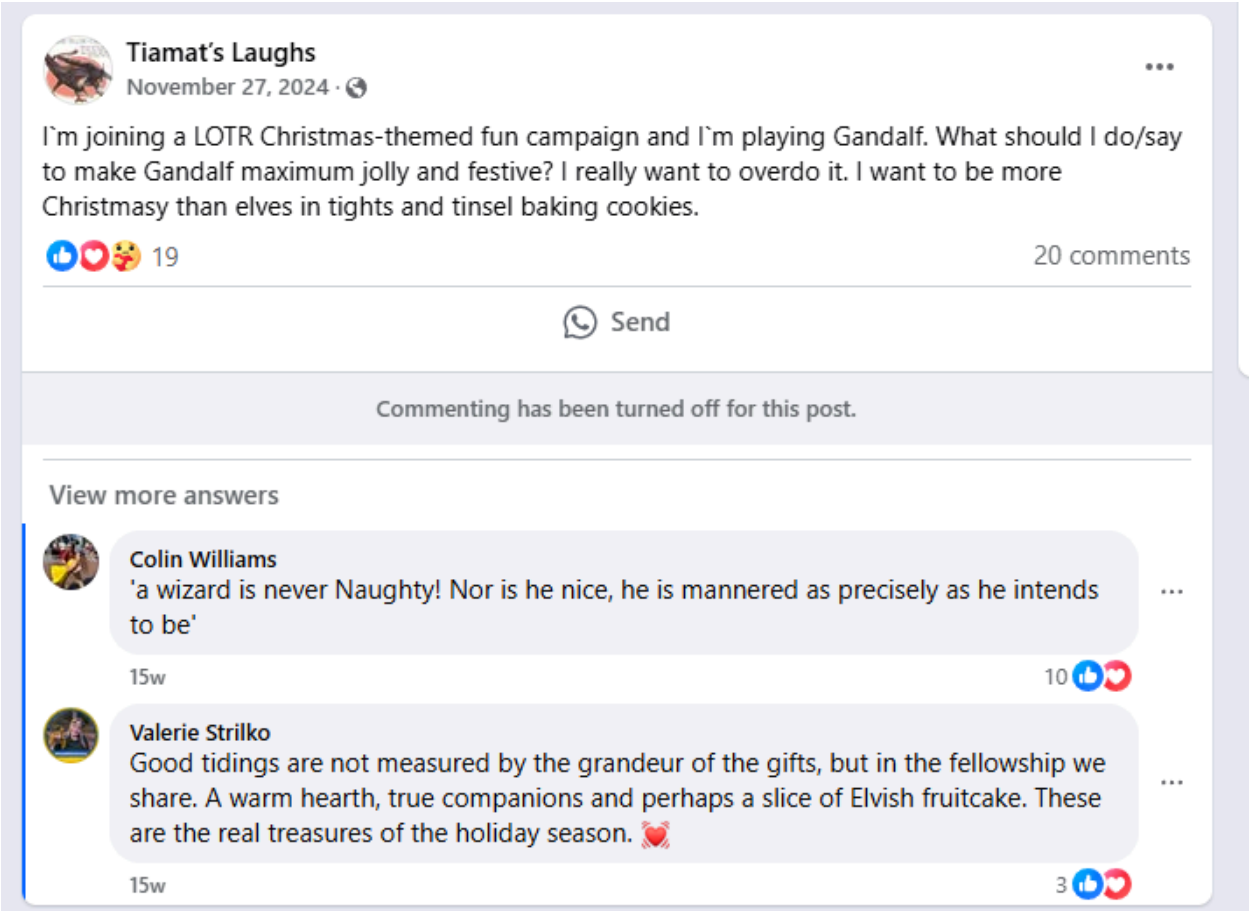
Yuval Margalit
First of all, I'd suggest checking out pathfinder's performance combat rules. It's not 5e, but it could help. Performance combat is turned into more of a skill challenge, with certain "moves" giving you a chance to earn/lose points or the crowd's favor (granting a buff/debuff).

Secondly, I'll say: unlike regular combat, gladiatorial combat was for entertainment not for killing opponents (death wasn't common amongst gladiators), so it was about long theatrical fights not short deadly ones (basically WWE wrestling vs real wrestling).

14w 3

Daniel Hubbard
December 9, 2024 ·

Few knew that Ralphie Parker was the illegitimate child of Kratos, God of War and soon he would be slaughtering entire pantheons and feasting upon on their souls.



Tiamat's Laughs
November 27, 2024 ·

I`m joining a LOTR Christmas-themed fun campaign and I`m playing Gandalf. What should I do/say to make Gandalf maximum jolly and festive? I really want to overdo it. I want to be more Christmasy than elves in tights and tinsel baking cookies.

19 20 comments

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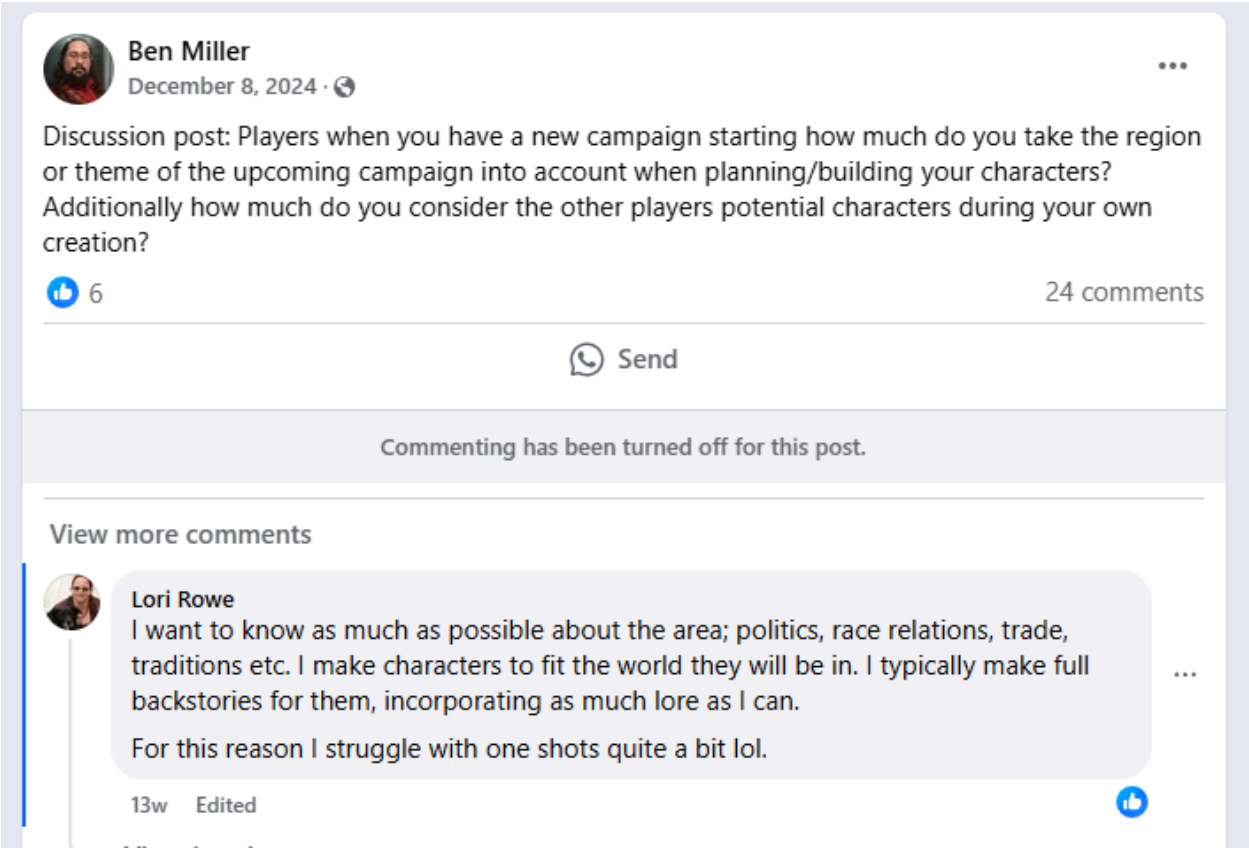
Colin Williams
'a wizard is never Naughty! Nor is he nice, he is mannered as precisely as he intends to be'

15w 10

Valerie Strilko
Good tidings are not measured by the grandeur of the gifts, but in the fellowship we share. A warm hearth, true companions and perhaps a slice of Elvish fruitcake. These are the real treasures of the holiday season. 💓

15w 3



Ben Miller
December 8, 2024 ·

Discussion post: Players when you have a new campaign starting how much do you take the region or theme of the upcoming campaign into account when planning/building your characters? Additionally how much do you consider the other players potential characters during your own creation?

6 24 comments

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Lori Rowe
I want to know as much as possible about the area; politics, race relations, trade, traditions etc. I make characters to fit the world they will be in. I typically make full backstories for them, incorporating as much lore as I can.

For this reason I struggle with one shots quite a bit lol.

13w Edited

Caitlin Smith
December 8, 2024 ·

When your backstory is dark but your character is cute

82 1 comment


Tiamat's Laughs
December 3, 2024 ·
OUR DM ON OUR FIRST NIGHT
- SON, THERE'S NO WRONG WAY TO PLAY D&D
Our DM after we persuaded an old woman to pay our party a monthly protection service fee after stealing all her money
- THIS IS THE WRONG WAY TO PLAY D&D
359
52 comments


Amber Jade
December 6, 2023 ·
Bard Warlock multiclass
why would i fuck a demon? simple, the status. imagine rolling up into hell already havin had ur back blown out by one of their own. imagine you and a gang of other losers standin at the gates of hell, they're all crying, scared to death about having a pitchfork up their ass for eternity and you just walk into the arms of your sugar demon? legendary.
kavinksybaby Seguir
this post spoke to me on levels many of you will never understand
556
36 comments

Iain Furstenwerth
December 3, 2024 ·

Weird math: D&D edition.

So I've championed the idea for years, that not more than 4 people should be in the adventuring party unless there's extenuating circumstances: a really good dm, a group of close friends, etc.

Usually I use the idea that going from 2 people to 3 people changes the count of interpersonal dynamics from 1 to 3, in order to show how dynamics grow more quickly than person count. That's already a logarithmic growth chart, if im not mistaken, since the multiplication grows faster than the number of party members (feel free to correct me, please do).

I mused that in fact, the number of dynamics between two people is not 1 but 2 - because each individual has a different experience than the other in the dynamic. So, adding a third supposedly adds numbers 3-6. No biggie, just double the other graph.

But wait, there's more.

Think about yourself around friends and loved ones. You have a different dynamic with just your mother (for instance) than your mother and your father together. Same with your father. So in fact, the chart is exponential, since there are two factors of P. Each different group of people not including all of them, in a scene or at the table for a game night, adds an additional dynamic. I'll show my work below.

P = number of players
D = number of dynamics total

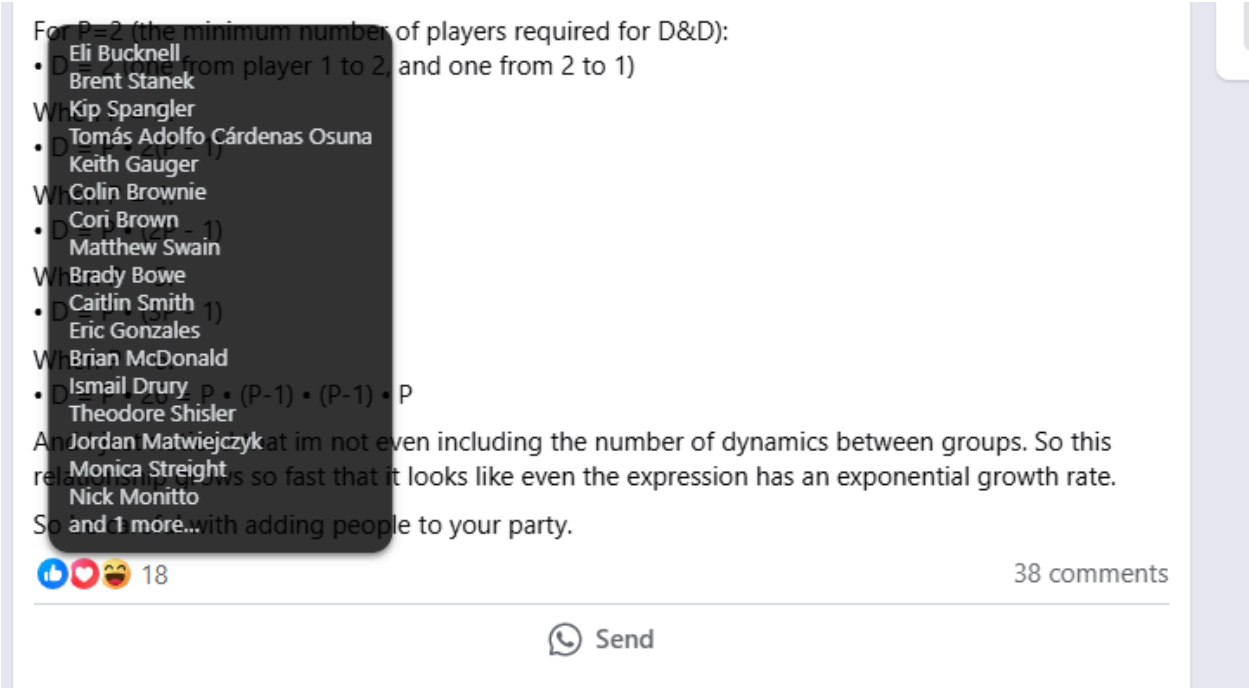
For P=2 (the minimum number of players required for D&D):
• D = 2 (one from player 1 to 2, and one from 2 to 1)

When P = 3:
• D = P • 2(P - 1)

When P = 4:
• D = P • (2P - 1)

When P = 5:
• D = P • (3P - 1)

When P = 6:
• D = P • 26 = P • (P-1) • (P-1) • P



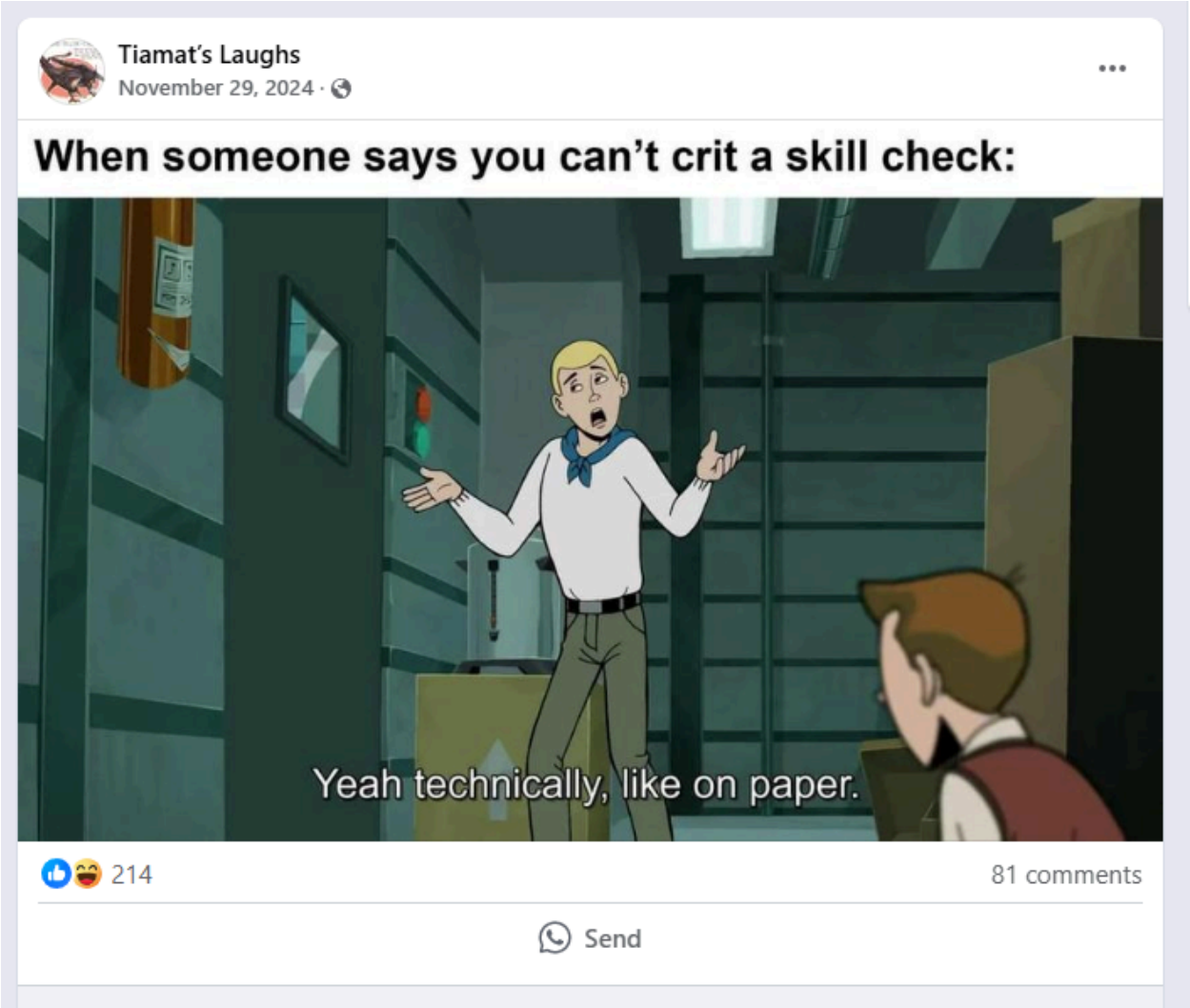
And just look at im not even including the number of dynamics between groups. So this relationship grows so fast that it looks like even the expression has an exponential growth rate.

So with adding people to your party.

Tiamat's Laughs
November 24, 2024 ·

C`monnnnn just this once, lemme torch em!

-Leopold the Just


Tiamat's Laughs
November 29, 2024 ·
When someone says you can't crit a skill check:
Yeah technically, like on paper.
214
81 comments
Send

Brady Bowe
November 30, 2024 ·

BABYLONBEE.COM

Dungeons And Dragons Introduces New 100-Sided Die For Determining Your Character's Gender

860 1K comments

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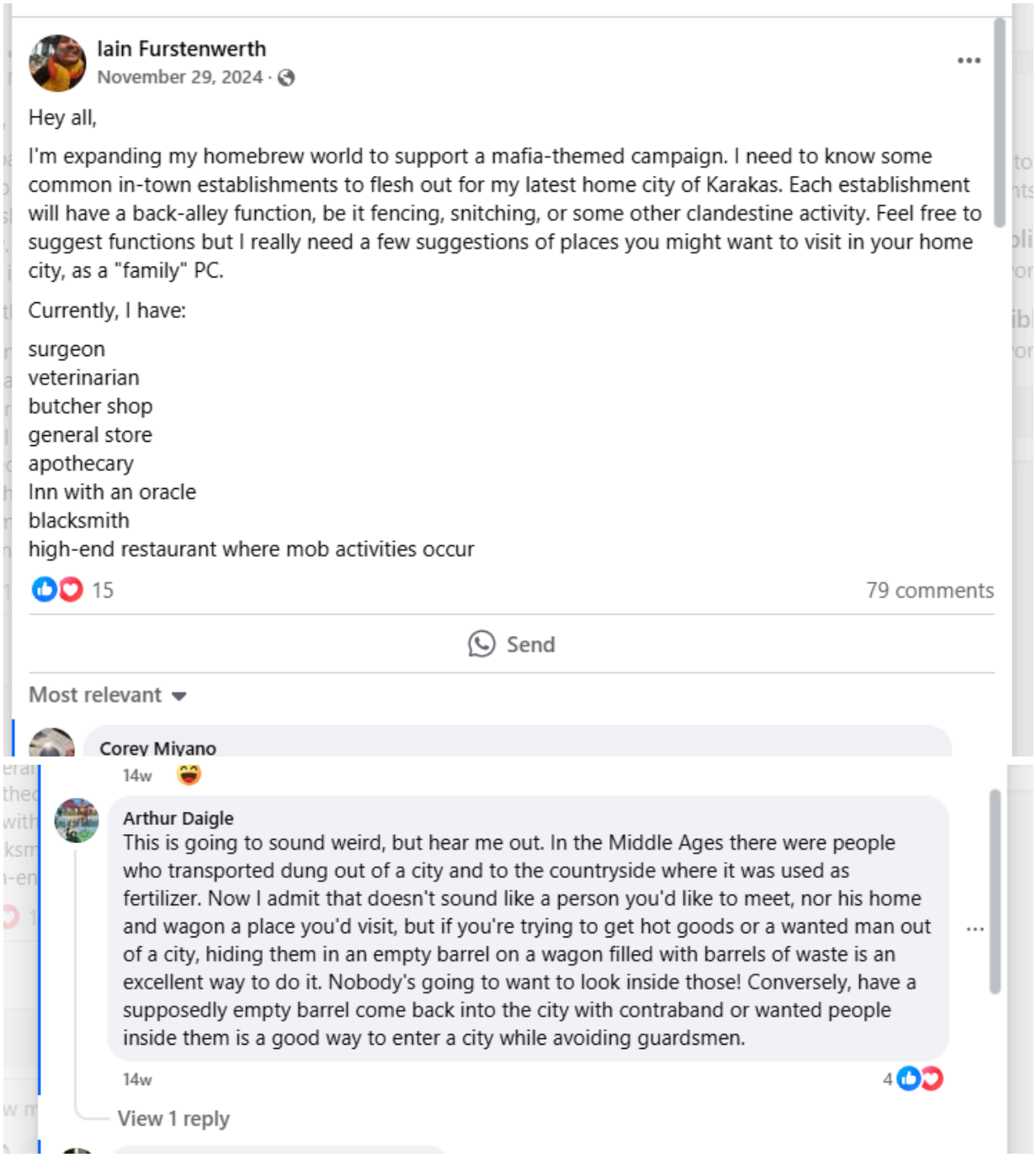
Ryan Hill
The Right has one joke and it's not even remotely funny.

14w 497



Iain Furstenwerth
November 29, 2024 ·

Hey all,

I'm expanding my homebrew world to support a mafia-themed campaign. I need to know some common in-town establishments to flesh out for my latest home city of Karakas. Each establishment will have a back-alley function, be it fencing, snitching, or some other clandestine activity. Feel free to suggest functions but I really need a few suggestions of places you might want to visit in your home city, as a "family" PC.

Currently, I have:

surgeon
veterinarian
butcher shop
general store
apothecary
Inn with an oracle
blacksmith
high-end restaurant where mob activities occur

15 79 comments

Send

Most relevant

Corey Miyano
14w

Arthur Daigle
This is going to sound weird, but hear me out. In the Middle Ages there were people who transported dung out of a city and to the countryside where it was used as fertilizer. Now I admit that doesn't sound like a person you'd like to meet, nor his home and wagon a place you'd visit, but if you're trying to get hot goods or a wanted man out of a city, hiding them in an empty barrel on a wagon filled with barrels of waste is an excellent way to do it. Nobody's going to want to look inside those! Conversely, have a supposedly empty barrel come back into the city with contraband or wanted people inside them is a good way to enter a city while avoiding guardsmen.

14w 4

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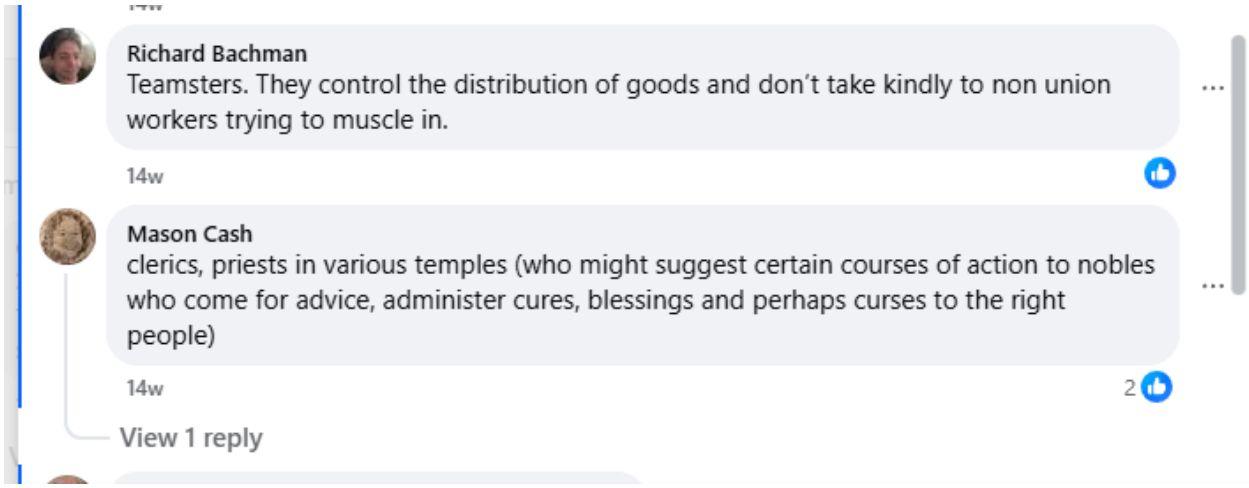
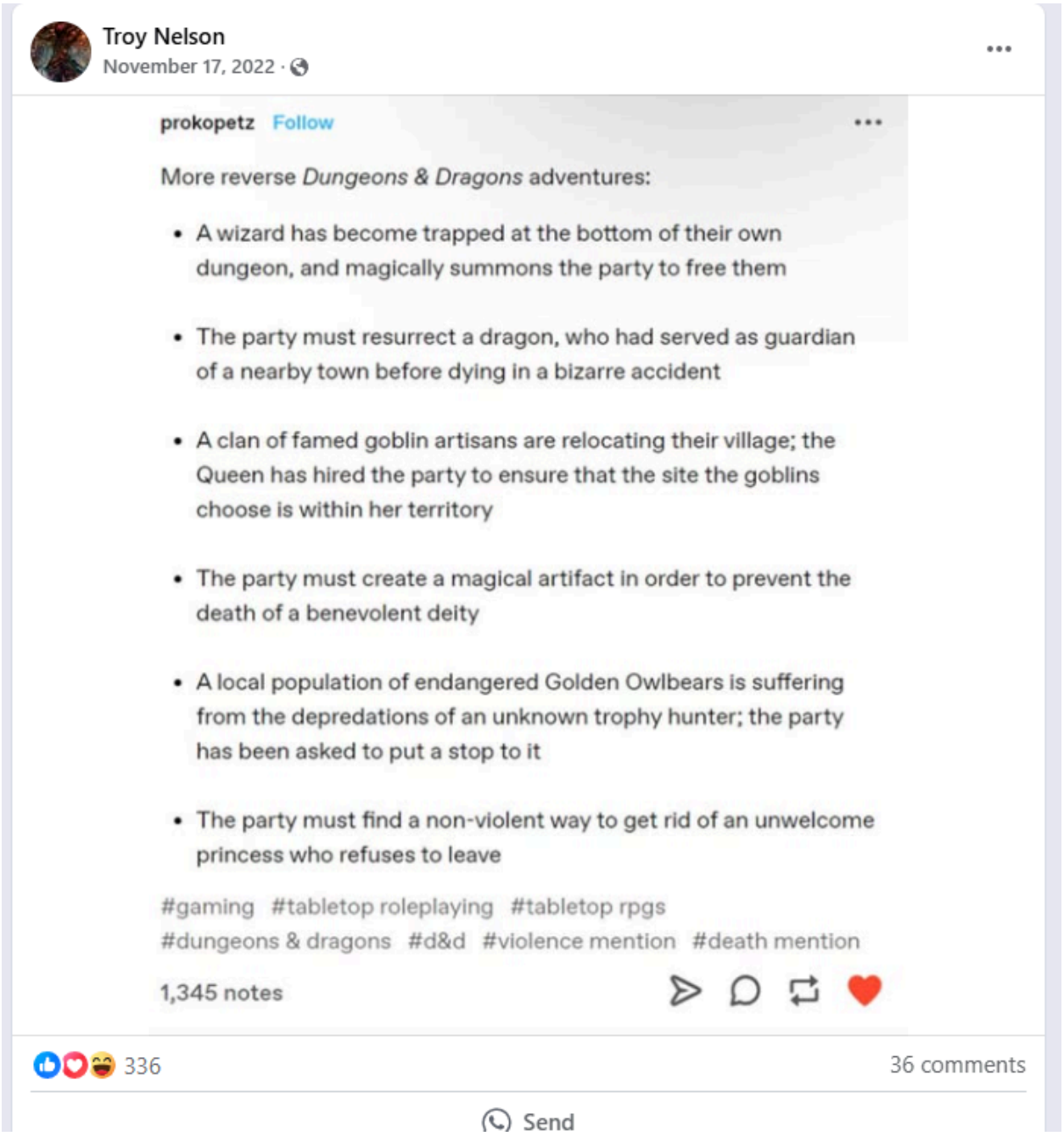
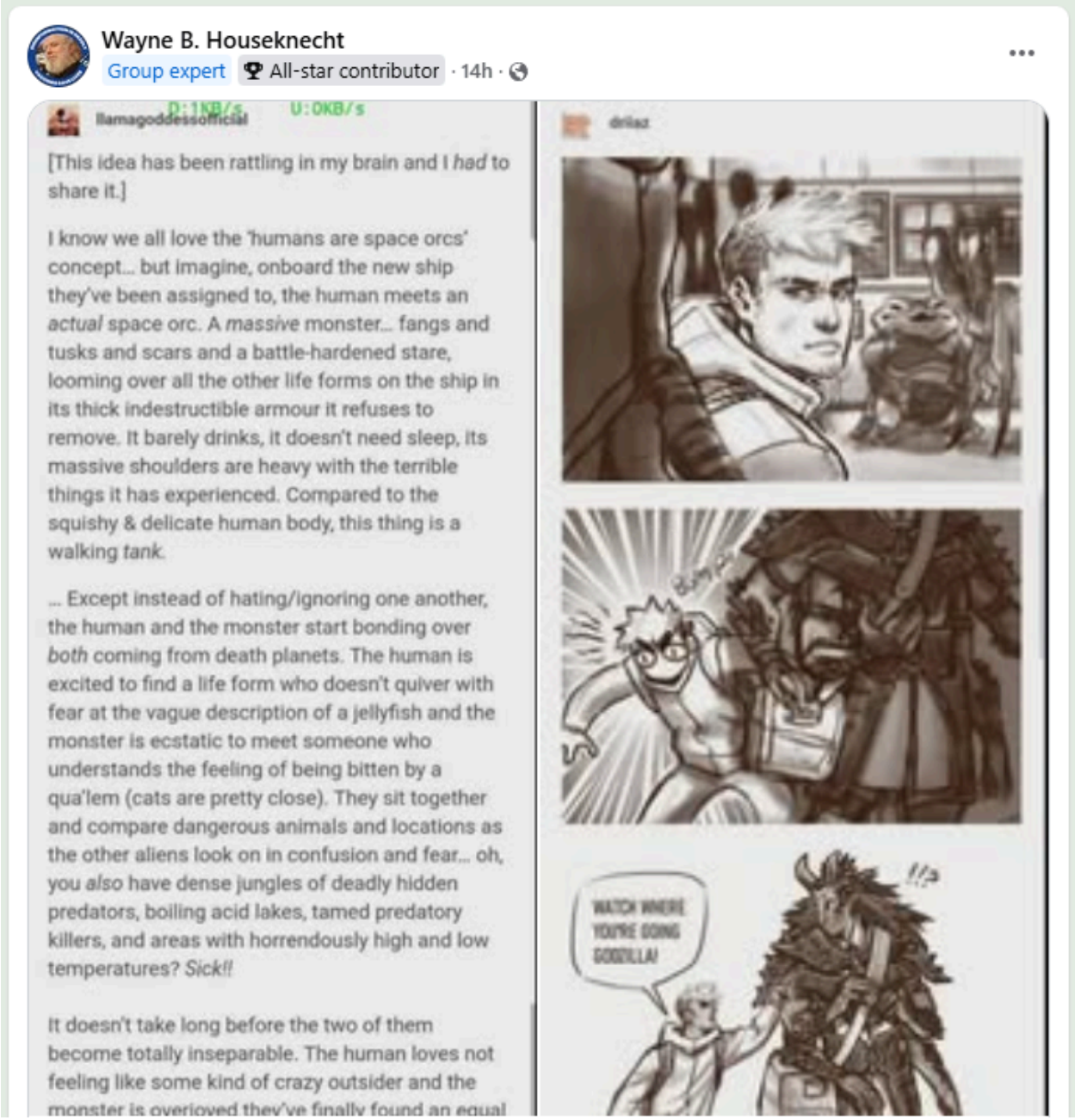
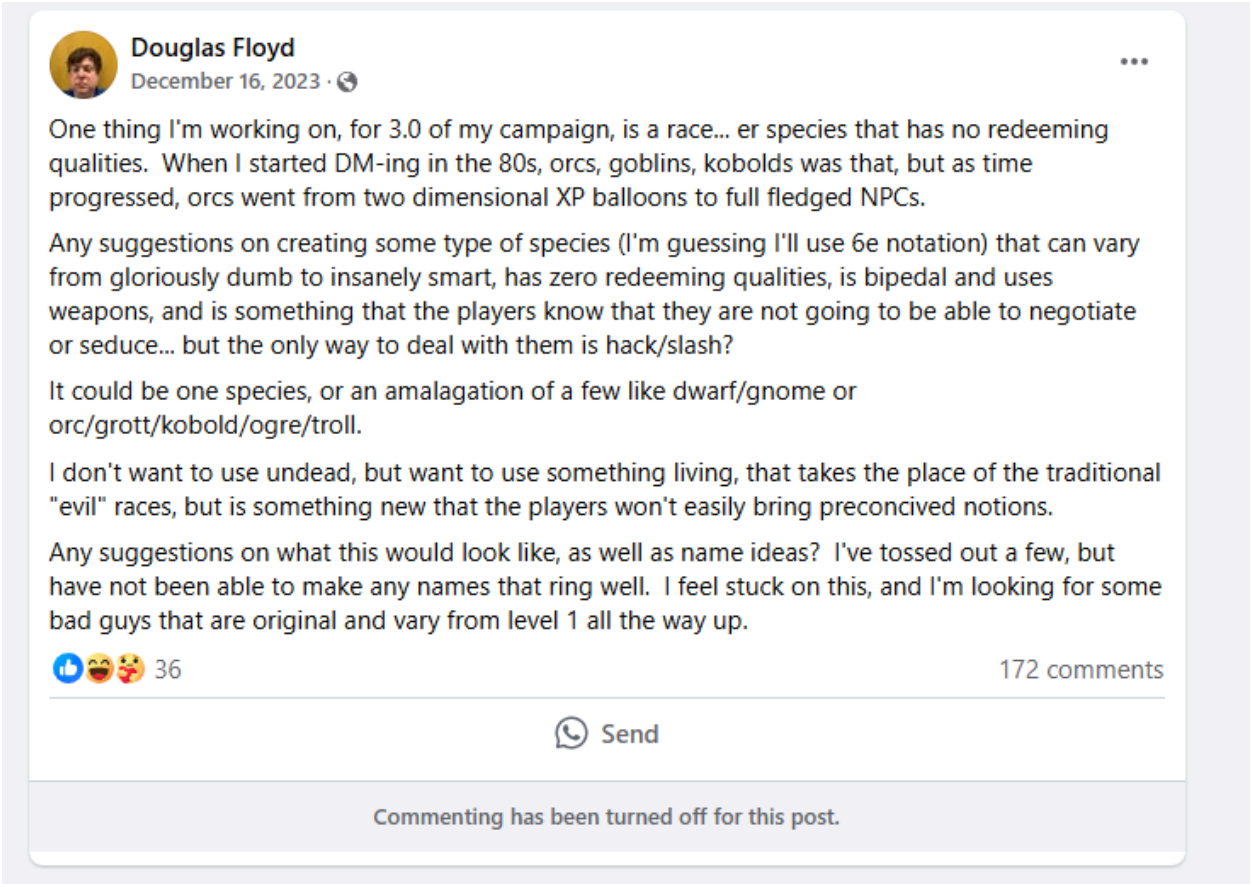

Richard Bachman
Teamsters. They control the distribution of goods and don't take kindly to non union workers trying to muscle in.
14w
Mason Cash
clerics, priests in various temples (who might suggest certain courses of action to nobles who come for advice, administer cures, blessings and perhaps curses to the right people)
14w
2
View 1 reply


Troy Nelson
November 17, 2022 ·
prokopetz Follow
More reverse *Dungeons & Dragons* adventures:
• A wizard has become trapped at the bottom of their own dungeon, and magically summons the party to free them
• The party must resurrect a dragon, who had served as guardian of a nearby town before dying in a bizarre accident
• A clan of famed goblin artisans are relocating their village; the Queen has hired the party to ensure that the site the goblins choose is within her territory
• The party must create a magical artifact in order to prevent the death of a benevolent deity
• A local population of endangered Golden Owlbears is suffering from the depredations of an unknown trophy hunter; the party has been asked to put a stop to it
• The party must find a non-violent way to get rid of an unwelcome princess who refuses to leave
#gaming #tabletop roleplaying #tabletop rpgs
#dungeons & dragons #d&d #violence mention #death mention
1,345 notes
336
36 comments
Send


Wayne B. Houseknecht
Group expert
All-star contributor
· 14h ·
D:1KB/s U:0KB/s
llamagoddessofficial
[This idea has been rattling in my brain and I had to share it.]
I know we all love the 'humans are space orcs' concept... but imagine, onboard the new ship they've been assigned to, the human meets an actual space orc. A massive monster... fangs and tusks and scars and a battle-hardened stare, looming over all the other life forms on the ship in its thick indestructible armour it refuses to remove. It barely drinks, it doesn't need sleep, its massive shoulders are heavy with the terrible things it has experienced. Compared to the squishy & delicate human body, this thing is a walking tank.
... Except instead of hating/ignoring one another, the human and the monster start bonding over both coming from death planets. The human is excited to find a life form who doesn't quiver with fear at the vague description of a jellyfish and the monster is ecstatic to meet someone who understands the feeling of being bitten by a qua'lem (cats are pretty close). They sit together and compare dangerous animals and locations as the other aliens look on in confusion and fear... oh, you also have dense jungles of deadly hidden predators, boiling acid lakes, tamed predatory killers, and areas with horrendously high and low temperatures? Sick!!
It doesn't take long before the two of them become totally inseparable. The human loves not feeling like some kind of crazy outsider and the monster is overjoyed they've finally found an equal
drilaz
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING GODZILLA!


Rules Lawyer
That monster's not supposed to have that ability
DM
Take 1d6 psychic damage



Douglas Floyd
December 16, 2023 ·

One thing I'm working on, for 3.0 of my campaign, is a race... er species that has no redeeming qualities. When I started DM-ing in the 80s, orcs, goblins, kobolds was that, but as time progressed, orcs went from two dimensional XP balloons to full fledged NPCs.

Any suggestions on creating some type of species (I'm guessing I'll use 6e notation) that can vary from gloriously dumb to insanely smart, has zero redeeming qualities, is bipedal and uses weapons, and is something that the players know that they are not going to be able to negotiate or seduce... but the only way to deal with them is hack/slash?

It could be one species, or an amalagation of a few like dwarf/gnome or orc/grott/kobold/ogre/troll.

I don't want to use undead, but want to use something living, that takes the place of the traditional "evil" races, but is something new that the players won't easily bring preconcived notions.

Any suggestions on what this would look like, as well as name ideas? I've tossed out a few, but have not been able to make any names that ring well. I feel stuck on this, and I'm looking for some bad guys that are original and vary from level 1 all the way up.

36 172 comments

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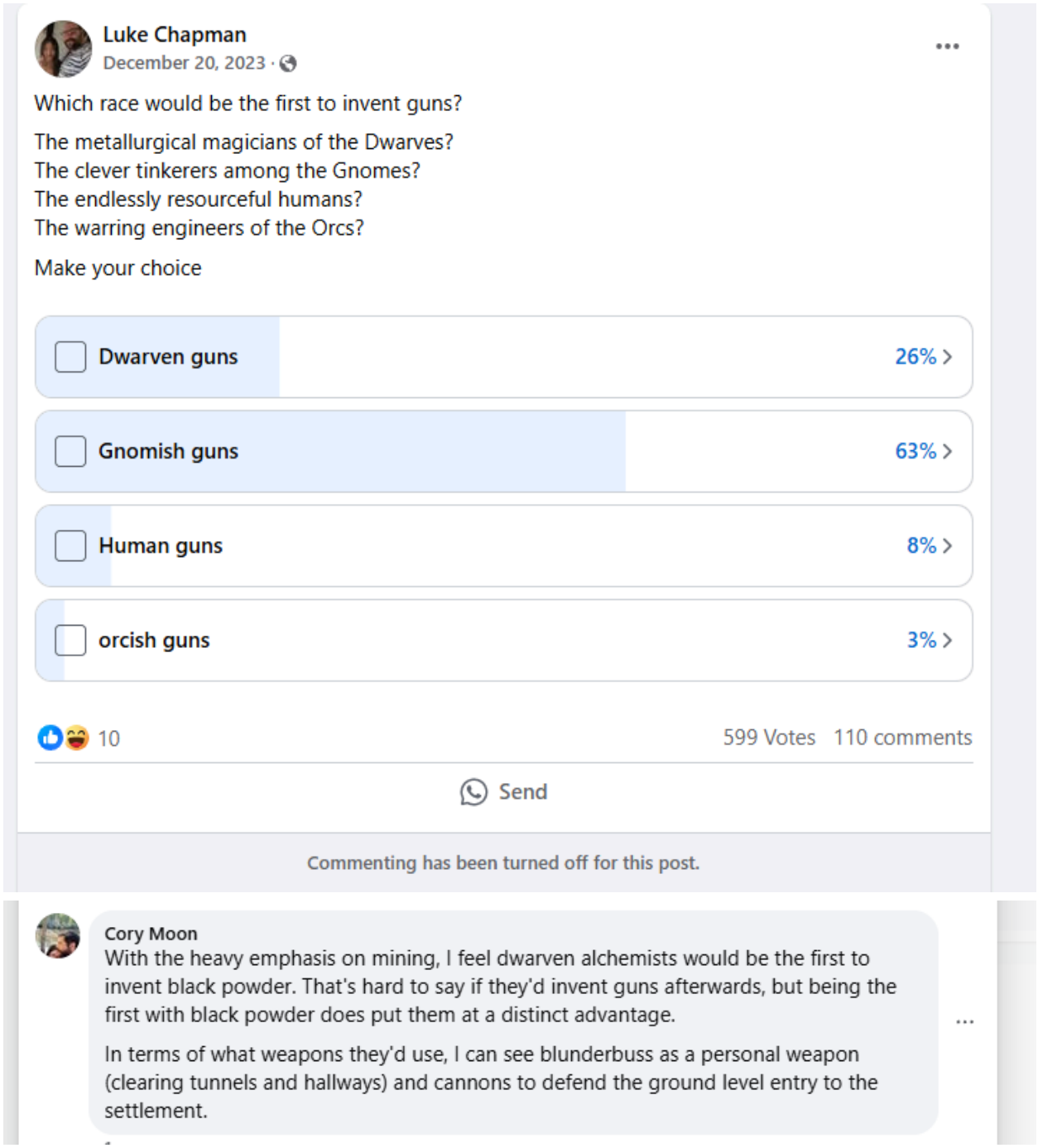

Luke Chapman
December 20, 2023 ·

Which race would be the first to invent guns?

The metallurgical magicians of the Dwarves?
The clever tinkerers among the Gnomes?
The endlessly resourceful humans?
The warring engineers of the Orcs?

Make your choice

Dwarven guns 26%

Gnomish guns 63%

Human guns 8%

orcish guns 3%

10 599 Votes 110 comments

Send

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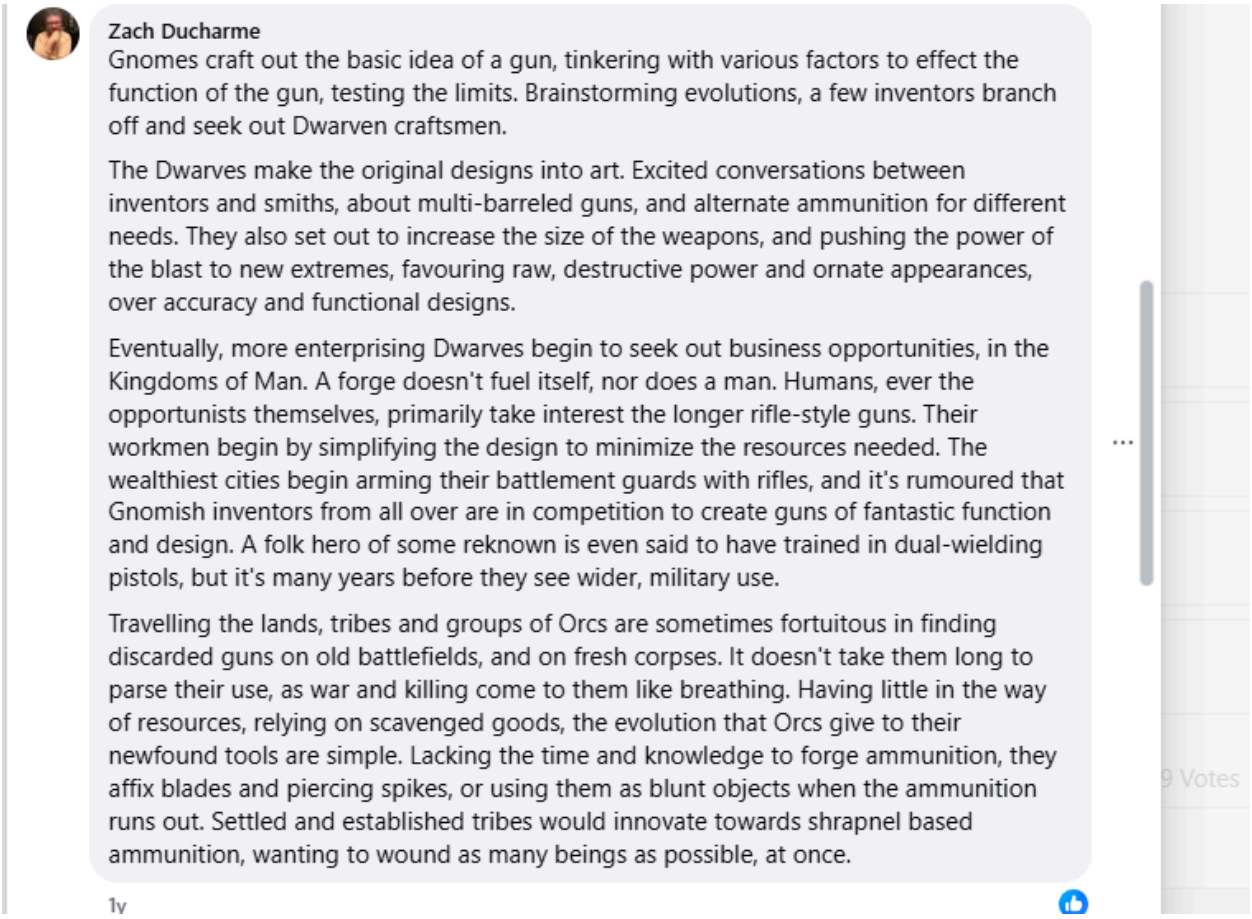
Cory Moon
With the heavy emphasis on mining, I feel dwarven alchemists would be the first to invent black powder. That's hard to say if they'd invent guns afterwards, but being the first with black powder does put them at a distinct advantage.

In terms of what weapons they'd use, I can see blunderbuss as a personal weapon (clearing tunnels and hallways) and cannons to defend the ground level entry to the settlement.



Zach Ducharme

Gnomes craft out the basic idea of a gun, tinkering with various factors to effect the function of the gun, testing the limits. Brainstorming evolutions, a few inventors branch off and seek out Dwarven craftsmen.

The Dwarves make the original designs into art. Excited conversations between inventors and smiths, about multi-barreled guns, and alternate ammunition for different needs. They also set out to increase the size of the weapons, and pushing the power of the blast to new extremes, favouring raw, destructive power and ornate appearances, over accuracy and functional designs.

Eventually, more enterprising Dwarves begin to seek out business opportunities, in the Kingdoms of Man. A forge doesn't fuel itself, nor does a man. Humans, ever the opportunists themselves, primarily take interest the longer rifle-style guns. Their workmen begin by simplifying the design to minimize the resources needed. The wealthiest cities begin arming their battlement guards with rifles, and it's rumoured that Gnomish inventors from all over are in competition to create guns of fantastic function and design. A folk hero of some reknown is even said to have trained in dual-wielding pistols, but it's many years before they see wider, military use.

Travelling the lands, tribes and groups of Orcs are sometimes fortuitous in finding discarded guns on old battlefields, and on fresh corpses. It doesn't take them long to parse their use, as war and killing come to them like breathing. Having little in the way of resources, relying on scavenged goods, the evolution that Orcs give to their newfound tools are simple. Lacking the time and knowledge to forge ammunition, they affix blades and piercing spikes, or using them as blunt objects when the ammunition runs out. Settled and established tribes would innovate towards shrapnel based ammunition, wanting to wound as many beings as possible, at once.

1y

9 Votes

Sebastian Thain
March 17, 2022 ·

A creative mind can make a character's race essential to the character without being a shallow stereotype.
Or make something that's great and interesting without their race mattering too much.
Neither method is superior, both methods are applicable to every race, even humans.

292 72 comments

Send


W-WHY DOES EVERYONE HATE ME??
Uhhh... are you crying?
@pet_foolery
I MIND MY OWN BUSINESS IN A CAVE ON TOP OF A FREAKIN' MOUNTAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE! BUT YOU PEOPLE KEEP COMING TO MY HOUSE AND TRYING TO KILL ME!!!
THEN YOU CALL ME A MONSTER! FOR WHAT? DEFENDING MYSELF?
OH, WOW...
@pet_foolery