



Posting and Commenting Etiquette & Moderator Policy v. September 2020

Names and usernames

Please consider using a recognizably personal name, because it has a real and positive effect on the way people talk to one another. However, this certainly does not require your full name. There are lots of good reasons to manage your usernames and general online presence. If you prefer a fictional username or long-established webhandle, that's fine too.

Some half-and-half options include altered spelling, a pen-name for surname, and an internet-style username while using one's personal name in the body text.

Posting content and format

The good news is that any reflection about the experiences you had in play is welcome. Even if you're not too sure about your direction or conclusion in posting, as long as you've followed the basic guide to posting (using my Best Practices advice or not), it'll work fine.

I recommend composing your posts outside of the site and pasting in the text. That way they'll say what you really mean and protect them from the software's sudden and inevitable betrayals.

When you create your own post in Actual Play, you get a fair amount of options, maybe too many. Please don't over-format.

Images are currently permitted, with some recommendations and limits.

- To format an image while you're composing a post or comment, insert them via embedding or URL, then right-click to assign their size and position.
- Leading images really help the look & feel of the site. Please include them at 300 pixels for the long edge, left-aligned.
- Limit the number and size of additional images so they enhance what you're saying rather than becoming a spectacle of their own.

Structure for commenting and replying

The nesting is built to organize conversations.

- A comment gets its own title, but replies to it do not.
- All replies are submitted by clicking "Reply" to the original comment, and are nested at the same level among one another.
- Use ordinary language to be clear whom you're responding to, when necessary.

I can move comments and replies around. If you submitted one into the wrong place, notify me through the Contact form and I'll fix it.

You can't edit or delete anything. If you made some mistake, go ahead and post again to say so and fix it – this turns out to be very readable and has a positive social effect. If you absolutely cannot bear to see the error, notify me through the Contact form and I'll fix it.

Actual disagreement

I'd like this site to showcase real and meaningful differences among our points of view and our experiences of play. That means you can't treat disagreements as fights or debates, with winners and losers for a cheering or sneering audience.

When you present critique or disagreement, set yourself a high bar for the interest and value of what you're saying – that you're making the conversation better, not worse.

- Make it clear whether you're *demonstrating a different view of your own* or *disagreeing with the accuracy of the view you're commenting on*.

When someone disagrees with you, even to the point of criticizing your reasoning, review what you actually wrote.

- If it's mistaken, or needs revision, own up to it.
- If the disagreement seems productive, take the conversation in the right direction.
- If you're not sure what they mean or how it relates, say so nicely enough so they try again.
- If they're taking it in a bad direction, then notify me using the Contact button and let me handle it.

In all cases, once you've stated what you want and mean to say, then quit trying to convince the other person. Do nothing. Let the contrasting views stand as they are.

Moderation

This isn't a public site. It's mine, built to permit and facilitate discussion. I moderate it, so you know.

- I read everything.
- I might edit your comment solely for format – fixing a picture or link for you, or shifting a comment or reply to the proper level of nesting.
- I do not edit your stated content. If I have to delete a whole post or comment someday, I will, but so far that hasn't happened.

I moderate for content out in the open, in a reply, stating that this is moderation. It typically includes some way forward and is not phrased to shame you.

What for? I am ruthlessly enforcing intellectual honesty and personal courtesy.

You can help by avoiding certain phrases and their associated habits of thought, like these:

- "To be honest" – at best a placeholder, at worst an indicator that anything but is about to arrive.
- "Only" or "just" – think about what your sentence would be like without them – usually it will entail taking a more genuine responsibility for what you mean.
- "So you're saying" – do not presume to speak for others.
- "It's interesting that you say ..." "You're clearly an intelligent person ..." – these are code for calling someone stupid, prejudiced, or something else insulting.
- "You need to understand" or "You don't understand" – do not presume to speak for others' understanding.

Willful stupidity, provocation, and stubbornness are far too tolerated in role-playing culture. You know what they look like and so do I. They are not permitted here.

- The current social and alleged creative subdivisions within the hobby are worthless, toxic, and above all, counter-factual. Don't waste our time with this nonsense.

- Be ready to learn real-world, hobby, textual, and personal histories which explode a great deal of what you may believe and value. Don't hold onto falsehoods.

Discourtesy toward persons is also not permitted. Be as profane, nonconformist, or idiosyncratic as you like as a matter of style, but don't direct any such thing toward anyone. This means toward what they say, who they are, how they live, what "impression" you may have formed, or anything else.

That includes false politeness, which is a high art on the internet. I am attuned to it and will treat passive-aggression, if anything, more directly than the active kind.

- A good example: Using a person's name as a repeated "beat" throughout your sentences and paragraphs - this is worse than passive-aggressive, it's passive-hostile - do not do it.
- There are others which I reserve the right to call out as they may appear.

How to respond to moderation:

- In the case of minor editing or repositioning, carry on without comment. Your contribution wasn't an infraction and my fix isn't a punishment.
- In the case of my moderating your content, please consider what I said carefully.
 - Do not strike back as if I had struck you, and conversely, do not apologize or self-abuse. Carry on, merely better.
 - If you think that I'm being unfair or missing something, use the Contact form. Consider it a sympathetic hearing for which I will review myself carefully, given that you are doing the same.
- You're free to clarify if you think I'm missing something, but past that point, my judgment is final. When all is said and done, if you don't like it, then go away and don't come back.