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

Structure for commenting and replying

The nesting is built to organize conversations.
- Begin a comment stream with the distinctive prompt at the bottom of the original post.
- All replies to a comment 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, reply 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.

Encountering 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, 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 is owned and moderated by me.
- I read everything.
- I might edit your comment 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.

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 not permitted. You know what they look like and so do I. Specifically, current social and alleged creative subdivisions within role-playing culure are worthless and counter-factual. Don't waste our time with this nonsense.

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: who they are, how they live, what "impression" you may have formed, or anything else.

I will address false politeness and passive-aggression directly and immediately.
- Examples: addressing a person as "sir" as if you were at a Renfaire, or using a person's name as a repeated "beat" throughout your sentences and paragraphs.
- 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-abase. Carry on, merely better.
  - If you think that I'm being unfair or missing something, use the Contact form.
- My judgment is final. When all is said and done, if you don't like it, then go away and don't come back.

Hi! Thanks for checking this out.

Actual Play posting means that you write about what happened while table-top role-playing. *The requirement is that you refer to real-life actual play experiences.*

Fortunately, it's not supposed to be a transcript of play in a complete, journalistic account. You don't have to do that. The scope of content is very much up to you.

- Any and every role-playing game is eligible for discussion. There is no favored type or approach to play here.
- Any amount of play: thirty years or thirty seconds, long ago in the past or just last night, whatever you want.

You don't get likes or plusses or up-voting, so the only metric for "good" is how well the discussion proceeds. What I call good is that someone – preferably including you – comes away with an enriched notion of anything about role-playing. Maybe we see it explicitly in the discussion, maybe we don't, but the right kind will have that impact, if not now, then later, if not for one of the participants in the discussion, then for some other person reading it.

A brief orientation helps

Say what game title you were using, and whether you've played it a lot or a little.

State your authentic view of the experience. Consider any of these: Was it fun, or mostly fun except for one bit, or terrible, or what? Did you like it? Are you looking forward to doing more of it?

- Keep this simple. "It was great" or "I didn't like all of it," or whatever. It lets the reader know where you're coming from and how to consider what you're about to tell them.

Provide the context for whom you're playing with. A group you've known and played with for years? A convention one-shot with strangers? Or what?

- A little bit of detail goes a long way; you don't have to provide full names or complicated social histories.
- That said, certain details can be important - whether, for instance, siblings or other close ties are included; or the general age range. Mention any of these if you want.

What happened in the game?

You could call this "the fiction" or even "the story" or just "in-game" or whatever you want. It's who the characters were, where they were, what they did, and what happened.

- Don't write it *as* a story, recasting it into fanfic or a script. Talk about play and use your own voice.

Only present a bit of reading, not a novel. The best options are either to describe most of it loosely or to focus on a specific moment in detail.

- Please include any data-type information, e.g., character sheets, as attachments instead of text in the post.

The system in action

Mention or explain – to any degree – what you and the other people did which created this fictional content.

- This isn't a review site. You don't have to thumbs-up or thumbs-down, you don't have to recommend or not, you don't have to be complete.

When and if you want, evaluate the mechanics you're talking about or compare them to any other way to do it that you're familiar with.

- Here's where some analysis kicks in. I – for example – really like to compare systemic features of play, and to comment upon what others have presented. If you want to see that, feel free to start it yourself or to encourage it; if you don't, feel free to say so.

Format

Please don't modify the site's default font and other features of the text. I like it as it is.

Display images in the body text at 300 pixels on the long edge. They'll remain at the original size when they're clicked on, for people who want a closer look. Align them at either left or right.

What about recordings?

Please feel free to include video or audio recordings.

- If you do, it will help if you edit them to match what you're writing about or time-stamp the content you want people to focus on.

Entertainment value isn't the point.

- Plenty of people are currently billing role-playing, or staged versions, as skits or performance art. You aren't getting paid for this and don't need to do that.

It's your post

You started it, so you set the goals, in the context of the site etiquette standards.

- Throw it open to whatever anyone might think, or set a goal or point-at-issue to consider, or address some issue or idea about role-playing for which you think the experience is relevant.
- You aren't captive to whatever someone says – if you don't want to pursue it, you don't have to reply.
- Be open to what others may think, be willing to be surprised or at least to compare their view with yours.

Style and tone

It's easiest and best to write as you would say it in person, without either dressing it up or neutralizing yourself. Check out my posts for how I follow my own advice, but you don't have to *sound* like them or make similar decisions.

I recommend writing them out in some other program first, and going over them to be sure you're saying what you want. Good spelling and grammar always help, but I have no formal standards for you to meet.

That's it!

If you have any questions, use the Contact button. I hope to see your thoughts at the site.