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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome –

Welcome, one and all to the *Munchkin's Guide to Power Gaming!*

What is a munchkin? Well, we're not referring to the cute little fellows from *The Wizard of Oz* (though even they might be capable of munchkinism after reading this book). We're talking about power-gamers, mini-maxers, twinkies, gun-bunnies, combat-wombats, and purveyors of ultra-violence. Those guys that demolish your average GM's intricately developed plots by killing everything in sight and somehow jumping straight to the end of your story without passing through the middle. They're the ones that you know have to be cheating with their dice when they claim to have three maximum stat rolls in a row; then, when you check, they roll

it again. They're that strange combination of luck, cheek, and aggression that most people seem to think is the bane of roleplaying today.

We're not here to judge. Most people are munchkins between the ages of eight and thirteen, but some just don't grow out of it. What you hold here in your hands is a guide to the very nature of the munchkin. What makes them tick? How do they fake those stupendous die rolls? How do they come up with a death machine when you're trying to play *Pixies and Flowers*™? How exactly do they make you allow them to play these characters? These questions, and more, will be answered inside. Welcome to the bloody, sweaty, testosterone-laden lair that is the home of the munchkin . . .

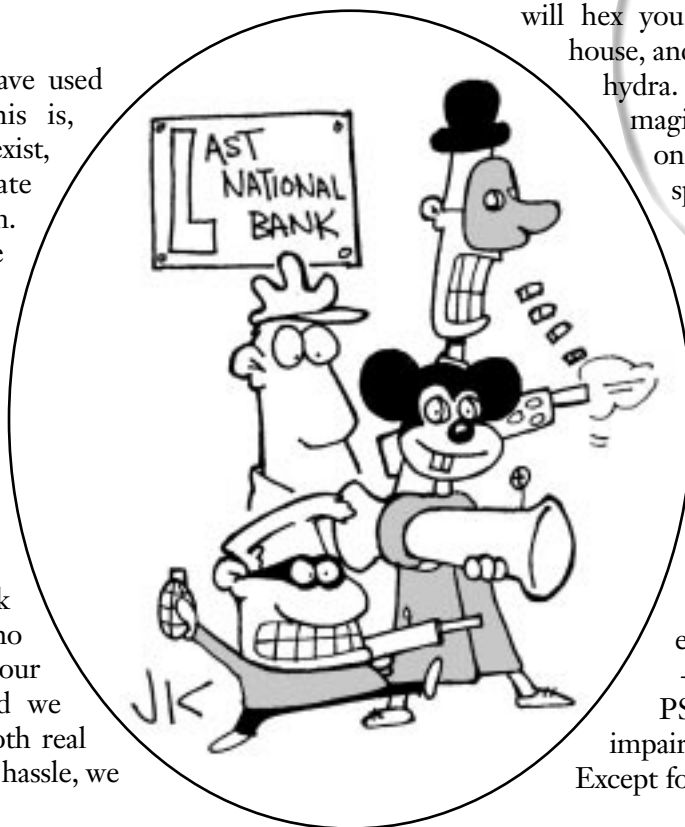


## Pointless Stuff They Always Put at the Beginning of Roleplaying Books

### DISCLAIMER

Throughout this book we have used the male pronoun "he." This is, of course, because we are sexist, misogynist scumbags who hate women and wish to insult them. This book also contains rude words, references to the occult, horrible, nasty, violent descriptions of things and general mickey-taking.

The authors obviously believe in magic and often sacrifice children. And we like to encourage satanic practices in others, especially impressionable young teenagers with a weak grasp on reality. We exist for no other purpose than to corrupt your children to the dark side, and we know that *AD&D* spells are both real and powerful. If you give us any hassle, we



will hex you until you glow, fireball your house, and *Polymorph Other* your cat into a hydra. For those of you of a similar magical persuasion there is, inscribed on this book in invisible runes, a special message just for you.

In addition to forming the Young Men's Satanic Association, we also like to keep our work extremely depressing, angsty, and horrible. This is in order to twist young minds into committing suicide or murder. Unlike most writers, we alone realize the value of wiping out most of our customer base and causing the rest to be incarcerated. Thank you for your attention.

– Grim & Steve

PS. For the terminally brain-impaired, we are of course teasing. Except for the hexing bit.

## WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

Yeah, right. You buy this book and you don't know what a roleplaying game IS? Humph, well, on the off-chance that this book becomes a comedic cult classic and normal, boring people like you begin buying it, we'll cover the possibility. Though we don't really see the point.

A roleplaying game is like a board game. Only there is no board, or pieces, and you're not competing with each other. In fact it's not much like a board game at all come to think of it. Especially not *Monopoly*<sup>TM</sup>, *Risk*<sup>TM</sup>, or *Scrabble*<sup>TM</sup> now we come to mention them. OK, board games were a bad analogy. Let's try again.

Roleplaying is sort of like writing a book. No. Hang on, it isn't. You don't write down everything that happens, there's more than one writer, and the characters really do have a life of their own. Also, you don't get paid for it, or do book signings. All right, writing a book isn't the best example either. (Unless you're talking about some of the dime-a-dozen cheap cloned fantasy books out there, which may as well be a transcript of someone's gaming session. Only they are usually worse.)

Gaming is like theater. No, it's not. (Unless you're doing live-action, which is another kettle of fish.) You don't wear make-up, or costumes, you don't have any lines to remember, you don't move around a lot, and you most definitely do not call each other "luvvy," or indeed "darling."

Damn, this isn't getting us anywhere. Roleplaying is like . . . roleplaying. A group of people get together with some junk food, some booze, a few cigarettes, some dice, some paper and an expensive, poorly-put-together book that is probably shedding pages like they're going out of fashion. They create a bunch of social misfit alter-egos and then pretend in their heads that they are running around massacring bad guys and saving the world.

Hey, it beats the cud out of Nintendo and is a lot more fun than hanging around outside a 7-11 in the rain all hours of the night.

## ABOUT SJ GAMES

Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine covers the hobby's top games – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings! Suggestions for especially evil munchkinism will be gleefully read.

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for an online catalog, errata, updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on Compuserve and AOL. The *Munchkin's Guide* web page has updates, resources, and links at [www.sjgames.com/munchkin](http://www.sjgames.com/munchkin).

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Neither Grim nor Steve has done anything particularly of note. Both went to college, both had attempts at University, both match the stereotypical unhealthy, unpopular, "can't get no satisfaction" stereotype of gamers.

Grim was going to do illustration but never got past the Foundation stage due to his habit of arguing with people during the interview. He is a sad, lonely figure who you may openly ridicule.

Steve has a job in the real world and can often be found propping up bars and letting trusting women sit on his knee.

Both gentlemen wish to work further in the RPG world and are quite active despite being too poor to go to conventions.

'Net-heads can see what they are up to at any given time by accessing <http://www.postmort.demon.co.uk>. At this site you can also pick up pictures of the dynamic duo and their LARP group, and read a load of unfunny material.



# DEFINITIONS OF RPG TERMS

*Adventure* - An evening of drunken debauchery with maybe a game involved.

*Fumble* - Bad thing.

*Campaign* - A series of fights over several months.

*Critical* - Good thing.

*D4* - The sharp pointy dice that hurt your foot when you tread on them.

*D6* - The box-shaped dice that you will need a lot of as they are often used to roll damage, and some games take a sort of retro approach and use nothing else. Most players have a couple of bags full of these.

*D8* - The first of the rarely-used curiosity dice.

*D10* - Probably the most popular dice at the moment, due to the ever-increasing number of percentile systems and the rocket-speed conglomeration of White Wolf games. You will need half a ton of them.

*D12* - The second of the rarely-used curiosity dice.

*D20* - This dice first found fame with *AD&D*. Its near-spherical shape allows it to hurtle round your house with great speed. When you finally do need some d20s, you invariably discover that they are mostly disguised d10s and you don't have enough.

*D100* - Normally two D10, but sometimes a huge munchkin-die. The D100 is used to enable percentile systems to give a false sense of scientific credibility.

*Experience* - Ways to increase your munchkinism.

*Freeform* - A more street-credible way of saying Live-Action.

*FRP* - Full-on Righteous Punch-up.

*Genre* - What determines whether you are slaughtering aliens or orcs.

*Gamemaster* - The enemy.

*Hit Points* - A number you want to be as high a possible.

*Interactive Theater* - A pretentious drama student way of saying freeform.

*Level* - The scale of munchkindom you have achieved.

*Live-Action* - What table-top gamers say they don't do; i.e. dressing up in costumes and hitting each other.

*Magic Points* - The number of times you can shout **FWACKOOM!** and deafen your GM.

*Munchkin* - Power-gamer, twink, combat-wombat, mini-maxer, gun-bunny . . . Read the book!

*NPC* - Cannon-fodder.

*PC* - Your character, dummy.

*Player* - You and your mates.

*RPG* - Rocket-Propelled Grenade.

*Skills* - One half of your munchkin potential.

*Statistics* - The other half.

*Supplement* - A book that adds on to the basic rules and background of the original game, complicating everyone's lives.

*Table-Top* - Not Live-Action or PBM or PBEM - roleplaying in armchairs, with dice getting lost under the sofa and coffee getting spilled all over game books. (Only sad cases usually sit around a proper table.)

Then of course there are the exceptions. Live-action, where you *do* run around, in costume, and make-believe beating people on the head with plastic-and-foam wiffl-bats. Then there's interactive theater, where you walk about in costume and make-up, and *don't* hit people. There's Multi-User Dungeons on the Internet where you run up huge bills chatting up someone you think is a woman because their alter-ego is and then they turn out to be a 53-year-old management consultant from Felch Springs, Australia. Play-By-Mail, where you shell out mucho dinero for a few scrappy computer printouts. Play-By-E-Mail, where you receive a lot of e-mails telling you why your



GM can't send you your turn that week. Diceless Roleplaying, where the whole thing degenerates into an argument about who can or can't do what. Collectable Card Games, which are rapidly overtaking crack as the most addictive and crime-inducing thing on the planet. There are all manner of spin-offs and sub-genres and people who roleplay who don't even realize that they're doing it.

Look, face it, the only way to understand roleplaying is to play. Nothing else is the same, or can convey the same feeling. It's like sex, or getting drunk; you never really know what it's like until you've done it. You can talk about it, watch it, listen in, read up on it, get magazines about it - but the only way to know is to experience it for yourself. Now take yourself out of our presence, you difficult person of questionable parentage.