

# SLAY YOUR DRAGONS



A GUIDE TO DUNGEONS & DRAGONS  
AND WELLBEING



# Introduction

Welcome to the dungeon! This minibook is for players, and particularly Dungeon Masters, of Dungeons & Dragons looking to improve their wellbeing. It focusses mostly on D&D but is entirely applicable to any RPG.

As Dungeon Masters and players ourselves, we wanted to take a peek behind the DM Screen at how the game can both be a huge benefit to a player's wellbeing but can also, on occasion, cause some of its own anxieties. We have talked with RPG community members about their gaming experiences and they have been kind enough to share them with us for this mini-book.

In **Part 1** we'll focus on Dungeon Masters, the mind dragons they may have to battle and we'll share tips and tricks for DMs to look after themselves.

In **Part 2** we look at the benefits of the game for players, especially young people and give some advice as to how to make the RPG gaming experience even better for everyone at the table.

In **Part 3** we focus on the D&D community. Harry Hunkin writes about RPG groups and the sense of belonging. Therapist, Tim Sumner, shares his thoughts on how D&D can help with the wellbeing of players and how the game can be used in therapy sessions.





# ***Part 1***



## ***The Dungeon Master's Guide***



## Dungeon Mastering

Being a Dungeon Master can be the best job at the table. You get to facilitate a great time for your players and help to create memorable moments that will be discussed forever more. It's like making your own movie but without knowing what the actors are going to do. It's a great time.

Dungeon Mastery can also be a really tough job. This game only works if one person is willing to step behind the screen and run the session. The DM shares the world, releases the dragons, and pins another quest to the tavern board. It's no small task.

Sometimes, this goes incredibly well; The game flows and really comes to life. Other times, the dungeon is dark, the traps don't work the way they should and the monsters refuse to do what you tell them. Sometimes, the adventurers run the opposite way, they talk too much, or they just want to unleash absolute chaos (I do love a bit of chaos though).

If a game goes particularly wrong, that is when your inner mind dragons might appear and whisper that you don't belong here. You feel like an inadequate DM. You might want to hang up your robe, shut the dusty tomes and walk away from the dungeon once and for all.

This section is dedicated to all the DMs who have felt the fatigue, the anxiety, and the imposter syndrome of being a Dungeon Master. It is also for the players that want to support their glorious DMs.





***Dungeons & Dragons*** is built on community spirit and this minibook hopes to strengthen that bond between players and DMs to make your games last a lifetime. This book aims to ensure that everyone leaves the table feeling awesome.

Dungeon Masters... Do you remember that awful game you had? The one where things didn't go your way. The one that you couldn't stop thinking about for days afterwards. Nearly every DM has been there. Our brains lock onto those negative moments that we wish had gone better. We think about what we should have done in hindsight and cling to those moments for no good reason. Perhaps our brains are wired that way. We tend to focus on the negative moments as we can learn from them. This can be a good thing. The best DMs are the ones who embrace their mistakes to help improve the game for themselves and their players.



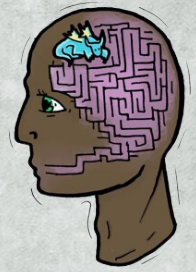
That is the beauty of RPGs; they are organic. It is easy to let the gelatinous cube gobble you up and dissolve you in the acid of over analysis. Try to move forward. You'd never complete the dungeon if you stayed in the same darn chamber thinking about how you could've solved the puzzles more effectively or slayed the goblins in a fewer turns.

If a mind dragon comes to you, remember that you and your players built this world; it is yours to play in. Without you all, the world ends and nobody wants that...

...except the cultists.



# MIND DRAGONS

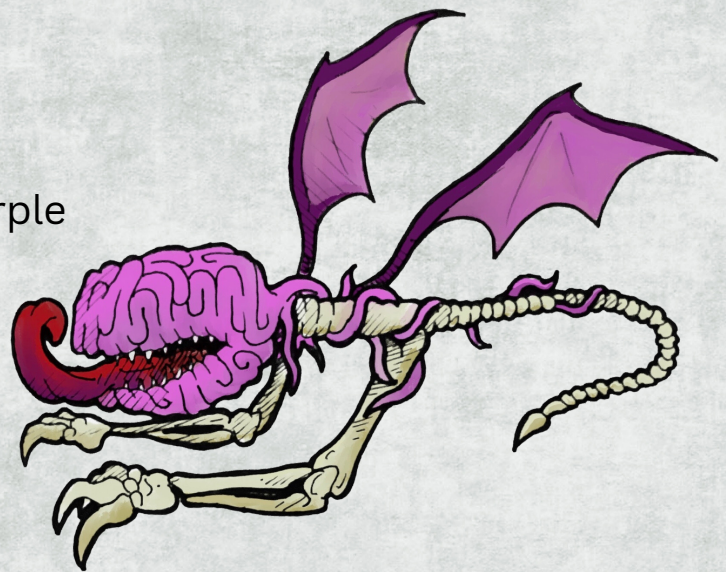


We all come to play D&D for different reasons, and there are so many ways in which RPGs can help us feel better and be better. We mustn't forget that this game can also be the cause of some worries too. The mind dragons come in many shapes and forms. Let us unlock the bestiary to study a few.

Like all dragons, these unpleasant creatures can be defeated with time, thoughtful work and support. We hope to guide you on your path to overcome these dragons and support others so that every DM and player is protected, as much as possible, from the mind dragons that wish to attack them. Grab your (insert weapon of choice here), and let's go to battle!

## ***The Anxiety Dragon.***

Thin as a brain stem with shadowy purple wings. It twists and curls around your mind causing severe headaches before flying down to wrap itself around your core, tightening your chest and quickening your heartbeat.



This dragon often spreads its horrid wings and sends jets of negativity directly at you before the game. It makes us worry that the game we have planned is not good enough, or that it doesn't develop the characters, or that we haven't made enough notes. Sometimes, the dragon is too terrifying or has us too firmly in our grasp and we decide not to leave the comfort of our homes.

They can be defeated by planning ahead, creating to do lists and writing or reading affirmations of how great a DM you are.





## ***The Imposter Dragon***

Not a dragon at all, but a twisted mimic of a creature stealing the form of another. Its shape is ever changing to the creatures it wishes it could be. The Imposter Dragon can appear at any time, during your own game or another's. It makes you feel that others are better at DMing than you, it makes you doubt your abilities to run the game. The Imposter Dragon can turn imagined worlds into ruins.



They can be defeated by talking with your players. Discuss what you all want from the game and ask them how they felt about the sessions. I bet there were lots of great moments they absolutely adored. You helped to shape those moments.

## ***The Fear Wyrmling***

A close relative of the Imposter Dragon, this creature is born from the fear of new Dungeon Masters who are inexperienced in the dungeon. They are small and struggle to fly and are defeated once a Dungeon Master gains their confidence. They will try to linger for as long as possible but are the weakest of the mind dragons. They can often stop Dungeon Masters from ever stepping into the dungeon at all and this is where they cause the most damage, diminishing the number of Dungeon Masters across the world. These Fear Wyrmlings are sometimes devoured by other, more terrifying dragons who take root in the Dungeon Master's mind in their place.



They can be defeated by co-DMing. Ask a Dungeon Master you respect to talk you through things and maybe run a game together. You could also prep some resources to help you in your first game. Have some help sheets and notes ready. The DM screen is always a great resource as it's filled with handy info to use as you run the game. That Fear Wyrmling will soon fly away.



## ***The Fatigue Dragon***

A tired looking creature with dark, flaking scales. These monstrous creatures hang from their victims, weighing them down. The fatigue dragon feeds on the energy of Dungeon Masters, growing fat on the enthusiasm they devour.

The more the Dungeon Master tries to run their world, the more of a toll the fatigue dragon takes. Growing larger and heavier, pulling the Dungeon Master down with their growing weight. Fatigue Dragons cause tiredness, exhaustion and can eventually lead to burnout. These dragons are extremely dangerous if left undealt with.

They can be defeated by taking some time to rest. You could treat your games like episodes in a television show with mid-season and end of season breaks. This will give you some time to gain some new energy and collate awesome ideas for your next adventures. Talk to your players about changing things up a bit to add some new life into the game.





## ***The Fixation Dragon***

A small, orange dragon that has pockets all over its back that it fills with items it makes the adventurers want. Trained by goblins to always want more. The fixation dragon controls minds to make it seem like adventurers never have enough.

They fill bags with math rocks and miniatures. No matter how many they have, they must acquire more. The dragon gives them a small satisfying feeling each time they gain something new, but this doesn't last long. The 'want' can only be sated by collecting more and more. The Fixation Dragon loves being surrounded by precious things and so gets adventurers to do the hard work for it.



They can be defeated by remembering this game doesn't need all the shiny things. It is a game built by imagination. All you need is some pencils and paper, and the world will come to life.

It is nice to have shiny things, but the players will always be the shiniest thing around the table.

As we know, all good adventures should be embarked upon with friends. Don't face these dragons alone. Talk to your nearest and dearest about your feelings and they will help you to slay your dragons.

***Those who slay together, stay together.***



# ***Don't Forget to Long Rest***

It is easy to forget how much energy and love Dungeon Masters put into each game. The amount of preparation required for a 4-hour long session of Dungeons & Dragons can often be hours and hours of extra planning time. It is a lot of work and sometimes it can seem too much, especially for those groups with a weekly game.

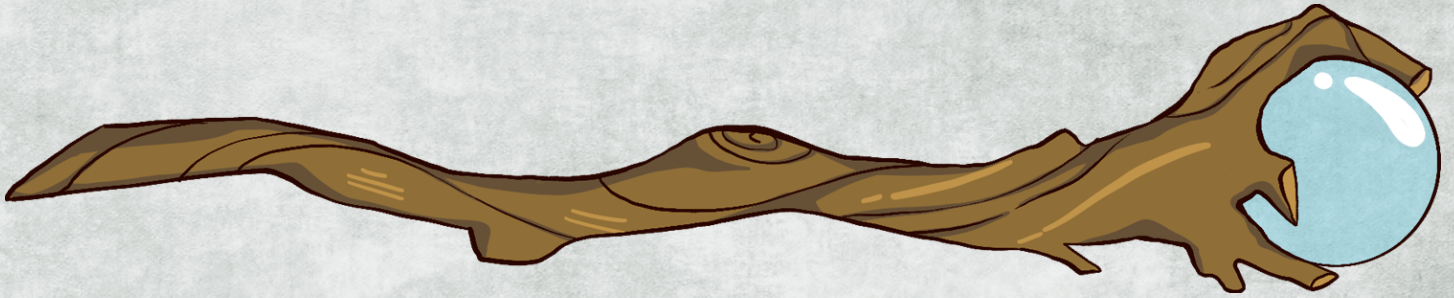
The Dungeon Master must read and re-read through the adventure if they are running a pre-written quest, make notes and alter the adventure so that it is bespoke for their group. Alternatively, if they are creating a homebrew game, they may be creating the game from nothing – a hugely time-gobbling task. If only there was a handy workforce of modrons to help each Dungeon Master out.

Included over the next few pages is a little Dungeon Master's checklist to support you running the game whilst looking after yourself.





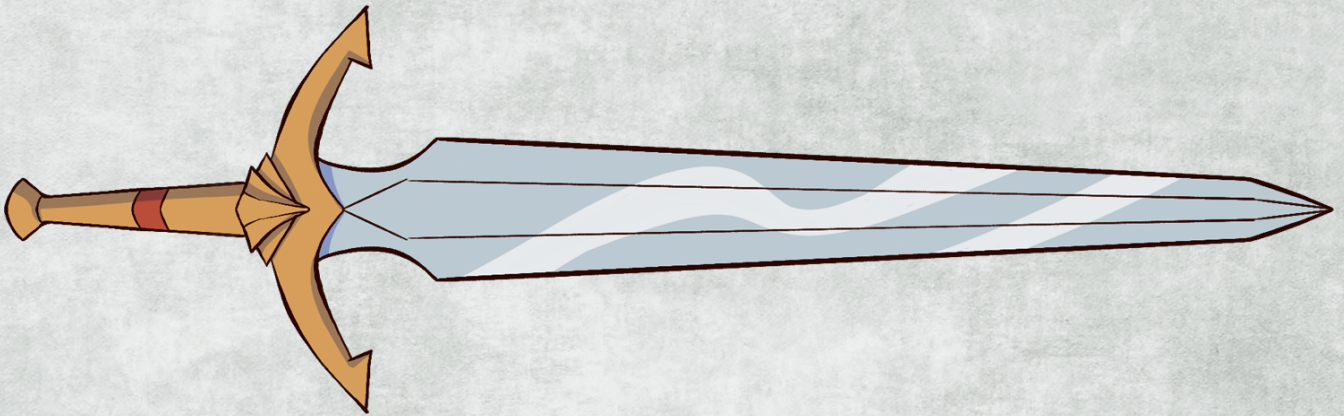
# ***Before the Game***



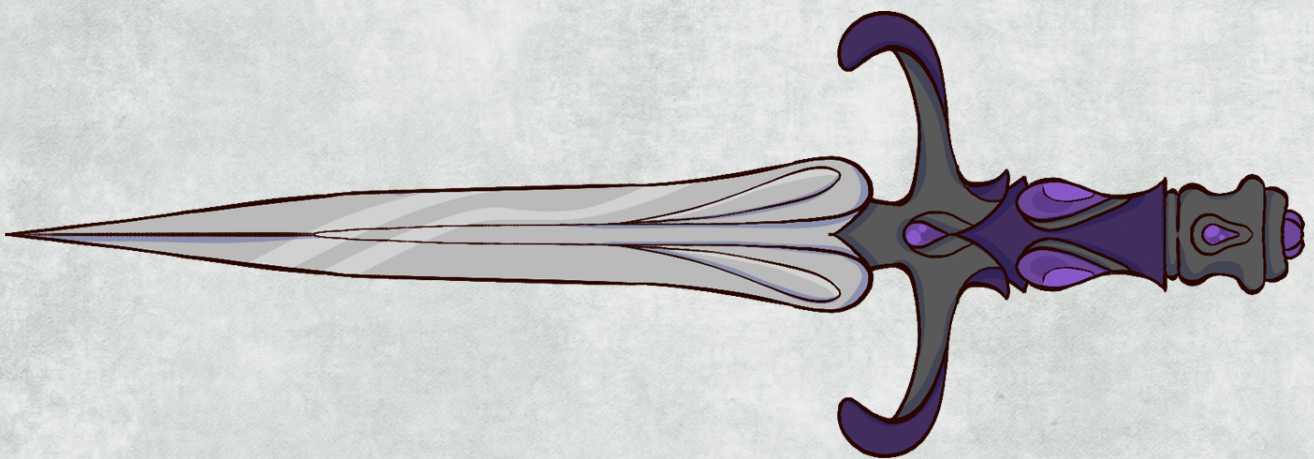
- Give yourself the time to plan for the game, look through the module and make notes.
- Find the preparation method that works best for you.
- Read and re-read the module you are running; the better you know the module, the better the game will go.
- Know your players as best you can. What do they like to encounter in a game?
- Plan to give players their moment in the spotlight.
- You could make a list of bullet points of the key events for your game for quick reference.
- Prepare a list of names that you can use for when the players meet NPCs you weren't expecting them to meet.
- Pre-draw your battle-mats as you might not have the time at the table.
- Pack your game bag in advance so that you don't forget anything. Bring snacks. Yum! This will help keep your energy up.
- Get to the gaming venue with time to spare.
- Remember your dice!



# ***During the Game***

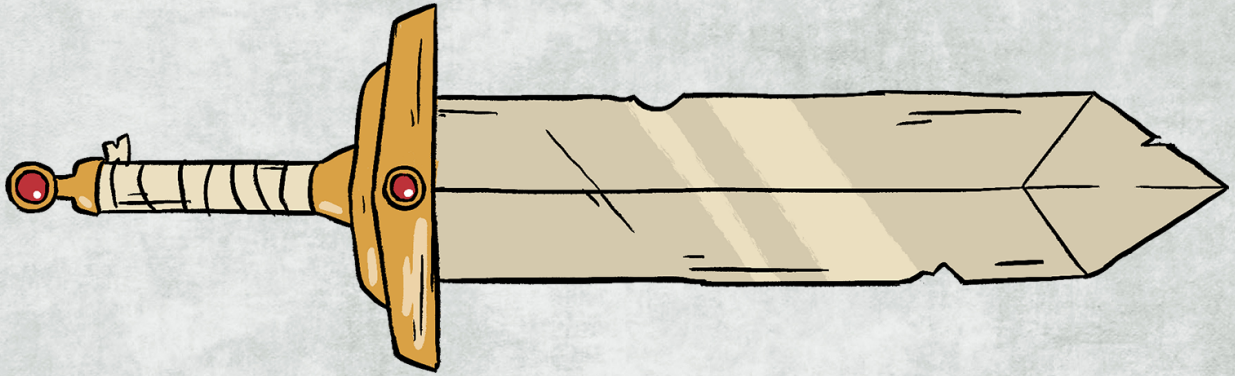


- Take a break if you need it.
- Have character and monster stats to hand.
- Listen to your players and make notes; this will make it easier to refer to players by their character name and have the information you need about them easily available.
- Don't get bogged down by the rules. Press on and check later.
- Keep an eye on the time. Try to keep the game's momentum.
- Reward creative players with inspiration.
- Roll with the surprises. Often, players will take the game in an unexpected direction (nearly always).
- Drink lots of water. Your voice will get tired, especially if you love putting on silly voices. Look after it.





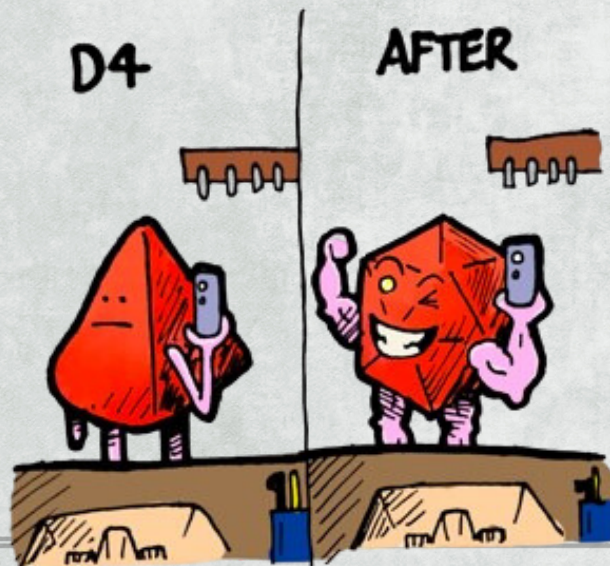
# ***After the Game***



- Chill
- Write down session notes sooner rather than later.
- Take time to reflect on what went well and what you might change for the next game.
- If you are running a campaign, think about how this session will affect the next game.
- Ask the players that you trust for feedback.
- Give yourself a firm pat on the back. You did it!

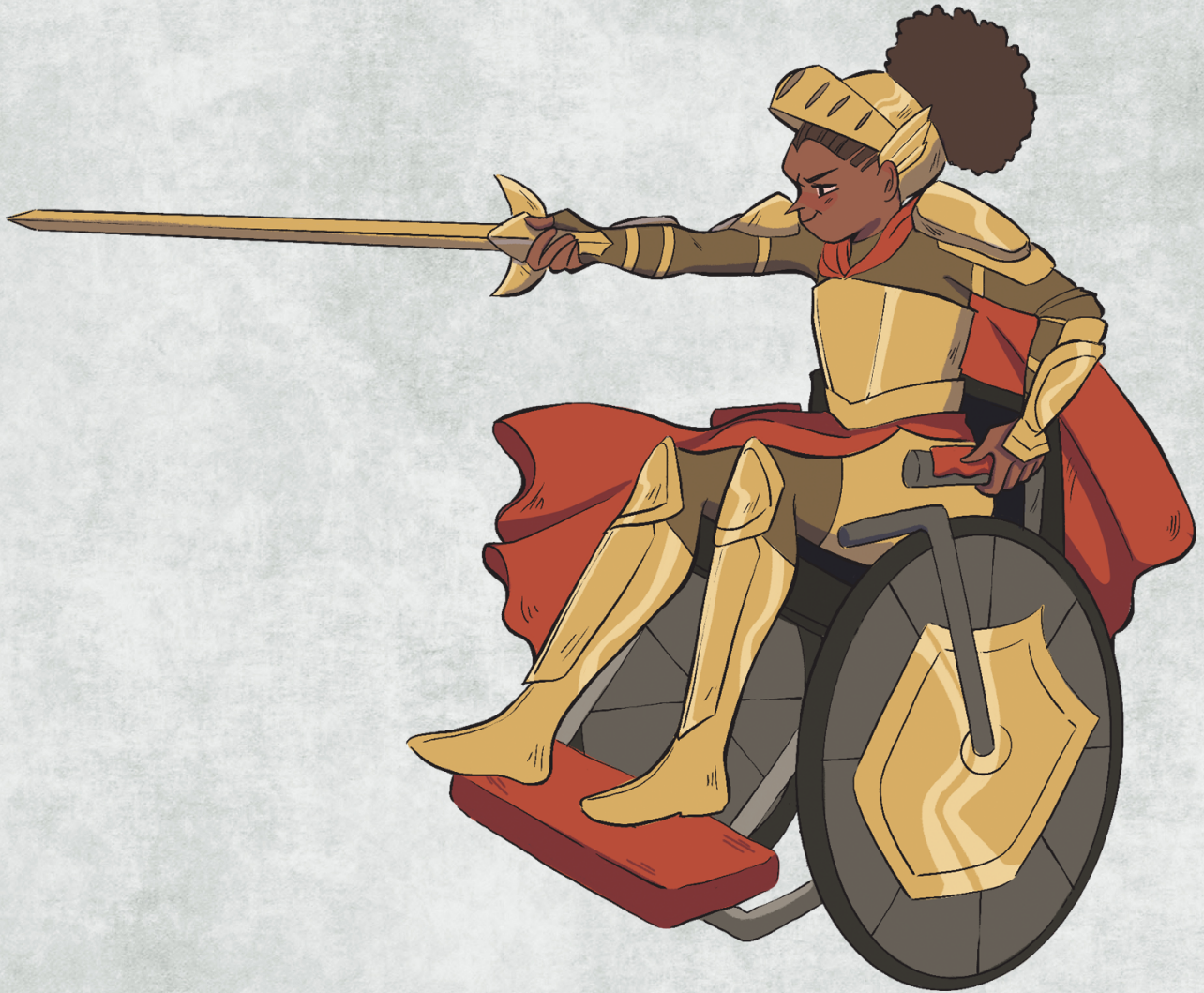
By following this checklist, hopefully some of the challenges of DMing are much more manageable.

Remember that your players appreciate you. You helped make the game happen and created a space for them to play in. You're a world builder, a fun-facilitator, a community cultivator. That's amazing! You're amazing!





# ***Part 2***

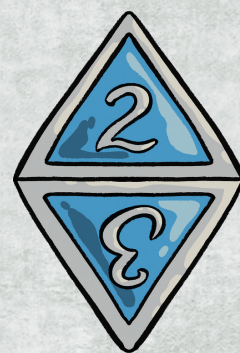
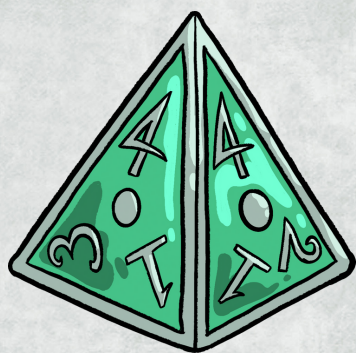


## ***The Player's Handbook***



## ***Playing from the Handbook***

Most people sit around a D&D table for one main reason; fun. Everyone wants to have a great time, and we want that too. Throughout this chapter, we look at how to make the game the best experience for all, the positive impact that being part of a D&D community has on players from different demographics and how D&D can be an inclusive and welcoming space full of diversity that can nurture and inspire future generations.



## ***Be a Thankful Hero***

As a player, it can be easy to forget how much work goes into a great game of D&D, from both the DM and the other players. D&D is an amazing game that encourages team-work, problem solving and communication; when these things go well, it can make an amazing experience for all involved. If we can give one piece of advice about being a heroic player for your DM and the other players at the table, it is this; be the glowing light of positivity that shines in the darkness of doubt. If you think the people at your table have done a good job, tell them. In fact, don't just tell *them*, tell everyone! Shout it from the rooftops! It can really enhance a game knowing that someone else really enjoyed what you have brought to the table, so be a catapult of positive praise wherever it is called for. It is important to remember that in a world where you can be anything, be kind. Who knows, it may even help someone defeat their own mind dragons.



# Adventurer School

Leanne Poundall is a secondary school teacher who runs an after-school Dungeons & Dragons club for students. The popularity of the club has grown immensely this year. We interviewed Leanne to find out more.

**So, you and Chris Pine both agree that students should be playing D&D in school. You've actually made it happen though! What made you decide to start a D&D club at your school?**

Absolutely! It's nice to see D&D being talked about more in mainstream media since the release of the film, and Chris makes some excellent points in his interviews. I share the belief that D&D teaches cooperation and teamwork, and can bring together many different people and personalities, regardless of social hierarchy, to work towards a common goal (defeat the BBEG!) in a fun setting where everyone is on a level playing field. I truly believe that D&D has a very valid place within education enrichment.

**Was your school a bit 'Satanic Panic' about you setting the club up?**

Haha, I am relieved to say thankfully there was none of that! My school has a great extra-curricular system in place and they were very happy to have another club to add to the list. Staff have been very supportive. Anyone who has popped into any of our sessions has said how much fun it seems, which is lovely feedback to receive.

**How did the first few sessions go? Organised fun or absolute chaos?**

Both clubs at one time or another have been comparable to trying to herd excitable kittens, which is no mean feat. At the end of the day, there is a group of excited and eager adventurers sat around the same table who all have their own ideas and strategies; it is always going to be a little out of control; but with lovely, polite, funny and well-intentioned students it makes it far easier to manage, meaning that it truly is the best kind of wonderful chaos I could ever imagine, and is always a great laugh!





### **What has been the response from students? Any cosplaying yet?**

The response from students has been amazing; they seem to enjoy it so much and always seem so excited to play! The sheer number of students we have across both groups shows the popularity of the club and continues to astound me every week. Many of the students who had never played before, now play D&D outside of school with each other, which is awesome. Sadly we've had no cosplay yet but we do get some great voice acting attempts, sound effects and glorious accents; they really do get fully into the roleplay too!

### **It must be great to have that pocket of a safe community provided by the school. Have you seen much of a change in the students who attend?**

It is so heart-warming to know that we have a safe space where students can be part of a community and not face judgement whilst doing something they love. I have seen huge changes in most of the students that come to our club; I had many start off shy and reserved when they first joined who have naturally come out of their shell, which is incredible to see. This has led to changes in other areas too with the students I actually teach; it's been amazing to see them improve in lessons as a result of increased self-confidence and a bond over our shared interest.

### **What skills are these students developing whilst playing?**

I also believe that D&D encourages development of many more skills; the obvious arithmetic that is needed in order to play (especially if using a paper character sheet), roleplay which can develop confidence, communication and general social skills, time management and critical thinking under pressure/with a time limit, co-operation and listening skills when working with your party and obviously reading and writing too. The list is by no means exhaustive, but a fully comprehensive list of all the great skills you acquire and develop whilst playing D&D would take up many pages!



I'm starting to think that the next step is to try to convince the Department for Education to let us teach D&D as its own subject \*laughs with nervous hope\*!



## **The DnD website now has a whole section for educators. What tips would you give to other teachers thinking of setting up a D&D club at their school?**

Firstly, I think it is excellent that these resources exist! I would advise anyone starting their own D&D club to absolutely access anything pre-made if they can, as it will generally save time. I created homebrew settings for my clubs as that's what I find easiest and less time consuming than having to remember a pre-written module. Obviously I'd say anyone running a club should do what they are most comfortable with to make their own lives easier. I'd also recommend keeping a regular and up-to-date register, making plenty of notes, writing down students' character descriptions and names and also assigning a couple of students (who enjoy taking notes) to act as your recap people; that way, you can be setting up all your DM stuff whilst someone else explains the recap (bonus points/inspiration if they do it in a movie style voice).

## **What do you think the future holds for RPGs in education? Dungeon Academy Summer Schools anyone?**

Well, obviously that would be incredible! I think that RPGs and education go hand in hand, especially if we can harness the creativity and storytelling power of those young minds! It would be fantastic to see schools have RPG clubs with as much popularity as football for instance. With the rise of D&D in the media, I think interest could grow and therefore things like Dungeon Academy Summer Schools could possibly take off in the future. I think at this stage, this could be a job for an external organisation rather than within schools themselves; school holiday clubs for creating fantasy worlds and then playtesting them would be an excellent idea which would be something I'd love to be a part of!

*All in all, it is an absolute privilege to be able to help inspire and nurture the creativity of the next generation of RPGers. I have also come to learn that many D&D players are also teachers or work in education in some way; there must be something about planning and delivering sessions to excitable people that resonates with us. If you do work with young people and have thought about starting a D&D club but are a bit hesitant, I would advise just going for it- the kids will love it as will the adults and it will provide great opportunities for young people to grow (and if anyone questions you about Satanic Panic... just set your patron on them).*



It would be remiss of us to discuss the impact of D&D as part of educational enrichment, without actually talking to the young people who play. I asked students who attend our D&D club to tell me what the game and the club means to them and how it has helped them; here are some of their answers...

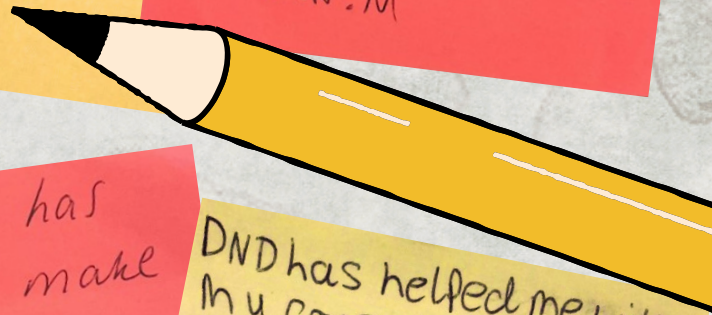
Dnd is a space when I get to know ~~know~~ people and make new friends. It feels safe and kind,



DND inspires me to create art.

DND club is an amazing way to start the week and have fun with my friends

Callum.M



D&D club ... well to me it's a place where I can be myself, it's somewhere where people like us can just enjoy each others company, where we can laugh, relax and grow. It's just great.

-Barkley H

D+D club has helped me make new friends-

Solomon

DND has helped me with my confidence when roleplaying and DND is great for bringing people together.

Nathan



In Dand D I get to have a great time with my friends and Sometimes get to act Stupid. I also love to roleplay; I love to use my imagination and create new things. I love D and D.

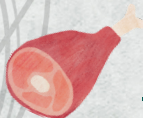


Seth

D+D has made me infinitely more happy.



We asked local goblin, and gammon thief, Griblitt Gobspitter, to share his thoughts on being an excellent player at the D&D table. Here's what he sent over...



## Griblitt's Guide to being an 'orrible Table Goblin

Alright you pesky players, looks like you're not causing enough mischief at your tables. I'm here to let you know 'ow to be a propa table menace like Griblitt. I got a badge wot I made an' evrythink.

The ultimat' quest of any table goblin is to make this stooped game as unpleasant for evry other dummy at the table. Playin' silly games when they should be out there stealin' treasures and wiping their bottomz on Griblitt's enemies. Wot iz they thinking?!?

Da first rule of Table Goblining is to interrupt the Dungeon Master as much as pozzible. Make them feel like the dung in the 'dung'eon.

Whenever they wantz to build tension or give a big plot moment, you should cauze as much noize as you can.

I rekomend bringing a kazoo or a pair of cymbalz to really make sure no one is having any fun. If da other playerz ain't got a headache by the end of da game, then you ain't banging loud enuff!!!

Next tip is to cheat, cheat, cheat!!!

Its Griblitt's faverit'!!! I'm always telling liez as big as a beholder's eye! Yessir my dice always rollz a natural 20! Yessir, I can kast all the spellz with my fartz. Yessir, I have adzvantage on Wizdum checkz. Griblitt is very wize, yessir.





Oh, Gribblit lovez mi magic pocket tablet too! It haz all da answerz to all da problemz that da Dung Master tries to throw at me. A quick peek on the Inter's Web and Griblitt knows the armour class and hit pointz of all da baddies, or how to solve da boring, yawny, brain puzzles. Alzo, it's good for checking my Goblinstagram wen Griblitt shud probably be listening... snore!

Every dummy knowz that the game should be all about Griblitt!! If other pesky playerz try and do anythink, Griblitt getz grumpy! Always try to steal the limelight wheneva you kan. Dis stooped game would be much betta if there woz less dungeons and dragons, and more Griblitt and gammon. Griblitt luvs gammon... yessir.

Why would these pesky playerz all want to work togeva and have a nice time? Showin' each other respekt and taking turnz?

It makes Griblitt wanna be sick!! Follow Griblitt's simple stepz and you can be an 'orrible table goblin like wot Griblitt is.



**Editor's note: Please don't be a Griblitt.**

Da Editor needz to shut his gammon hole and bring Griblitt lots of nice treatz for writin such a brilliant article for this stoopid magazeen. Who is even gonna read dis?!?



# ***Part 3***



***Join the Party***



## ***D&D in the community***

Thankfully, the D&D and RPG communities that we are a part of are wonderfully diverse and inclusive; we have many, many players who are neurodiverse, LGBTQIA+, BAME, and age diverse. RPGs don't discriminate, which is potentially one of the reasons it draws so many of us in and why we fall in love with these games. It is a privilege to be part of such an accepting and diverse group, so we asked one of the brilliant people we know for their take on being part of this community.

I count myself among the cohort of Dungeons & Dragons players who played their first proper game over voice call during the pandemic. I had played a handful of casual one-page TTRPG one-shots in about 2017, but beyond that I had essentially zero knowledge of D&D until a friend recruited me for a Discord campaign in January of 2021. With no idea what to expect but nothing better to do in the height of lockdown, I agreed. I certainly hadn't gone in anticipating that the TTRPG hobby would burrow itself into the core of my personality, but here we are.

My D&D era has ended up coinciding with (or perhaps helping to catalyse) my coming-to-terms-with-being-neurodivergent era. The way people described their autistic special interests sounded a lot like how I had come to feel about D&D, which was one of several breadcrumbs on the path to the realisation that either autistic people had to stop being so relatable, or I had to take the RAADS-R.



D&D played a small part in the epiphany of coming to understand myself as autistic, but it was much more crucial in helping me navigate the world in the context of this discovery. I suspect part of the reason I've taken so strongly to D&D is that it's a social situation with lots of very clearly delineated rules, I appreciate the routine of having a session at the same time every week, and I get to share my special interest with other people without worrying too much that I'm getting on their nerves because they all seem to enjoy it as much as I do.



Something I struggle a lot with is executive dysfunction – I frequently encounter a sort of mental “task manager has stopped responding” error that can be impossible to overcome, regardless of how much I need to do the thing, or how much I love and want to do the thing. The constant, insurmountable inertia pretty much entirely scuppered my ability to enjoy pretty much any creative hobby for a long time – I wanted desperately to create, I just couldn’t force myself to start. One of the few things that can regularly help me overcome executive dysfunction is having someone to be accountable to. What I mean by this is: in a battle between the immovable object that is my executive dysfunction and the unstoppable force that is my pulverising terror at the concept of disappointing anyone, usually the fear of being a disappointment wins. Sometimes you’ve just gotta work with what you have, and in my case what I have are warring symptoms I can weaponise against one another.

I started learning how to DM partly because there is only so much time in a week I could rotate my own player characters in my brain, and preparing to run games gave me an excuse to think about D&D some more. I frequently describe my time spent puzzling over how to fit all the moving pieces of a campaign together as my “zoo animal enrichment activity in my enclosure.” But crucially it gave me a creative outlet that I had no choice but to do – if I wanted there to be a session, I had to prepare for it. Admittedly a lot of this prep has been very last-minute, but I’ll take what I can get.





The first campaign I played in ceased abruptly due to an unrelated-to-D&D friend group implosion, which left me pretty much completely isolated. Making and maintaining friendships, especially as an adult, felt like a thing that everyone but me had been given the instruction manual for, and I didn't know where to start rebuilding. When I discovered that there was a local Adventurer's League, the accumulating passion I had for D&D that'd had nowhere to go for a few months only just prevailed over the horror of going to meet a group of complete strangers by myself with no idea what to expect. I'm very grateful that it did.

Finding an entire community of people in my city with whom I share this nerdy hobby that's so important to me has been a blessing. Everyone has been so welcoming and so accepting of me – though it certainly helps that queer and neurodivergent people are very well-represented in these circles. The small talk at the start of getting to know someone is something I've never been good at, and already having a common passion makes all of that so much easier. I've reconnected with old friends and met so many wonderful new people who I feel like I can properly be myself around. My confidence has flourished, and I'm so grateful both to the people who have become such a positive presence in my life when I really needed it, and to the hobby that connects us.

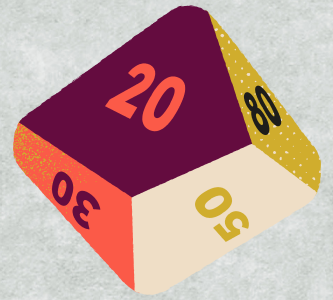
Harry Hunkin, pronouns they/them or he/him, is a civil servant in the streets and Dungeon Master in the (character) sheets. They are currently DMing a weekly D&D 5e campaign for an all-neurodivergent group spread across three time zones, which has been running for almost a year. In the rare event he isn't playing, prepping, talking about, or consuming content about D&D and other TTRPGs, Harry can be found playing video games badly, forgetting about cups of tea, and bothering their three black cats.



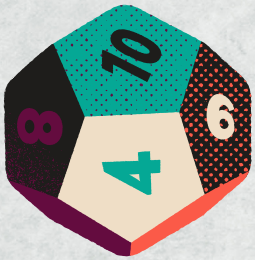




Treasured hoards of  
iridescent dice



Rolled, rolled again across  
tables slice  
to score movements of this  
evening's spice



Stories unfolding with  
shared advice



Adventurous souls meet  
around penned sheets  
heroes crowned,  
climax cliff-hanging  
to entice



A poem by Taleisen



# ***D&D and Therapy***

*We asked Tim Sumner, Nottingham based therapist and D&D player, for his thoughts.*

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) has been around for over 45 years, and in recent years it has gained a lot of popularity. The game involves players taking on the role of characters in a fantasy world and working together to overcome challenges and adventures. While it may seem like a simple game, there are many benefits to playing D&D, particularly when it comes to mental health.



One of the biggest benefits of playing D&D is the social aspect of the game. It's a collaborative experience that requires teamwork and communication, which can be a great way to build relationships and strengthen existing ones. In fact, research has shown that social interaction is important for maintaining good mental health, and D&D provides a unique way to connect with others.

Another benefit of playing D&D is that it can be a way to process feelings and experiences. Role-playing allows players to step into the shoes of their characters and explore different perspectives and emotions. This can be particularly helpful for individuals who may struggle with expressing themselves or processing difficult emotions in a traditional therapy setting.

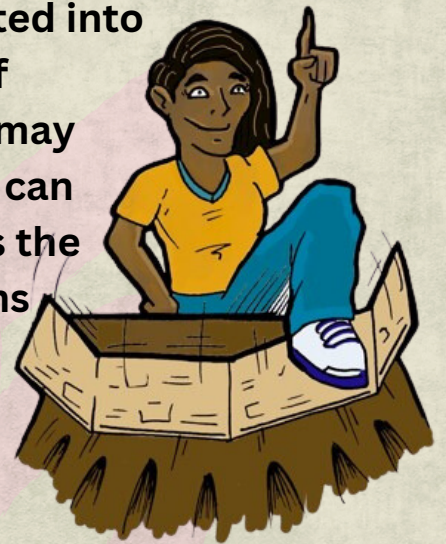
Social support and a sense of community are crucial for maintaining good mental health. The community aspect of D&D can help individuals feel less alone in their struggles and provide a space for them to connect with others who understand and relate to their experiences.



The bonds formed through playing D&D can be long-lasting and provide a source of support and encouragement outside of the game. This can be particularly helpful for individuals who may feel isolated or disconnected from others. However, it's important to note that while D&D can be a helpful tool for mental health, it's not a replacement for professional therapy. It's important to seek out a trained counsellor or therapist if you're struggling with mental health issues.

One potential drawback of using tabletop role-playing games as a way to process feelings and experiences is that it can be easy to get caught up in the game. This is particularly true if the game involves difficult or traumatic subject matter. Knowing one's own boundaries and triggers can be helpful when it comes to adventures involving difficult subject matter and letting your DM know beforehand about these is useful. It's important for players to have a clear understanding of the boundaries between the game and real life too, and to have tools in place to help them navigate any difficult emotions that may come up during play. Despite these potential drawbacks, D&D and other tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) can be a valuable tool for mental health professionals.

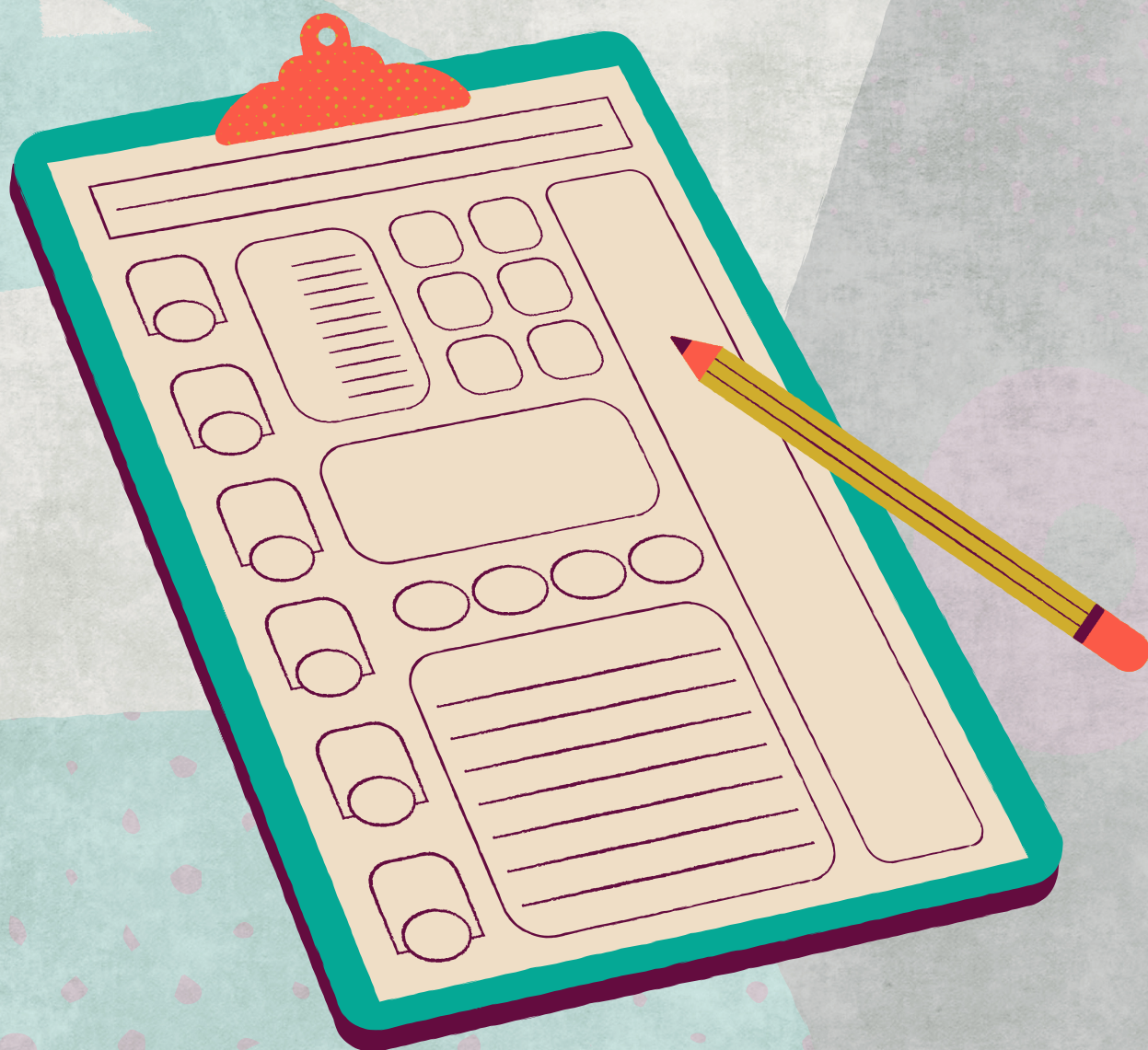
One way that the realm of TTRPGs can be incorporated into person-centred talking therapy is through the use of therapeutic scenarios. In this approach, a therapist may work with a client to create a scenario in which they can role-play a difficult situation or emotion. This allows the client to explore different perspectives and emotions in a safe, controlled environment. It's important to bear in mind that this is simply an example and a person-centred therapist would never force this on a client. Overall, the benefits of playing Dungeons & Dragons on one's mental health are clear. The game provides a unique opportunity for social interaction, teamwork, and exploration of difficult emotions. However, it's important to approach the game with a clear understanding of its limitations and to seek out professional help if needed.





With these things in mind, if you are interested in exploring these benefits and integrating them into your mental health journey, consider getting in touch with me.

Tim Sumner is a cis-male, person-centred counsellor working online and in Beeston, Nottingham. He works with depression and anxiety, grief and loss, relationship issues, male identity issues and LGBTQIA+ issues. He also offers walk & talk therapy and works to ensure that everyone seeking help is offered kindness and empathy. Tim is currently offering a six-session discount to members of the Nottingham D&D community. If you're interested in discussing this further, feel free to contact him through his website; [tscounselling.co.uk](http://tscounselling.co.uk) or via email at [timsounselling@protonmail.com](mailto:timsounselling@protonmail.com)





# ***Behind the Screen***



**David Murcutt** has been a GM since he was a little goblin. He runs silly games with talking rats, creepy clown parades and monstrous titans. He has grown a love for all RPGs, and has run games of D&D, Mouse Guard, Dread, Fiasco, Kids on Brooms, Pathfinder and many more. When he's not playing RPGs, David can be found teaching, playing ukulele or writing about himself in third person. He also makes games including one page RPGs and runs the Nottingham RPG discord group which you can find by following the link or QR code below.



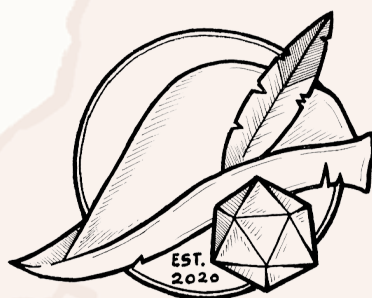
<https://linktr.ee/slayyourdragons>



**Leanne Poundall** has set up two D&D clubs at the secondary school she teaches at. She enjoys this wonderful chaos with nearly 30 adventurers, some of whom have started running their own sessions at the club. Leanne is now well and truly hooked on RPGs and can be found spending most of her free time playing, DMing, writing one-shot adventures and sharing this incredible hobby with many others. She is also co-HR for Nottingham Adventurer's League.



**Daniel Knox-Hewson** is a real-life adventurer, illustrator and community organiser currently living in Nottingham. He built the Nottingham Dungeons & Dragons Adventure League a few years ago. It has now grown to over 400 members with at least 3 games of D&D taking place each week across Nottingham's many welcoming gaming spaces. You can join the Nottingham Dungeons & Dragons Adventurer's League by following the QR link below:

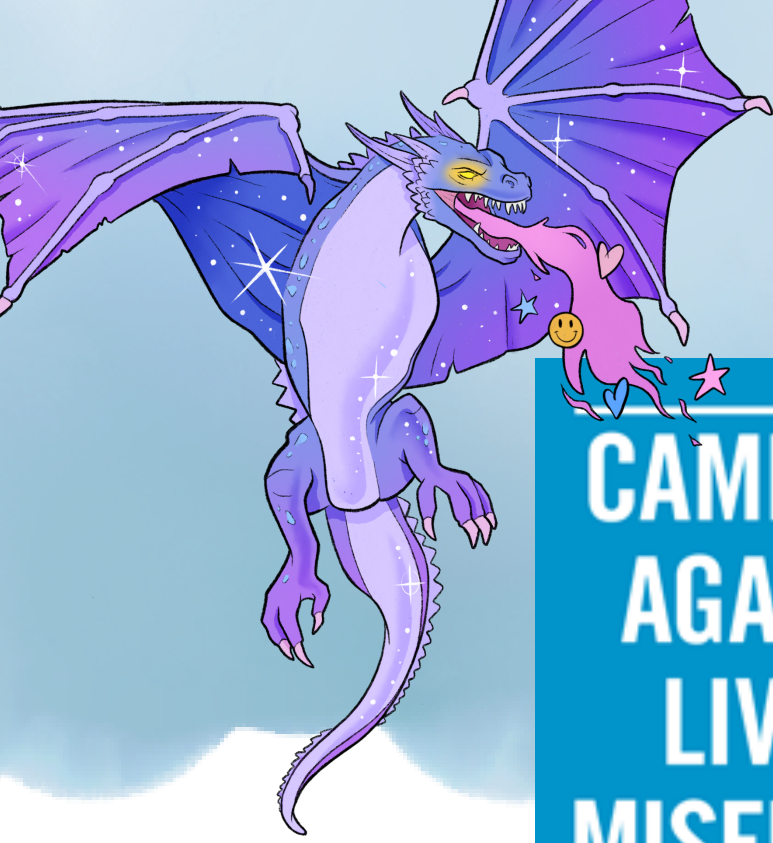


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## Pun-geons and Polyhedrals

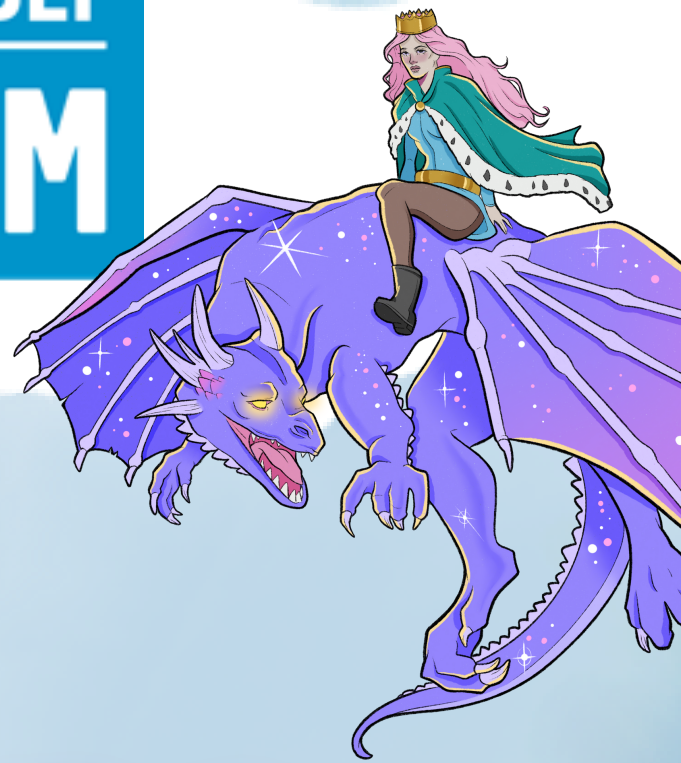






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