

dDA's Rant: Itchy Trigger Finger

Contributed by dDemonicAngels
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Itchy Trigger Finger

Like a lot of gamers reading this, I haven't decided if I'll be upgrading to the 4th Edition of Dungeons & Dungeon. Heck, I know a few of you still play the 2nd and even 1st editions.

I'm not going to persuade any of you that 4e is the best. But it is a question for me and I'm not sure which way I'll go. Do I forge ahead and keep up with the times? Or wallow in my endless shelves of 3e and 3.5e books.

I hadn't planned to, but yes, I bought the 4e books when they came in. Let me restate that. It seems I did plan to buy the 4e books when it was first announced. So much so that I even placed an order at Checkswing, my local FLGS (Favorite Local Gaming Store).

Of course things had changed since my order and I had eventually reversed my decision. So on Thursday, when Trevor called to say the books were in, I couldn't really turn him down. I'm a big supporter of gaming stores and will only buy online if I can't get it locally.

Click "Read More" below to see what dDA's going on about now.

Not Interested, Thank you

So I picked them up on Friday, but didn't even bother to open them. I purposely left them in the car knowing I'd be driving with my son in the morning to his football game. And yes, I got a kick out of watching him thumb through the pages like a kid in a candy store. But damn it, I wasn't supposed to look myself. I mean, I was driving and all so I wasn't really looking. But every time he said 'wow, look how they did that' or 'oh no, they ruined this' or 'that is way cool', I couldn't help but steal a glance.

And wouldn't you know it? When we got to the park, I had a half hour to kill. With three 4e books sitting on the seat next to me. Nuts.

I skimmed them. Honestly! That's all I did. I didn't want to go into detail because I didn't want to like it. Just in case. And I left it that way. I still haven't read the books.

But now I'm getting an itchy trigger finger. Do I jump aboard the 4e express to fun and newfound frontiers? Or do I stay safe and sound in my 3.5e bubble and continue down that safe and true path?

I'm not going to answer you now because I'm still mentally jousting it in my head. I really don't know if I will or not.

My thinking until now has been simple and straightforward. And I've been going over the points in my head trying to justify my decision. So here are my top 6 reasons not to move to 4e:

1. No Backwards Compatibility

This is the big one. My entire library goes out the window since the new version isn't at all compatible with anything I've got. How convenient for WotC to have to fill in my new library. This is what turned me off from the 4e edition right away.

There is no conversion method of old monster or characters to the new format. Start a new campaign. That's WotC's advice. So now if I want to run a campaign, I'm limited to what's in the new Monster Manual. Because there's no way for me to modify the stats for the Purple Worm, Fire Elemental or Tren to play in 4e. I now have to wait for them to provide me with the stats, in a new and shiny book, of course. Which all in all means that any campaigns I run are going to be pretty limited until they've produce quite a few more source books.

And worse than that, the levels are so different that it's not like you can just guesstimate that a 2nd level Lizardfolk is doubled to 4th level. There just are no conversion rules. This blows chunks.

2. Tieflings and Dragonborn

This is filed under the 'What were they thinking?' category. Most people envision their campaign world to be some 12th century German or British setting with magic and fey thrown in à la Tolkein. We don't envision a horned Tiefling being able to walk the streets of without causing mass panic. It just doesn't fit. Uh uh, not in the core book.

Look, you can have warforged in Eberron because it's a campaign setting. That's fine with me. But don't tell me that Tieflings and Dragonborn should be accepted as player characters in every campaign. Puh-lease, this is just an attempt to pander to the 15-year-olds who want to play Drizz't or some other dark creature.

I'm not saying there shouldn't be character options. If anything they should be presented as options in an add-on supplementary book. You know, something like what they're going to do for the gnome and others to get more money out of us.

So now I can expect to see these monster characters as NPCs in new adventure releases. And somehow I'm expected to fit this into my campaign.

3. Dungeons & Dragons Magazines

Yeah, I'm still pissed at them for moving the magazines online. Damn you, WotC!

4. Six Month Poison Pill

The way I read it, WotC is making all publishers decide whether they are 3.5e or 4e. They can't be both. In six months, someone like Goodman Games will no longer be able to sell its 3.5e product line if it also wants to sell 4e. This really sucks for these smaller publishers, but WotC wants it to be known that 4e is the direction to go to. No more looking back.

So what does that mean for all the older 3e and 3.5 books? Well basically, they can no longer produce revenue for the company. So what would you do if you had all this 'old' material that was useless to them? That's right, you give it away free. Now I expect they won't really even be able to give it away. So I predict that towards the end of the six month period, the companies who are moving up to 4e will have a kick-ass bargain sale. I mean why not try to make a dollar off a book today instead on nothing tomorrow.

Yes, I'm expecting either a giveaway or end-of-line sale for some of my favorite publishers. Either way, I'll be free to visit my favorite BTGS since I'll essentially be able to download them guilt-free. (Yes, yes. That's the dark side. I know, I know...)

5. Forgotten Realms

Look, I've already ranted about this. In case you missed it, check through the archives here at Greytale.com. They blew up the Forgotten Realms with the Spellplague. Sounds like a good campaign thread, not as a rewrite of a whole world. My whole world.

6. Numerology

- On the cover of the Player's Handbook, the Dragonborn has exactly 23 points on it's face.
- The Dragonborn's banded armor has exactly 23 pieces to it.
- The authors of the Player's Handbook are 'Rob Heinsoo, Andy Collins and James Wyatt', for a total of 32 characters. 32 is 23 reversed.
- The authors of the Monster Manual are 'Mike Mealrs, Stephen Schubert and James Wyatt', again 32 characters or 23 reversed.
- James Wyatt worked exactly 23 months on this project. That's 23 23rds of the month. (Okay, this one is just a wild guess. But wouldn't it be cool?)
- There are 5 dragons in the Monster Manual. 5 is 2 plus 3, or 23.
- The red dragon on the cover of the DM Guide has 2 eyes and 3 horns. That's 2 and 3 or 23.
- Need I go on? All of this a coincidence? I think not!

So I don't expect to have swayed anyone and that's not my purpose. Same thing, I'm not saying these are THE main reasons not to go to 4e. They're just my top reason. Please visit the forums here at Greytale.com and add your 2 cents.

Bil White is a freelance writer living in Montreal. Bil wants to thanks his son Eric for making him aware of the whole '23' crisis but really wishes his son would stop bringing it up because it's starting to freak him out.