**Why D&D is the Perfect Game for Writers**

Dungeons and Dragons is a tabletop roleplaying game created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arenson in 1974. You’ve seen it in *Stranger Things* and *The Big Bang Theory.* It’s a foundational pillar of nerd culture, a background gag for countless sitcoms, and a place for adults to don wizard caps and do math in their basements.

D&D is way simpler than it looks on TV. When playing D&D, you create a fantasy character, put all their stats on a piece of paper, and embody them. After that, it is essentially a skill check game with the Dungeon Master as a referee. Say your goblin rogue Jeffery wants to climb a wall to claim a bag of gold sitting at the top. The DM will tell you to roll a twenty-sided die and add that number to Jeffery’s acrobatic ability (a number specified on his character sheet). If Jeffery rolls high, he can climb the wall. If Jeffrey rolls low, then he fails, and you figure out another way to get to the treasure. It is a problem-solving game. But if D&D is just crunching numbers, why is it such a sensation? Why does this silly game of elevated pretend have such a grip on popular culture right now?

In my opinion, the success of Dungeons and Dragons is rooted in its ability to facilitate communal storytelling. *The Lord of the Rings* series is as much about the connections between the members of the fellowship as it is about fighting Balrogs and Mages. D&D is the same. If Jeffery is at the bottom of the wall, gazing up at the treasure, maybe he wants that treasure because he’s greedy and he wants to get rich. What if one of his party members wants the gold too? Now those desires are butting up against each other, creating conflict. What changes when Jeffery says that he wants the gold to send back to his struggling family? How does that alter the way the rest of the party treats him and the trajectory of the narrative in general?

The meat of Dungeons and Dragons is in the relationships and disagreements between a group coming together to weave a narrative they get to actively participate in. That’s why I think it is such a perfect game for writers; they *care* about stories and characters. D&D is a way to uniquely explore a writer’s imagination. It requires you to think on your toes and invent natural dialogue that suits the tone of the story. The elements of chance force you to shed the insecurity and overthinking that so often accompanies writing. If you pause, the story will leave you behind. Playing D&D is great practice and great inspiration too.

Beyond just the fact that writers are uniquely suited to enjoy D&D, the popularization of different forms of D&D media (shows like Dimension 20 and Critical Role) generate jobs for writers as well – people to write the TV adaptions, novelizations, and comic series. The stories in these shows are some of the most profound and individual I have ever seen, igniting more creativity and opportunities.

So, rethink your concept of nerds in cloaks. Dungeons and Dragons is more than dorks squabbling. It is a breeding ground for distinctive stories, a place where writers can hone their skills, and where Jeffery can get a bag full of gold.