A Dungeon Master in the Library: Women, Libraries, and Role-playing Games

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What are role-playing games?

• RPGs are games where players create characters within a fictional world and act out a story according to a set of mechanics which can vary from game to game

• Types of RPGs include table-top (TTRPG), live action (LARP), and video games

• For TTRPGs, like Dungeons & Dragons, all you need are an imagination and some dice
A short history of RPGs

- Early origins in Chess and ancient strategy games
- Wargames like Kriegsspiel from the early 19th century were created to teach battle tactics
- Chainmail - a medieval miniature wargame developed by Gary Gygax and Jeff Perren in 1971
- Dungeons & Dragons - developed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson - 1974
Women make up almost 40% of players with ever increasing representation of transgender and gender diverse characters, creators, players, & fans

- Dungeon Masters & Players
  - Video Streaming
  - Podcasts
- Publishing
  - Game Design
  - Artists
  - Writers
  - RPG adjacent (fiction & comics)
- Fans
  - Cosplay
  - Art
Benefits of playing RPGs

- Improved communication, empathy and social skills
- Enhanced reading, writing and math skills
- Cooperative problem solving and teamwork
- Exposure to other cultures, religions, histories, belief systems, etc.
How RPGs can easily fit into your library

• Easily justifiable benefits to the community through existing research
• Free resources allow for low cost programs, or game nights that will take up little to no resources
• Libraries can feel like a safe space for those that might not be comfortable starting their own group elsewhere
• Budget for the top tier, more recognizable titles first and slowly expand your selection
• Don't forget to include children's titles!
Free and low-cost alternatives to get you started

- D&D Beyond – online toolkit to create characters and campaigns
- Basic rules (for multiple titles) are free online
- Free map building tools, or easily draw them out on graph paper
- Online dice rollers and token makers
- Free character sheet downloads & pre-generated characters
- Free and pay what you want adventures or get creative and make your own!
Top source books and other publications

Tried and True
- Dungeons & Dragons 5E
- Pathfinder/Starfinder
- Fate
- Savage Worlds
- Monster of the Week
- Vampire: The Masquerade
- Call of Cthulhu

New and Interesting Alternatives
- Rolled & Told
- Humblewood
- Symbaroum

Kid Friendly
- No Thank You, Evil
- The Cloud Dungeon
- Amazing Tales
- Hero Kids
- Tiny Dungeon 2E

Book/Media Tie-ins
- Middle Earth – LOTR
- Game of Thrones
- Star Trek Adventures
- Star Wars
- The Witcher
Where to turn when you need help with your game

- Websites
  - D&D Beyond
  - Roleplaying Tips
- YouTube
  - GM Tips, Running the Game
- Books
  - The Monsters Know What They’re Doing: Combat Tactics For Dungeon Masters - Keith Ammann
  - Return of the Lazy Dungeon Master - Michael E. Shea
- Your local game shop is staffed with experts that love to talk about RPGs
Questions?
Thank you!

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