

History

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D) is legendary. Alongside original D&D (OD&D), it is the ultimate adventure game of swords & sorcery founded on challenge-based gameplay, player skill, and luck. By the time AD&D 2e ("2nd Edition") was published, D&D had transformed into something else entirely. The pulp fantasy and swords & sorcery had gone, and the game became more focused on narratives, plots, and "renaissance faire" heroic fantasy. The game was no longer about the campaign, but about character feats and powers. Though it's had its moments since, Dungeons & Dragons was never the same again.

In late 2021, I became aware of [The Blue Bard](#), Anthony Huso's website on By The Book (BTB) AD&D. "BTB" is a practice where the game rules are respected. The reason this is special is because AD&D is famous for having its rules ignored. People throw away rules that they view as stupid, meaningless, or annoying – rules that bring color and magic to an intricate, deep game system. The common parlance in modern circles is that AD&D is impossible to understand, that it's a broken game, and that no one actually plays by the rules.

I believed that the common parlance was wrong, but I had never read someone write about D&D in a way that resonated so strongly with me until I found The Blue Bard. At the time, I had just returned to RPGs after a long hiatus, and I hadn't run AD&D proper before, only OSRIC. Anthony Huso's passionate writing about this game enthralled me and spurred me to action – I had to run by-the-book AD&D, and I had to run it for the long haul.

So in 2022 I wrapped up my other campaigns, I gathered a group, and started running an open table 2-3 times a week. Many players who started back then are still playing, and many joined and left and returned besides. Our private chat server has about 35 people who talk about the game, many of whom are active players in one of my tables or one of the tables run by another DM in our group.

Anthony's campaign, our campaign, and the campaigns of numerous others who run AD&D "by the book" is proof that AD&D works, and boy is it good.

As the campaign developed, I kept a public document containing all the things we learned about the rules, and rulings we had to make when the rules didn't cover a particular case. This was really helpful to us since learning AD&D properly requires cross-referencing a lot of material and often turning to old magazines and forum posts – AD&D is great, but its organization is not intuitive.

In September 2023 I began converting the non-campaign-setting-specific parts of our campaign doc to a website other people could use: Demon Idol. So what you see here is the combined knowledge of quite a lot of gaming over the past year or two. We hope that you find it interesting, and maybe even useful.

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