

Why Demon Idol

DRAFT

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D) is legendary. Alongside OD&D (Original D&D), it reigns eternal as the ultimate adventure game of swords & sorcery founded on challenge-based gameplay, player skill, and a healthy dose of 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. Though it's had its moments since, Dungeons & Dragons was never the same again.

Around 2021 and early 2022, I became aware of [The Blue Bard](#), Anthony Huso's website on By The Book (BTB) AD&D, a practice where the rules of AD&D are followed closely with few deviations. The reason this is special is because AD&D is famous for having its rules ignored. People throw away all kinds of rules that they view as "stupid" or "meaningless" or "annoying" - rules that bring color and magic to an intricate, deep game system. The common parlance is that AD&D is impossible to understand, that it's a broken game, or that no one actually plays by the rules.

I had a strong feeling that the common parlance was wrong, but I had never before 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.

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Last update: **2025-04-13 23:35**

