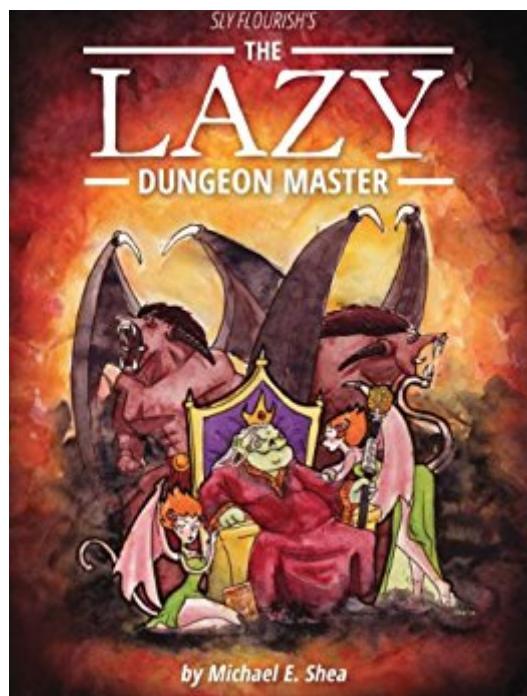


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The Lazy Dungeon Master



Synopsis

You love Dungeons and Dragons. As an experienced dungeon master you've run dozens, if not hundreds of games. You put a lot of work into making your games great. What if there's another way to look at how you prepare your game? What if it turned out you could spend less time, less energy, and have a better game as a result? It's time to unleash the Lazy Dungeon Master. Written in the style of Sly Flourish's Dungeon Master Tips and Running Epic Tier D&D Games, The Lazy Dungeon Master shows a new approach to game preparation, one that takes less time and gives your game the freedom to grow at the table. This book will help dungeon master prepare awesome games for any version of D&D. Based on the real-world experiences of hundreds of dungeon masters and dozens of professional game designers, the Lazy Dungeon Master includes interviews with veteran D&D DMs and a complete toolkit to help you improvise an entire game. Whether you play 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, Pathfinder, or the D&D Next playtest; The Lazy Dungeon Master has tips, techniques, and advice to make preparation easier and help you run a flexible and entertaining game.

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Customer Reviews

This book is short, which is actually one of its design goals: short, concise, immediately useful advice you can bring to your table at the very next game session. And man does it succeed! The advice in here amounts to about 10-15 main "tips", most of which are "Things you can and should fit onto a 3x5 notecard to keep preparation to a minimum and utility at a maximum." There's a few other tips and tricks, but the vast majority revolve around that. The thing of it is that the tips are highly specific, and concisely stated regarding what goes on the notecard, and in what order, allowing it to be an excellent tool at the table. Other tips and tricks include having portfolios of different information -- maps, monsters, stats, personality ideas for roleplaying -- so you can literally pick and choose every element of an NPC, monster, trap, or encounter on the fly, and make it all work. Dozens of quotes from professional game designers, long-time Dungeon Masters, and other bloggers help to clarify or customize these tips, so you know you'll find stuff that's useful for how you DM and how you prep. One person might be OCD, while another totally wings, and there are good tips for both types (and everything in between) in this book. As the introduction states, this book is more for experienced DMs, though I'd say it's worth reading almost immediately, even for newbies. You may not understand the advice right away if you're a n00b, but you'll have several "Ah-HA!" moments once you get a few sessions under your belt and refer back to this book. As a 25+ year veteran gamer, I can honestly say this book is worth every penny, and every bit of advice is good. There's little -- maybe nothing -- I won't use from this book, and that's rare in RPG books filled with tips and advice.

First and foremost, this is not for an inexperienced GM. Now if you are an experienced GM, most of the advice is sound and I wish I had heard it on some occasion (many) years ago when an impromptu game was thrown on my lap on an afternoon and I didn't have anything with me but pen and paper - not even dice. The essence of the suggestion is: have seen it all many times and you don't need to prepare, reason why it won't work with inexperienced GM. First, nothing dispenses you from knowing the rules inside and out. Even if you play "permissive" systems such as AD&D 2e or even Pathfinder (as opposed to 3e or 4e) you still need to know enough of the rules to be able to keep the balance while fudging. Second, lazy GMing requires access to much prepared material (NPCs, monsters, locations, encounters etc.) for which you need (1) access to the material right there at the table and (2) knowing your way around to find the needed information without searching. Third, this mostly applies to role-playing, not mechanics. Inexperienced GMs tend to rely on mechanics because the rules are math and give them a sense of mastery when pure role-playing cannot be codified that easily, hence more combat and less personal interactions. The real value of

this short book, to me, is in the appendices where a few experienced GMs are interviewed with a set of standard questions about preparation and the value it brings to their games - even though I thought the questions were biased towards "preparation is not that important". There are a few tables aimed at providing ideas for campaign arcs or short on-the-spot adventures, but if this is what you are after I would strongly suggest getting the Pathfinder Game Mastery Guide, even if you are not playing Pathfinder. It is much more elaborate and addresses aspects barely touched here, such as the players archetypes and how to address them, a subject that would deserve more attention.

This book was written to reduce prep time for harried DMs, this book has that done for me. The LDM provided lot of information I can use and sparked dozens of other idea threads I intend to explore. About 40% of the book, located after the meat of the book, is a compilation of practical and helpful answers to important DM-related questions. Thanks for the great, easy-to-read, non-preachy advice, Michael Shea!

I've been gaming now since waaay back in the late 70's & I'd have to say this is probably one of the BEST books I've ever come across, whether for new Game Masters or those who have been running games for as long as I have or less. The book emphasizes using the imagination and gives loads of great ideas, input and feedback from many other GMs and players. The book is divided up into several chapters and I truly wish I would have had this book when I first started running games. There are very few books I can think of that are equal to this one that will help develop your storytelling and game-running expertise as well as this one will for such a cheap price. Books 5-10 times the price will be heavy on text and advice but this one will, in my honest opinion, assist you the GM in becoming a MUCH better storyteller. I could go on but let me honestly say that I love this little book and the emphasis is on simplicity and winging it. If that's NOT your strong point just yet, go through the book and I honestly think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how much better you will become. Of course, there will be some GMs who love planning their adventures, campaigns and other 'essential' info down to the T (I used to be one of those) but since reading this, I usually just wing it, having run hundreds of games with as much as perhaps, an hour's worth of brain-storming. A GREAT purchase worth every gold piece oops, I mean penny paid for it!

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