



SHE KILLS MONSTERS

Dramaturgical Pocket Guide



Plot Summary

She Kills Monsters is an action comedy set in the 1990s in Athens, Ohio. *She Kills Monsters* is the story of Agnes Evans, a high school teacher in her 20s, and her attempt to cope with the death of her younger sister Tilly in a car crash through Tilly's "homebrew", or homemade, *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign detailed in an old notebook that Agnes finds at the beginning of the play. In order to decode the "nerd" culture presented in the notebook, Agnes employs the help of a "dungeon master" named Chuck. In playing the *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign, Agnes learns about the secret life her sister led, her friends, both in the actual people and their characters, and how to confront her fears. By reuniting with her sister through the *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign, Agnes eventually finds comfort and closure in her grief.



Characters

Tilly Evans	Lilith
Agnes Evans	Kaliope
Miles	Steve
Orcus	Farrah
Vera	Evil Gabbi
Chuck	Evil Tina

Setting

<u>Location</u>
Athens, Ohio
A High School
Various Fantasy Locations

<u>Time</u>
1995

The 90s: Political Overview

1990-91: The Gulf War waged in the Middle East

1991: The World Wide Web debuts

1991: Dissolution of the USSR

1992: Los Angeles Riots spurred by the acquittal of four Los Angeles Police Department officers accused in the videotaped beating of African American Rodney King

1992: Bill Clinton elected as U.S. President

1995: Oklahoma City bombing kills 168 and wounds 800

1995: O.J. Simpson is acquitted of two charges of first-degree murder in the 1994 slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and Ronald Goldman. The trial, which lasts nine months, receives worldwide publicity.



The 90s: LGBTQ+

1980s: AIDs epidemic: widespread fear of homosexuality

1990: Only two known high school student clubs, known as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), exist in the US at the time.

1993: Senator Sam Nunn's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy for the US military becomes law. The law includes the determination that "persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" are an "unacceptable risk" for inclusion in the military.

1995: President Bill Clinton signs an executive order forbidding the denial of security clearances on the basis of sexual orientation.

1998: 21-year-old gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard was beaten into a coma and tied to a fence outside Laramie, where he would not be discovered for 18 hours.

2009: Federal hate crimes legislation extends to protect LGBTQ+ individuals.

D&D: History

- Created by David Arneson and Gary Gygax in 1974
- Based off of tabletop war games like the 1971 game *Chainmail*
- First published by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. (TSR)
- Now published by Wizards of the Coast
- Rise of popularity in the 1970s-1980s : the name *Dungeons and Dragons* could sell anything
- Stereotypes develop: child players are seen as "nerds" and adult players are seen as "freaks who live in their parents' basement"
- Media panics begin in the 1980s: linked to murders, satanic rituals, and suicides
- D&D is banned by schools, demonized by churches, and criminalized by courts.
- Makes a comeback in the early 1990s as the former players of D&D become nostalgic
- The video game industry draws influence off of the imagery and open-world nature of D&D in the 1990s.
- Wizards of the Coast does a massive rewrite of the game in 2000, basing gameplay off of a d-20 system (playing with a 20-sided die)



D&D: How to Play

Each player controls the actions of a single character, known as a Player Character (PC). The player chooses their character's race (human, elf, dwarf, etc), class (fighter, wizard, cleric, etc), and other options that help determine how skilled the character is performing different tasks such as fighting or casting magic spells. The player records this information on a piece of paper that tracks all the game rules about their character, known as a character sheet.

During the game, the Dungeon Master (DM) will present different situations and challenges for the PCs to face. It is up to the PCs to determine how they want to overcome these challenges. The players will often speak "in character" as if acting out the part. When performing an activity that has a chance of failure, such as swinging a sword or sneaking down a dark passage, the DM will ask the player to roll the dice to see how well they did. Between the dice roll and the character's statistics as listed on the character sheet, the DM determines the degree of success or failure of the activity.



D&D: The Heroes

Tillius the Paladin: Human Cleric



Clerics are intermediaries between the mortal world and the distant planes of the gods. As varied as the gods they serve, clerics strive to embody the handiwork of their deities. No ordinary priest, a cleric is imbued with divine magic. Harnessing divine magic doesn't rely on study or training. A cleric might learn formulaic prayers and ancient rites, but the ability to cast cleric spells relies on devotion and an intuitive sense of a deity's wishes. Clerics combine the helpful magic of healing and inspiring their allies with spells that harm and hinder foes. They can provoke awe and dread, lay curses of plague or poison, and even call down flames from heaven to consume their enemies.

Humans are the most adaptable and ambitious people among the common races. They have widely varying tastes, morals, and customs in the many different lands where they have settled. When they settle, though, they stay: they build cities to last for the ages, and great kingdoms that can persist for long centuries. An individual human might have a relatively short life span, but a human nation or culture preserves traditions with origins far beyond the reach of any single human's memory. They live fully in the present—making them well suited to the adventuring life—but also plan for the future, striving to leave a lasting legacy. Individually and as a group, humans are adaptable opportunists, and they stay alert to changing political and social dynamics.

(D&D Beyond)

D&D: The Heroes

Lilith Morningstar: Demon Queen (Tiefling Barbarian)



To a barbarian, civilization is no virtue, but a sign of weakness. The strong embrace their animal nature—keen instincts, primal physicality, and ferocious rage. Barbarians are uncomfortable when hedged in by walls and crowds. They thrive in the wilds of their homelands: the tundra, jungle, or grasslands where their tribes live and hunt. Barbarians come alive in the chaos of combat. They can enter a berserk state where rage takes over, giving them superhuman strength and resilience. A barbarian can draw on this reservoir of fury only a few times without resting, but those few rages are usually sufficient to defeat whatever threats arise. Tieflings subsist in small minorities found mostly in human cities or towns, often in the roughest quarters of those places, where they grow up to be swindlers, thieves, or crime lords. Sometimes they live among other minority populations in enclaves where they are treated with more respect. Lacking a homeland, tieflings know that they have to make their own way in the world and that they have to be strong to survive. They are not quick to trust anyone who claims to be a friend, but when a tiefling's companions demonstrate that they trust him or her, the tiefling learns to extend the same trust to them. And once a tiefling gives someone loyalty, the tiefling is a firm friend or ally for life.

(D&D Beyond)

D&D: The Heroes

Kaliope Darkwalker: Dark Elf (Drow Ranger)



Though a ranger might make a living as a hunter, a guide, or a tracker, a ranger's true calling is to defend the outskirts of civilization from the ravages of monsters and humanoid hordes that press in from the wild. In some places, rangers gather in secretive orders or join forces with druidic circles. Many rangers, though, are independent almost to a fault, knowing that, when a dragon or a band of orcs attacks, a ranger might be the first—and possibly the last—line of defense.

Were it not for one renowned exception, the race of drow would be universally reviled. To most, they are a race of demon-worshiping marauders dwelling in the subterranean depths of the Underdark, emerging only on the blackest nights to pillage and slaughter the surface dwellers they despise. Their society is depraved and preoccupied with the favor of Lolth, their spider-goddess, who sanctions murder and the extermination of entire families as noble houses vie for position. Drow grow up believing that surface-dwelling races are inferior, worthless except as slaves. Drow who develop a conscience or find it necessary to cooperate with members of other races find it hard to overcome that prejudice, especially when they are so often on the receiving end of hatred.

(D&D Beyond)

D&D: The Heroes

Mage Steve



From the Second Edition Player's Handbook: "Mages have no historical counterparts; they exist only in legend and myth. However, players can model their characters after such legendary figures as Merlin, Circe, or Medea. Accounts of powerful wizards and sorceresses are rare, since their reputations are based in no small part on the mystery that surrounds them. These legendary figures worked toward secret ends, seldom confiding in the normal folk around them."

Mages can be a human, elf, or a half-elf (half-human and half-elf). Mages, unlike wizards, do not need to specialize in any school of magic, so they can do a wider range of spells; however, they do not have the ability to learn as many specialized spells. Mages belong under the larger class of Wizard because they are spell casters and because of this they use spells as tools, weapons, and armor. To learn a spell, a mage must study the spell from a spell book.

Intelligence is the prime requisite for mages to have because this is what allows them to study magic spells and hone their skills.

D&D: The Enemies

Kobolds



Kobolds are egg-laying creatures that can live to be very old. Most, however, do not make it out of their first decade due to their physical weakness.

It is due to this weakness that Kobolds often band together. They are tunnel builders and are very cunning with traps. Kobolds are followers of the lesser god Kurtulmak Dragon Queen Tiamat. Some Kobolds are born with leathery wings. These are rare and often hated by the other Kobolds.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Ogres



Ogres are lazy of mind and strong of body. They survive by raiding, scavenging, and killing for food and for fun. They are between 9 and 10 feet tall and weigh close to a thousand pounds. Ogres are known for their intense rage that is easily set off. They enjoy playing with their food and making crafts out of leftover bones and skin. They are greedy and love gold and silver colored objects. They are often clothed in animal pelts and carry stone-tipped javelins.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Tiamat



The Queen of Evil Dragons is a five-headed dragon of enormous size. Each of her five heads matches that of a chromatic dragon, and each head has its own brain and its own intelligence. The five heads do not argue, and they all share the same goals. The only goal of immediate interest to Tiamat is finding a way to escape imprisonment in the Nine Hells. Tiamat is the patron goddess of chromatic dragons and the embodiment of greed and envy. She takes the form of a five-headed dragon, and each head is a different color. She gave birth to the five primary species of chromatic dragon, each taking the form of one of her heads. Tiamat combines the powers of all of the chromatic dragons. Confined to the Nine Hells by the power of the greater gods, Tiamat longs to escape and wreak havoc upon the world.

D&D: The Enemies

Bugbears



Bugbears believe that when they die they have a chance to fight at their god, Hruggek's, side. Their ultimate goal is to defeat as many foes as possible. Bugbears are incredibly stealthy despite their size. They will form bonds in exchange for food, drink, and treasure. These bonds, however, are forgotten as soon as their lives are on the line.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Faerie (Pixie)



Pixies wear flowing gowns that sparkle, thinking themselves princesses of the fey. Some wear acorns, leaves, bark, and the pelts of woodland beasts. When Pixies fly, a glittering tail of sparkling dust follows in their wake, powerful enough to grant the power of flight to creatures, confuse a foe, or put a foe to sleep. Pixies like to play harmless tricks on passersby. Pixies would sooner flee than getting into a physical altercation.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Faerie (Sprite)



Sprites lack warmth and compassion. They are aggressive and hardy warriors who go to great lengths to ward off strangers from their groves and shaded glens. Sprites have the power to judge a person's heart, therefore seeing the truth about an individual. Sprites brew toxins, antidotes, unguents, and poisons. Sprites are protectors and judges.
(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Succubus



Succubi service devils, demons, night hags, and the like. They are often used to convince mortals to commit evil acts. Once a succubus has convinced a mortal to commit 3 betrayals of thought, word, and deed, the mortal soul belongs to the succubus. A succubus's kiss is painful for a victim. It is usually delivered as a final farewell before the succubus escapes.
(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Gelatinous Cube



The cube takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the cube's Engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures inside the cube can be seen but have total cover. A creature within 5 feet of the cube can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the cube. The cube can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time. Even when the cube is in plain sight, it takes a successful Perception check to spot a cube that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the cube's space while unaware of the cube is surprised by the cube.

(D&D Beyond)

D&D: The Enemies

Doppleganger



Doppelgangers often kidnap those who they intend to impersonate and keep them alive for weeks to continue its studies. They often work alone or in small groups. They are too lazy and self-interested to take care of their young. They often take the form of an attractive male and seduce women, leaving them to care for the child who discovers its true form by adolescence.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Enemies

Beholder



A beholder's spheroid body is covered in chitinous plates, scales, or leathery flesh. Its great bulging eye sits above a wide, toothy maw, while the smaller eyestalks that crown its body twist and turn to keep its foes in sight. A beholder channels extraordinary levels of magical power. Its central eye emits a broad field of energy that can nullify the magic of its foes, while its eye stalks blast those foes with a host of powerful effects. A beholder's central lair is typically a large, spacious cavern with high ceilings, where it can attack without fear of closing to melee range. Some beholders manage to channel their pervasive xenophobic tendencies into a terrible despotism. Rather than live in isolation to avoid other creatures, the aptly named eye tyrants enslave those other creatures, founding and controlling vast evil empires. An eye tyrant sometimes carves out a domain within or under a major city, commanding networks of agents that operate on their master's behalf.

(D&D Wiki)

D&D: The Enemies/Heroes

Orcus

(Orc)



Orcs are savage raiders and pillagers with stooped postures, low foreheads, and piggish faces with tusks. Orcs wage endless war on humans, elves, dwarves, and others, holding a particular hatred for elves. Orcs travel in tribes that plunder villages, devour herds, and slaying any humanoid that stands against them. They seldom settle permanently, always wanting to be near the promise of battle with new targets. They do not build anything more than is necessary for defense and display the severed body parts of their victims with pride.

(Monster Manual)

D&D: The Weapons

Tilly's Sword

The Eastern Blade of the Dreamwalker



A fictional weapon, most likely created by Tilly. In the second edition, longswords can be enhanced with various types of materials such as steel, dark wood, silver, etc. It is unclear whether this is a highly specific magical weapon or a longsword which has been enhanced to suit Tilly's needs and interests. The Complete Barbarian Manual gives some indication that a Dreamwalker is related to the Australian aboriginal culture. The aboriginal people used a wooden sword for a short while so this sword could have be wooden.

D&D: The Weapons

Agnes's Sword



Probably a regular longsword since there is no specific detail given.