



Forge Your Imagination: A Guide to Immersive World Building (Intro Episode)

Transcript:

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Tom

[TOM] Greetings, adventurers. Welcome to the Ocean County Library's first episode of Forge Your Imagination: A Guide to Immersive Worldbuilding. This is a podcast series that will point creative individuals in the right direction when attempting to create your own world. I'm your host, Tom, a worldbuilding enthusiast and professional dungeon master with over 13 years of experience. In today's episode, I will briefly discuss the type of material this podcast series will cover, as well as my experience in this field. This will hopefully help ease your minds and let you know that you're putting your time and effort into good hands. Now let's jump right into it.

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Tom

[TOM] First, let me address the immediate questions you probably all have. Question one: why should I listen to this podcast? Well, the purpose of listening to this podcast is to help you adventurers narrow down the information you need when it comes to worldbuilding and book writing. This podcast will become a crucial stepping stone to exposing the roots of worldbuilding and assist you in making a strong foundation for your story to build upon. Question two: what will you get from this podcast? In this podcast series, you will learn how to build your own universe. I will be covering a variety of different topics like how to select a genre and timeline, climate creation, common mistakes during world building, classifications of people, beliefs, cultures, morality, mapmaking, how to create cities, currency and more, as well as extended lore for adventurers who really want to dig deep, like creating names of arcane academies and school structures, classifications and rankings of animal companions, prominent world figures, ancestry, and more.

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Tom

[TOM] Now you are all likely thinking, why should I listen to this guy? What makes him qualified to give any advice? So that leads us to question three: who am I? Well, I'm a professional dungeon master or game master, depending on what title you prefer, otherwise known as a DM or GM. I have been a Dungeon Master for over 14 years now, and it all started when I was 12. My friend's father offered to

run a Dungeons and Dragons game for us. It was short, chaotic, and a carefree campaign with three two-hour sessions, but that's all that it took to get me hooked. After that, I started looking into how to play and where to find a group. But as many Dungeons and Dragons players know, these options tend to be scarce. It's not like now where you could use the internet and connect with different groups and new parties and individuals. However, if you're a teen 12 to 18 years old and you're interested in joining a Dungeons and Dragons group but don't know where to look, look no further. The library has a variety of different groups to choose from, like the Berkeley, Brick, Lacey, Point Pleasant Beach, and Toms River Branch. If you have the time, I strongly encourage you to look over our Ocean County Library calendar of events at theoceancountylibrary.org. But back then, I decided the only option available to me was to make my own group with my friends who had never played before. There are a lot of ups and downs and the game wasn't for everyone, but I definitely found my calling.

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Tom

[TOM] I became the forever DM for our group of friends and this has just continued to grow and change over the years. Since then, I've run multiple self-made campaigns and one-offs over the years. I've never personally used a pre-made campaign, but I would definitely encourage new or aspiring DMs to use them for inspiration. They're a great asset to help building your own themes and plot twists. Over the years, I've created two universes with crucial world building lore. My first universe is Akkijan. This is a universe on Google Docs that's over 135 pages. This is my first try at a world, and it's just a normal, high fantasy D&D world. It totals about 41,000 words if I round down. The second universe I've created is Salerra. It's 132 pages. This is a world that ties in fantasy and reality together. It's a world where magic and technology coincide and new players get to learn magic in our current time period, and tame familiars like trolls, velociraptors and dragons. This one ends up totaling about 31,000 words if I round down. Once again, this is the size of a novella. However, it's much shorter than the first world I've created. The world of Salerra is actually a world that I thought it would be fun to write a book series in. It's something I've been considering and fleshing out more as time goes on. I just recently completed a list of prominent magical locations that include arcane domains, which are dangerous areas in the world that are supercharged with raw magic that the human body is unable to process.

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Tom

[TOM] That being said, let's take a short rest so that I can inform you adventurers that various branches in the library have adult writer groups for creative writing. Various libraries host these groups like Brick, Jackson, Manchester, Point Pleasant Borough and the Waretown library. These events all occur at different times, but on the same days of the week, either being Monday or Thursdays. If this is something you're interested in, please check out our calendar of events on theoceancountylibrary.org to keep an eye out for a group near you. Additionally, I would like to mention that this month on January 23rd, 2025, the Jackson Library will be having an author event called How to Hunt the Jersey Devil. This is with Tony DiGerolamo, who is a New Jersey writer of comedy, movies, books, comics and games. Registration for this event is required. I think it'll be a good program to attend for new adventures.

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Tom

[TOM] Now, without further ado, please grab your anvil and hammer because it's time to return to forging your imagination. I would like to say to everyone who wants to write a book and do world building has a brilliant mind and a knack for creative writing and storytelling. However, that's not always reality. I've tried my hand at book writing and self-published it, but I hate even thinking about it. It's something I never mention and that I actively try to hide from most people. This book was a terrible example of my skills and made me incredibly unhappy. It pointed out crucial writing flaws and showed I rushed through them without building upon the proper foundations. I'm not telling you this to discourage you, adventurers. I just want to let you know that no matter where you stand, you always have room to grow. Even if you have great plot and seemingly good characters to work with, it could still fall short if you fail to world build in advance. My universe was so shallow that I was ignorant, and I forgot to create guidelines or specific world lore to actually tie in. There were no laws, no administration, no beliefs, and no one to tie in these pivotal pieces of information organically.

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Tom

[TOM] Writing is, for most people, something that I think doesn't come easy. It's a commitment and often a struggle for those who lack willpower and the drive to complete what they've started. However, with that struggle comes experience and knowledge that will elevate you to a higher standard. Now that I have built upon my universe with all the necessities and laws, I feel much more comfortable and confident to take another crack at book writing. I do plan on trying to finish any world building aspect that I could possibly think of before starting it back up. But you know, that's definitely something I want to try my hand at again. But that's everything I wanted to discuss today. Tune in on the next episode to officially begin your journey of worldbuilding. Here, we'll take our first swing of the hammer to craft our preferred genre, timeline, and technology.

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Tom

[TOM] If you were hearing this message, you've officially listened to the entire episode. And for that, I'd like to thank you. I hope you enjoyed this episode, and if you did, please take a look over some of our other OCL Sound Waves podcasts. Feel free to leave us a rating on Spotify, RadioPublic, and Pocket Casts. Most importantly, safe travels, adventures.

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Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Do you have new or slightly used prom dresses in good condition, or do you know someone who wants to give away a prom dress? Starting January 2nd, the Ocean County Library invites you to donate your dresses during the 17th annual Prom Dress Collection. Donated dresses will be collected at all of the Ocean County Library branches until February 28th, and will be available for free for students in eighth through 12th grade, starting in March at our prom dress giveaways. Before you donate, please ensure that your dresses meet the following criteria: long or short styles from the last five years, gently used and clean dresses ready for attending prom. Please don't donate dresses with rips, tears or stains and please don't donate accessories like shoes or purses. For details, check out our website at theoceancountylibrary.org, visit your local branch, or call us at 732-349-6200. We thank you in advance for your donation.