

CORRECTIONS

Daddy Master explains why he is changing some mechanics back, pg. 1

GOOD READS

Double the book reviews, double the fun! pg. 7.

IDENTITY CRISIS?

A fun and handy guide for the teen who wants to shake things up, pg. 5

THE TEEN
TRIBUNE



A student looks into a microscope during urology class.
PHOTO BY EDWARD OU / TEEN HIGH

WHY I CHANGED A BUNCH OF MECHANICS BACK

MANY OF THE MECHANICS I TALKED ABOUT CHANGING I HAVE SINCE CHANGED BACK OR SIMPLIFIED.

BY ANTHONY BURCH, DADDY MASTER



You might have noticed that in the last few episodes, many of the mechanics I talked about changing (rolling for damage rather than rolling to hit, a lot of the complication regarding keys that

can buy items) I have since changed back or simplified.

Here's why.

MISSING IS DRAMATICALLY INTERESTING

One thing I'd failed to consider is how much the players love adding character beats to their failures. Not even their critical failures, either— just their garden variety I-didn't-roll-high-enough-to-beat-their-AC failures. Normal doesn't just fail to hit with an attack— he fails to hit with an attack because he's so embarrassed that Link is a better Teeny the Teen than him.

This is a big part of the storytelling of DnD, and autohitting meant we lost it. In the episode where the teens fought Puckeroni Tony, we already had weirdly fun narrative stuff show up as a result of these misses (Scary's "your wife doesn't talk to you" attack misses somehow, so Tony weirdly be-

comes a guy who both loves his wife and hates talking to her).



"THIS PODCAST IS ONLY PARTIALLY ABOUT LETTING THE DICE DETERMINE THE STORY."

TEENS DON'T GET TO MAKE CHOICES

A lot of the complications at DADDIES HQ—the key economy, the whale, the different tiers of items— were meant to increase the choices that the players had for season two. Season one was sort of a railroad in terms of the overarching plot structure and when they'd get items and stuff— this time around, I wanted them to have more choice and put more of the story in their hands.

I'm still keeping the items and the whale and the Obsidian Door and all that, but I'm not gonna push them as hard in future for one simple reason: when you're a teen, you don't actually have much choice in how your life goes. Not really. Your parents and your school tell you what to do every hour of the day, and only by rebelling (which half of our teen player characters are pret-

ty much physically incapable of doing) do you get to exercise your own agency.

I still wanna add interesting choices for the player— it is, after all, their decision to keep popping open locks on the Obsidian Door rather than buying armor or weapons, and that could be interesting down the line— but structurally I think it's okay if things are a little more linear. That's what teenage life is like.

Also, I keep intending to hide keys in the main story missions as little optional objectives, but I forget every single time. I dunno why. I get caught up in things, I guess.

I CAN JUST LIE ABOUT ENEMY HP AND DAMAGE

I initially changed our attack rolls into autohits because I wanted the story to move faster. Then I realized: I can just lie about how much HP a baddie has.

I won't do this very often, of course, because then it feels like nothing is real and you're playing Calvinball, but if I get the vibe that the crew is getting really sick of a fight? If they're trying to beat up an absolute nobody but they keep missing because the dice hate them that night? I can just make their next hit lethal. Whatever.

It's taken me three years to realize this



podcast is only partially about letting the dice determine the story, and way more about occasionally using dice to empower and throw wrenches in our improvisational group storytelling.



The whale awaits your questions. Ask wisely!
PHOTO BY EDWARD OU / TEEN HIGH

THE SWIFT FILES

EVERY DAY CARRY ESSENTIALS

As someone who is prepared for every possible eventuality, I often get questions about what's in my "EDC" kit ("Every day carry," for you rubes out there). This is, of course, an impossible question to answer, because everybody's needs are going to be very different.

My needs, for instance, as one tasked with singlehandedly saving the world from unknowable abominations from another dimension on an approximately bi-weekly basis, will likely be much different than your needs (I don't know you, but statistically you're likely some manner of chump, simp, or rube).

That being said, there are some fundamentals that even a chump/simp/rube such as yourself might find helpful in the course of developing your own EDC loadout, which I will elucidate thusly:

1. A POCKET KNIFE/TOOL COMBO

Just having a knife means you're a psychopath. Just having a tool means you're a loser. Transcend both those labels by having a combination knife/tool.

On the tool front, limit it to the bare essentials— ideally a flat head screwdriver, a narrow flat head, a phillips-head, and a Torx 15 security bit (I looked it up and apparently they got really popular around the turn of the century for some reason and now they're basically a standard everywhere.)

When it comes to the knife part, serrations make it harder to sharpen, and frankly if you need the serrations you're probably better off with a more dedicated blade for whatever task at hand. Make sure to keep the blade sharp and honed! Often the packaging tape on boxes can be tricky to cut through.

2. HIDDEN RAZOR WIRE/HAND-CUFF KEY IN YOUR BELT

I recommend threading thin razor wire in case you ever need to choke someone out, and having a spare handcuff key (most police cuffs take the same key) for slipping your cuffs after you're arrested for choking someone out, allowing you to make a clean getaway.

3. LOCK PICKS

I'm still working on gettin' gud with picks, but this is a cool thing to always have. For now, I've found just having the reputation of "being a guy with lock picks" is just as good as knowing how to actually pick locks. It makes you cool and mysterious and a little dangerous. And then if you DO come across a locked door and someone says "Hey you got lock picks, can you pick this?" you can make a big

show of looking at the manufacturer of the lock and saying something like "these are mushroom head security pins, I need a specialized rake, which I left at home whoops." That way your reputation as a cool thief who knows about cool stuff remains intact!

4. BUTANE LIGHTER

Most people go for something simple like one of those Bic plastic lighters, or maybe something a touch fancier. All of these, while still able to produce a flame (one of the most important things you need in any survival scenario), quite simply are not up to the task compared to my lighter of choice: a butane creme brulee cooking torch. Sure, it's a little bit unwieldy (that's what having a good belt rig with holsters and pouches unlocks for you, btw) but consider the following facts:

1. Works just as good as a normal lighter (better in windy conditions)
2. Unlike a normal lighter, can go up to over 2000 degrees F
3. Carries enough fuel to start many fires/brulee many cremes
4. Makes a HUGE FLAME!! Equally be at home, completely lost in the woods, or in any professional French kitchen

5. A SECOND KNIFE

I know there's a knife listed, but let's be honest— if you can carry one knife, you can carry two knives. That way, you have a backup knife if something happens to the first one, but you're also prepared to dual-wield both knives. I know a lot of people say knife fights are really bloody and you're gonna get cut no matter what, but this way you can ensure the person you're fighting will get cut roughly twice as much as you will. Bonus points if this knife can be deployed in a cool way (ei-

ther it makes a cool sound, or you gotta flick it out and it makes a cool sound).

Not all knives make cool sounds! Sometimes, if you're good like me, you can like use your mouth to make a cool "schwing" noise and if you time it right, it sounds like the knife is making a cool sound.

6. A GOOD PEN

A lot of times, you need a pen, and you just don't have a pen, and the pens that are available to you are terrible— low ink, cramped ergonomics, inconsistent flow and paper feel, etc. Make sure you're never in that situation by getting a good pen that you can keep on you at all times (buy in bulk to save money). I'm big into gel pens with a little glitter in them because that way, you'll know if someone's stole your pen, and plus gel pens with glitter look so COOL and write so GOOD. Bonus points if it makes a cool sound when you deploy it (see above).



That's it! Hopefully this will help you on your journey towards becoming a totally prepped and ready individual, ready to tackle anything life throws at you, be it "opening packages" or "doodling animes on deposit slips and lighting them on fire while your mom is at the bank."

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE FACULTY AND STAFF AT TEEN HIGH DO NOT ENDORSE OR CONDONE THE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS SUGGESTED IN THIS COLUMN.

WHAT TYPE OF TEEN SHOULD YOU BE?

A FUN GUIDE BY NORM



These are the years, fellow teens, where we become the people we were born to be. But sometimes the person you were born to be is weird and your parents aren't proud of them.

Which means it's back to the drawing board! I know what you're thinking: "Gee, Norm, constructing a brand new identity for myself sounds pretty daunting!"

Not to fear, fellow self-reinventor. Below you will find an exhaustive list of the types of things that teens are, arranged into a simple formula that makes choosing a new type of teen to be as easy as remembering your birthday.

So let your stress melt away like your former hopes, dreams and hobbies and get ready to meet the brand new you!

THE NEW TYPE OF TEEN YOU ARE IS:

BIRTH MONTH

JAN: FUN AND FLIRTY
FEB: SWEET 'N SOUR
MAR: VERY SCARY
APR: PERKY PEPPY
MAY: WEIRDLY PRETTY
JUN: KINDA-FUNNY
JUL: LOW-KEY HUNKY
AUG: ARTSY-FARTSY
SEPT: CRISPY-CRUNCHY
OCT: PARTY-HEARTY
NOV: MOODY-BROODY
DEC: NICE AND QUIET

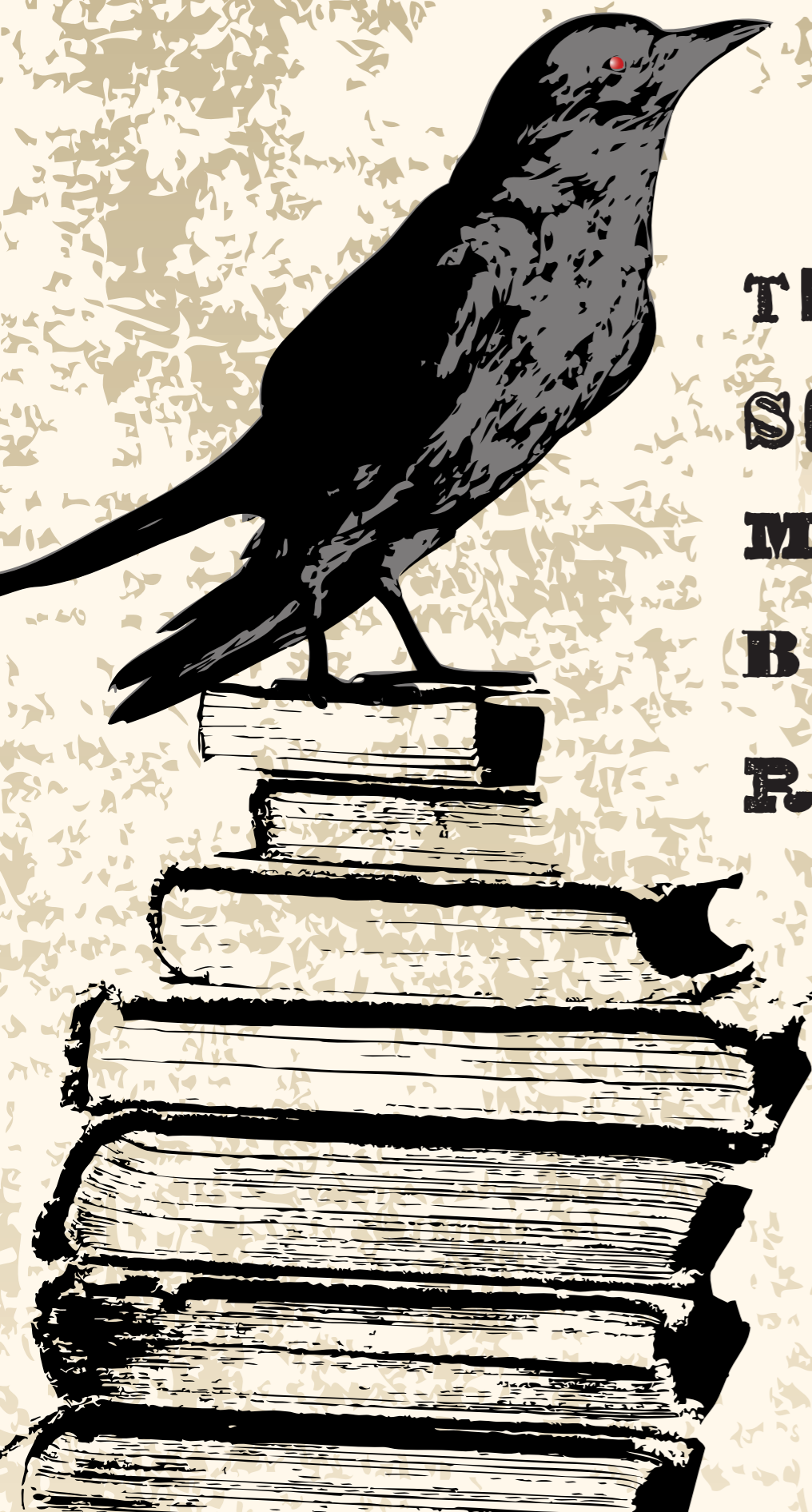
BIRTH DAY

SUN: GRADE GRUBBING
MON: SCHOOL SPIRIT
TUE: FLOWER POWER
WED: YOUTH SPORTS
THUR: HEAVY METAL
FRI: METHOD ACTING
SAT: MUSICALLY GIFTED

LAST DIGIT OF BIRTH YEAR

0: DRAMA BOMB
1: UROLOGY PRODIGY
2: FEDORA WEEB
3: HORSE YOUTH
4: E-GOTH
5: SCENE TEEN
6: MEGA JOCK
7: CLASS PRESIDENT
8: CRYPTO PUNK
9: MASCOT KID





THE SCARY MARLOWE BOOK REPORT

Sup Losers it's your dark goddess Scary Marlowe comin' atcha! This month for the tribune I thought I'd stray from what some of my more TYPICAL or HAPPY classmates are doing and provide something actually USEFUL for anyone reading. I kinda doubt anyone's reading because 1) Nobody understands me and 2) Reading sucks. That's why I did some reading *for* you. That's right, I'm offering some free homework help— The Scary Marlowe Way™. Below are three book reports that you can just turn in right now for probably a decent grade. I didn't work that hard on them. I'm just smart and misunderstood. No credit needed because I never get credit anyways. Just put your name on them and rock on.

[Editor's Note: Do not do this, you will get in trouble.]

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

This is a book about a hunky lawyer fighting racism and his weirdo daughter Scout who's kinda cool and then like one annoying neighbor and one mysterious neighbor, and then a brother who's probably hunky too but who knows.

Basically this whole town is f***ed up and racist and s*** but the neighborhood kids keep playing because they're white and don't have to deal with that. But the lawyer dad does because he's representing this wrongly accused dude named Tom.

This book is hella sad and you're lucky I read it for you but at the end Scout learns that the world can be s***y but that you still have to love people and that's like the theme maybe, even though loving people is for chumps. The mysterious neighbor ends up being good and is probably hunky.

ANIMAL FARM

I know what you're thinking— this would make a totally rad band name. Unfortunately it's just some book, and worse, it's basically a metaphor for some war or something. There's these two pigs and they're called Napoleon and Snowball, and they don't like the farmer on their farm, so they sing a song and make him leave. It's pretty metal. But then Napoleon ends up being a total dick, and the animals are kinda too stupid to notice. Like, at first he's like, "All animals are equal," but then he starts changing shit to like, "but some animals are more equal than others." It's like how Mrs. Nelson suddenly requires like a teacher signature for hall passes. Like what the f***. I should be able to pee without asking. They're lucky I'm not peeing in class.

Anyways, there's also this pig Squealer who's a total p***y, and he's helping Napoleon get rid of Snowball. The whole thing's totally bogus. I don't know where this happened for real, but like the message is probably just don't f*** with pigs?

THE SCARLET LETTER

This book is about a chick that's kind of slutty, which is totally fine. But like back in ancient Boston they didn't think it was fine, and they were totally s***y about it. So they make her wear this letter "A" all the time, which is actually pretty metal if you think about it, but she definitely should have been able to choose if she wanted to wear it. People don't know who her baby's dad is, and she acts like she doesn't know either. It'd be chill if she didn't. Like, who gives a s*** if he doesn't want to be a dad. F*** him. Like, people don't need dads.

In fact, sometimes dads or dad figures just f*** things up, because they're like "Oh I'm here for you" and you're like "No, you're not. You're just trying to be someone else and that ship has sailed, dude. I'm perfectly fine without a dad obviously. I don't need you, and you're dumb." But she does know her baby daddy and he feels guilty that she's being shamed. At the end he confesses and then literally f***ing dies because men are weak as s***. This book is kinda hot though.

RETURN RACK REVIEW

WITH LINK!

Library books neatly stacked behind a laptop.
PHOTO BY EDWARD OU / TEEN HIGH

Hey Teens. I'm sorry to disappoint those of you who were looking forward to some of Link's advice. Unfortunately, it seems I stepped on some toes, and did a feature that was already part of the school paper.

Sorry, Normal! I'm sure he gave you all great advice. And you can always just talk to me in person if you want. I can be a good person to talk to.

Anyways, when I was trying to think of what I can offer to this wonder-

ful publication, I realized I should stick close to home. I love my books. My dad is a librarian. We talk about books. I find a lot of the best advice and moral lessons can come from books.

So I thought I would do a little twist on this and grab a couple random books from the library return rack and review them. Maybe they'll be books you should check out. Cause someone did! And then returned them! And now I'm reviewing them!

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

BY HARPER LEE

What a great book. Its full of great words, and great ideas, and the author, Harper Lee, really knows how to use those words to make those ideas easy to understand. Racism is bad. We all know it. But sometimes its good to check yourself and remind yourself.



The main character scout reminds me of me. My dad Grant would call me "scout" sometimes. And the dad is a really good lawyer who fights racism and reminds me of Grant. I would really recommend you read this book.

ANIMAL FARM

BY GEORGE ORWELL



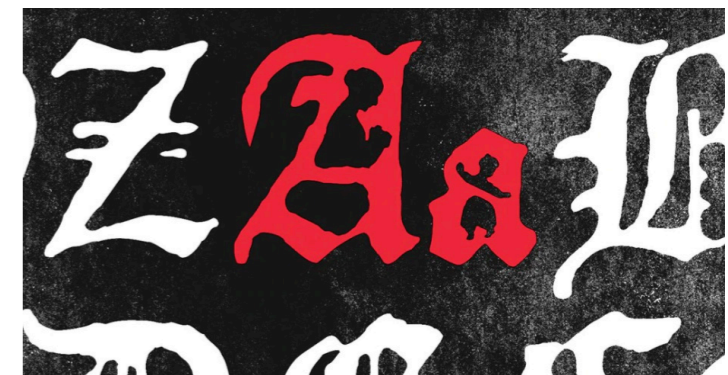
This is a great book. I don't know if I understood it very well though. The back said it was about Russia, and I'm not really good with history. I knew Napole-

on was short, but I didn't know he was a pig. I think it was a me-problem, cause looking into this book, people love it. So it must be great. If you like history and are okay not really understanding a book, you'll like it.

THE SCARLET LETTER

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

The last book, and another great book. I didn't like it very much, but what do I know? Everyone was just really mean to this nice lady, and I'm not gonna lie, my



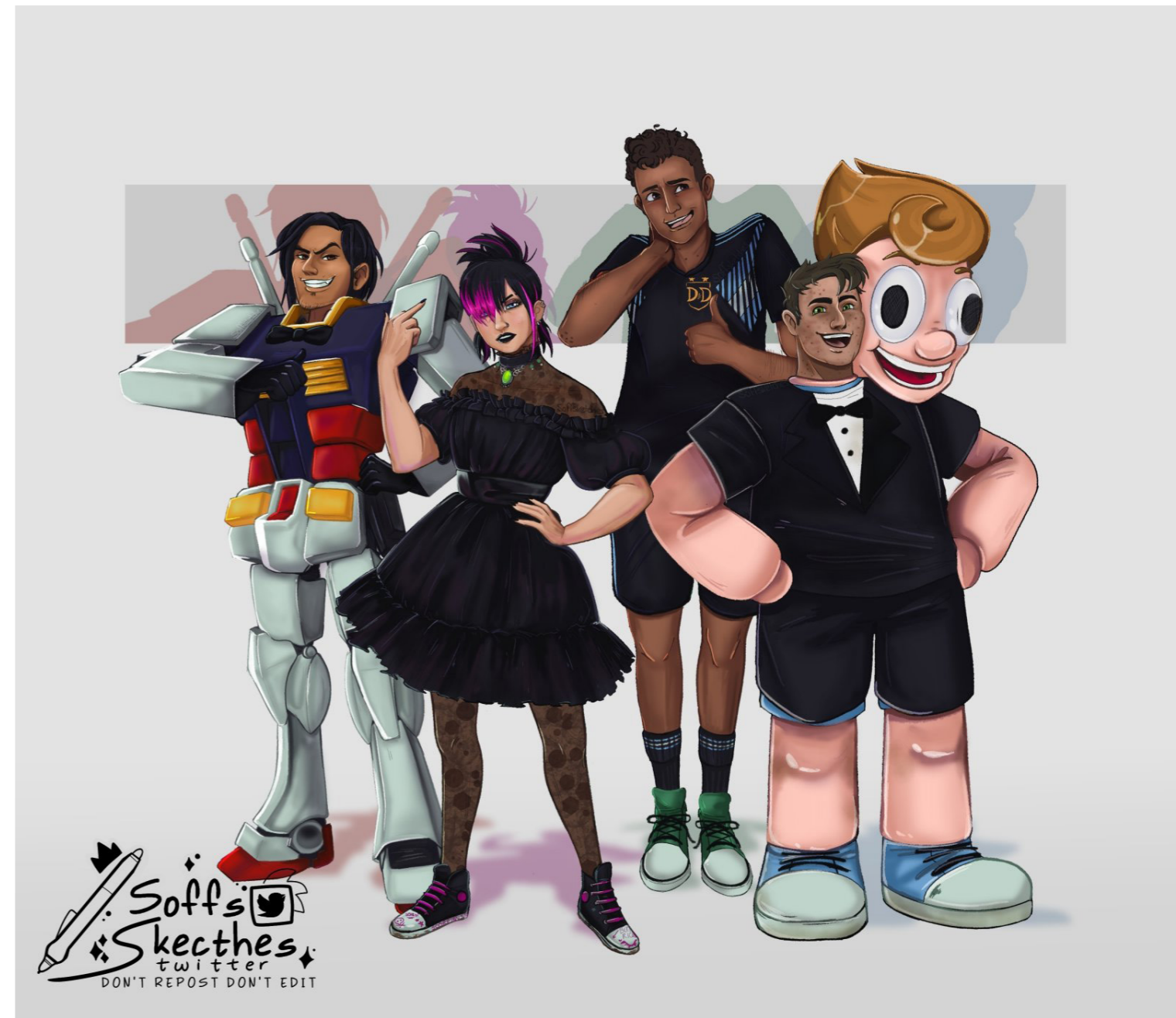
dad Marco wanted to play Fifa with me and I asked him how the book was, and he said he never read it. But if you like to read, people say this is one you have to read.

Thanks everyone for checking out my first *Return Rack Review*. Next issue I promise I'll read the books more closely. This was sort of last minute because of the whole taking Normal's idea fiasco. So I may or may not have skimmed these books. But if the point of a review is knowing whether or not you should read a book, I think I did my job. These are all worth reading. Until next time—Link out!

STUDENT ARTWORK



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