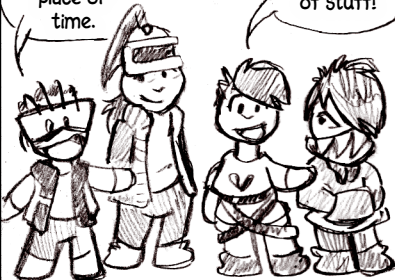


Imperfect Overview: ISEKAI

Isekai (異世, "another world") stories have one or more characters transported to another place or time.

Often, these stories have fantasy elements, with magic, mystery, monsters, and all kinds of stuff!



Isekai stories have been around for a long time.

Back in 1900, L. Frank Baum wrote *The Wizard of Oz*...

the first in a series of novels of people being whisked away to a place of magic and wonders.

Pfft. Who *hasn't* heard of Oz?!

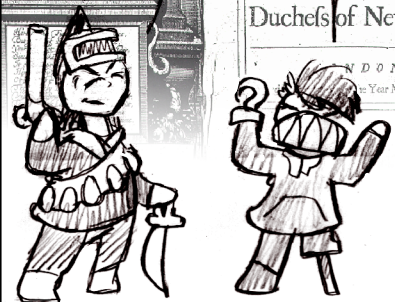


Back in 1666, Margaret Cavendish wrote *The Blazing World*, about a woman who is so wonderful, that only she can survive the journey to place that challenges all of Western society!

Ugh, we get it, you're *nerds* who read old books.

Get to the stuff that people actually care about!

PRICES
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In the 1980s, role-playing games and video games were the new hotness.

You didn't just have to hear about a hero... you got to *be* the hero!

The Dungeons & Dragons cartoon, made for U.S. television, featured six friends trapped in a dangerous fantasy world, as they searched for a way to get back home!



I thought we were going to talk about *anime*?

In Japan, *Aura Battler Dunbine* had starting airing months before.

A bridge between giant robots and swords-and-sorcery it was about a racecar driver summoned to be a pilot of a giant insect-like mecha!

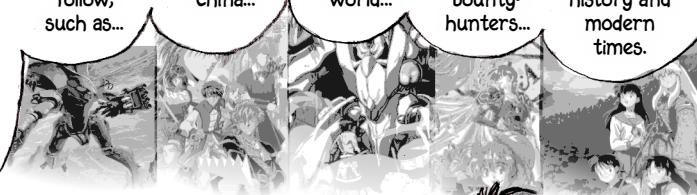
"Normal person transported to fantasy world" was a big hit. More stories like this would follow, such as...

Fushigi Yūgi, where a middle school student is trapped in a book about Ancient China...

Escaflowne, where it's a girl who finds she has psychic powers in this new and strange world...

Those Who Hunt Elves, a wacky comedy about Earth-citizens turned bounty-hunters...

Inuyasha, where our heroine travels back and forth between Japan's magical history and modern times.



When are you going to talk about MMOs?

Okay, okay. It's 1999, and *Digimon Adventure* is on the air. A tie-in with a toy-line, the show starts with our heroes trapped in the "Digi-World", sort of like the Internet.

Digimon would go on to launch many more shows, card games, and video games.

The stories are all different, but they are all about the merging of the digital and the physical worlds.

A few years later, *Dot Hack* takes this motif of "trapped in the digital world" one step further.

A multimedia franchise, the *Dot Hack* games, apps, anime and manga are less about fantasy and action-adventure...

And more about identity, anxiety, and the very nature of reality.



Finally, we're talking about computers.



This is more like it! Dark and serious stuff.

Then, in 2009, we're introduced to *Sword Art Online*.

In the first story, several people find themselves trapped in a full-sensory simulation. And if they die in this MMO, they die for real!

Yeah! Just like in the movies!

Sword Art Online was a huge success. It quickly spun off a new story: *Accel World*, where our heroes not only participate in a secret MMO, they augment their perceptions to superhuman levels.

More anime would follow in SAO's footsteps.

Log Horizon, another trapped-in-MMO story, but even more serious.

Bloom!, where online players are forced to perform real-world violence.

Overlord: it's not just that our hero is playing his game alone... it's that he can't find a way to log off!

It's creepy stuff like this that got me into *Vital Hearts* in the first place!

Today, *Isekai* anime is dominated by stories about digital simulations mingling with reality as we know it.

And even more anime about MMOs!

You didn't even mention *Recovery of an MMO Junkie*!

Or *IC!*

Or *Ready Player One*!

Or *No Game No Life*!

That's not an anime!

Our *Vital Hearts* game draws inspiration from a variety of sources.

Our game captures not just the thrill of defeating monsters, looting chests, and leveling up...

The game will also ask you to make difficult choices. Do you risk your own life to save other people? What if they're not even real?

What if *none* of this is real?

Hey, no spoilers!

Find more secrets at our *Vital Hearts* Kickstarter! You can pledge now for exclusive rewards!

