

A Tale of Two Games

GemStone IV and DragonRealms
January 2016

by Deb Christensen
Dreamweaver, Dreamheart, Luxelle et al.

Table of Contents

[Foreword](#)

[General Game Observations](#)

[Starting Characters](#)

[Events](#)

[Premium Subscription Contrast](#)

[Festival Notes: You Pays Your Money And...](#)

[Free To Play](#) (kind of incomplete, I have never been F2P)

Foreword

I'm going to preface this piece by telling you I played DR since it went into the invitation beta test on GENie. Compared to my total time in GS, my DR years win by a huge margin. I played GS2 and GS3, until the night it was De-Iced in 1995. Then I spent the next **20 years** in DR, with a 4 year hiatus. I returned to GS a little over a year ago. I have played both games side by side the past year.

GemStone has blown me away. It feels like the “magic” is still in GS. And I'm going to try to quantify that with a list. (*I started out with a fresh character, not a restored one.*)

Uritel said it like this: "I feel like DR is my job and GS is the game I get to have fun in."

It is like these two games are managed by *two completely different companies*. It goes *far* deeper than a classic level-based experience system (GSIV) vs. a skill-based experience system (DR). It is the very atmosphere of the game environment.

Let me share the link in the newsletter that appeared in my email one day in the fall of 2014, that piqued my imagination and reminded me of the DR I used to play. Except this was from GS. I had not subscribed to GS except for a few months when it opened on the web. I don't know why the email appeared in my email.

<http://forums.play.net/forums/GemStone%20IV/Quests%60Sagas%60Events/Announcements/view/237>

And I was hooked already, so back I went to GemStone after 19 years. First I cancelled my premium DR account. And now, I just cancelled my entire DR account.

I was so taken aback at the differences between the games, I started a list of Pros/Cons for each one. What follows is the results.

<p>Note: <i>I understand my observations are subjective. I come to these text MUDs with a primarily role-playing perspective. I am not an uber gamer and I never aspire to be high level. So my “pro” might be someone’s “con”</i></p>	<p>A third column added to say that this item was recently changed in DR. (And I don't have the time or will to look into it.) <i>Too little, too late for me.</i></p>	<p>Pros/Cons Grey=neutral Color Legend: Gold=Pro Lt Gold=Pro w/ limits Red=Con</p>
---	--	---

GemStone IV	DragonRealms	DR Recently changed
General Game Observations		
Not as many Tweets via Twitter, except for Festival times.	More tweets happen.	
<p>There's a modern OOC Forum that is not affiliated with Simutronics where people sell, auction, trade, help and leave messages - and it should defo come with at <i>least</i> a PG-13 rating. We call it the Player's Corner, or just PC: http://forum.gsplayers.com/forum.php</p> <p>NO Simutronics censorship happens. Policed by the community.</p>	No alternative OOC Forum anymore. OOC sales/auctions happen on DRSales, a Yahoo group.	
Some of same commands have different syntax! Fail to see logic of that. :((ditto)	
There are well-established cliques of friends	(ditto)	
There are out in the open multi-account players who keep multi-characters near/on call for various things.	(ditto)	
There are easily identified people who are always looking for others to RP, check their Profile	You introduce yourself and hope A: They are awake and B: They want to RP with you. Profile is about PVP	
Deeds. Buy them painlessly before you die.	Favors: drain your EXP for each one before you die.	
Treasure happens all the time. Cool stuff could drop for any level, and DOES. Enchanted stuff! Even stuff people will buy from you for lots of money.	Treasure sometimes happens on the very rare treasure maps. But how about that diopside!!? And that thousandth sarong you've found.	
Pawnshop is useful to everyone. Even if you're a capped character.	Pawnshop is useful for thieves after they're done running their afk stealing script. Sort of.	
Gems look beautiful. Really, look at them. All of them	Gems have simple tap-A few fest/quest ones have a look	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Backtraining is NOT a way of life.	Constant backtraining required due to the incessant major changes to the game's design ideals of the moment by whomever is in charge this year	
When major game changes go down, GMs release a way to fix your skills.	When major game changes happen, you get to backtrain until your character is viable under the new rules. Again.	
There are many long term players, happily capped and still playing/RP'ing.	100+/150+ circle drop out rate very high or bought by a well known collector.	
The words are worth reading	Skim by the highly repetitive stuff. Except for the weather effects in Muspar'i. That's incredible and much like the flavor of GS.	
Individual character led RP is common	Rare to find even casual interaction approaching RP	
Can nominate someone for an Role Playing Award	Can actually pass out PIRP points that turn into Role Playing Awards <3 this!	
Role Play awards are active immediately, and stay until they drain off. But <i>only</i> if you have field exp.They are smart enough not to waste the time if you have no exp.	You can start (or pause) your stored RPA to put into play at your convenience. But you have to remember to pause it yourself if you run out of exp.	
Weekly learning bonus, BRILLIANT idea for that extra learning boost on your time schedule	Nothing of the sort.	
A growing player-led wiki	An AMAZING wiki thanks to the players	
Everyone learns exp by just a few ways, equally	EXP in each skill is a constant, looming MUST DO that eventually hangs over everyone	
You go hunt for exp, then sit and RP with others while it drains.	There's no mechanical reason to come in to rest or visit with others.	
No forced segregation by guild.	Certain guilds must stay in certain places to not get penalized.	
Constant development	Seems to only have forward motion by a select number of GMs at a sluggish pace.	Seems better past 6-8 months

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Group hunting is fun, fair, easy, and beneficial. It happens ALL the time.	No mechanical bonus besides the company & maybe a class. Actually quite the reverse. most people learn better hunting solo. :(
Everyone learns/absorbs at the same rate for the most part - and do it in the same way. Other means for gain experience also viable outside of combat.	Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary skills make learning some key skills for some guild members very slow and difficult. (<i>Why are any combat skills tert for anyone when it's primary way of advancing for almost everyone?</i>)	
There are benefits to all professions and the characteristics that keep one unique are being preserved	A number of guilds have significant lapses in purpose and ease of learning.	
Loresongs (Bards) are amazing. I have already seen more actual items/places with special songs in them in 12 months of GS than in 20 years of DR.	Look the item up on wiki. Or guess. Or study. Not easy to tell what it does sometimes.	
Museum is full of actual history that happened in the game. Characters, events, etc.	Museum has stuff in it that is part of the fictional history, nothing honoring characters, events, or the times in the realms which we have experienced.	
The past is cherished and memorialized.	The past is at best, inconvenient. At times even retconned. Little effort is made to preserve it, only to distance themselves from it.	
Separate ESP channels built in. Local, Merchant, Guild, House, Groups, Friends, & global; or private (person to person). ** In addition, lnet (Lich's chat) has become the dominant realms wide chat service, w/ many different channels, all OOC, including a player-enforced merchant channels. [Turn off everything except Prime to start out with, or you'll be overwhelmed.]	Gweths - two channels that overlap each other and everyone hears everything everywhere. Can turn down the "volume" to limit range, but it is essentially only a general channel for everything . Don't want to listen to stuff for sale? Tough luck.	
Wear one amulet for all ESP, including private.	Wear 2 gweths plus 1 ring to be able to hear all thoughts, and have private messages, too. Then go spend lots of coins on gweth hidiers.	
There's a badname command (and the GMs watch it...)	There's bad names.	
Bufs you can help others with!	Some guilds might have one or two spells they can help someone with.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Most buffs last for four hours	Buffs usually now cap at 30-40 minutes	
No class of character is automatically villainized.	Necromancers are hunted semi-aggressively, but be careful, even though there is lore behind exterminating them, you can still get reported for acting on it Thieves are forced to steal to advance	
You don't have to re-learn to play every few years	Perma-beta test game that changes its algorithm every few years based on the views of whichever GM is in charge at the time with very little player input. Sometimes grandfathering happens, other times not.	
Since exp is exp ... there's no need for classes.	Sit in a class with someone to learn almost any skill. The better the teacher's skill, the more you learn. The better the teacher's scholarship, the more you learn. People use downtime for class learning: exp drain, auctions, & events	
Annual FREE fix skills (skill wipe & reallocate how you like)	Haha, do what? Backtrain. Or reroll.	
Simucoin store with lots more than just jump jewelry	Simucoin store with 200 versions of jump jewelry - none of which are general worn	More things have appeared for sale. None that I want or need, but NEW
OOO kept on Inet	Gweth-smashing expected of the player base when someone gets out of line. Gweth-smashed character then has consent on the gwethsmasher. (no words)	
Free amazing front end that lays over StormFront (Lich/Ruby) - heavy script contributions by the community at large, huge repository of scripts	Many people pay \$30 for the Genie front end, but Lich/Ruby also available for free - just not as widely used in DR.	I hear Lich is getting better for DR now, too.
You see the numbers (when you want to) and know immediately how well you did and whether you are over your head.	"We don't want numbers in our game, it'll break immersion." First thing people do when they buy Genie is install the substitutes which has numbers so you know whether "soundly" is better than "well". Or vice versa.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Because you see numbers, you know immediately if something is wrong (either with your gear/settings or some system bug)	"Nothing is wrong it must be the player." 6-18 months pass, a post might be made on forums by GM saying a "bug has been squashed" re: what players were saying was wrong.	
HELP commands are amazing	HELP is sporadic	
SPEECH commands that are <i>incredible</i> , but syntax cumbersome	Say has some styles but punctuation-cumbersome	
Awkward :: and : structure for expressive speaking. I make a SF dot script to accomplish it. :(Simpler syntax ... but still not user friendly. I either make a script for a style or never use it. :(
The '@ for SAYTO *wins* But couldn't @ and } work in both? And maybe even the > that we used to have in DR?!	'}' for SAYTO is so easy to mistype. Especially when it was a different character for years . <i>Couldn't @ and } work in both games (and > which used to work)?</i>	
Nothing is dropped when you die.Nothing left if you decay/depart.	You drop everything in your hands when you die. Grave of all items left unless you depart at extra cost	
Adventuring guild bounties!	Find yourself something to hunt. Hope it's the right thing.	
Sharing adventure guild bounties!	(see notes about hunting with others)	
No restrictions on what empaths can hunt	Expecting anyone not to hunt has always seemed silly in a combat-driven game. Mechanics have been added to assist empaths to hunt 2 kinds of things, but still an uphill battle because of critter range disparity.	
Guild leaders are players, for the guilds that exist	Guildleaders are NPCs. But the guilds are finished	
https://ps.lichproject.org/ Amazing search engine of shop inventories, maintained by players	Isharon uploads a spreadsheet of trader shop inventories every couple weeks: http://www.elanthia.org/TraderShops/	
There is layered clothing! And you can SORT.	Layered doesn't happen in DR. Can SORT though.	
Some things you buy get unlocked for extra verbs. If you know when to be where and which merchant you need to see. Oh, and if you are selected. :(You buy things with all the verbs already.	This appears to be changing to the GS UNLOCKING tiers method :(

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Less AFK scripting - mostly because you don't NEED to, but the GMs are strict about enforcing policy here.	There's more and more 24/7 AFK scripting going on by the month. Players see it/know it. No clue why GMs can't.	
The few crafts they have are actually useful and make sense.	Crafting: cookie cutter scripting targets for (mostly) nothing but the exp/prestige in some cases.	
Special abilities to each profession that help you and those around you survive and live in the world.	Every year that goes by there is less guild diversity and less things you can do to help out others.	
SERVICE SHOW - who is doing boxes and where? Empath healing? Cleric raising? Forging weapons? Enchanting? Loresinging? Who is offering buffs? This is BRILLIANT!	Either listen to the gweth for people repeating over and over they are at XYZ trying to do ABC, or gweth and hope someone responds... eventually.	
Your bank balance is area wide - so you don't have one bank account in Ta'lllistim and another in Ta'Vaalor. IE: every bank in the cities of the Elven Nations is the same bank. Even if there's a river/ferry between the two places. Political boundaries define banks, it seems.	Banks are different not only in the local currency (worth different amounts) but banks in the same province have individual balances. They seem city based.	
Imperfect, but flexible player shop system that lets any profession participate if you want to. Multiple rooms, partners, everything. All you need is one of the limited availability shops	Shops belong only to traders. So ... you roll up a trader character ...	
Shopping consists of a look on (surface) pretty much for everything.	The SHOP (container) command so much easier to read at festivals and stores. Yes, I know everything doesn't use it, but ... still, it wins for me.	
Can log in or log out silently	All (player) log ins and log outs show	
Thwart pickpockets with traps in your various containers and pouches.	Train an insane amount of perception to thwart thieves and say a prayer. Keep everything closed.	
When active, learning bonuses are smart enough not to tick away when you have no exp to absorb	You can toggle your rpa off when your experience clears. If you remember to. There's no notice Likewise, you can toggle it on when you have a full exp pool. If you remember to.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Stow from hand only, limited to one target container	Several STOW options, or from ground.	
Limited INVENTORY options	INV {container} is so convenient, plus other variations	
BANK ACCOUNT shows you your balances everywhere.	Remote bank balances only visible to PREM with bankbook	
Silvers are Silvers. Everywhere. A silver from the Landing is worth a Silver in the Elven Nations. Exchange rates only come into play on bank notes.	Currency has to be exchanged (for a fee) in each province, and has a different value. 1 silver from Therengia is worth 1.3ish silvers in Zoluren.	
There is only one denomination for money.	There are four denominations to money. Tho we count prices in only platinums these days.	
You can transport large sums of money in bank notes	You transport large sums of money in your pocket. Or the thief's pocket whom you can't see.... There are no bank notes.	
Player characters hold various RPd positions & titles.	Far fewer player characters currently involved in positions than were 10 years ago. Only Therengia seems to have an active group of these.	
Most spells stack up on each other for additional duration. (up to 4 hours) no re-casting that spell every 10 minutes because you can't cap it. Stacking happens whether it is on you or another.	Spells don't stack. If your version of a spell only lasts 10 min, that's all you get. Leave combat, fix it.	
Registering an item is done right in your hands. For free.	Registering an item costs 5 gold, and you have to navigate a maze of offices to find the right place in the capital of the province.	
Coins looted from monsters are auto-collected by game mechanics when you loot/search creature.	Coins have to be picked up. Every different denomination, each diff. currency. My poor wrists!	
You can walk through a room and get attacked by a creature - or killed by a big-one. Running...doesn't matter.	Engagement system prevents melee attacks from happening to casual passers-by. Ranged, attacks, however, not so much, but are rarer.	
WHO has params (letter, house, profession, guild)	WHO has no parameter, all or one person.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

view your inventory sorted and grouped together in like things.	View inventory of containers in a list, rather than a comma separated long line.	
You can wink at your husband without feeling like an idiot. (and many other delightful and <i>beautiful</i> small verb changes) It's all about the words, again.	You can't ever wink at him again once you get married - you'll feel like an absolute fool. But yes, there are a few other verb changes when you are bonded that are nice.	
You can place paper or a bank note in an envelope.	I've never found a piece of paper or anything else that made sense to be in an envelope that would fit one.	
Your inventory (usually) ends up in the same order as when you logged off.	You have to reverse your inventory each log in.	
When you write on paper (or in books...) you can add paragraph marks. In books, you can erase or add to a page (up to the limit of chars)	Everything you write on a piece of paper appears in one run-on paragraph. You can't use it for poetry, lyrics, dialogue, or ease of reading.	
Login rewards. No joke. Progressively better perks over 30 days. Then it starts again. Collect 'em all! Use them when you want.	Say what? Er, ChaCHING, thanks!	
Wear one item for all ESP-related things, including multiple channels and private thoughts	Wear three things to hear thoughts on 2 "channels" and be able to think privately to people.	
Writeable books available (with newlines I can add!) with *50* pages!	Books are props only save for a very few old quest items. (but no newlines for formatting....)	
All exp must be drained while in game. Generally the 20 min is nothing people will complain about, tho.	Offline drain. Log off with a full mind, log back in 6 hours later, and it's all absorbed! Prorated for less than 6 hours.	
Third party support: the author of Lich still plays.	Third party support: Genie author is mostly an absentee landlord.	
Policy seems evenly, fairly, and accurately applied by the staff.	Policy has become a game played by PvPers, graverobbers, griefers, and GMs. The only people protected by POLICY now are the troublemakers.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Starting Characters

New characters start with things that they are need, equal to store bought, and class specific.	New characters start with garbage. But when you die, you drop it, so ... there's that??	
The sprite is BRILLIANT for new players. Mentor response immediate if you need them. When none was avail, a GM came to answer me at the Mentor Bell!	Mentors are easier to find now since you start out in TGSE (center of town), but there's no guide, no in-character lecture about appropriate behavior, no teaching examples that are automatic.	
Run errands for the locals for experience your first few levels without ever seeing combat.	Listen to a class in your combat requirements if you don't want to risk combat yet.	
You get an ESP amulet to begin with	Someone, you hope, will find you a gwethdesuan set, sooner or later.	
New characters are expected to RP and not ask mechanics questions aloud in an OOC manner. Someone will quietly take someone aside and help them. Or there's ;chat where anyone can help you, not just the designated and pre-screened few.	There's an OOC "Chatter channel" that goes away after a while. Only new players and mentors are on it, alienating them from the regular social structure of the game and making it so they never see/experience how to ask mechanics-based questions in character, or that there may be people who are not official Mentors that can help.	
New & young characters can help defend the town from walls/towers.	New characters are told they can drag bodies to help during an invasion. You know, having a roundtime through rooms populated by explosions, bowyers, and hostiles. RIGHT.	
Many people will stop to help someone new. If someone tries to take advantage of one, the community jumps on the aggressor quickly and decidedly. It can make or break your reputation	New characters are routinely preyed upon by thieves, bullies, and troublemakers.	
New chars greeted personally by someone, they pop in during your first day, welcome you, ask if you have questions. WOW.	Haven't seen anyone greeting one of my new f2p storage characters yet.	
You've got 30 days to retrain and/or re-roll your stats (max 5 times) without starting over and losing your hard work.	You have 1 shot. If you get it wrong, you reroll. Or spend the extra time back-training.	

Events

<p>Invasions. Happen several times a week, usually as a part of a storyline. Even fresh off the turnip farm, you can help defend the town from the walls or towers.</p>	<p>Invasions. Auto-invasions happen several times a week. (with months/years between storyline ones) Can't do squat when you're new.</p>	
<p>Regular on-going storylines and events. 2-4x a week, and more. (In multiple areas!)</p>	<p>Elpazi have been attacking every once in awhile in the Crossing for 3+ years. Plot has barely advanced. Oh, there's the random critter auto invasions for no reason (...)</p> <p>Therengia is better at it. I have not heard of much happening in Shard these days.</p>	<p>Elpalzi were back for a while. But now, nothing - for weeks and weeks on end.</p>
<p>RAFFLES! Raffles for everyone! You pays your money, you takes your chances... :) Outside of festivals and events, might be for a guild/profession, might be for a city, for everyone or prem.</p>	<p>Raffles? Oh wait I think those happen for premium people during the day when most people are at work in real life. Or during pay events during biz hours</p>	<p>I heard they may bring token raffles to Prem.</p>
<p>Regular multiple appearances of merchants monthly, outside of special events. Some on calendar. Some surprise visits.</p>	<p>Merchants/alterations tied only to the few scheduled events annually, oh, and the extra charge events</p>	<p>Premium alterations started showing up 1x a month.</p>
<p>People wait respectfully in line for merchant alterations.</p>	<p>It's a MAD SWARM! Lucky to hear yourself think. Sometimes lucky not to be killed. I've seen warnings issued to people waiting in line</p>	
<p>So many events and ongoing storylines</p>	<p>A couple events this past year.</p>	
<p>A calendar that is busy and many unique activities</p>	<p>Calendar has a few cookie cutter order events each month. They brought out a a pay event and event and none of events associate with it were on the calendar. :(</p>	
<p>Innovative and active base of House/Groups</p>	<p>There's a hand full of official orders in barely compliant levels of participation. Rules & policies so cumbersome, most people don't want to start a new one.(or stay in)</p>	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Auctions are handled manually in a room.	There are *amazing* auction mechanics for both GM auctions and player auctions.	
There's almost always a warning before an invasion so that younger characters can get out of harm's way, all done in character, and situational messaging	Rare are the warnings, they usually come from other players after the incursion has started.	

Premium Subscription Contrast

Premium ... OH WOW, so many awesome things to say about it now that I took the plunge!	Premium still does not justify \$20 a month in my opinion.	
Homes Extra Character Slots Discounts in Simucoins Store Discounts for Event Tickets Discounts for Wedding/Party Tickets Bank Books Locker/Vault books Banking Perks	Homes Extra Character Slots Discounts in Simucoins Store Discounts for Event Tickets Discounts for Wedding/Party Tickets Bank Books Locker/Vault books Banking Perks	
Individual (different) lockers in every city. Extra items in the locker for premium	Use the same storage vault that you can transfer to another city when you move there. I think it's a free xfer. You do get more items in your vault.	
You can exchange your locker in Town A with your locker in Town B anytime, anywhere. Pretty much instantly	Transfer your only locker before you move to another city.	
Access to a locker on the special Premium Four Winds Island, too! Get there instantly by a non-limited teleport device from anywhere in the Realms.	No extra vault in Fang Cove.	
Teleport devices to Four Winds Island are free and available in most cities. Been this way for years.	New teleport rings added in 2015 that you can buy only in Fang Cove that will take you to Fang Cove from wherever in the realms. After you see a merchant to unlock them.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

People use Four Winds Island to meet, make purchases, exchange spells, loresongs, etc. All shops on the island have zero racial penalties. Full services there. 24/7	Fang Cove ... unused, not very convenient.	
Access to immediate cross-realm teleport 10 times a month. (But you do have to pay for each one)	Roll up a Moon Mage...	
Several merchants are scheduled on the calendar monthly/bi-monthly for alterations, lightening, deepening, unlocking, or something special - all at Four Winds Island	Premium alterers were pretty rare when I was premium.	Recently added 1x a month altering session
Merchants come unscheduled for alterations, lightening, deepening, unlocking, or ... whatever!	See above.	
Long Term Benefit points actually can be used for things you want! It's awesome!	Premium Points ... can buy things. Things that I've never seen any point in. And I have TONS of premium points.	
Local Premium Hall in major cities	Nothing like it	
Hunting grounds on Four Winds Island	There are some premium only hunting grounds	
Several Premium Festivals during year with some AWESOME items!	Lately, there has been 1 Premium festival per year	
I think it feels like LOADS more people have premium subscriptions in GS	Fewer premium players	
Free Spell of the Month in a magic holding item.	There's a free (generally fluff) gift of the month to Premium characters.	
Called "Four Winds Hall Member"	Called "Estate Holder" :(

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Festival Notes: You Pays Your Money And...

You walk in instantly. Or out. All the time.	You wait for something even more crippling than an RT to get in to fest. And out. every time. Haven't timed it, seems like it must be over a minute.	
Wiki: players contribute to a long list of each shop and the items in the shops	Wiki: players contribute to an amazingly detailed listing of each shop, as well as each item's properties on individual shop pages & item pages for easy reference later.	
Hunting ... Necropolis runs every 2ish hours with your best buds, scaled by level.	No adventuring; leave the fest grounds and go where you normally hunt.	
Spend money or bank notes from any place, any bank. The bank at fest comes from the bank wherever you entered the Fest.	Must pay to exchange to specific coin and travel with the coins on you.	
SO many merchant sessions. Daytime. Night time, Late Night.	Limited to 2. If you are there at the right time and if you are picked. Many people never fill that limit. I got picked once this year. Premium folks get 1 extra.	
Games: So many games. None kill, poison, maim, or hurt you. With GREAT prizes, & tickets every time! If it's something your char wouldn't do, move on to the next game, there's plenty!	Games: Pick the way you want to get hurt (or die) for trash or a very few treasures. In three years, I haven't seen a game yet that was not dangerous or disgusting.	
There are no tasks to earn tickets/prizes (well, that I saw...) <i>But nobody really needs them.</i>	You can do different tasks each year to earn a few tickets and sometimes a rare prize item. They are not fast, and the payout is usually far less than the deadly games. In my 80some tasks this year I found 3 volumes of kertig.	
Fest Ticket Prizes: What GREAT things to spend your festival ticket winnings on! All of them appropriately priced.	Fest Ticket Prizes: There are a few things you can spend HUGE numbers of tickets on, most of them result in random prizes inside. Complete waste of tickets and time..	
Raffles: you buy 1 ticket per character in coins, making it very fair to all participants. Over 20 raffles were held for <i>amazing things</i> . All of them scheduled so you knew when you needed to be there.	Ticket Raffles were cancelled this year evidently. But there were a few auction items for tickets. Big Balances only need apply.	

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Free Raffles: don't happen. <i>But nobody even notices.</i>	Free Raffles: 1 ticket per char, happen randomly, sometimes more than once a day, with 5 prizes per raffle. Generally a few raffles are held back to back.	
BINGO - and 3 other GM-led interactive games on a schedule.	Sometimes Vatari plays "I'm thinking of..." games, if we're lucky, we see a tweet about it in enough time to attend. Other than that ... not really.	
Free Gift to Attendees: Carousel quest, Necropolis quest, both extremely useful for the rest of your character's life.	Free Gift to Attendees: changes each year. Sometimes they're lots more amazing than others. This year's gift took a post over a screen long to explain. I'm putting mine away unopened... Also a toy. This year a Kitten, copied/pasted from GS, complete with reference to a GS spell that isn't in DR.	
All similar items priced the same on festival displays.	There's a hefty surcharge for black clothing for sale in some shops at Festival the last few years.	
Can get your weapon, armor, bags, clothing, and other things made lighter or increase capacity. There were so many of these sessions offered, I lost count.	Last year, there was an "embiggerating" (or something like that) which increased the capacity of a few kinds of containers, not many, though. One small session was held again this year.	
Total (unofficial) GemStone EG Box Office: \$24,595	Total (unofficial) DR HE Box Office: \$24,525	
A number of small (free) Festival featured multi-days packed with merchants. AMAZING!	A small (pay) festival had 3 runs - they kept adding more features with each run. I was not in the third one, and I can't tell you how cheated I felt.	
Lost track of number of free festivals.	1 free festival, plus Shard Bridge Fest & a (varying race) Fest with a hand full of shops.	There's a rumor that the free GuildFest will not happen this year. :(

GemStone IV

DragonRealms

DR changed

Free To Play

No forced segregation by paying status.	Free players must stay in one province, Zoluren.	
No profession choice restrictions on F2P.	Not all guilds are available on F2P.	
HARSH bank deposit limits, but you can at least carry notes.	HARSHER bank deposit limits - 10 plats total. You can't even buy a steel weapon or tool for that. So you walk around with your money, becoming a target for thieves, and get too burdened to hunt. BUT, hey, Welcome to DR, isn't it wonderful?	