



Gaming April Fools’ Pranks Turned Real

Pandarens

Blizzard Entertainment 2002

In 2002 Blizzard was working up to the release of Warcraft 3. This was the long awaited sequel to Warcraft 2, with fans excited that it would have 4 playable factions instead of only the two from the previous game. But that changed on April 1st when Blizzard announced that there would be a 5th faction! Humans, Orcs, Night Elves, and Undead would be joined by another option. And that option was Pandarens!



Some concept art of the Pandarens

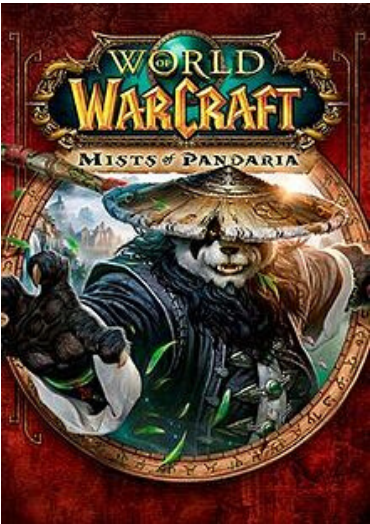
Pandarens, as we learned, were giant panda people that were as cute as they were deadly. The announcement included concept art, unit descriptions, and in-game models. People were very confused. This was long before the movie Kung Fu Panda, so no one had really seen anything like this before. It was silly. The Pandarens looked wrong next to the fearsome Tauren Warriors and creepy Undead Ghouls. Of course it was just a joke. And a really good one.

As it turned out a lot of people actually liked the Pandaren idea and hoped that they would turn up in the game. The Frozen Throne expansion in 2003 had one Panda hero in it, which gave players some hope for a full Pandaren faction in the game. But that was the last expansion. In 2004 Blizzard released World of Warcraft and the Pandaren were nowhere to be found. Most people probably forgot about the whole thing.

Blizzard didn't. In 2011 at Blizzcon the company announced a new expansion for World of Warcraft. The title? Mists of Pandaria. Players all checked their calendar, but it was October 21st not April 1st. The Pandas were going to be a real thing!



Pandaren from Warcraft 3



Pandarens enter the World of Warcraft

Today thousands of players have Pandaren characters in World of Warcraft. The panda people have also shown their faces in other Blizzard games like Hearthstone and Heroes of the Storm. Pandarens are a staple of the Warcraft Universe even though they started as a silly April Fools' joke.



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My Little Pony RPG

Hasbro 2006

Today a roleplaying game based on My Little Pony might not seem that odd, but in 2006 the franchise was in hibernation. My Little Pony was popular way back in the 1980s with its iconic toys and cartoon series, but nothing new or exciting had come out in years.



The Fake My Little Pony Roleplaying Game

This is why it was hilarious when Hasbro announced the d20 My Little Pony RPG. Hasbro owned the rights to both My Little Pony and the popular RPG Dungeons and Dragons. They announced a new game that would bring the two together. No longer would players play brave warriors that slayed vicious monsters with swords and spells. Instead they would play cute ponies who solved their issues with friendship and kindness. These changes definitely would have caused a huge uproar, so of course it was just a joke. This prank was extra funny because of the nostalgia as most people probably hadn't thought about my Little Pony in a decade.



The Real My Little Pony Roleplaying Game

In 2010 the cartoon My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic relaunched the franchise and as you probably know it was a major hit. Tons of merchandise was being sold, but mostly the same kinds of dolls and toys that were popular in the 80s. However, the new cartoon wasn't just a hit with young girls, so Hasbro decided to expand its My Little Pony products in new directions. This included a My Little Pony roleplaying game. Tails of Equestria was released in 2017 allowing players to make their own pony related adventures. Dungeons and Dragons fans have nothing to worry about, though, the two product lines are completely separate.

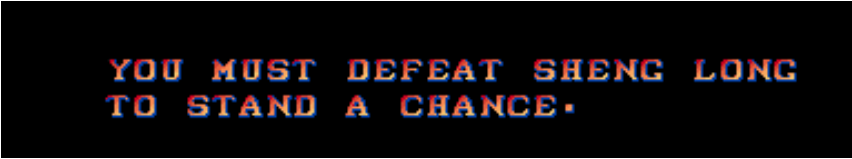


Sheng Long?

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Sheng Long

Electronic Gaming Monthly 1992



Electronic Gaming Monthly is notorious for its wild April Fools jokes and April of 1992 was no exception. Street Fighter 2 was extremely popular at the time. The game had groundbreaking gameplay, but some of the translations were off. Ryu's confusing win quote “You must defeat Sheng Long to stand a chance” is the inspiration for this prank.

First off, it is important to know is that there is no Sheng Long in Street Fighter 2. That fact didn’t stop EGM from writing an article about how you can fight him in the game. The article said you had to beat the game multiple times playing as Ryu (who said the quote) without taking a single hit in order for Sheng Long to appear and challenge you. They even faked some screenshots and drew some concept art to make it look like this secret character actually existed. This was before most people had the internet so I’m sure many players, not knowing it was a prank, were really frustrated as they tried to complete the almost impossible task of beating the game perfectly multiple times only for absolutely nothing to happen when they did it.



The Original Article

It seems Capcom liked the idea of the secret boss, because in Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo they added one in. Fortunately for players the rules for fighting him weren't as insane as the fake ones posted in the EGM April Fools' article. However, the character didn’t fit the description of Sheng Long, leaving some disappointed. Some fans got hopeful when EGM reported Sheng Long would be in Street Fighter 3, but this was just another April Fools joke!



They Don't Give Up, Do They?



Akuma, the secret boss of Street Fight 2 Turbo



Gouken from Street Fighter 4

Many years later in Street Fighter 4 a new character named Gouken appeared who looked an awful lot like the images of Sheng Long. While his name was a little different, the elusive character had finally appeared in the game and this time, you didn't even have to do anything special to fight him. You can even play as this April Fools legend!