



Console Legends

Das Geschichte-Erklärende Spiel

Credits

Writing and Layout: Colin Fredericks

Editing: Some person

Artwork: Blahdy von Blah

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Introduction

For every person who plays console RPGs for the mechanical aspect — that is, for the monsters, the treasure, the leveling and looting — there is someone else who plays for the plot alone. This edition of Console is for the plot-lovers.

Console has a brief but distinguished history as an “emulation” game: that is, it tries to copy particular characteristics of certain console RPGs with great accuracy, providing a play experience very similar to the details of such games. Until this edition, Console was focused on minutiae: describing characters and their abilities with as much accuracy as was reasonably possible, and leaving the story of the game up to the players and CPU.

For this edition, we’re doing things a little differently. Consider this a side-track, if you will; an excursion into a different way of playing Console. The game you are now reading focuses no longer on detail and mechanical description; rather, it brings the focus to the story itself. Rather than expecting that a grand, sweeping epic story will arise from the raw numbers we provided in the past, this game turns the entire experience on its head, providing structure and rules for the story, and leaving the numerical details to one’s imagination.

There is no CPU in this game. There are no classes, no levels, no attributes or even hit points. Instead there are... well, why not read on, and find out for yourself?

The Sidebar

This blue area is the sidebar. It’s used for commentary on the main text, parenthetical notes, and occasionally some optional rules. It’s also used for smartass remarks.

Glossary

Artist: The player responsible for a particular region of the game world. The authority on that region's social setup, geography, bosses, and more. Every player will be the artist for at least one region.

Boss Dice: Dice gained through narration and used to defeat bosses. They represent not only the party's training, but their mental readiness and how emotionally "charged up" they are for the fight. These dice stick around from session to session until a boss fight is triggered. Each player has their own supply and generally cannot lend them to others.

Character: There are two kinds of characters in Console Legends: Main Characters (MCs), who are important to the plot, and Secondary Characters, who are only there to give the MCs something to do. Both kinds are controlled by various players.

Controller: The ability to direct the game's flow. One person, the current Narrator, is said to have the "controller" at any given time. The controller is represented by a physical object; preferably an actual game controller for the amusement value, but anything will do.

Dead: Actually, really, 100% dead. Contrast to merely Knocked Out (see below), which can be fixed.

Fate: A fate is a choice between two things that a character could do. Typically, one of them is very good, and the other disastrous. One way or another, most characters meet their fates by the end of the game.

Flaw: Flaws are the worst things about the MCs; their blind spots or emotional weak points.

Foreshadowing: A literary term; mentioning something that is going to happen later on in the story. Foreshadowing is a good way to get other people to describe your visions.

Knocked Out: Unconscious and unable to act. Typically the result of a fight. This can also represent other debilitating statuses, such as paralysis, petrification, stopped time, or even just sleep. If a character is knocked out, her role abilities cannot be activated and she cannot be voiced.

Main Villain: The person the party is fighting to stop. The bad guys' head honcho. By the end of the game, one member of the party will secretly be the Main Villain, who will stand revealed to the other characters. Typically referred to as "he", because most Main Villains are.

Terminology

I agonized for a while over the nomenclature in this game, and eventually went with artistic-sounding stuff rather than more technical terminology. Thus why you have Actors, Narrators, and Roles rather than Regional Experts, Current GMs, and Character Archetypes. The latter terms don't exactly roll off the tongue.

Gender Choices

The Main Villain gets referred to as "he", and yet I chose to use "she" for most of the players and Main Characters. Apparently the MV gets a gender swap at some point. In general, I'm going to refer to the Protagonist and Man Without a Past as male, and other characters as female.

Narrator: The person currently telling the story and describing the scene. Narrators change as the game progresses, with each player having a chance to narrate once in each game session. The Narrator has the Controller.

Open Floor: The time after the first five minutes of narration. When the floor is open, other players may ask the current narrator for the controller, though she is under no obligation to relinquish it.

Party: The group of characters as a whole.

Players: The people playing the game, who describe various parts of it, create the characters and the world, and tell the story as it progresses. Console Legends is designed for three to seven players.

Prophecy: A vision (q.v.) that can be fulfilled at any time, rather than just during the current game session. Prophecies can be created through the use of particular Role abilities.

Retcon Authority: The ability to retroactively change established facts about the game world, typically through behind-the-scenes alterations. An example would be revealing that a character lied about his or her past, or claiming that a particular incident was not real, but rather a dream or the result of hypnotism. Retcon stands for “retroactive continuity.”

Role: Roles are archetypes used to describe characters in this game. The six roles are Protagonist, Love Interest, Sidekick, Badass Woman, Man Without a Past, and Comic Relief. There can be more than one of each of these in the party, though there is canonically only one Protagonist.

Token: A poker chip, playing card, granny smith apple, or any other small object used to indicate that a player has recently been a narrator (q.v.) and is not yet eligible to be chosen as the next narrator. It is considered bad form to eat your tokens.

Virtue: Virtues are the best things about the MCs; their areas of expertise or their strongest points.

Vision: Something that a player wants to have happen in the current game session. Describing other peoples’ visions gives you Boss Dice. Visions are kept secret.

Voice: As a noun, the person who is currently controlling or speaking for a particular character is called that character’s “voice.” As a verb, you can “voice” a character, which means to speak for them and dictate their actions. Knocked out characters cannot be voiced.



Creating the World

The first task before the players is to create the world in which the game takes place. This is intentionally done in a very superficial fashion, describing the minimum amount of detail necessary for the story to begin. More details will be filled in as the game progresses, following the idea of Emergent Backstory.

Elements

The players begin by creating a list of cliches, conventions, and thematic elements for the game. How many elements is relatively unimportant, but less than ten provides little detail, while more than thirty yields either oppressive detail or a scattered focus. The players should also settle on a name for their game.

Example: Ray, Tavi, Anna, Sarah, and Janra get together to play a game. Sarah suggests an Arabian theme for the game, and the others agree. They begin brainstorming, writing the ideas down as they go. Here are the elements for their game, sorted by who suggested them:

Ray: scimitars, evil viziers, acrobatic swordfighting
Tavi: horses, camels, belly dancers,
Anna: dervishes, sorcerers, libraries
Sarah: oases, onion dome towers, wise women
Janra: Islam, trade routes, The Spice

They name the game “Stars over Al-Atia.”

The Map

After the thematic elements of the world are created, the players move on to create a map of it. The map can be as crudely or expertly drawn as the players are capable of; it makes little difference. The players should take turns: one person draws a location on the map, the next one writes down its name and a quick description, then draws a new location, and so forth until everyone has gone at least twice. Note that this yields one unnamed location; this is intentional.

Again, great detail is unnecessary, and may even hinder the game later on. The map can be revised and added to as the game progresses and as the story demands.

Arabian Games?

To my knowledge there are no console RPGs that are set in ancient Persia, but it seems like a good source of inspiration.

Emergent Backstory at Work

The reason most of the map is left blank is “emergent backstory,” one of the big principles behind C3. There’s more about it on page xx, but the basic idea is to let the story of the game emerge Act by Act, rather than trying to create the entire narrative beforehand.

Regions and Artists

Each region of the world has an “artist,” a player responsible for describing that zone. Artists must be experts on their region, and will be expected to describe its physical appearance, any creatures that may live there, and the boss monster currently terrorizing the area (if any). Artists have retcon authority (see page 3) over others’ descriptions of a region, whether the description was of a physical element or a social one. However, they cannot alter plot elements with this power.

Each player will be the artist for only one region at the start of the game. After a particular region has been explored, the Artist for that region picks another area to detail.

Characters

The players should now create three or four central characters, who will form the core of the group of Main Characters. A character is described in game terms by six things: a Role, a Motivation, a Fate, a Virtue and a Flaw, and an appearance and name.

There are six **Roles** to choose from: Protagonist, Love Interest, Sidekick, Badass Woman, Man Without a Past, and Comic Relief. Each has its own plot hooks and abilities. In general there is only one Protagonist, but there may be multiple characters sharing the other Roles. For more on character roles and the associated abilities, see page 18.

Characters’ **Motivations** should be statements of what they want to do in their lives. They should be something that could take the whole game to complete and more, rather than short-term goals.

Fates are the characters’ destinies. Each Fate should have two options; one good, one bad. They need not be completely exclusive, but the bad fate should prevent the good one from happening if it comes to pass.

A **Virtue** is the best thing about a character, while a **Flaw** is the worst. Virtues are helpful; Flaws are harmful. Try to distill each down to a word or two.

Example: Our players choose to make three MCs:

- Al-Ushab, the Protagonist. His motivation is to redeem the soul of his father, the dark sorcerer Kheptak. His fate is to save the world or die trying. (This is a common Fate for protagonists.) His virtue is his stubborn tenacity, while his flaw is his curiosity. He is a young man with straight black hair and a hawk-like nose, wearing a robe with arcane symbols drawn on it.

Limited Mobility Rule

Many console and computer RPGs restrict the characters to traveling on foot for the first half (or more) of the game. To enforce this, we present this optional rule: narrators may not describe the party moving from one region of the world to another. All regional travel happens between sessions. This rule is lifted at the beginning of the sixth act, when rapid transportation (stereotypically, an airship) becomes available to the party.

Missing Roles

There’s at least one Role that’s missing from the current set of rules: that of the Turncoat. This guy is the protagonist’s friend and equal, who joins the Main Villain’s side partway through the game, and comes back later on. Perhaps Turncoats will show up in the next version of Legends.

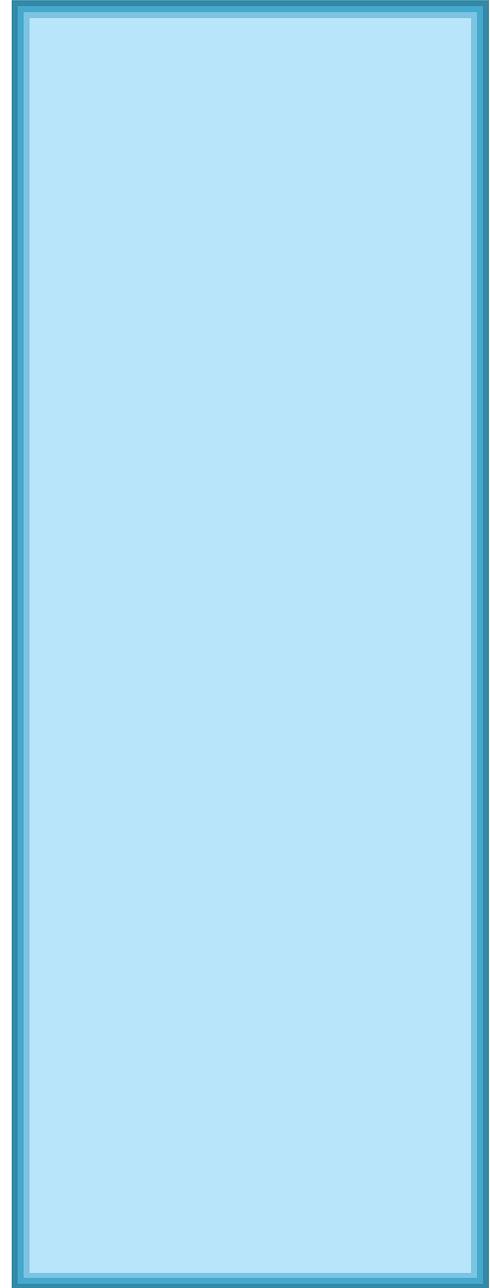
Roles and Gender

The Badass Woman is *always* female, and the Man Without a Past is *always* male. Characters with other Roles can fit either gender, though the Protagonist is typically male, and the Love Interest typically female.

- Fiali, the Love Interest. Her motivation is to explore the world. Her fate is to reveal the true nature of The Spice, or to help conceal it from the world. (Note that what this “true nature” is should not be defined yet. It will be a part of the game’s emergent backstory.) Her virtue is her courage, while her flaw is her broken heart. She is a dark-haired woman of about twenty years, wearing a black shirt and white pants, carrying a cutlass.
- Bitana, the Sidekick. Her motivation is to find the Great Library. (Again, we don’t need to know what that is or why it’s so important to her — that can be filled in later.) Her fate is to sacrifice herself for the world, or for nothing. Her virtue is faith, while her flaw is that she is indecisive. She is a short woman dressed in dark brown robes from head to toe, with only her green eyes showing.

Later on these characters will have elements of their backstory and personality fleshed out through game-play; for now, these descriptions will suffice. New MCs can be introduced later on.

Once you have a world, a map, and the starting MCs, you’re ready to play.





Playing the Game

The rules of Console Legends are relatively minimal, giving the players a framework in which they can tell their story. This section describes the overall mechanics and setup of the game, and leaves the details for later.

Overall Structure

Games of Console Legends are divided up into nine acts. The first act gathers together the Main Characters and shows them some part of the danger they must face. As the game progresses the characters explore the world, learn more about the dangers they face, and grow more powerful. The ninth act signals the end of the game and a confrontation with the Main Villain. Sidequests are possible as well; these are diversions that are not a part of the main plot, but are nonetheless part of the story.

Each act starts with the party entering a new region of the world, and ends with a confrontation between them and the local “boss” monster. Acts are typically played out over two or three sessions. Every player gets a chance to tell part of the story during each session, and the Story Cycle (see below) is the mechanic used to make sure that everyone gets their chance to speak.

As the story goes on its progression is measured by the Plot Bar, which is important to the battle against the Main Villain. Narrating certain events increases the Plot Bar, while narrating others does not.

The Story Cycle

Each session of the game starts with the party in a particular region of the world. The artist for that region briefly describes the area and what the characters are doing there. If these are already common knowledge and no refreshers are needed, this step can be skipped. Players write their Visions (see below) just after this description. The area’s artist then picks one player, possibly herself, to act as the first narrator. That player picks up the controller and begins telling the story.

The narrator has general control over the flow of the story while she holds the controller. She can describe various events in the world, involving just a few characters or the entire party as she sees fit. She should use the character’s virtues, flaws, and motivation, not just because it makes for a good story, but because there are mechanical benefits for doing so! She should also try to incorporate the game’s elements, other players’ foreshadowing, and occasionally activate a character’s role ability.

The Feel of the Game

Console III supposed to mimic a console RPG, so one might suppose that the narrator should try to stay with the conventions and clichés of that genre as much as possible. However, there’s no rule that says you have to. There are facets of the game that *encourage* you to do so, such as the role abilities, but nothing that *forces* you to. Console Legends is designed to provide a minimum number of restrictions on what kind of story you can tell; if you prefer a more or less realistic or believable story, or one with a different focus, you should be able to tell it without us getting in your way.

Narrative Permanence

Unless an objection goes through, each narrator’s has told what *actually happened*. This includes descriptions of events, character’s actions, various story elements, even character’s thoughts or emotional states. Unless you acquire retcon power, you cannot change anything a previous narrator said. You cannot even say that a character voiced by someone else was lying, unless it was previously established by that voice. Sometimes it pays to say, “... and you’re not sure whether he’s telling the truth.”

Other players can make various sorts of interruptions in an organized fashion (see Interruptions, page 9). After five minutes of narration, other players may request the controller. At this time, it is said that “the floor is open.” After fifteen minutes, the narrator takes a token (see below). She then *must* pass the controller to any other player who does not have a token.

Tokens

Tokens are the game’s way of making sure that everyone gets a chance to tell the story. You’ll need one token for each player; it doesn’t matter what they are as long as they’re obvious. Poker chips, playing cards, stones, anything except six-sided dice (which could be mistaken for Boss Dice).

When a player passes the controller, she takes a token. Players with tokens cannot be narrators. Once everyone has a token, everyone puts away their tokens, and anyone can be a narrator again.

The Plot Bar

Not all narration topics are equal in this game. Some have more of an impact than others on the flow of the game, and on the progression of the story towards its climactic ending. To represent this in mechanical form, some events in the game add to the Plot Bar.

The Plot Bar starts off at zero, and creeps continually upwards in one-point increments. It increases by one point each time your narration includes one of the following: important or significant additions to a character’s backstory, revelations about what’s “really going on” in the world (even if they are later revealed to be wrong), the dramatic death of a Main Character, the beginning of a flashback sequence (which someone else may complete), or the completion of a major quest (but not declaring the quest to begin with). Sidequests typically include none of these events, and thus do not increase the Plot Bar. *You can only describe one plot-increasing thing during your narration time.* Leave some story for the other players, ok?

You use the Plot Bar when attacking the Main Villain (see page 15). However, there’s only so much plot that any one Act can contain. To find the highest your Plot Bar can reach at any given time, multiply the number of players in your group by the number given in the table on the right. After Act 9, the plot bar effectively stops increasing, so it’s in your best interest to pack in what you can before the endgame.

Patience

In the same way that some topics move the plot of the game along, others do nothing to change the story, but could reasonably have an effect on the characters’ capabilities. Console RPGs are full of these kinds of things: fighting monsters to gain levels, looting a town or dungeon, playing frustrating minigames for in-game rewards, and so forth. While such activities can be useful, there’s only so much of them that one can take.

Each time you describe one of these actions, you must spend a point of Patience. That point of Patience then turns into a Boss Die for you. Every player starts with one point of Patience, and may gain additional

The Bench-Warming Rule

Some people prefer to just sit back and enjoy the story, occasionally voicing a favorite character or interjecting. If this describes you, you can feel free to pick up a token at any time. Just remember that it might be a while until you can drop the token.

Too Much Plot?

The Plot Bar provides some intentional “drag” on the story’s progress. If you fill in everyone’s backstory, give away the game’s secrets, and complete twelve quests all during Act One, what are you going to do in Act Seven?

Plot Bar Maximums

Act	Max per player
1st	1
2st	2
3rd	3
4th	4
5th	6
6th	8
7th	10
8th	13
9th	16

points through the use of various character abilities. If you have any points of Patience left over at the end of a game session, you can turn them each into +1 Victory Point bonuses that can be used against any later boss, including the Main Villain. You can save up these bonuses for as long as you like.

It costs one point of Patience to describing the characters doing any of the following: fighting monsters (except a Boss) to gain levels, looting areas for treasure, playing mini-games, solving puzzles, or going through “tutorial” segments. This cost is assessed for each time you describe one of these events. If you accidentally describe something that would cost Patience when you have none left, you lose a Boss Die, take a token, and pass the controller. You are said to have exhausted your patience with the game.

Interruptions

There are two different ways that someone’s narration can be interrupted. The first kind is a standard interruption, in which someone else adds to the story without taking over narration. The second is an Objection, which will hopefully become more and more rare as the game progresses and the players learn each others’ play styles and adapt to the world they’re telling a story in.

Standard Interruptions

Standard interruptions come in four different varieties: interjections, voicing requests, character ability activation, and requests for control.

Interjections

An interjection is a very short interruption, in which a player makes a quick comment or describes a single plot element or piece of set dressing. To request an interjection, players hold up a single finger (as if to say, “just one thing...”). Interjections can be requested any time, but the narrator does not have to grant them.

Voicing Requests

This expresses your desire to voice a particular character in the current scene (see page 3). To make a voicing request, players hold up two fingers in a V (think “V for Voice”). Voicing requests can be made any time, but the narrator does not have to grant them. The narrator can ask which character the player intends to voice before deciding whether to grant the interruption.

Character Ability Activation

You can activate a role ability for any character, whether you are narrating or not. The narrator cannot stop you from activating any role ability, even before the floor opens. You notify the other players of an activation by holding a clenched fist up in the air and stating which ability you’re activating, and for which character. When you activate a character’s role ability the narrator can either describe the results herself or ask you to do it for her. A complete list of role abilities can be found on page 18.

Seriously, Shut Up.

If you don’t have an objection and you don’t want to make a standard interruption, you should be quiet and listen to the story. The details will be important for you later on when you’re the narrator, and talking while someone’s telling a story is rude.

Conversations

Narrating a conversation on your own is difficult, and can easily become boring or farcical. To avoid this problem, narrators may wish to enlist other players to voice part of a conversation. The other players may refuse if they feel like they don’t know what a particular character would say in this situation.

Requests for Control

By holding up her hand with all five fingers out (as if raising your hand in a classroom) a player can request the controller. If the current narrator accedes, she takes a token, and the new narrator begins her turn. Requests for control can be made any time after the floor opens, but the current narrator is not required to grant them until the end of her turn. Players with tokens cannot request control.

Objections

While narrating, players can describe anyone in the party taking any action they see fit. This is artistic license, not an excuse to go wild. If you feel that someone's narration (or voicing of a character) makes no sense in the story, going against either character or genre, you can say "Objection!" and call for an explanation. You do not need to wait for the floor to open. The narrator or voice you object to can give a quick comment as to why what they're doing is appropriate. If you still object, everyone in the group votes, with the current narrator voting only to break ties. If the vote goes in the narrator's favor, play continues as normal. If it does not, the narrator must back up a step or two and change things so that they are appropriate.

Two successful objections in a row force a narrator to pass the controller to a player of her choice. The narrator does not receive a token for this turn unless everyone else has one already. Receiving two successful objections in a row while voicing a character prevents you from voicing that character again until the next play session. Two failed objections in a row mean that the person objecting needs to suck it up and deal, and is not allowed to object to that narrator or voice again for the rest of the session.

Visions

At the beginning of each session, the players write down a number of secret visions — things they would like to see happen during the game. The number of visions each person can write down is equal to eight minus the number of players: three players could write down five visions each, four players could write down four visions each, etc. Here are some examples of appropriate visions:

- The Love Interest gets kidnapped
- The party gets ambushed
- The Protagonist dresses in drag
- The Sidekick and the Comic Relief get into a slap-fight
- The party rides on pterodactyls
- The Main Villain abuses or insults one of his goons
- The Badass Woman runs into one of her ancestors (especially appropriate in a time-travel game)

# Players	Visions each
3	5
4	4
5	3
6	2
7	1

- The party fights goblins in the forest
- The ghost of the Comic Relief's father appears
- The Main Villain escapes yet again
- The Protagonist gives an inspirational speech to the townsfolk
- The Comic Relief sasses the Main Villain
- The party rides on a train
- The party appreciates the beauty of the ancient forest

Don't tell others what your visions are! The skill factor in Console Legends comes from getting used to your fellow players' styles, foreshadowing what you want to have happen, and picking up on other players' cues.

When someone else describes a scene that includes one of your visions, that narrator gets a Boss Die (see page 13). If there are enough dice around the table, you should physically hand her one, so that everyone ends up with a stack of dice in front of themselves at the end of the session. If someone else voices a character who says something from one of your visions, that voice gets a Boss Die.

If you describe something that appears in your *own* visions, you don't get a Boss Die for it. *Your visions exist to give other players power.* However, when you have the controller, it's perfectly ok to set up a situation that favors one of your visions. For instance, if you think it would be cool to have the group ride on pterodactyls, you could describe an immense chasm a dozen miles wide, and then say that the group looks up at a pterodactyl nest on the nearby mountainside. You haven't described your vision exactly, and the next people are under no obligation to narrate the group traveling up the mountainside, fighting monsters all the way, to get to the pterodactyls... but if someone does narrate it, that person gets a Boss Die. This does put the last narrator in each session at somewhat of a disadvantage, because he or she can't do any foreshadowing, but rotating narrators helps even that out over the course of the game.

Certain events will "count as visions." For instance, if the Love Interest is seriously endangered — kidnapped, assaulted while alone, verbally threatened — the Protagonist's "Love Link" ability can be activated, bringing him into the scene for a rescue attempt. This counts as a vision (it says so under the Love Link ability), and gets the narrator a Boss Die. This works once per session for each ability, so only one narrator can use it.

Try not to reuse the same exact action every game session — if the Love Interest gets kidnapped every goddamn week, it gets old really fast. Even things intended to be running gags shouldn't be used more than every other session.

Shared Visions

If two people happen to write the same vision, that's fine — the narrator or voice gets two Boss Dice from it.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is useful, and gets the party more Boss Dice, but is best done subtly. For instance, let's say your visions consist of the party riding on a train, fighting robots, dodging lasers, and having the Main Villain escape. The following narration would be considered bad form: "The mayor says, 'You guys will have to move fast! Take the train to the robot factory, beat up the robot guards, vault through the laser grid trap, and confront Mordeth the Dark. Go now!' Ok Bob, it's your turn to narrate." Sure, there are plenty of console RPGs that do exactly that, but come on — you can write better stories than that.

Some visions are either too broad or too narrow to use. Here are some examples of inappropriate visions, and explanations of why they're bad.

- The party fights monsters — Duh, it's a console RPG. Of course they fight monsters. A better option would be, "the party fights zombies" or "the party fights killer sharks," picking specific monster types.
- The party solves a puzzle — Too generic. What sort of puzzle? Perhaps, "the Protagonist pushes blocks."
- The party finds a pile of treasure — Again, this states the obvious. A good vision would say why the treasure is important, or what it would be used for. For example, "the party finds enough gold to fix the Sidekick's sword."
- The party never makes it to town — Visions should be events, not exclusions of them. A better option would be, "the party finds themselves blocked from entering town," because someone could describe that and then narrate the group finding a way to break through.
- The party fails to solve a puzzle — This one might be ok, but it has the same problem as the last one: it's a negative action. Perhaps, instead, "The party gets stumped by a puzzle," which allows the possibility that they might find a different solution.
- The Comic Relief uses his State the Obvious ability — Visions shouldn't directly reference character abilities. Instead, say, "the Comic Relief notices that the Main Villain is afraid of water."

Visions "expire" at the end of each session, but Prophecies (see sidebar) do not.

Changing Roles and Adding MCs

Blah blah transitional roles blah blah _____ (Add some stuff about characters who switch sides and join the MV for a while, or go off and join a monestary, or something like that.)

Any player can introduce a new MC at any point in time before act nine. This does not increase the plot bar, nor does it cost Patience. Approval from the other players is highly recommended, but not required unless the new character is objectionable in some way (see Objections, page xx).

The Benefits of Being In Character

By describing a character in the game faithfully, you as a player receive certain mechanical benefits. It's important to note that any one of the *other players* can hand out these rewards. You can request these awards,

Prophecies

Prophecies are a special kind of vision that can be fulfilled at any point during the game. Unlike regular visions, they never expire, nor do they prevent you from writing your normal allotment of visions. Certain role abilities allow players to write prophecies; see their descriptions starting on page xx.

but you can't give them to yourself. If not a single other player thinks that you voiced a character properly, they're probably right, and you should try again at some point.

If you describe a character acting in line with her Virtue or Flaw, you get more narrative latitude with that character in the form of retcon authority. You may retcon any one statement about that character's beliefs, intents, emotions, or other internal states, or change a fact about her past. Each player can only receive this benefit once per act.

If you describe a character acting in line with their Motivation, you can get more mileage out of that character. If there's a once-per-session or once-per-act ability that you'd like to activate, but it's already been activated, you can choose to do it anyway. Each player can only receive this benefit once per session.

If you choose to have a character meet his or her Fate, immediately add a point to the Plot Bar. All *other* players (not you) receive a Victory Point bonus, which they can add after any roll during a boss fight of their choice. The amount of the bonus varies by Act. Before Act 4, there is no benefit. In Acts 4 or 5, the bonus is +1. In Acts 6 and 7, the bonus climbs to +2. In Acts 8 and 9, and during the final battle, the bonus becomes +3. This benefit can only be reaped once for each character: once you've met your Fate, there's no going back and changing things.

Boss Fights

While Console Legends skims over the everyday fights one sees constantly in console RPGs (everytenseconds fights would be a better name for them), boss fights are a different story. These aren't just mindless battles, they're part of the plot, and an important part of the game.

Any player can call for a boss fight at any time. The other players cast votes as to whether this seems appropriate, with the player who called for the fight only voting to break ties. If the fight gets voted down, the player has to move on and narrate something else. If the vote goes in favor of a boss fight, it's time to throw down.

The fight starts with the Artist for the current area describing the boss, its appearance and demeanor, the battlefield and any unimportant goons it might have with it. The Artist can, if he or she desires, defer any or all of this to the current narrator.

Players in a boss fight act in order of the number of Boss Dice they have. If players A, B, and C have 3, 2, and 6 boss dice, it means that C will act first, then A, then B, then C again, and so forth. The players should decide which characters are in the active party for this battle, and which are sitting on the sidelines.

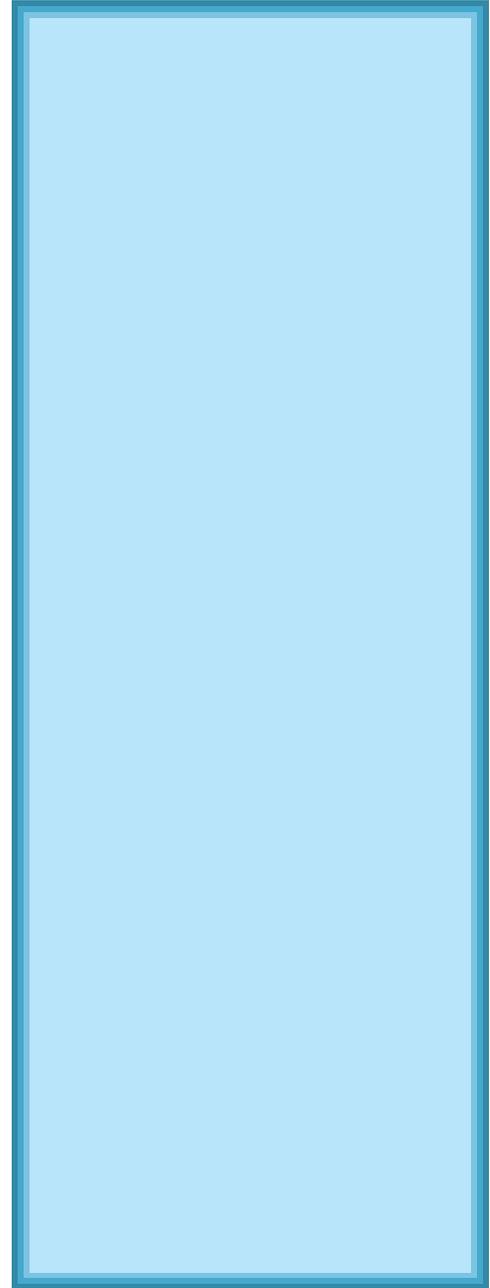
Plot Battles

Some console rpgs follow the tradition of the "plot battle," an utterly unwinnable fight that the players might as well just sit back and watch. These are best handled though pure narration, not through these mechanics. Rolling dice against something you're guaranteed to lose against is a recipe for frustration.

On your action, you will pick a character to voice, roll a Boss Die, and describe that character's words and actions. Boss Dice add the number shown to the Victory score (which starts at zero for each fight). The result on that die shows both how effective your action was, and how powerful the boss' response will be. High rolls are good for the party and bad for the boss; low rolls indicate an ineffective move from the character and a powerful attack soon to come from the boss. Every roll also has some sort of special effect as shown on the table below.

The character's actions can be anything you want, from an attack to a magic spell to using a potion or simply taking up a defensive stance. You can describe ground-breaking stomps for your martial artists, rains of explosive cinders for your wizards, debilitating status attacks from your thieves, inspiring cheers from your Comic Relief; anything that is in-character is appropriate. However, you should only describe things that make sense for that character. A meek and feeble old healer should not bust out an eight-foot-long sword and go into a berserk rage, for example. You should also try to describe things that make sense for the battle itself, such as attacking the Dragon of Fire with an ice sword instead of a fire spell (though such a thing might be an apt description for a low roll).

Once you've narrated one character's actions, play passes to the next player. He or she first describes the Boss' response to your action, which can be anything appropriate to the monster as described. The Dragon of Fire might breathe flame across the battlefield, a giant might smash someone under his foot, a snake might poison someone. The effectiveness of this action has already been determined by the roll that was just made. After describing the boss' action, that player goes on to choose a character, describe an action, and roll a die, after which the next player describes the boss' response, chooses a character, and so forth.



Boss Dice Special Effects

Roll	Effect
1	Status Attack: The boss' attack will inflict some sort of nasty status on one of the characters. None of that character's special abilities can be activated for the rest of the fight. If that character gets hit with this effect again, he or she is knocked out.
2	Build Up: The boss counts down to prepare for an all-out assault. Keep track of the number of 2s rolled. On the third time, the boss knocks out one character.
3	Shrug Off: The boss escapes the effect of any harmful status that may currently be hindering him. The player who rolled this cannot use any saved-up Victory points during this battle.
4	Miscalculation: The boss does something stupid that helps your party. The player with the lowest number of Boss Dice gains one die. This can only happen once per battle.
5	Secret Weakness: This action has revealed some sort of hidden weakness in the boss. The next three actions that exploit this weakness are worth an extra Victory point.
6	Critical Hit: If the player who rolled this has extra Boss Dice left, he or she should roll another one and add it to the total. Do not apply any special effects from this attack. If this was the player's last Boss Die, count this roll as an 8.

When a player has no Boss Dice remaining, he or she can still describe actions for characters, but each one adds just one point to the Victory total, and has no special effect. It's up to the following player as to whether they feel like describing the boss' response to such a weak attack.

Characters who have been knocked out cannot be voiced; that is, no player can use them for actions or activate their special abilities. A knocked out character can either be replaced with an inactive character, or revived by an action from any character (it is assumed that the party has the appropriate items to fix such things). In either case, the party loses two Victory points because of the delay. The Boss Die is still rolled for this action, so there could still be a net gain of Victory points.

When the party's Victory score reaches or exceeds the boss' strength (see sidebar), they have defeated it. The player who called for the boss fight can narrate its death, capture, escape, or other fate.

If, however, all the players run entirely out of Boss Dice, or all the active characters are knocked out, the party has been defeated. The player who called for the boss fight must now narrate some sort of non-final defeat for the party. Perhaps they are captured and thrown in jail. Perhaps they are merely humiliated and left

Boss Strength by Act

As the game progresses your group will need to work together more and more effectively, or face defeat at the hands of later Bosses. The table below shows the Victory point total needed to defeat the boss of a particular Act.

Act	Victory points needed
1st	35
2st	40
3rd	45
4th	50
5th	55
6th	60
7th	65
8th	70
9th	75

A group playing through a sidequest to face an optional boss can decide on whatever boss strength they like. The challenge they face is not a normal part of the game.

to suffer. Perhaps an annoying secondary character comes in to save them at the last second. Whatever the result, it's not what you would call victory, and the player who called for the fight *must* narrate it.

If any visions happen to be described mid-fight, the person describing the vision gets an extra Boss Die as normal. You still can't get any benefit from describing your own vision.

The Main Villain

The Main Villain is the boss of bosses, the nastiest monster in the world. Through intimidation and subterfuge he has been preparing to either rule the world or destroy it forever.

When it comes time to fight the Main Villain, it's not just a normal boss fight. You'll fight your way past hundreds of peons, beat a dozen bosses (some more than once), crawl your way up the side of his tower and into his throne room, and when you get there, it's going to be empty...

...Because one of your party members is secretly the Main Villain. He's been watching the others, gauging their strength, deciding where their loyalties lie, and seeking out their weak points. He might have been that way since the beginning of the game, or it might be more recent. Mind control, illusions, disguises, shapechanging, all these things are possible. In fact, the face others see as the Main Villain's might be the disguise; perhaps the Love Interest has been the MV all along, using her shapechanging powers to fool the rest of the world.

When the MV boss battle is triggered, all the players vote as to which character they think should be the Main Villain, and who they think should voice him for the final battle. Ties should result in a run-off vote between the tied characters/players, or, if that fails, in rock-paper-scissors. That player becomes known as the "traitor."

To attack the Main Villain, the players use points from the Plot Bar as if they were Boss Dice. The order people act in is unimportant; any way that lets everyone have a chance is fine. Players can (and should) apply any residual Victory Points they have lying around, such as from unspent Patience. Rather than having the next player in line describe the MV's actions, the traitor describes them, and/or activates one of the MV's special abilities. The Victory point total needed to defeat the Main Villain is 50 times the number of players in the game. If you have five players, you'll need 250 Victory points in order to win.

Role abilities can still be activated as usual during the fight, providing whatever benefit they normally do. The Boss Fight is treated as its own act and session when determining what abilities can be activated. For instance, if you used a once-per-act ability during Act 9, it's still available now.

Victory is Ours!

If the party prevails against the Main Villain, you should take one more Session of the game to describe the final cutscene and tie up loose ends. If you're planning on playing out a sequel, you can skip this if you so desire.

...Or not.

If the party *loses* to the Main Villain... well, what happens then is entirely up to you. Are you all ok with a "downer" story? Is there more to be told here? Will the sequel happen in a ravaged post-apocalyptic world? Or will you simply "restore from save" and try act nine over again? It's up to you.

The Main Villain has a few special abilities available only to him, and only during this fight. Below is a list of five abilities; the traitor can pick any four of these to use. They are chosen them at the beginning of the fight, and kept secret from the other players until they are activated.

True Form

Effect: Nearly all Main Villains have this power, which allows them to shapeshift into an even more powerful and deadly form. Once during the battle, cut the party's Victory Point total in half. Do this in addition to your regular action.

Gaze of Death

Effect: What do you mean "if" looks could kill? Knock out one character. Do this instead of your regular action, but not more than once every three actions.

Wanton Destruction

Effect: You obliterate the surrounding area, state, country, continent, or solar system in an effort to kill the Main Characters. It doesn't work, but it hurts them badly. Special abilities from any character currently in the fight cannot be activated for the next ten dice. Any characters who are already prevented from using their abilities (such as from the effects of rolling a 1 on the Boss Die) are knocked out. Do this instead of your regular action, but no more than three times during the fight.

It Was All a Lie

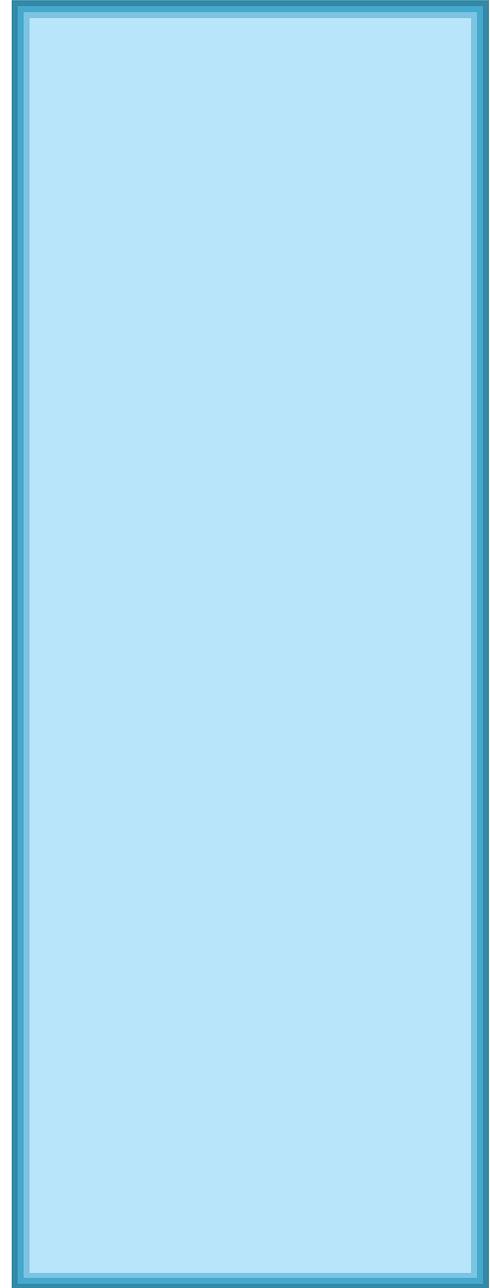
Effect: Retcon one established fact about the Main Villain, Protagonist, or (if the Protagonist is dead), a Love Interest or Man Without a Past. The party loses two points from the Plot Bar. Do this in addition to your normal action, but no more than three times during the fight.

Blatant Cheating

Effect: The party's Victory point total goes up by the normal roll of the dice, but the side effect is dictated by you. You can chose anything from the table on page 14. Do this in addition to your normal action, but no more than once every three actions.

After Each Session

Once your session is done, you have a few things to take care of (besides cleaning up the soda cans and pretzels). The first, and probably most important, is to talk about what worked this session, and what didn't. If you *almost* called an objection on someone, you might want to mention it now. If you called an objection and later regretted it, tell them that too. Who did a good job voicing characters? Who brought in new and interesting plot elements? There's a lot to discuss.



You can also decide to change some of your characters, to bring them closer to how the group thinks of them or to write some change in their personality into their character sheet. If there's some disagreement as to what should be done, a majority vote wins.

Finally, talk about the characters and what their reactions to this sessions events might be. Will it reinforce their beliefs, or will it weaken them? Are any of them in the dark about what's really going on? How do you envision the characters changing as time goes on?

There are no mechanical benefits for any of this discussion, but it might help the player group to work together more effectively next time.

Bonus Persistence

Visions expire by the end of the session.

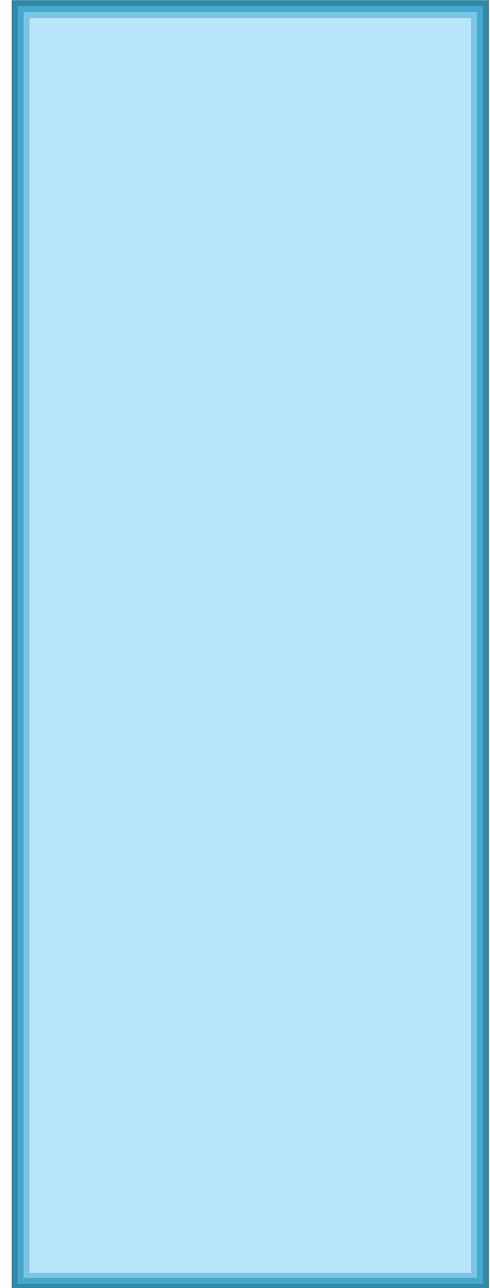
Patience expires by the end of the session.

Boss Dice must be used during the next boss fight.

Leftover Patience and Boss Dice turn into +1 Victory point bonuses. Leftover visions simply disappear.

Victory point bonuses stay around until used, expiring at the end of the game.

Retcon authority stays around until used.





Role Abilities

Every character has a set of abilities, based on their role, which can be activated by any Player. It is these abilities and the interactions between them that make this game emulate console RPGs, and not, say, romance novels or comic books. These abilities provide mechanical benefits to players who describe events and actions similar to those seen in many console RPGs. While the abilities are conceptually attached to the characters, the benefit they bring is to the players.

Only Main Characters have role abilities. Supporting characters don't have a character sheet, and thus have no role and no role abilities.

When the game begins (in act one), the Main Characters have just one role ability. As the game progresses into higher acts, these characters gain more abilities. Main Characters introduced in later acts still have all the abilities granted in earlier acts; for instance, a Badass Woman introduced in act three still has the Show Independence ability.

As a player it will benefit you greatly to read over these abilities. They provide many different kinds of benefits when activated, and will be all but necessary for tackling later bosses. The list of abilities, with detailed descriptions, begins on the next page. The table below summarizes which abilities become available in which acts.

Act	Protagonist	Love Interest	Sidekick	Badass Woman	Man Without a Past	Comic Relief
1 st	Strong Silent Type	Love Link	Buddy Flick	Show Independence	Ominous Utterance	Ignored
2 nd	Love Link	Sudden Shyness	Bitch and Moan	Note Significance	Intimidating Loom	Annoy
3 rd	Hog Limelight	Unexpected Backbone	Oblivious	Call Bluff	Note Significance	Anticlimax
4 th	Draw Attention	Rescue	Sass Main Villain	Kick Ass Offscreen	Main Villain Connection	Stumble on Insight
5 th	Cheat Death	Step Up	Push for Answers	Unrequited Love	Violate Continuity	State the Obvious
6 th	Ignore Reality	Beyond the Grave	Teambuilder	Back Up Protagonist	Kick Ass Offscreen	Sass Main Villain
7 th	Brood	Support Protagonist	Step Up	Smack Down	Tough Love	Cheer Up
8 th	Grow Up	Do Something Rash	No Mercy	Love Life	My Real Past	Betrayal
9 th	Renewed Focus	Back to Back	Motivate	Got Your Back	Forge a New Future	True Friends

Creating Role Abilities

You may want to fiddle around with the role abilities we've listed here, either to create new Roles, or to change how existing ones work. If you're interested in making new abilities, you should be aware of how strong the various possible benefits are. Here's a ranking of them in order from weakest to strongest reward:

- Write an additional vision
- +1 Victory point
- Write a Prophecy
- +1 Patience
- +1 Boss Dice
- Retcon power

Also, the more often an ability can be activated, the more potential it has to dominate the storyline. An ability that can be activated once per

Act 1

Strong Silent Type (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per session per player

Benefit: Write an additional vision

Activation: When asked an important question, the Protagonist responds with silence, a gesture, or an unintelligible mutter of some kind.

Love Link (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Love Interest aids the Protagonist in any manner.

Buddy Flick (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Sidekick spends time talking with, or giving advice to, the Protagonist.

Show Independence (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The BW does something major on her own, without help from anyone else.

Ominous Utterance (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Mw/oP says something cryptic and mysterious.

Ignored (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per session. Not during act nine.

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: Everyone ignores the Comic Relief.

session per player, that gives an extra Boss Die, *will* come up several times per session.

Keep in mind that all the role abilities were chosen not only on their own merit, but for their interactions. (Act seven, for example, is particularly thick with interconnections.) If you introduce a new role, think carefully about how its abilities will interact with existing role abilities. In many ways, these abilities have the potential to make plot all on their own.

Act 2

Love Link (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Protagonist aids the Love Interest in any manner.

Sudden Shyness (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per session per player

Benefit: Write an additional vision

Activation: The Love Interest responds to a personal inquiry of any kind by acting shy and quiet.

Bitch and Moan (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Sidekick complains about anything — the Main Villain, his own confusion, the weather, the general state of the world, a bad feeling he has, etc.

Note Significance (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Badass Woman points out something as being important or significant. +1 Patience when your prophecy is fulfilled if the Mw/oP also noted the significance of this thing.

Intimidating Loom (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Victory point

Activation: The Mw/oP makes someone shut up or back down just by staring at them.

Annoy (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Comic Relief does something to aggravate or annoy another character (can be MC or secondary). Every player must do what the Comic Relief is doing in order to activate this ability.

Absent Characters

You can activate role abilities even for characters who aren't present in the current scene. Sometimes that's just inappropriate — for example, activating the Badass Woman's "Show Independence" ability during a touching scene between the Protagonist and Love Interest. It just doesn't make sense. Other times, however, it can be a good way to bring a character into a scene in a dramatic fashion. For instance, if someone activated the BW's "Note Significance" ability instead, she could be standing back from the scene and saying, "Oh, the Evil One won't be happy about this..." which can provide both foreshadowing and some dramatic tension without breaking the scene entirely.

Some abilities are practically *designed* to be used with absent characters, such as the Love Interest's "Rescue" ability. Others, such as the "Kick Ass Offscreen" ability, remove a character from the spotlight. Most of these are relatively obvious.

Act 3

Hog Limelight (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per Act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Protagonist does something to interrupt another character's "screen time."

Unexpected Backbone (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice, or Retcon one statement the Love Interest previously made, to indicate that her real opinion was different.

Activation: When everyone expects her to be quiet and defer to others, the Love Interest brings up an opinion of her own, and sticks to it.

Oblivious (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per session. Acts 3-7 only.

Benefit: +1 Victory point

Activation: The Sidekick makes it obvious that he has no idea what's going on.

Call Bluff (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Badass Woman calls anyone's bluff, to their face.

Note Significance (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Mw/oP points out something as being important or significant. +1 Patience when your prophecy is fulfilled if the Badass Woman also noted the significance of this thing.

Anticlimax (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Comic Relief ruin's someone's big speech, a joke's punchline, or a would-be boss fight all on her own. Write an additional vision if the Comic Relief didn't intend this to happen.

Act 4

Draw Attention (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Protagonist calls attention to himself in a major way.

Rescue (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Love Interest rescues the Protagonist (or the entire party) from a dangerous situation through her own efforts. Write an additional Vision if you did this sometime after the Protagonist's Draw Attention ability was activated this act.

Sass Main Villain (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once during any Boss Fight or a confrontation with the Main Villain.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Sidekick insults the Main Villain. +1 Victory Point if combined with the Comic Relief ability of the same name, but the Comic Relief must be voiced by someone else.

Kick Ass Offscreen (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Badass Woman beats the crap out of someone, preferably a large number of formidable opponents, while the story follows the rest of the party.

Main Villain Connection (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Mw/oP reveals a connection he has to the Main Villain.

Stumble on Insight (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Comic Relief blunders into something important, and *realizes* that it is so.

Character Death

Character death is a fine and worthwhile tradition in console RPGs. The Cheat Death and Beyond the Grave abilities give you a good reason not to throw out those old character sheets, and give characters a way to affect the game even when they're long gone.

Act 5

Cheat Death (Protagonist)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever, and only if the Protagonist is dead.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice, +1 Patience, and retcon the Protagonist's death or incapacitation (see below).

Activation: The Protagonist, after having seemed dead for some length of time, reappears or miraculously recovers.

Step Up (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: When the group is leaderless, the Love Interest steps up and takes charge.

Push for Answers (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Sidekick demands answers from a secondary character, or from the Mw/oP.

Unrequited Love (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Badass Woman talks about or interacts with someone she loves, but cannot have a relationship with for some reason or other.

Violate Continuity (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Retcon any one fact. This can even change things that the entire party was present for, revealing brainwashing or other memory problems.

Activation: The Mw/oP tells everyone what *really* happened.

State the Obvious (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Victory point

Activation: The Comic Relief points out something both useful and blatantly obvious, which the rest of the party missed either or ignored as unimportant.

Act 6

Ignore Reality (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Protagonist declares his intention to do something that is patently impossible. +1 Victory Point if he actually succeeds.

Beyond the Grave (Love Interest)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever, and only if the Love Interest is dead.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice, +1 Patience, and retcon any event or known fact.

Activation: The Love Interest enters the game in some meaningful way, even though she is dead. Flashbacks, dream sequences, diaries, relatives, and so forth are all good ways for this to happen.

Teambuilder (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Sidekick gives a rousing speech to bring the team back together after a squabble.

Back Up Protagonist (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: Write an additional vision

Activation: The Badass Woman supports something the Protagonist says, or goes with him when others are hesitant to do so.

Kick Ass Offscreen (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Mw/oP beats the crap out of someone, preferably a large number of formidable opponents, while the story follows the rest of the party.

Sass Main Villain (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once during any Boss Fight or a confrontation with the Main Villain.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice. +1 Victory Point if combined with the Sidekick ability of the same name, but the Sidekick must be voiced by someone else.

Activation: The Comic Relief insults the Main Villain.

Act 7

Brood (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per session per player. Acts 7 and 8 only.

Benefit: Write an additional vision.

Activation: The Protagonist sits on his ass and complains about how his life sucks, or reflects on the impossibility of victory.

Support Protagonist (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per session, only while the Protagonist broods.

Benefit: Write an additional vision

Activation: The Love Interest takes time away from the party to help the protagonist deal with his brooding and depression.

Step Up (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: When the group is leaderless, the Sidekick steps up and takes charge.

Smack Down (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Badass Woman harshly disillusiones a secondary character, or tells her to shut up.

Tough Love (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: Write a Prophecy

Activation: The Mw/oP remarks on how no one can help the Protagonist deal with his burden.

Cheer Up (Comic Relief)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Victory Point, and write a Prophecy

Activation: The Comic Relief helps someone get over a sad time or forget their worries. +1 Patience if used on the Protagonist while he's brooding.

Act 8

Grow Up (Protagonist)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Protagonist realizes that he and only he can shoulder his burden, and stops being such a child about it. +1 Victory Point if activated after the Love Interest Does Something Rash (see below).

Do Something Rash (Love Interest)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Love Interest embarks on a dramatic and dangerous course of action, such as traveling to confront the Main Villain on her own.

No Mercy (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Victory Point

Activation: The Sidekick lets loose with his full ability and potential.

Love Life (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Badass Woman finds love. +1 Victory Point if her Unrequited Love ability has been activated for the person she finds love with.

My Real Past (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever.

Benefit: Retcon any fact relating to the Mw/oP's own past. This must be something previously established in a flashback or backstory exposition, not something that happened during the game.

Activation: blah

Betrayal (Comic Relief)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever.

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice, and retcon any one fact about the Comic Relief (including her identity).

Activation: The Comic Relief betrays the entire party in a significant way.

The Boss of Act Nine

Each act has its own boss, as mentioned before. Act nine is no exception. The Main Villain counts as his very own act and session, which comes *after* act nine, with an indeterminant number of sidequests between the end of act nine and the beginning of the MV's act. If you wish to be traditional, act nine can end with the party fighting every single boss they've faced before, all in a row. Use the same Victory point requirement as normal for act nine. If that's not your cup of tea, you're certainly welcome to invent a new boss just for this act.



Act 9

Renewed Focus (Protagonist)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Protagonist renews his dedication to saving the world (or, alternatively, whatever the good side of his Fate is).

Back to Back (Love Interest)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Patience

Activation: The Love Interest fights alongside the Protagonist. Characters with other Roles cannot be present for this (though there may be multiple Protagonists and/or multiple Love Interests).

Motivate (Sidekick)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Victory points for every player

Activation: The Sidekick gives a rousing speech to motivate the party, or simply to kick their asses into gear. +1 Victory point for the narrator if someone else finishes a sentence in his speech.

Got Your Back (Badass Woman)

Frequency: Once per session

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Badass Woman physically defends any member of the party.

Forge a New Future (Man Without a Past)

Frequency: Once per act

Benefit: +1 Boss Dice

Activation: The Mw/oP speaks movingly of the need to kick predestination in the teeth, take control of your fate, and create your own destiny. This traditionally happens just before a boss battle.

True Friends (Comic Relief)

Frequency: May only be activated once, ever, and only if the Betrayal ability has been used.

Benefit: "Recharge" any once-per-act or once-per-scene role ability (except this one, of course) which has already been used, allowing you to activate it an additional time.

Activation: The Comic Relief realizes who his real friends are and rejoins the party.

I Changed My Mind

Note that you don't need retcon authority to have a character change her mind or have new feelings about something — only to say things like, "No, I was lying when I said I cared about you." People change their minds all the time; it's not unusual. You also don't need a retcon to have something a character said turn out to be incorrect. Even experts are wrong sometimes.

Advice to Players

Console Legends is an unusual game. There aren't very many story-telling games out there yet, so you may not have seen one or played in one before. Therefore, we offer a few words of advice for first-time players.

General Advice

- Be descriptive, especially when it comes to characters and locations. If you introduce new secondary characters, make sure everyone knows what they look like. If you're the artist for the region, make sure everyone knows why the area is both important and cool. Make the other players feel like they're really in the game.
- Be polite to the other players. You can voice a jerk in game, but you should keep the in-game character separate from your own personality.
- The more you work with what's already in the game — character's Virtues and Flaws, the elements you all decided on when you created the world, other players' visions — the more power you'll have when it comes to a boss fight, and the smoother the game will run.
- You don't have to activate every character ability all the time! Sometimes it's worth giving up a point of Patience or some Boss Dice in order to tell a better story.
- If you don't like the rules, change them. Console Legends is a collective venture; if your group enjoys (for example) using retcons more often, more power to you.

Emergent Backstory

Characters in Console Legends are created *in media res*, not as fully fleshed-out characters. As the game progresses, more about their pasts are revealed until they stand as three-dimensional entities (metaphorically speaking). The same is true of the world they live in. Rather than try to define everything beforehand (the way a console RPG is actually made), Console Legends leaves nearly everything blank, filling in only what's important as the game goes on. We call this the method of Emergent Backstory.

Because you'll be controlling all the characters and the entire world (though only for a few minutes at a time), you don't have to worry about making your own personal character cool. By the same token, this is a highly cooperative game. The fun comes from hearing the parts of the story that other people make, and fitting

your own narrative into a (hopefully) seamless whole. In plain terms, your story is there for the enjoyment of others, not to make you seem cool to yourself.

Tracking Consistency

One drawback to using purely emergent story is that a certain amount of inconsistency can arise just because people are forgetful. It's just the way our minds work — not everyone has a perfect memory. If you happen to notice someone contradicting a past event, feel free to bring it up as an Objection. You can vote down the current narration, change the previous event to smooth things over, or even intentionally leave the inconsistency in the game!

Introducing New MCs

It's a tradition for console RPGs to bring in new characters after the game begins. Some have a connection to the existing MCs; others are completely new characters who have their own reasons for joining the party. The important thing to remember is that, unlike a regular role-playing game, there's no exclusivity to any characters. If you bring in a character, other people *will* use them if they're at all interesting, which is both a good thing and, sometimes, a bad thing. It's hard to tell a coherent story with a character who keeps getting jerked around. It will help a lot if you make sure everyone understands the new character's Motivation, Virtue, Flaw, and Fate.

It's worth keeping the number of MCs reasonably low. When you get ten or more of them, they become difficult to keep track of. A game with forty-seven main characters really stretches the meaning of "main," and characters' Fates start becoming incompatible.

Remember that bringing in MCs is free, but a their dramatic death scenes increase the plot bar. Until near the end of the game, it's worth having unused MCs retire, quit the team, join the opposition, or wander off on their own rather than die. That way, at the end of act nine, you can have the Main Villain kill off a few of them, using their deaths as story fodder and a way to get more plot points to use against the MV.

The Element of Surprise

When you can see the end of a movie coming after watching for five minutes, it loses its appeal. A book that follows a standard formula ceases to be interesting after a few dozen pages. Unexpected elements are what makes a good story. How can you do that in this game, where everything that's said becomes part of the game?

The End, For Now

That's all for this version of the game. When the full version comes out, there will be a lot more player advice, more examples, better game balance, a portrait layout, the list of conventions and clichés found in previous versions of Console, and more.

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First, synchronicity and consistency can be very useful. If you make an interjection every time the party meets a member of the royal family, and mention the green dragon ring on their fingers, you can use that later on to *imply* to the other players know that the peasant they've just met is a lost prince. If you then turn around and make that man a murderer who killed the prince and took his ring, that's an interesting twist, and one that doesn't break the Narrative Permanence rule (page 7).

Second, *you* don't always have to be the one unveiling the surprise. If you do some foreshadowing and someone interprets it differently than you expected, that can lead to some very interesting and surprising results. This is another case when good story can be more fun than just getting a Boss Die.

Third, use retcon authority judiciously. When you have the ability to retcon a character, that authority stays around for the entire game. Use it when you have a good dramatic moment rather than simply throwing it away as soon as you see the chance.

Other Story-Telling Games

If you're interested in other story-telling games, here are a few the author knows about.

- Capes, a superhero game of competitive storytelling.
- The Extraordinary Adventures of Baron Münchhausen, a semi-gaslight game of absurd stories.
- Universalis, a more generic story-telling game.
- Primetime Adventures, which handles games that mimic television shows.
- Games like The Pool and octaNe are slightly closer to traditional role-playing games, but share a great amount of control between players and the GM.
- Once Upon a Time, a storytelling card game

