

Legend & Truth

Solo Intertwined Play

This is the Systemless version and version 2.

Why? Because it's exciting to see other people's takes on your character. Because it's fun to work in a shared world. Because it's a rainy day and I'm in currently in love with *Stranger Things*. Because why not?

Inspiration is tricky; it's hard to know where ideas come from, especially when you're running low on sleep and high on coffee. Dabbling in PBEM, IF, MUDs, for sure. Reading about narrative games, likely. *Trollbabe* and *Stranger Things* and *In a Wicked Age* and *S\lay w/Me*, definitely. If I've missed something, let me know.

Legend & Truth

Because we are all playing alone but also together, certain basic tenets must be established. Setting, genre, if monsters exist, if magic exists.

The World you are playing in is described by Truth, which is defined by you and decided by you, and Legend, which is defined by everyone else who is playing in the World but still decided by you.

So, too, is your hero defined by Legend and Truth.

The Play

The Play is your own personal solo adventure featuring a hero. It's just like any other actual play or play session. You pick the system and the format and the output.

It begins when you say the adventure begins and it ends when you say it is over. It can encompass a single scene, or a dozen sessions, or a campaign, or anything in between.

The only stipulation is that if you wish for your hero's personal Legend to grow, you must give other authors the chance to learn of his adventures by sharing the details of your Play with them.

The World

What you say and establish and describe is Truth for the World in your Play.

What you say and establish and describe for the World in your Play is only Legend for the World for everyone else playing in the World, unless they choose to accept it as Truth in their World.

You may incorporate as much or as little of other people's Legends of the World into your Truth of the World as you please, at your whim, just as they may do for your Truth (which is their Legend).

At the beginning of each Play, at least, and as often as you'd like, state something you know to be True about the World clearly with "I know it's True..." , so that others may add it to their Truth or Legend as they will.

Others, if you see that phrase, you know you have a choice between Truth and Legend to make.

I know it's True that in this World, the darkness sometimes has teeth and claws.

You may also choose this format instead, right at the beginning, if you wish to signal that all of the World you present – the people, the places, the things – is open for others to use and interpret. You may certainly exclude any aspect you wish from being shared; your hero is always excluded, since sharing heroes is handled under different rules.

I know that the following is True...

Building a Legend

There are two ways to build your hero's Legend.

The first is to ask someone else for input; this is really exactly as it sounds. Find someone you know (or just shout it out to the internet) and ask them a question about your hero.

- What did I do at the battle of Three Falls?
- When I was staring down the gullet of the demon in the ruined temple in the Cold Wastes, what happened?
- Why am I called "The Bitterest Draught" in certain circles, and which circles are those?
- I knew this guy once who knew a secret about the Gods... where did he and I meet?
- Tell me something I don't know about my hero.

Or really any question you'd like. You don't have to give them any context at all but you can. They're under no obligation to answer, and you can choose whether their answer is Legend or Truth or must have been about some other guy.

The second method is to ask an author from another Play to add your character to their Legend, or accept such an offer from another author.

Any author of any Play may ask to have their character join yours. If you accept, that character is under your control just as a standard NPC would be in your Play – in all respects. If they ask you for your character and you accept, your character becomes part of their Play, and they have complete control over your character in their Play.

This control is not revokable; if they want to make your character into a fool or a sex slave or a mass murderer, whatever, they may (though one would hope it would at least serve the purposes of the story).

They do, however, have to start with the basics you've laid out as to things like name, gender, and Drive, or it's obviously an imposter and no one will believe it is part of your Legend.

As always, you have ultimate control over what is the Truth in your Play (and only your Play); your timeline is the one that is Truth for you, though all stories of your hero that you know of will add to your hero's Legend unless you explicitly declare them to be about an imposter, in which case all benefits are lost to you.

And that's why you will expose your character to someone else's tender mercies – the benefits.

The System

The only rule for system is that you must have a mechanic of some sort that adds randomness to the tale – otherwise the modifiers you earn for Legend and Truth are meaningless. So if you don't care about such things, ignore even this!

At the very least, you probably need a way to get a small bonus (equivalent to a +1 or a reroll), and a larger one (equivalent to a +2 or a reroll, pick highest) to your rolls.

Whenever an aspect of your Legend – the fiction built by others around your character – comes into play, you may decide it is, in fact, Truth. If so, you may take a moderate bonus or moderate mechanical benefit for all rolls that are affected by this sudden aspect of your Truth.

If it remains Legend, you may use it to get a small bonus or other small mechanical advantage to rolls involving that aspect of your Legend.

You should figure out what's a reasonable “small” and “moderate” bonus for your system, and if you'll do anything else on turning a Legend into Truth like granting a skill or trait or similar mechanic.

You are never obligated to use an entire Legend or someone else's Play as Truth, even if you co-opt part of it. You may also re flavor or put your own spin on it or even adapt it wholecloth.

“You see, she thought she saw me kissing that demon, but this is what really happened...”

Example

Meg's character, the feisty red-headed witch Isabeth, is embroiled in a court intrigue in a royal court and Meg's not sure where to go next with it; when Jim asks if his character, Con (a wandering swordsman) can join her Play, she decides to accept the offer.

During her Play, the two have a tumultuous affair, Con loses a hand in a duel for her honor, and ultimately he unleashes a dark demon on the whole court through a combination of drunken magic and carelessness that Isabeth only narrowly manages to contain.

Meanwhile, in Jim's own Play, Con defeats a wicked and seductive flame sorceress, Isabeth, exiling her to the Cold Wastes for her crimes.

Meg's Play is Truth for Meg. Isabeth just had a torrid love affair with a wandering swordsman who was maimed over it and defeated a demon in the process.

She is a feisty witch, not a wicked sorceress, and she certainly doesn't live in the Cold Wastes, unless of course Meg decides to accept any of these items as Truth. If she doesn't, the tale goes into her Legend.

If Isabeth is ever in a situation where convincing someone she's a wicked sorceress is necessary, she can use this aspect of her Legend as part of the roll with a +1 to it. If she needs to seduce someone, she can pull that out of her Legend, declare it Truth, and give herself a +2 to rolls intended to accomplish her goal of seduction.

Jim's Play is Truth for Jim. Con has both hands, is a teetotaler, doesn't like feisty red-headed witches, and has just banished a sorceress to the Cold Wastes. If he's ever in a situation where he needs to know how to summon a demon, however, he may decide that that part really did happen.

In that case, it is now Truth, and he takes a +2 for the rest of the attempt to summon the demon (and any time he tries to in the future). Of course, he might suffer in game ramifications from being a demon summoner, but that's up to Jim.