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Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying

Game is based on the Powered by the
Apocalypse framework originally developed
by Meguey and Vincent Baker.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About This Booklet.....	1
Overview	1
The Avatarverse	2
Bending & Trainings.....	4
Playing the Game.....	5
Moves and Dice.....	6
Core Elements	7
Moves	9
Basic Moves	9
Balance Moves.....	13
Combat Exchanges	16
Step-By-Step Exchange	18
Statuses	19
Basic Techniques	22
Advanced Techniques.....	25
Running the Game	26
GM Moves.....	28
NPCs.....	29
Running Fight Scenes	31
Using This Quickstart.....	32
Storm Over Linsho Adventure.....	33
Using This Adventure.....	34
Summary	35
Introduction	37
Important Characters.....	38
Important Locations.....	41
GM Advice	42
Pregenerated Characters.....	42



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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet has two sections. The first is a guide and primer on the full rules of **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game**. Here, you'll find the advice and tools you need to play through a couple of sessions of the game, but if you want to extend your game you should look into the full core book. The focus of this section is to get you playing as quickly as possible!

These rules might make more sense to those familiar with the Powered by the Apocalypse framework, but they are designed to be used by anyone. If you have any questions or want to give feedback, you can head on over to our Magpie Games Discord (<http://magpiegames.com/magpie-games-official-discord/>).

The second section of the booklet is a fully playable adventure scenario, ready for your game! It includes a situation, a cast of characters, guidance on what is likely to happen during play and what the GM might do, and a set of pre-generated characters for the players to use! Before turning to this adventure, make sure you're familiar enough with the game and the setting by reading the first part of this booklet.

OVERVIEW

If you've never played a tabletop roleplaying game before, welcome! Starting a new hobby can feel daunting, but everything you need to learn how to play is included right here in this book, including how to make your heroes and tell amazing stories in the Avatarverse. Don't be afraid to jump in and get started; the best way to learn how to roleplay is to try it out for yourself!

Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game is a heroic adventure game set in the world of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra*. This world is a fantasy setting inspired by Asian and North American Indigenous cultures, a land filled with breathtaking landscapes, majestic hybrid beasts, and unique marvels of technology and industry. Yet, it is also a world defined by struggle in which there are no absolute villains or perfect heroes—only people with complex motivations who come into conflict with others while striving to forge a future they believe is best.

In this game, you and your friends tell a story about a group of young heroes—the player characters, or PCs—who join together to fight for what's right in a complicated and nuanced world. One of your friends acts as the gamemaster (GM), describing the problems the heroes face and the people they meet along the way; the rest of you take on the roles of your own PCs, seeking to make the Avatarverse a better place.

This game focuses on stories of adventure and the personal journeys of heroes through the various trials in their lives. If you have ever wanted to throw yourself into the Avatarverse and craft your own adventures alongside your closest friends, then **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game** is for you!

WHAT IS AN RPG?

A tabletop roleplaying game (sometimes abbreviated to TTRPG or RPG) is a storytelling game for three to six people played at a table—or online—with pen, paper, and dice. The game plays out as if you and your friends were cooperatively telling a story together. Over a few hours, your collective tale evolves and changes, going to new and unexpected places based on the characters' actions.

Most players take on the role of a character in the setting of the game, called a PC, but often referred to in this text as a hero or a companion. Alongside your friends—who play their own characters—you describe what your character looks like and what they do. You say what they say, either describing their words (“I say something intimidating and glower at the guard!”) or speaking them verbatim (“I say, ‘I’ll never forgive the Fire Nation!’”). You think about how your character thinks and feels, and you guide all their actions.

One of your friends plays a special role—the gamemaster (GM). They portray the rest of the world, including all the other characters. They describe what every other character does or says and fill in any holes in the setting so that everyone at the table shares the same imaginary world in their heads. In a game focused on an existing property, like **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game**, the GM also helps to productively introduce existing story elements like major characters or events from the setting.

The GM isn't playing against the other players. They're here to try to represent the world faithfully while building out a set of interesting conflicts—to say what happens and what exists in a way that makes the fictional world make sense.

YOUR HEROES

In **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game** you play one of the many heroes of the Four Nations. Your goal is to protect the world from harm and stand up for those without the power to stand up for themselves. You fight on the side of what is right, even if that is the most difficult path to take, and you understand that to achieve peace there must be balance in all things.

In the full game, each player creates their own hero using a **playbook**, a kind of hero archetype—a set of abilities and details and story elements all wrapped together to help you make the coolest character possible. Each hero is known as a **player character (PC)** in contrast to characters not controlled by the players called **non-player characters (NPCs)**.

In this booklet, you'll find pre-generated characters, ready to play and get into the action. They have some pre-selected elements, but they also have plenty of space for you to determine more about them. As you play, you'll make them your own!

You and your fellow PCs are the main characters; your decisions matter the most to the tale you're telling together. As you play, the GM presents the PCs with locations, situations, and characters that create new, interesting choices and events. You decide what your heroes do to respond to the situations they encounter!

THE RULES

For the most part, a **tabletop roleplaying game plays like a conversation**—you take turns speaking, describing the action or sharing dialogue, reacting to each other, switching back and forth between in-character and out-of-character speech. The conversation leads to places of uncertainty, times when no one knows what happens next. When one character tries to jump from a burning building to safety—across a ten-foot gap—no one knows for sure what happens: do they make the jump or come crashing down?

In those moments, you turn to the game's rules; they help you to figure out what happens in times of **tense uncertainty**, guiding the conversation forward into new, interesting, and surprising outcomes.

What's more, the GM also acts as a kind of impartial judge, helping the table determine when the rules come into play. If there's ever doubt about whether or not the rules apply, the GM acts as the final arbiter and decision maker. If a character is jumping from a burning building, the GM might look at the rules and the situations in which they're supposed to come into play, and then decide that, yes, there *absolutely is uncertainty here*. Time to go to the rules!

If, on the other hand, a character is jumping from one building to another when there's no fire and the two buildings are practically touching, the GM might look at the rules, look at the situations in which they're supposed to come into play, and decide that there's no real uncertainty here. There's no tension. The character just does it.

When the rules do apply, they guide you to what happens next in your particular game and story. The GM will help to interpret the results, as well, to make sure they fit the game and the story. Through this system, the rules will lead to interesting and surprising outcomes for everyone involved!

THE STORY

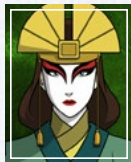
Telling a story together through **roleplaying** isn't like writing a screenplay, in which a sole **writer** is in complete and total control over the narrative. Instead, the **GM** offers problems for the players to confront while making room to be surprised by how the PCs respond to the conflicts at hand, and the players make choices about what their characters do, playing off each other and finding out what happens together.

Thus, each individual story of **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game** is like an **episode** of your own television show—the heroes learn about problems, figure out what they want to do, engage in some action, then discover the resolution of those problems through their choices. But unlike those shows, nothing is scripted, and you play to find out what happens!

You can play an individual session of play, featuring exciting conflicts and tense moments, almost like a movie. And you can play an ongoing set of sessions, a campaign, experiencing ongoing story arcs and character development. In both cases, though, this game depends upon you playing to find out what happens so everyone at the table can be surprised and excited!

THE AVATARVERSE

In the full game of **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game**, you begin by picking an era as the backdrop for your game. The eras are each tied to the span of an Avatar's life—except for the Hundred Year War Era during which Avatar Aang was frozen—and focus on distinct themes which define the type of game you play. The five eras included in the core book of the game are:



The Kyoshi Era, which covers the events right after *The Shadow of Kyoshi* novel. Play in the Kyoshi Era if you want to fight in battles against rogues and bandits and deal with governmental corruption as the nations establish their borders.



The Roku Era, which covers the time right after Sozin became Fire Lord and before Roku married. Play in the Roku Era if you want to deal with tensions between different nations and the trials of maintaining an uneasy peace.



The Hundred Year War Era focuses on the time just before Avatar Aang's awakening at the beginning of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Play in the Hundred Year War era if you want to rebel against unjust rule, protect the weak, and stand up to tyranny.



The Aang Era, which is set immediately after the events of the *Imbalance* comics trilogy, some time after the end of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Play in the Aang Era if you want to heal the world after tragedy and help push it into a brighter future.



The Korra Era, which covers a period that takes place after the events of the *Ruins of the Empire* comic trilogy, sometime after the end of *The Legend of Korra*. Play in the Korra Era if you want to deal with the repercussions of imperialism and play in a modernized era.

THE FOUR NATIONS

For centuries, the world has been split into four distinct nations each with their own cultures and customs. While individuals from these nations often form lifelong bonds of friendship and love, the nations themselves are often in conflict.

Not every nation or people will show up in every session of play, but here's a short summary of each of the Four Nations, their history, and some of the most important issues surrounding them, to give you a grounding in the setting.

THE EARTH KINGDOM

The largest of the Four Nations, the Earth Kingdom has been ruled by a monarchy for much of its history. It is known for its sheer vastness and diversity of both geography and peoples. Despite the history of hardship in the rural areas neglected by the government, the citizens of the Earth Kingdom are known for their strength, resilience, and unyielding nature. When they are knocked down, they rarely stay down for long. They draw their strength from the immortal earth and immovable mountains.



THE FIRE NATION

The Fire Nation is located on a group of islands to the west of the Earth Kingdom. It boasts an impressive military, and its navy is a force to be reckoned with. This is in large part because travel by water is a necessity on the islands. In addition to its military, the Fire Nation is known for its robust economy and industrial achievements. The Fire Nation is filled with people who value innovation, technology, discipline, and strength of all kinds.



THE AIR NOMADS

Determined to focus on a spiritual life separate from the rest of the world, the Air Nomads roamed the world while maintaining four distinct Air Temples in nearly inaccessible locations. Tragically, Fire Lord Sozin ordered the Fire Nation military to kill all Air Nomads at the start of the Hundred Year War; Avatar Aang was the only survivor. Over a century later, a number of people gained airbending abilities during the Harmonic Convergence, ushering in a new Air Nation under the guidance of Aang's son, Tenzin.



THE WATER TRIBES

Divided into the Southern Water Tribe and the Northern Water Tribe—alongside a smaller group based in the Foggy Swamp—the people of the polar tribes are skilled at sailing and navigating challenging terrain. However, there is a long history of tension between the two tribes, and the Southern Water Tribe has often struggled while their Northern counterpart thrived. Both are known for their powerful loyalty and unrelenting perseverance, like the waves of the ocean crashing onto the beaches' shores.



BENDING & TRAININGS

Within the Avatarverse, many people have incredible skills and abilities. The most well-known of these are different forms of bending, a kind of elemental manipulation based on motion and spiritual alignment. A bender is born with innate elemental abilities, but must undergo training to master their element. All benders (except the Avatar) can only bend a single element, though specialized forms of bending can push that element to its limits. The four elements are: water, earth, fire, and air.

But bending is far from the only training held by heroes of the Avatarverse. Many other heroes are expert martial artists, wielding weapons with incredible skill and agility, while others are genius technologists, inventing new devices that can solve problems bending can't even touch.



WATERBENDING

Water is movement, change, and grace. The element cannot be broken and even in its most rigid forms has the ability to melt and reform. It is a dynamic element, subtle but powerful. Waterbending is inspired by the real-world martial art *Tai Chi*. This style's flowing motions allow a Waterbender to use their element defensively to redirect an opponent's attack, or offensively in the form of water whips, ice attacks, or large waves. Certain Waterbenders can also redirect energy paths in the body to heal injuries.



AIRBENDING

Air is flexible, playful, but still powerful. The element goes where it wills and expands and contracts to meet its environment. Air is an open element, breeding freedom and bolstering spirits. Airbending is loosely based on the real-world *Baguazhang*. The martial art's circular motions and footwork allows one person to defend against multiple enemies. Airbenders are quick and nimble using their skills to defend from and evade attacks. Airbenders can ride balls of spinning air, quell cyclones, and sweep even the heaviest objects into weightlessness.



EARTH BENDING

Earth is strong, stable, and constant. The element stands the test of time; it is a steady element, bold and unyielding. Earthbending is inspired by the real-world *Hung Ga*, known for solid stances and blunt punches, with fists formed into diverse shapes and toughened by striking exercises. Earthbenders can harness the formative energy of the earth, powerfully punch boulders, and ride platforms of stone to impossible heights.



WEAPONS

Weapons are precise, intimidating, and fierce. They demand craftsmanship to create and discipline to master. In the right hands, a weapon can level the playing field between a non-bender and a bender. Fighters trained in the use of weapons can come from any nation. Their first specialty likely comes from their home nations, but it can also include unarmed combat such as chi-blocking. Weapons in the Avatarverse take inspiration from real world Asian and Indigenous cultures, such as the Chinese *dao* (saber) and other traditional weapons.



FIREBENDING

Fire is pure energy, destruction, and regeneration. The element can either consume everything around it in a powerful blaze, or heat it with a brilliant intensity that is impossible to ignore. It is an energetic element, bright and mighty. Firebending is inspired by the real-world *Northern Shaolin*, associated with the Shaolin Monastery. These fighters use fast, athletic movements including jumps, spins, and extended linear stances, powered by breath. Firebenders can exhale fire, wield flames like daggers, and grow a singular flame into a raging bonfire.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology is brilliance, power, and innovation. It changes what is possible and pushes the boundaries of established norms. It is intricate, yet mighty. Technological innovation can be found throughout the Four Nations; heroes who use technology spring up all over the world. Of course, advanced technology varies by the era—an Earth Kingdom technologist in the Roku Era might use smoke bombs and traps, whereas a technologist in the Korra Era might use an electrified rod or mechanized vehicles!



PLAYING THE GAME

This section includes the basics of playing the game, including an explanation of core ideas of the game as a whole, like what it means to play to find out!

PLAYING TO FIND OUT

Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game depends upon a crucial core idea: **play to find out what happens**.

There will be times in the story when you think you know exactly what should happen next, when the path of the tale you've been telling becomes clear and you feel like you know just where the game should go next.

But as Uncle Iroh said, "Destiny is a funny thing. You never know how things are going to work out." Part of the fun of this game is not knowing where the story will go. Let go of the need to control the narrative and play to find out what happens! Don't pre-plan your story; instead let the mechanics lead you into unexpected, novel outcomes based on the conflicts that emerge from the decisions you've made throughout the game.

The adventure included here mostly sets up complicated situations and possible ways things might progress, without demanding a specific track or set of outcomes. Playing through them will always lead to different stories based on how the PCs act and what they choose to do!

SAFETY TOOLS

Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game is a family-friendly game. At the same time, following the game where it takes your story can sometimes lead you to some pretty uncomfortable spaces, especially around the darker themes of *Avatar Legends* stories.

In general, it's always a good idea to talk about the game, before you start, during play, and afterward. Check in with your fellow players often and be sure everyone is having fun together. Be mature and understanding with each other as you talk about how the game affected you and others, including times in which you disagreed about what should happen or how it felt.

Beyond talking, there are many tools for keeping your table on the same page, to make sure the game is comfortable and fun for everyone. Check out the *X-Card* by John Stavropoulos at tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg and *Lines and Veils* compiled by Robert Ian Shepard at tinyurl.com/lines-veils-rpg.

THE CONVERSATION

If you remember playing pretend with your friends as a little kid, the conversation that drives a roleplaying game is kind of like that! You talk about the interesting things your characters do, have adventures, and build on each other's contributions. You might invent new characters on the spot if you need them, but you might also play the same characters over and over in a continuing story of adventures, one after another.

A game like **Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game** is much like that, just with additional tools to guide the conversation! The tools of the game aren't limits on your imagination; they are springboards and structures that push you to keep things moving in interesting directions.