

# **Text-Based Role-Playing Games:**

**What's the "Vibe" and How Do We Play?**

**by Cassiopeia & Polly | October 9, 2021**



Everyone has a favorite movie, book, game, or — in geek-speak — a favorite **fandom**. Now, imagine you're dropped right into the middle of that world. Finally you have a unique chance to steer the story yourself through a character of your choice (either a canon legend or your own original creation).

Can you see it? Great.

This is exactly what has been happening in the world of **Text-Based Role-Playing Games**, a scene that's exploding in popularity.

My fellow player having an in-game argument with my character and role-playing well

Me, taking it personally



## What exactly is RP?

In a broad sense, **Role-Play (RP)** is a game where people step into the shoes of someone/something else. You could be a rogue, a cosmic entity, or even a god.

In these games, we're presented with a simulated world. As players, we pilot our characters based on their unique personalities and internal convictions, all while navigating the "Game Realities" established by the **Game Master (GM)**.

The GM is the architect. They organize the sessions, build the **Lore**, and step into the role of a constantly shifting universe. They control the weather, introduce plot-twists, and manage NPCs (Non-Player Characters). Sometimes there's one GM; sometimes it's a whole team. But we'll get to the "Mastering Styles" later...



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## The Evolution of the Game

Role-playing comes in many flavors:

- **Live Action (LARP):** Reenactments, airsoft, and high-effort cosplay.
- **Computer-Based:** Classic RPGs and role-play servers in massive MMOs.
- **Tabletop (TTRPG):** The Dungeons & Dragons style.
- **Text-Based:** Our personal favorite.

Many people think text-based games started with internet forums, but that's a myth! The real ancestors were **Play-by-Mail (PBM)** games. Back in the 80s, people ran complex, turn-based adventures through physical letters and early email. It was a wild mix of tabletop mechanics and slow-burn storytelling.

Today, text-based RP is much more streamlined. With modern platforms and refined mechanics, you can dive head-first into a story and get the full spectrum of creative dopamine right from your phone or laptop.



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### The Geek's Glossary:

- **Geek:** *Someone unapologetically obsessed with their passions.*
- **Fandom:** *The vibrant subculture of fans surrounding a specific world or IP.*
- **Game Master (GM):** *The referee, the god, the moderator. The person responsible for the rules and the world's reactions.*
- **Lore:** *The deep history and "soul" of a universe — whether it's an original world or a famous franchise.*

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