

## 5 Attacks from Classic RPGs that Require Some Explaining

The golden era of JRPGs brought the wonderful and sometimes wacky world of crazy convoluted plots and impossible hair to western audiences in a beautiful torrent of pixel-art and squint-to-make-it-out polygons. As a kid, I devoured every morsel of number flying, turn-based, god-killing goodness I could. It's only as I now look back on the fond memories of those games that I start to see some of the absolute absurdness my child brain simply glossed over, no doubt, in an attempt to protect itself from the lunacy on offer.

Specifically, I was perplexed by some of the attacks that these heroes of ages, these paragons of virtue, concocted to use on actual opponents in life or death situations. Iron-willed sword-masters who had dedicated their lives to the mastery of the blade decided that a secret technique forged in the bowels of an active volcano should be the most ridiculous thing they could think of. "BANANA REDUNDANCY!" they cry out on the battlefield as they bisect some poor underpaid henchmen with a river trout, their battle-hardened companions batting nary an eye. Okay, so maybe while training alone, brain cooked from the, y'know, volcano, they didn't have the opportunity to workshop the technique, but what excuse did the development team full of actual adults for these following games have?

### 1) Legend of Dragoon. Rose's "Whip Smack" must be a diversionary tactic?



The combat in Legend of Dragoon tried to differentiate itself from its contemporaries by implementing something called "Additions". Rather than just plunk the select button on "Attack" and sit back while your character jumped forward 15 feet, hit the enemy once, then jump backward again, the characters in Dragoon would jump forward 15 feet, then require you to time button presses to accurately pull off a specialized attack accompanied by the character dramatically shouting the name of the attack. One of the titular dragoons in the game, Rose, starts the game with a very simple two-hit combo named "Whip Smack". She does the prerequisite leap forward and cries out "WHIP SMACK" as she lands two brutal slashes *with her sword*. That's right, Rose wields a sword, a very rigid, sharp, and in no way resembling a whip, sword. I can only imagine Rose named this attack with the full knowledge that she would shriek it out during its use, utterly confusing her opponents. They would then obviously be trying to figure out where the whip is coming from as they eat a broadsword to the face.

### 2) Final Fantasy VII Tifa's "Dolphin Blow" defies setting, logic, and space-time.



You are standing in soiled pants after watching eco-terrorists summon a dragon the size of the moon to orbital strike your work friend Jimmy off the face of the planet. As you wipe the ashes that used to be Jimmy from your eyes, you question if the Shinra benefits package was really worth it. Then, the girl-next-door with lower back issues charges you, and you thank Gaia that at least you're not getting hit by the punk-rocker with the sharpened surfboard. She pummels you with a flurry of hand-to-hand techniques and then, just when you think you might survive this, your rib cage is caved in by a fucking dolphin. Your organs are paste, but you're more concerned with the logistical conundrum of how a hostile tuna-breath marine mammal missile just launched out from a solid steel floor in an industrial city that is hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean. At least Jimmy died with dignity.

**3) Tales of Symphonia**  
**Lloyd and Colette's "POW Blade" niether "pows" nor "blades".**



Much like peanut-butter and chocolate combine to clog my arteries, the attacks that the characters in Tales of Symphonia use can be combined into sweeter, deadlier, attacks. The lead protagonist Lloyd's sword based attacks have a stylish theme of attack names like "Demon Fang" and "Omega Tempest". His companion Colette who dual wields bladed chakram, has the cool potential to be on the side of a van next to a rad unicorn. Yet her favored method of attack seems to be smacking her foes with a dollar store squeaky hammer she found behind the abandoned Pizza Hut. So what happens when you combine Lloyd's awesome dual-slashing "Tiger Blade" with Colette's anemic "POW Hammer"? That vicious sword slash murder combo becomes day-care comedy as Lloyd's swords are turned into squeaky-toy hammers that softly squawk as he gently bops the enemy on the head twice. Maybe it's the anticlimactic sound of a bicycle horn falling off a shelf after a dramatic power-up or the logic-defying fact that the attack actually does *more damage* than the individual attacks, but "POW Blade" is the definition of nonsense.

#### 4) Star Ocean: Second Story

**Ashton Anchors's "tri-ACE" is named after the developer and is one of the strongest attacks in the game.**



Star Ocean: Second Story is filled to the brim with some prime whacky attackies (special shout out to "Hole-y Mole-y" in which a character jumps into a digging machine and wrecks enemies from below). The cake-winner here, however, is a 4th-wall breaking meta-attack in which the character Ashton literally name-drops the developer of Star Ocean, tri-Ace, then cuts open a hole to the explosion dimension. The guy who took the title Double-Dragon too seriously slashes his sword twice through the air before the entire battlefield is engulfed in a cavalcade of blue detonations that do not care what your distance, defense, or brand loyalty is. This is the video game equivalent of begging the gods for assistance and a graphic designer in a cubicle answers your prayers with the entire folder of fire animations.

#### 5)Xenogears

**Bart's "Angel" deathblow would be fine if he didn't look like a maniac doing it.**



The heroes of Xenogears have some super stylish attacks called “Deathblows”, some of which carry elemental effects to satisfy the Pokemon type-matching trainer in all of us. Bartholomew, Captain of the Yggdrasil, is one of the most stylish guys around. Kickin’ surfer locks? Check. Rocking-red leather vest? Check. A bitchin’ eye-patch? Hell-yeah. So it’s a little disconcerting when Cpt. McCool leaps backwards into the air and starts flapping his arms like a chicken. The attack, “Angel”, is aptly named as there are ethereal wings that sprout from the whip-wielder’s back as he furiously flaps them forward to do wind damage. This issue is that, while the wings may actually be a diegetic visual able to be seen by other characters, Bart flailing his arms in the air to stay aloft is definitely happening in-universe. With every beat of the wings Bart pumps his arms like Icarus realizing wax has it’s adhesive limits. The best case scenario is that his enemies are astounded that this man is flying using nothing but the power of his butterfly stroke before they are consumed by the resulting tornado of down-force.