

Dark Stalker



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Dark Stalker

SOLO ROLEPLAYING RULES FOR
DARK STREETS & DARKER
SECRETS

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01: Introduction

Just as **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** was written as part of the NaGaDeMon 2019, this supplement is being written as part of a challenge to celebrate H P Lovecraft's 130th birthday on August 20th, 2020.

Dark Streets & Darker Secrets has many solo elements already built-in, the idea of yes, but, as a way of thinking comes right off the pages of a typical solo 'engine'.¹

Dark Streets & Darker Secrets also places a strong emphasis on improvisation by the Game Master [GM]. This is also the mainstay of solo play.

The difference between what you will find in these pages and the solo system presented in Appendix O of the **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** rules is the definition of 'solo.' The rules in Appendix O refer to solo as being one GM and one player. A group that doesn't have the back up of an entire party of characters, with their range of skills and abilities. The Appendix O rules appear to be a variation of the solo rules from Kavin Crawford's *Scarlett Heroes*, a very well respected game in its own right.

The solo that this book deals with is true solo or solitaire play. These rules dispense with the GM and replace that role with a few random tables and improvisational prompts.

DICE CONVENTIONS

DARK STREETS & DARKER SECRETS uses a lot of different dice rolling conventions. D6s for attributes, d66 for many random lists, d20s for attribute checks, advantage/disadvantage in 5e parlance [positive and negative dice] and then d10s and the occasional d100 for good measure.

¹The tools that you will use to emulate the game master are referred to as either a Game Master Emulator [GME] or solo engine.

This book uses the d20 with positive and negative dice but does also point you to existing DARK STREETS & DARKER SECRETS tables. Often I will change the order in which you would roll on the tables, from how they were originally presented.



02: Creating a Character

Being a solo hero against an entire world of darkness is tough. To that end, I suggest that you start with a slight advantage. It is only a slight advantage, it just gives you a slight uplift. The world will still be dangerous, and you are going to have to be smart to survive.

Firstly, when you roll for your attributes, you may swap the order of the rolls to best fit the type of character you want to play.

Solo heroes start at Level 2 as if they had already completed two adventures.

You should refer to page 60 of the **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** rules. This advancement does mean that you need to complete four more adventures before you gain any further advances.

EXAMPLE

My solo hero is called Anders, he is a dropped out Physics student. He suffered terribly after his drink was spiked at a party and now believes he can control people's minds using quantum entanglement.

Physique	9
Agility	10
Intellect	13 (Prime)
Willpower	13 (Prime)
Recovery Roll	1d6
Vitality	10
Sanity	13
Luck	3
Special	<i>I Sense a Disturbance, There is Power in Blood, Energy Projectile, Flight, Glimpse Future</i>
Heritage	<i>Shadow</i> : Can become invisible in shadowy areas with a Willpower test.
Complication	Hunted by a criminal organisation.
Money	2
Gear	Uncomfortable old pillow

Anders is **Gifted**, and his delusions of being able to alter people's minds are, in fact, true.

This Anders at first level. Advancing him to second level adds 1 point to Vitality, he gains a power, but this will be learned during his first adventure, and his attributes improved to Agility 11, Intellect 14, Willpower 14.

Anders is now ready to play.

- Physique** 9
- Agility** 11
- Intellect** 14 (Prime)
- Willpower** 14 (Prime)
- Recovery Roll** 1d6
- Vitality** 11
- Sanity** 13
- Luck** 3
- Special** *I Sense a Disturbance, There is Power in Blood, Energy Projectile, Flight, Glimpse Future, <TBA>*
- Heritage** *Shadow: Can become invisible in shadowy areas with a Willpower test.*
- Complication** Hunted by a criminal organisation.
- Money** 2
- Gear** Uncomfortable old pillow

Anders is **Gifted**, and his delusions of being able to alter people's minds are, in fact, true.



03: Creating A World

dark streets & darker secrets has some brilliant random tables for creating a grimy and dark city in which to play out your stories.

For solo playing **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets**, I suggest taking a pad of post-it™ sticky notes, or small index cards. We are going to roll on the tables, and then reorder the results as they make the most sense to you. The goal if this exercise to construct a world that inspires your opening scene.

OPEN WINDOW

Imagine your character threw open a window, or stumbled out of a club, squinting into the dazzling morning light. What is the first thing they see? That is the effect you are after, it could be a crime in progress or a scene of brutality. We are not going to do an entire world creation, we can learn about the city as we explore. Make two d100 rolls in the table below, and pick the result from the resulting sub-table. i.e., a 91 would be the first entry on the Signs of Persecution table (page 123) followed by 08 which would be the eighth entry on the Signs of Corruption table (page 117)

Roll	Sub Table
1-10	Signs of Corruption (page 117)
11-20	Signs of Violence (page 118)
21-30	Signs of Decadence (page 118)
31-40	Signs of Inequality (page 119)
41-50	Signs of Darkness (page 120)
51-60	Signs of False Hope (page 121)
61-70	Signs of the Supernatural (page 121)
71-80	Signs of Supernatural Influence (page 122)
81-90	Signs of Fear (page 123)
91-100	Signs of Persecution (page 123)

My two rolls gave me:

Strange people have been asking about the characters everywhere.

and

Blackmailed officer has their secrets revealed by criminals.

Together this combination says to me that Anders overheard people moving through the club he was at, showing his picture and asking if people know him. This was enough to send Anders scrambling out of the club and onto the street.

Outside there are electronic billboards flashing up the breaking news about Blackmail at the heart of the city police.

This is just a hint of the city, but we will add more as we go. Every time you enter a new location, roll once more, and add in the new detail to your version of the city.



04: Start the Adventure

The adventure generator in the core rules runs through this procedure.

1. Adventure Goals
2. Adventure Locations
3. Adventure Antagonists
4. Adventure's Supporting Cast
5. Adventure Complication
6. Adventure Rewards

I suggest a slightly different order.

1. Adventure Locations
2. Adventure's Supporting Cast
3. Adventure Complication
4. Adventure Goals
5. Adventure Antagonists
6. Adventure Rewards

Only roll the first three, Location, Supporting Cast and Complication. Write each on its own post-it/sticky and see how your character would interact, and how do these entry points relate to the little you know of the city and world.

I have rolled:

Location: (41) Airport
Supporting Cast: (52) Forgotten God
Complication: (32) Enraged Monster

At this point I have an obvious starting point and a very dramatic one by the looks of it, but even I do not know who or what is behind this.

EXAMPLE

How does this relate to what I know of the world?

I am going to move my idea of the club to one of those time warp bars at the airport that are open 24/7, why Anders was there, he cannot remember. The Billboard is now those TVs mounted above head

height with 24hr rolling news. In amongst this a wave of panic passes through the airport users. Screaming can be heard coming through the corridors and halls.

From Anders perspective, this is all he is aware of. What I am thinking is that someone was smuggling an ancient religious relic through the airport when it was discovered. When the customs official laid hands on it, it unleashed a powerful curse transforming the customs official into an enraged monster.

At this point, I don't know who is really behind this, what they wanted to achieve or what Anders stands to gain.

WHERE DID ANDER'S MONEY GO?

There is no reason not to start your game with a 'Where did my Money go?' question and answer. These are good for throwing your character into a situation from which you can start to improvise your way out.



05: The Dark City

We are nearing the point where we can start to play. The final element before we get to how to play solo is to build the first scene.

Solo games work best in scenes.

Dark Streets & Darker Secrets uses scenes that can wrap a single test in all the narrative description of what the character is actually doing, a month in a library could be a single scene and a single Intellect test at the end to see if you learned what you were looking for.

We are going to use the act of skipping a block of time as the marker for the end of the scene. This is where the screen would fade to black in a movie, or the director shouts Cut!

If you were researching a ritual in a lost library the scene would end just as you settled down to start your research and the next one would start at the moment of your discovery or when you throw down your pen in disgust at the month of wasted effort.

At the end of the scene is often when a short rest is possible, for example, if you decide to go somewhere tomorrow because it is too late today, that would end one scene and start the next.

Not only does the scene break move your story on, but it is also a convenient unit of time for playing solo games. A soloist is not restricted to game sessions of three hours once a week. I often play for just half an hour to an hour, covering several scenes.



SETTING THE SCENE

When you create a new scene, you are going to roll on the Dark city tables.

1. City Themes
2. City Events
3. Neighbourhood Themes
4. Rich/poor Neighbourhood Locations
5. Street Features
6. Building Features
7. City Smells
8. City Sounds
9. City Sights
10. Faction Themes
11. Faction Characteristics
12. Faction Objectives

Which table you roll on will be down to your individual scene.

EXAMPLE

Anders is in an airport filled with panicking people, I decided that this is closest to a city location, but I already have an idea of what it looks like. This time I choose to roll on City Smells and City Sounds getting (35) French Perfume and (66) Roar of a Beast.

During this scene, a woman is going to run into Anders, scattering everything she is carrying over the floor, she smells of French Perfume. Anders will hear the beast roar, this is the immediate cause of the panic.

I write both of these prompts on their own post-it/sticky note.

INSPIRATION

All of the lists so far have been tied to a physical aspect of the world. If you want something less specific, two tables are provided here. Roll D100 once on each table and using word association, try and work them into your scene.



Table 1

Roll	Inspiration	Roll	Inspiration
1	Rasping	51	Tension
2	Kamikaze	52	Warrior
3	Unexplainable	53	Cordial
4	Leviathan	54	Decapitated
5	Wrongdoing	55	Knock-out
6	Religion	56	Fortune
7	Zone	57	Scream
8	Specialised	58	Clairvoyant
9	Space	59	Mollified
10	Honest	60	Exhilaration
11	Uncertain	61	Awful
12	Tornado	62	Unbelievable
13	Militancy	63	Joking
14	Device	64	Well-trained
15	Hurt	65	Nostalgia
16	Infestation	66	Clock
17	Hijack	67	Roots
18	Utopia	68	Caution
19	Obstinate	69	Egypt
20	Train	70	Venomous
21	Munitions	71	Gryphon
22	Improvise	72	Centaur
23	Disease	73	Mystical
24	Elf	74	Pugnacious
25	Fertility	75	Hysteria
26	Halloween	76	Bully
27	Trade	77	Congregate
28	Overwhelm	78	Inspiration
29	Grace	79	March
30	Overjoyed	80	Wolf

31	Sedition	81	Moon
32	Garb	82	Werewolf
33	Freak	83	Intuitive
34	Account	84	Groups
35	Mesmerise	85	Ireland
36	Jiggle	86	Camouflage
37	Dynamic	87	Ambush
38	Aim	88	Monster
39	Myth	89	Dance
40	Hero	90	Recovery
41	Sure	91	Gas
42	Loch Ness monster	92	Coaxing
43	Hate	93	Savage
44	Ashamed	94	Concoct
45	Perform	95	Realm
46	Skirmish	96	Comic
47	Howls	97	Manifestation
48	Nemesis	98	Imaginary
49	Deeds	99	Old
50	Stealth	100	Rattle

Table 2

Roll	Inspiration	Roll	Inspiration
1	Tension	51	Enemy
2	Warrior	52	Justice
3	Cordial	53	Owl
4	Decapitated	54	Eek
5	Knock-out	55	Bored
6	Fortune	56	Shelling
7	Scream	57	Damage
8	Clairvoyant	58	Brawl
9	Mollified	59	Forgiving
10	Exhilaration	60	Erstwhile
11	Awful	61	Sinister
12	Unbelievable	62	Driving
13	Joking	63	Secrecy
14	Well-trained	64	Narration
15	Nostalgia	65	Domination
16	Clock	66	Disarmament
17	Roots	67	Time
18	Caution	68	Robe
19	Egypt	69	Decoration
20	Venomous	70	Gang up on
21	Gryphon	71	Wrath
22	Centaur	72	Settle
23	Mystical	73	Perturb
24	Pugnacious	74	Fields
25	Hysteria	75	Vanish
26	Bully	76	Discipline
27	Congregate	77	Furious
28	Inspiration	78	Novel
29	March	79	Intolerance
30	Wolf	80	Humongous

31	Moon	81	Despair
32	Werewolf	82	Ferocious
33	Intuitive	83	Target
34	Groups	84	Worry
35	Ireland	85	Xanadu
36	Camouflage	86	Ribbons
37	Ambush	87	Potent
38	Monster	88	Premonition
39	Dance	89	Swarm
40	Recovery	90	Feud
41	Gas	91	Fearsome
42	Coaxing	92	Obsess
43	Savage	93	Danger
44	Concoct	94	Unleash
45	Realm	95	Blast
46	Comic	96	Location
47	Manifestation	97	Fairy
48	Imaginary	98	Salvage
49	Old	99	Mask
50	Rattle	100	Zealot

Anders' first scene is nearly ready to play, for added inspiration, I roll two inspiration words. The rolls are (73) Mystical and (25) Hysteria. I will try and use both words in this scene.

06: Asking Questions

At the heart of solo play is the simple question. Broadly, there are two types of question, the first is the simple yes-no question, called a closed question and the second is a much broader, or open question, that cannot be answered so concisely. Examples of open questions are what are they talking about, what is in the box, what does the diary say for last Wednesday?

CLOSED QUESTIONS

Closed questions are treated much like an attribute check for NPCs. **Below 10** is a **yes**, **above 10** is **no**.

To add more variety to the answers, we have three more variations. Yes, and... is more than you initially imagined. Yes, but... is a toned-down version, that is not so good.

The other end of the scale is the No, and... answer with is the strongest possible negative answer.

LIKELIHOOD

Not all questions are as likely to be yes or no. Somethings are much more likely to happen, and others rarely ever.

To reflect this, answers to questions that you think are likely, are rolled with a **positive die**.

Questions that are much more likely to be negative are rolled with a **negative die**.

If you have no way of knowing whether something is more or less likely, roll just the one d20.

A **result of 20** is the **No, and...** answer.

Any result that is a Yes, but is equal, or **below** your characters **Luck** attribute is a **Yes, but...**

A result of **exactly 10** is a **Yes, and...**

OPEN QUESTIONS

Open questions are harder to answer with a simple die roll. Luckily, you already have the answer! The two inspiration words you rolled at the top of the scene can be employed to inspire an answer to an open question.

EXAMPLE

The woman with the French Perfume crashes into Anders, scattering her briefcase, and handbag over the floor, Anders starts to apologise, but the woman just bursts into tears and runs off leaving her things all over the floor.

Anders stands up and looks around wondering what is causing the panic, he tries to make sense of what people are shouting, but it seems to be incoherent stuff about magic and monsters, he can make no sense of it.

If in your scene, you have more than two open question situations, just roll a third or subsequent answer. You can use them individually or as a pair if they make more sense in your scene.

WHEN TO ASK

Try not to rely on asking too many questions. Let the scene suggest answers. You should have some idea of the sort of adventure you want to have. If you are looking for vampiric plots then that is probably what you will find, if you want political corruption, then you should find it. You will have many prompts on sticky notes on your desk, and you can shuffle them around and put them together. As you finish each scene anything unused, you can carry across to the next scene.

Asking too many questions can zero in on a specific fact, but in doing so, you can eliminate many options. What you are looking for just enough information to help you imagine your scene.

SCENE SUMMARY

For each scene, you are going to roll for two inspiration prompts. You can also add scene-setting rolls such as city sights, sounds and smells. I recommend the sounds and smells as our imaginations are normally more visual, so being pushed to think in sounds and scents are good exercises.

You play out the scene, imagining your character going through the action.

You use standard attribute tests, luck rolls, combat tests (or you can use the condensed rules from Appendix O in the core book).

When you need to ask questions, that you would normally put to the GM, you will roll a d20 either with a positive or negative die and get the answer. For more open questions, you use the inspiration prompts either alone or as a pair.

Those are the mechanics.

I also recommend keeping a journal of your adventures from your character's point of view, like a character's diary. This will be useful as a refresh for you when you come to pick up your adventure in future sessions.

All these sticky notes we have been creating you can stick into your journal at the right point, with an added few words to clarify what they really meant. Some of these may recur in your adventure, and you can move the post-it note and add more details as they are revealed.

07: Locations

With a whole city to explore, you are going to get to move from place to place. A location could be a single room, a floor in a building, a skyscraper, street, block or an entire neighbourhood.

Because your first scene or two reveals your adventures starting location, supporting actors and complication, there is a very good chance that you are going to be moving from that location. Frequently running towards or away from the danger!

When you change the location, you can choose which of the following three to roll for.

1. Adventure Goals
2. Adventure Antagonists
3. Adventure Rewards

Only roll for one with each location change. It then falls upon you to how to work this new piece of information into your story.

Knowing the Adventure Goal may entail discovering that you need to do, they often lead to further changes of location. These can spawn many individual scenes. Just because you, as the player knows something, does not mean that your character knows it. That is part of the challenge in all roleplaying.

EXAMPLE

Anders presses his way against the rush of fleeing people down the airport corridors, As the spaces empty he sees a side door has been ripped off its hinges and the floor is a bloody smear, a single brown leather brogue stands in a pool of blood. A sign over the doorway reads FREIGHT ARRIVALS. Anders takes a breath and heads toward the freight terminal. This is a change of location, and I decide to roll for the **Adventure Goal**.

A roll of (54) Discover New Ritual is revealed as the goal. It immediately came to me that the way to deal with the monster from the Adventure Complication is to banish it using a ritual. Unfortunately, the details of the ritual are now behind Anders in the

area he just left, where the monster came from. Anders, unfortunately, does not know this!

I still have no idea what the monster is, I feel inclined towards a werewolf. Still, something horrific and otherworldly also appeals.

Right now, Anders is on the trail of a monster, without a weapon to his name and no way of dealing with it.

As I have not explored the arrivals lounge and customs area, where I imagine the beast was summoned, that will be another location, when I get there.

08: NPCs

The **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** core rules have amazing tables for creating colourful NPCs of all sorts. The only advice I would suggest is that you create a small selection of NPCs ahead of time. Put each NPC on a sticky note.

When you need to introduce an NPC, you can grab the closest note and stick it to your journal at the right point. No need to break the flow of your adventure to roll on the random tables to create the character.

TIP # 1

If you are solo playing **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** to learn how to run the game, it is always wise to create plenty of characters before you help other people make theirs. You can get into the swing of making characters by creating them in full and then use them as NPCs in your own game.

TIP # 2

If you have created your NPCs as full characters, you have an option as a soloist, to put aside your character and take up one of these NPCs as a player character for a short while and see where their story would take them. If you wondered who was that woman with the French Perfume, you could play her for a scene or two just to find out a little about her.

TIP #3

Using different coloured post-it notes for male and female NPCs makes it easier to grab a suitable NPC at a glance.

NPC hopping can make your solo game feel more like an anthology game, rather like *Sin City* by Frank Millar than a traditional roleplaying game.



09: Insanity

I am somewhat reluctant to treat Insanity as a game mechanic. Of all the games in which insanity features, and it is common in the pulp noir, grimdark genre.

In solo play, you can choose to ignore it completely, use it as an improvisation prompt or use it to change the dynamic of the game.

Your solo game is your own. You are the only person that the game needs to be fun to play.

If you do not want to roleplay the suggested effects of insanity, this is my suggested mechanical modification.

Every time your insanity reaches zero, reduce your Luck by 1. This point can be recovered during downtime if you can get your character to a safe place, not something that is common or easy on these dark streets.

10: Combat

Combat is rarely your best option, but it is a very common feature in roleplaying games. If you are all on your own, you are in a worse position than most characters, you have little or no backup!

There is little or no need to change any rules to accommodate solo play. Appendix O has an abbreviated combat system, but I found it more cumbersome and less exciting than using the standard rules.

The important thing to remember is not to swamp yourself with too many foes if you are going to fight.

You can use the yes-no question to test the foes basic tactics. If they are heavily armed and have you outnumbered, they are more likely to press the attack, but the rolled answer may well say something different.

Dark Streets & Darker Secrets has a built-in rule that says should your attack roll be equal or lower than the difficulty, the foe has some something to avoid taking damage, such as dodging or blocking. Use these events to add more narrative description to your fights.

DEATH OR DEFEAT

Losing a battle does not have to mean that you died. Killing your character does not do you any good, nor does it improve your story. If you are captured, on the other hand, it moves your story on, and it gives you a new challenge to try and overcome.

There will be times, and many of them, when capture is just not a logical option. If a Mi-Go is intent on killing anyone who knows too much, they are unlikely to keep you alive. If you take away the death option too often, it will diminish the threat of battle, and that is not the intention here.

Being defeated should be an option when it makes sense, but it will put you in a difficult situation. The advantage of it is that it could move your story forward. You may never have found out who the corrupt

politician was until they stand gloating over your bruised and broken body.

POST MORTEM

If you really liked your character, there are two soloist techniques that you could consider.

WHAT IF? . . .

You are dead, your adventure ends here. The End. But what if you looked back up your journal and you found a question and answer that was a pivotal point in your story. Change that answer, keep all the known facts the same, everything you have learned remains true. Anything your character learned after that point, they no longer know, but keep the post-it notes separate from your unused ones.

You can now play this alternative reality 'what if?' thread. This is a real challenge to you as a roleplayer, can you unknow things that your character never learned?

Will you be just as rash, despite knowing the forces you are now up against? The 'what if' thread is a way of playing a character you have come to enjoy beyond where their story should have ended.

WHAT WENT BEFORE?

What went before is a last swan song for your character. A chance to play them one last time. These rules suggest that you start your character at second level. Revert your character back to first level, and play a short last adventure that took place *before* your solo game started.

For this adventure make it more of a psychological thriller, not a combat centred one. You know you don't die, because you made it to second level!

If you particularly like the city you have created, you can play this first level adventure where your character confides their fears about the reality of the world in another person. Just using what your character knew at the beginning. This innocent third person is going to be your next PC!

BODY - SWAPPING

Another option I touched upon in the NPC chapter. If you developed your NPCs as full player characters, pick one up in your story and play them. Think of the woman with the French Perfume. Was she an innocent fleeing in panic, or was she already part of the shadowy world of dark magic and mysticism? Did she know what was about to happen?

Pick up one of these NPCs and play one as your new PC.

This can be a fascinating option. It feels almost like getting a peek behind closed doors. Most of the time, we see NPCs as either provider of services to your character, or bit parts that are created in a moment and disappear as soon as they are no longer needed.

When you start body-swapping, you get to make those NPCs into living beings with lives of their own.



11: Drama

There is a danger that you will always know what you want to happen, and that will shape the game. The rule below is not part of **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** but works just as well when you are running a game for other players as it does for solo play.

There will be times when you are in a situation that could go wrong at any moment. Breaking into a criminal gang's compound, or trying to avoid security guards are classic examples.

You could make Intellect tests for every criminal gang member or security officer on a regular cycle, but that is a lot of rolling and breaks the flow of the game.

The other alternative is to use a Drama Die. Take a d6 and place it either with the 1 face showing if you are in a situation where the tension will increase or with the 6 face showing if you are in a situation where your luck may run out.

Each time you do something that may be noticed, it could be forcing a locked door, which could be heard to the damage noticed, or a failed attempt to be quiet, or knocking out a guard and stashing their body, where their absence may be noted, you advance the die one face.

When the die has either advanced all the way up or down, then you have been discovered, or the impending event takes place.

You can use this for villains trying to escape. If the die counts down, they made it out, each time you are delayed in your pursuit, it counts down the die.

You can use this technique to track many things that are happening 'off-camera'. If an innocent is suffering a terrible disease, and your mission is to find the cure, a die that counts down could represent their health.

Place the die its own post-it note, with a note of its purpose and the consequence. If a die is still in play at the end of your solo game session, you can jot down its current value. You can then easily set them up again at the beginning of the next game session.

So drama dice will never run down. If you successfully sneak in and out of the compound, you find the antidote or capture the villain.

In these cases, you discard the die.

The physical presence of the die, with it progressing towards its consequence is a way of you having a sense of impending doom or urgency in your game. How the die advances or not is within your power and your character's agency. What you do effects the outcome.

BURIED ALIVE

The same mechanism can be used for setting difficulty factors. If you are trapped in a room that is filling with water, or an open grave being filled with soil, the difficulty could be a 1 at first. As the tank or grave fills, or the oxygen runs low, it becomes a 2, 3... when it reaches 6 there will be dire consequences.

GLASS HALF FULL

Whether you prefer to count down or count up is a purely personal preference, rather like the glass being half full or half empty.

I find that some situations feel more natural to go in one direction than the other. When I am recording the state of the die on the post-it note I will also record the direction with an arrow. E.g. 4↑. This simple shorthand makes sure that I pick up where I left off.

12: Solo Playing Tips

Many of these tips have been mentioned in their own chapters, but I think it is helpful to gather them into one place.

- Don't ask too many questions! They are only there to nudge your improvisation skills.
- Imagine a 20 seconds rule. If a prompt does not suggest an answer in 20 seconds, ignore it and move on. Just pick something else that makes sense to you.
- Ask the best questions for your game, not the best questions for your character. While it would be nice if the Great Cthulhu had its back to you and was sleeping, that is neither very exciting to play nor likely.
- Don't ask questions you don't want the answers to. You have to accept that both yes and no are viable answers. If you are knocked out cold, don't ask if the villain is going to finish you off with a knife between your ribs, you may just get what you were asking for.
- You only have to please one person - yourself. If you are having fun, then you are doing it right.
- If you are not having fun, stop.
- Try and reuse NPCs rather than constantly creating new ones. If your character needs a fence to buy or sell stolen goods, use the same NPC, it adds continuity. This can make the world seem more real. If you know where that NPC hangs out, it can move you around the city, using more locations.
- An attribute test is still an attribute test. Use the rules for **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** when you are playing the game, and the question tools when you are asking questions. Asking if you can pick the lock is not a way of short-circuiting around a low Agility score.
- The sort of game you want to play and enjoy are just as important factors in deciding what an improvisation prompt means, as the prompt itself. Don't get sidetracked into a game you don't enjoy.
- The adventure so far can often provide the details to rolled answers. If you have already met some cultists in a burned-

out drug den, there is a very good chance that most of the foes you encounter are going to be more of the same.

- When you get started in solo, the play may seem very slow. This is not unusual. Over time you will get faster, and the answers will feel more natural.
- If you are thinking that these rules could be a cool way of writing **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** fan fiction, you are not wrong

