



SOLOIST RPG

Quick Start



Draft Version 0.1, May 9, 2017

chrisatthestudy

chris@the-study.net

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Guidelines	1
Randomisers	3
Randomiser - Genre	4
Randomiser - Characters.....	5
Randomiser - Adventure Seeds.....	8
Randomiser - Locations.....	11
Randomiser - Events	13

INTRODUCTION

Soloist is the RPG rule-set that underlies my [Soloist Online solo-rpg game assistant](#). The tables which are included here are also part of Soloist Online.

Role-playing games (whether solo or not) tend to range across a spectrum from strategy / war-gaming at one end through to almost pure story-telling at the other. Soloist falls at the story-telling end of this spectrum, with dice-rolls and randomiser tables to act as prompts or suggestions, and leaving everything else to the player's imagination and creativity.

GUIDELINES

Soloist basically consists of the following set of general guidelines. Feel free to ignore or change anything that doesn't suit you, or that doesn't seem applicable to the current game:

1. Determine your setting and background, and write a brief description.
 - 1.1. If you need help, use the Genre randomiser table.
2. Determine your main character(s) and write an introductory description (you can add more details as the game progresses).
 - 2.1. If you need help, use the Character randomiser tables.
3. Determine the starting point for your adventure, and possibly decide on some features of the adventure. Write an introductory account of how it begins.
 - 3.1. If you need help, use the Adventure Seed randomiser tables.
4. Dice Mechanic: when you need to check whether a character succeeds or fails at some non-automatic task, pick a Difficulty Rank for the task, ranging from 3 (easiest) to 12 (hardest), and roll 2d6. If the result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Rank, the character succeeded, otherwise they failed.
 - 4.1. If you are familiar with the "but/and" concept and want to use it, take the difference between the Difficulty Rank and the actual result. If this is 1, then add 'but' to the answer. If it is 6 or more, add 'and' to the answer.
5. Combat (or any kind of conflict) is treated as alternating rounds between the characters, switching between attacker and defender. The Difficulty Rank is based on how good the defender is at defending as opposed to the attacker. The attacker rolls 2d6 to see if they hit. Subtract 2 hit points for every successful hit. Player characters start with 9 hit points, minor NPCs start with 7 hit points (adjust up or down by 1 to 3 points for particularly weak or particularly hardy characters).

- 5.1. Optionally reduce the damage to 1 hit point if the difference between the roll result and the Difficulty Rank is 1. Increase the damage to 3 hit points if the difference is 6 or more.
- 5.2. Optionally determine a Fear level for opponents, based on how impressed or fearful they are concerning the player character, and use this as a Difficulty Rank at the end of each turn (that is, after each side has had a turn at being both attacker and defender). Roll against this to see if they continue to fight. If they fail the roll, they either flee or surrender (whichever seems appropriate). Decrease the Rank by 1 each time they score a hit against the player character, and increase it by 1 each time the player character scores a hit against them.
6. If you need to have a decision about something which is outside the player character(s) control, you can consult the Oracle. This uses the same basic dice mechanic, but instead of a Difficulty Rank you decided how likely or unlikely a given fact or event is. The more unlikely it is, the higher the Rank. Roll 2d6. If the result is equal to or higher than the Rank, then the event happened or the suggested fact is true.
 - 6.1. This is used for things like 'is the door locked?', 'are there orcs in the next room?', or 'will it rain in the next half hour?'
7. If you need a random non-player character, use the Character randomiser tables.
8. If your story is stalled, try the Events randomiser table for a suggestion on what might happen next.

RANDOMISERS

The Randomisers are sets of tables to give you hints and suggestions for your game. You roll 1d6 (or occasionally 2d6) and look up the result in a table. Most of the randomisers include several tables which work together to give you a final result.

In every case, you can ignore any tables that you don't like or don't think are appropriate for the situation that you want to roll for. You can also re-roll any set of results if they don't spark any inspiration for you – the whole point of these tables is not to restrict your options (although you could use them that way if you want a challenge!) but rather to give you pointers and ideas, and perhaps some unexpected directions for your developing adventure to go in.

RANDOMISER - GENRE

It is unlikely that you will start an adventure without any idea even of what genre you want to play, but if that really is the case, you can use the following table to give you some options.

Roll 1d6 for the main genre. If you want something more specific, roll again to select from the relevant sub-genres. If you roll a number that doesn't have an entry, just roll again.

The sub-genres are still very general.

Roll 1	Genre	Roll 2	Sub-genre
1	Fantasy		
-	-	1	High Fantasy (Tolkien, Dunsany, etc.)
-	-	2	Low Fantasy (Conan, Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, Pratchett's Discworld)
-	-	3	Historical Fantasy (The Three Musketeers, Pirates of the Caribbean)
-	-	4	Steampunk
2	SF		
-	-	1	Hard SF (Ringworld, Interstellar, Honor Harrington)
-	-	2	Soft SF (Star Trek, the works of Ursula K. LeGuin)
-	-	3	Pulp SF (Lensman series, Star Wars)
-	-	4	Time Travel (Doctor Who, The Time Machine)
-	-	5	Parallel Universes (Sliders)
3	Superpowers		
-	-	1	Pulp Crimefighters (The Shadow, Doc Savage)
-	-	2	Golden/Silver Age
-	-	3	Bronze/Modern Age
-	-	4	Future
4	Crime		
-	-	1, 2	Noir (Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammet)
-	-	3, 4	Mystery (Poirot, Sherlock Holmes, Campion)
-	-	5, 6	True Crime (Ed McBain, modern detective serials)
5	Horror		
-	-	1	Gothic (Dracula, Frankenstein, Hammer Horror films)
-	-	2	Eldritch (Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith)
-	-	3	Psycho / Slasher
-	-	4	Modern Zombies/Vampires/etc.
6	Espionage		
-	-	1, 2, 3	Spies (John LeCarre's Circus)
-	-	4, 5, 6	Secret Agents (James Bond, Harry Palmer, John Steed/Emma Peel)

RANDOMISER - CHARACTERS

Use these tables as starting point for your own character if you are stuck for ideas, or use them as a way of quickly generating significant NPCs (more nondescript NPCs, such as villagers in a fantasy game, or cops on the beat in a crime game should just select an archetype, or possibly not even that – they are just generic characters, after all).

ARCHETYPE

Roll	Archetype
1	Fighter / Soldier
2	Rogue / Thief
3	Pirate / Smuggler
4	Monk / Cleric
5	Wizard / Technologist
6	Healer / Medic
7	Assassin / Agent
8	Sage / Academic
9	Merchant / Businessman
10	Sailor / Pilot
11	Noble / Politician
12	Courtier / Diplomat

PERSONALITY

Roll	Personality
1	Reckless
2	Wary
3	Cheerful
4	Grim
5	Hearty
6	Ascetic
7	Jovial
8	Morose
9	Implacable
10	Devious
11	Calm
12	Hot-tempered

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTE

You can choose either a positive or a negative attribute, or if you want you can have both.

Roll	Attribute
1	Strong
2	Agile
3	Knowledgeable
4	Charismatic
5	Perceptive
6	Skilled

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTE

Roll	Attribute
1	Indecisive
2	Vain
3	Corrupt
4	Vindictive
5	Miserly
6	Treacherous

BACKGROUND

Roll	Background
1	Shrouded in mystery
2	Rags to riches
3	Riches to rags
4	Self-made
5	Impoverished nobility
6	Stranger in a strange land
7	Always on the run
8	Born to a life of crime
9	Born to wealth
10	Last of their kind
11	Thwarted ambition
12	Undistinguished

CHARACTER EXAMPLES

Roll: 8, 6, 3, 6 : Sage, Ascetic, Knowledgeable, Stranger in a strange land

S'sistak the serpent-mage wanders a fantasy world in search of ancient grimoires to further his knowledge of the necromantic arts. His sinister appearance often makes people shun and fear him, but he is at heart a kindly soul, in spite of his appearance and his rather grim subject area. He has laid to rest more than one crypt-fiend, earning the begrudging respect of those whose lives were imperilled, and his quest for knowledge has led him into strange and often dangerous places.

Roll: 4, 5, 1, 2, 4 : Technologist, Hearty, Strong, Vain, Self-Made

Hard-living, hard-drinking trouble-shooter, with a high opinion of himself (possibly deservedly), Bruce Cordite is the antithesis of the timid, bespectacled nerd, but his expertise with computers and all things electronic has made him a sought-after freelancer, hired by governments and corporations alike to defend against infiltration and technical sabotage, or to do some of their own. Any time, anywhere, but always at a price.

Roll: 4, 6, 5, 1 : Monk, Ascetic, Perceptive, Shrouded in mystery

From the pages of the pulp magazines comes the enigmatic Li-Song, mistress of martial arts, whose senses are honed so finely that no-one can ever take her by surprise, and who seems to anticipate her opponent's every move. She works for no-one, and cannot be hired, but is driven by some code of her own which impels her to bring justice to those who need it and whom she deems worthy.

RANDOMISER - ADVENTURE SEEDS

Loosely (*very* loosely) based on the Five Questions – Who, What, Why, Where, How – these tables can be used to generate some generic (and rather abstract) hints for an adventure scenario.

PATRON

WHO? Not all adventures need to start with a patron, but it is a common trope. If you want a patron to trigger the adventure, use the following options.

Roll	Patron
1	ruler, person in power
2	business or corporation
3	friend or relative
4	victim of a crime
5	object (e.g. you obtain a map or some other clue)
6	(Roll again)

ACTIVITY

WHAT? What is the main activity for this adventure, or at least the activity that is the starting point for it (it might well head off in other directions)?

Roll	Activity
1	investigation
2	acquisition
3	transportation
4	protection
5	captivity
6	elimination

IMPETUS

WHY? What is the motive that drives this adventure? Note that this is not necessarily the player character's motive – it could be the motive of the villain, or of a patron or other NPC.

Roll	Impetus
1	poverty
2	wealth
3	fear
4	desire
5	ambition
6	revenge

TARGET

WHERE? Most adventures have some kind of target -- an item to obtain, a person to capture/thwart/protect, and so on.

Roll	Target
1	person
2	group
3	item
4	location
5	yourself
6	vehicle

TRIGGER

HOW? How does the adventure begin? What event triggers it? Sometimes the results from the previous table and your own thoughts about them will give you an obvious starting point, but otherwise you can use this table to provide a suggestion.

Roll	Trigger
1	chance meeting
2	mistaken identity
3	tavern brawl
4	arrest / kidnap
5	accident
6	news report

COMPLICATION

Add a complication to make things more interesting. You could also use this later in the game to up the stakes if things seem to be a little too easy.

Roll	Complication
1	competition
2	treachery
3	environment
4	Concealment
5	Time
6	space

The 'competition' option could simply mean that there is an active opponent to the character's goal, or it could mean that another character is seeking the same goal.

The 'space' option could mean 'location', suggesting that the target is a long distance away, or it could literally mean that space-travel is involved.

ADVENTURE SEED EXAMPLES

Roll: 1, 1, 2, 6, 6, 6 : ruler, investigation, wealth, vehicle, news, space

On board the Orient Express the fabulously wealthy Prince Renard of Nepotania has narrowly survived an assassination attempt in mysterious circumstances. The newspapers are full of the story. The Greatest Detective in Europe has not been *formally* asked to investigate, and the Orient Express is on the other side of the continent, but these are minor details. The game's a-foot!

Roll: 2, 5, 1, 5, 2, 1 : business, captivity, poverty, yourself, mistaken identity, competition

Not long ago you were a well-to-do merchant. Now you have lost your money and your business, and you are languishing in prison, all thanks to the machinations of a doppelganger who has taken your place. Escape from jail, unmask the imposter, and clear your name. (With some minor tweaks this scenario could be suitable for almost *any* genre.)

Roll: 3, 6, 6, 1, 1, 2 : Friend/relative, elimination, revenge, person, chance meeting, treachery

"My name is Inigo Montoya – you killed my father. Prepare to die!"

A chance meeting with someone who knew your father has revealed the name of the one who killed him. You set out to take revenge. But can your father's old friend be trusted?

RANDOMISER - LOCATIONS

It's quite difficult to provide randomly generated locations that are suitable for *all* genres, so these tables are rather generic and colourless. You will need to add your own creativity to turn them into something interesting.

Roll 1d6 for the location type, then roll 1d6 again to get the actual location.

Roll 1	Location Type	Roll 2	Location
1	Business		
-	-	1, 2	Warehouse / Storage Area
-	-	3, 4	Market / Shopping Mall
-	-	5, 6	Bank / Money Lender
2	Rest & Recuperation		
-	-	1	Inn / Tavern
-	-	2	Club / Meeting-House
-	-	3	Theatre
-	-	4	Hotel
-	-	5	Coffee House
-	-	6	Temple / Shrine
3	Government / Ruler		
-	-	1	Palace
-	-	2	Castle / Fortress
-	-	3	Bureaucratic Office
-	-	4	Barracks
-	-	5	Parliament / Senate Building
-	-	6	(Roll again)
4	Transport		
-	-	1, 2	Ship
-	-	3, 4	Train / Wagon Train
-	-	5, 6	Bus / Carriage
5	Terminus		
-	-	1, 2, 3	Port / Dock
-	-	4, 5, 6	Station / Coach House
6	Workplace		
-	-	1, 2	Factory / Smithy
-	-	3, 4	School / Academy
-	-	5, 6	Office / Library

LOCALE

Roll	Locale
1	Town / City
2	Village / Countryside
3	Mountains
4	Forest / Jungle
5	Skyborne
6	Island or Underwater

STATUS

Roll	Status
1	Active
2	Abandoned
3	Concealed / Camouflaged
4	Ruined
5	Besieged
6	Well-Guarded

RANDOMISER - EVENTS

Sometimes a solo game stalls, and you don't know what happens next. Use the following table to give you a suggestion.

Roll	Event
1	Ambushed
2	Treachery
3	Unlooked-for assistance
4	Unexpected clue
5	Sudden accident
6	Crossed paths