

Pugmire[®]



A DOGS GUIDE TO SOLO PLAY

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INTRODUCTION

This rules supplement enables you to play Pugmire without a Guide. This means that you can create a character and launch straight into an adventure on your own. A group of players can also work collaboratively to play the game, each with their character, and no designated Guide.

The guiding principle of solo play is 'guided improvisation'. The rules are here to simulate a Guide. No rule on a page or random table can possibly know the exact circumstances the

characters are in. What the rules do is provide prompts that you use to come up with the answer.

Some of these answers are quite explicit, yes-no style answers to closed questions. Other questions and answers are more open to interpretation.

Both types of question are handled with very quick and simple dice rolls and mechanics that will be familiar to any fan of Pugmire.

If you are new to solo role play, this booklet will start with an introduction to how it all works,

but without going into detail of how each game mechanic works. It will then break down each mechanic individually so you can see how to apply it to your own game.

Pan Dachshund slipped out from between two of the imposing trees. The hunter was silent as a whisper, and his arrow was nocked and ready, waiting for the right moment. He growled a challenge to the demon and released the tension on his bow, aiming for the blood that seemed to drip from the air. The invisible demon screamed again, and then fell silent.

Yosha Pug removed her paws from her eyes. "Is it gone?" she asked, her wrinkles quivering.

Asking the solo rules the answer is Yes.

Rex towered over her, pushing a hidden button on his sword's hilt. The demon's blood sizzled on his blade, turning into dark, pungent smoke. "You can open your eyes now, my lady," he said, looking at her to make sure she was unhurt.

Pan snorted as he slid the bow across his back before sitting on his haunches. "Yeah, some help she was."

Asking the rules, why is Pan upset? <answer here>

"By barking her Man-damned head off, you mean! She drew it here, leaving us to clean up the mess! I told you we should have left her in Pugmire."

Rex started to growl, but Yosha put a paw on his arm before sitting awkwardly next to him. "He's right. I put you all in danger."

In this very simple example both of the most common question types were used. In the first instance the rules decided that the encounter was at an end. If the answer had been a No, the adventure could have turned into a hunt through the trees seeking the wounded invisible demon, or a second demon entering the fray.

In the second, the answer gives an insight into Pan's motivations. It is up to you to decide on how those motivations manifest themselves.

There is more to solo play than just random words. In the pages that follow you will get to see

each of the questions and supporting rules in detail.

How To

Many people don't know how to get going in solo role-playing. The traditional group game has an easy to see cycle. The Guide describes the scene, you describe your Characters reactions, the Guide arbitrates any conflict resolution. The cycle then repeats with the scene being updated. Put like that, it all sounds rather banal, but that is the game with all the setting, theatre and drama stripped away.

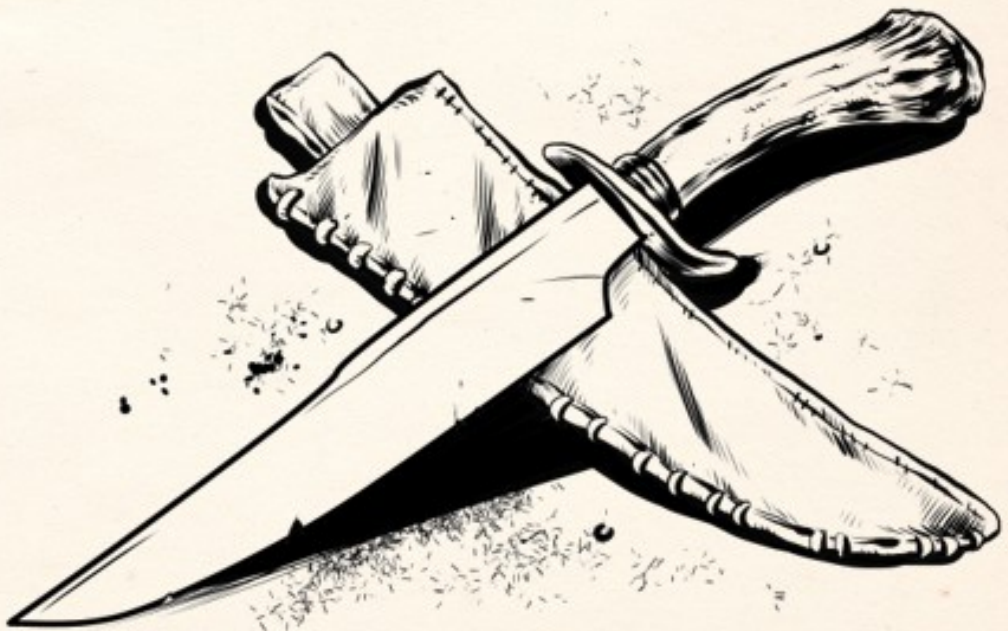
Solo play is not much different. You imagine the scene, you imagine your own reactions to the scene and should a conflict or encounter develop, you resolve the conflict using the standard Pugmire rules. What is different is the question/answer system. In a traditional game, the Guide is there to answer your questions. Here these rules will give you those answers and you have to fit them into your world. It is the answers that make the least sense that will drive your adventures into the most exciting and unexpected places.

In a traditional game, frequently, the Guide has an idea of the beginning, middle and end of your adventure, often with a big bad evil guy to be defeated, so that you know you have won, at least for that mission, quest or adventure. Solo games are not like that. No one knows where the adventure is going to go, or where it will end. An unusual couple of rolls of the dice can put the dagger of treachery into the hand of a trusted friend. It is just down to you to put the words into their mouth, and justify their deeds.

You will become very good at improv. and the rules of improv. will serve you well. Don't try and block a route if the dice come up with an unexpected answer. The golden rule is "yes, and..." Take what the dice give you, take the adventure so far, the type of adventure you want to have and just go with it.

Sandbox Campaigns

Solo role-playing games lean towards sandbox play. A sandbox is a world in which you can go anywhere and do anything. There are mysteries going on all around you, whether to get involved or not. Sometimes events will sweep your character up and carry them along. At other times an adventure will present itself and if you are not interested or too busy, you just walk on by. As your adventures progress you will generate many possible side quests and potential adventures. You pick and choose the ones that your character would take. The others are all part of the fabric of your own personal Pugmire. I will say this again and again. The kind of adventure you want to have is the single most important factor. That should guide your interpretations of answers to questions.





CLOSED TYPE QUESTIONS

A closed question is one that typically has a yes-no answer. Here we get them to do a bit more work.

First, how to ask a closed question.

A closed question is often one about the situation your character is in. When you would normally ask the Guide something about your characters surroundings or the NPCs, you ask a closed question.

You then decide if the answer is likely, unlikely or simply 50/50 to be a yes.

Asking if the street is busy, important if you want to blend into the crowd to make an escape, would likely give a very different answer at different times of the day. On market day, the street is quite likely to be busy, at 2am in is unlikely, on a typical morning 50/50 seems fair.

Likely

When the outcome is likely, the roll is made with Advantage. 2d20s are rolled and the highest result is taken.

Unlikely

If the answer is unlikely, the roll is disadvantaged. 2d20 are rolled and the lowest result is taken.

50/50

If you simply do not know the likelihood or the result really is a 50/50, toss of the coin, chance you roll just one d20.

And the Answer is...

On a result of 10+ the answer is Yes. On a 1 to 9 the answer is No. Except when...

If the results were always straight yes-no answers the game could get pretty boring. To add more subtlety to the results we have some special cases.

Natural 20

If any of the dice show a natural 20 the result is the most emphatic possible Yes. In the case of is the street busy, you are likely to have a troupe of carnival folk passing just as you look out. The noise and chaos being perfect cover for your escape.

Natural 1

If the best result you can muster is a 1, you have the worst possible result. In this case the street is deserted, all bar the guard dog just across the way.

High Pairs

You rolled with 2d20, advantage or disadvantaged, and the result was the same on both dice and they were both a pair of 10s or higher. This is called a Fortunate Event. See below for more.

Low Pairs

Rolling 2d20 you got a pair of results with both numbers being 1 to 9. This is the opposite of a Fortunate Event. We call this a Calamity.

Fortunate Events

A fortunate event takes your story and throws in a twist, one that makes the yes-no result of the roll irrelevant. If you were hoping for a busy street so you could make an escape, a fortunate event could be the arrival of an acquaintance and ally, one you thought long dead. This new situation can throw your plans up in the air. In this way the actual yes-no of the situation is now of less importance.

Fortunate events can take your stories into new and interesting directions. They should nudge you to think “outside the box” as the cliché puts it. It is a chance to improv. and it is a chance to reinforce the kind of adventure you wanted to have.

Calamities

As you can probably guess now that a calamity takes your story in an unexpected direction and makes life harder for your character. A calamity should still make the no result from your question moot, and in its place create a plot twist that makes your life that much more difficult. If your mission was to rescue a friend, a calamity could seem them being driven away in a prison cart or dragged to the gallows in chains. It could mean one of the Unseen has found your trail, launching you into another fight for your life.

It may sound strange, but do not think of calamities as bad things. Without new challenges being thrown at your character and adversities to overcome, there is no adventure!

Fortune

Every time you roll a calamity, put a Fortune point in your bowl. Fortune serves two purposes here. It can be spent like any other fortune point. You don't need to ask your groups permission if you are playing on your own. It is possible that you may get 'stuck'. If you just keep rolling terribly low rolls it can block your story. Imagine you are in a cell, you check the door to see if you can find a weakness and roll a no, you check the walls, floor and barred window, all roll a no, when you ask if there is a weakness you can exploit. You ask if anyone comes to interrogate you, and it is a no again. Before you get to this point you can spend a fortune point to 'tilt' the game. Give yourself a yes, but a yes that moves the story forward.

Using fortune in this way keeps you from just ignoring inconvenient results, the amount of fortune you have is limited.



COMPLEX QUESTIONS

Complex questions are those that cannot be answered with any variation of yes or no. When you want to know what someone is talking about, what a diary entry says, or the orders given to a servant of an evil cat say. All these are open questions.

The way that open questions are handled is with a pair of d20 rolls. It is helpful if they are different colours, or you can roll one d20 twice.

The roll is used to build a very simple sentence. Imagine we roll a 5 followed by a 15. The sentence would read "Supporting an enemy".

We can apply this sentence to the two examples above. It works just as well as a topic of conversation that we have overheard, as a diary entry, or as orders to a servant. If you had picked up a book and got this result you can play with the meaning of 'supporting'. It could mean a philosophical support for their position, or it could be propaganda planted in the library. What if it was an important book detailing all sorts of military plans that had been lost by a conspirator?

You use these mini sentences to prompt your imagination and your improvisation skills. The type of adventure you want to have, and enjoy playing will colour your interpretations, which is exactly what solo play is all about.

TIP: I find rolling 2d20 to generate these sentences is faster and less distracting than rolling one d20 twice and checking the results independently.

D20

1	Plotting with	an ally
2	Plotting against	a colleague
3	Exposing	a foe
4	Revealing	a traitor
5	Supporting	a new force
6	Lending aid to	an old enemy
7	Opposing	old lore
8	Stopping	Man
9	Blocking	magic
10	Creating	a death
11	Making	a murder
12	Unveiling	an alliance
13	Discovering	a surrender
14	Scheming with	friends
15	Dealing with	an enemy
16	Concealing	an opponent
17	Trading with	an old mentor
18	Playing with	new knowledge
19	Exploiting	magic
20	Terrified of	the Unseen

NPC REACTIONS

Normally, in solo play, everyone else is an NPC. If you are playing collaboratively you will still interact with a lot of NPCs. How they react to you is determined using a d20 roll with or without advantage/disadvantage dice.

You will generally know if an NPC is going to be generally friendly or hostile. Some NPCs are closed books and you have no idea how they will react. When you meet an NPC, you make that subjective call, considering your character, your reputation if you have one, and the adventures you have had. You then roll on the follow table, friendly NPCs are rolled with Advantage, hostile NPCs are with Disadvantage and neutrals are a single d20.

D20

- | | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | Attacks without warning |
| 2 | Denies access |
| 3 | Threatens or harasses |
| 4 | Demands tribute or payment |
| 5 | Tries to trick or deceive |
| 6 | Pursuing counter objective |
| 7 | Not interested in talking |
| 8 | Talkative or gossipy |
| 9 | Needs a favor or has a job |
| 10 | Wants to trade |
| 11 | Requests tribute or payment |
| 12 | Needs a favor or has a job |
| 13 | Tries to trick or deceive |
| 14 | Pursuing unrelated objective |
| 15 | Talkative or gossipy |
| 16 | Wants to trade |
| 17 | Offers help or advice |
| 18 | Needs a favor or has a job |
| 19 | Has a lead or a clue |
| 20 | Offers direct assistance |

Some of these results may seem odd or unnatural at first glance. Denies access could be anything from literally barring your way to

someone who is passive aggressive or just simply obstructive.

Attacking without warning could be totally inappropriate if you always think in terms of weapons and armour but extend it to verbal attacks and you have a wider range of options.

The guiding factor must be **your adventure**. If you are after a brawling dog fight of an adventure, any NPC you meet could a relative of a past enemy, a continuation of a blood feud going back generations. If you want adventures where wonder and discovery are the driving themes, hostile NPCs should be less likely to draw steel.

There are two very special features on this reaction table. The first is jobs and the second objectives.

Jobs

These are where you can introduce side quests into your games. Just consider what would be a sensible thing job, task or need for this NPC? What do they want or need from you? Of course, you are not obliged to take the job but role-play the interaction anyway. This could have repercussions later.

Objectives

Some NPCs will have their own goals. There are two cases that objectives come up. The first is a counter objective. This NPC is actively working against you. If you are trying to help someone, they are trying to harm them. If you need to find something, they want it to keep it hidden. Maybe not now, but at some point, you are going to come into conflict with this NPC or whoever it is that put them up to their mission.

Unrelated objectives are just that. The NPC has their own mission and now it is nothing to do with you. The point of this is that your solo game is a sandbox. There is much more going on in it than just your adventure. This unrelated objective

could at a later stage become important. It could be that you break off your own mission to help them with theirs.

It is extremely helpful, in solo play, to keep a record of the NPCs you met, their reaction and if they had a job, mission or favour, what it was. This will help you to keep those NPCs consistent when you meet them again. It is also useful to turn the list around and list jobs, favours and objectives and who was involved and where you heard about it. Think of them as an NPC list and a Plot Hook list.

Plot Hooks

There are three common ways of generating plot hooks. The first is through NPC reactions that offer jobs and objectives. A note of what you think the job or objective is, who it relates to and when and where you learned about is a good idea.

The second source is fortunate events and calamities. These sudden plot twists and turns can create spin off potential stories. Has a big bad villain, who you thought was dead, suddenly been seen alive? Did an evil cult bring him back from the near death through some dark ritual? The place to record that cult is in your plot hooks.

The third source comes from rationalised questions. Sometimes a simple question produces an unexpected answer, a follow up question just begs to be explored. In one game I was returning to a tavern I had stayed at before. I asked the rules if the bar keep was pleased to see me? Rolling with Advantage, because I am good dog, the result was a No! I followed up with Why isn't he pleased to see me? The answer was "Terrified of an old enemy." Now if that isn't an invitation to investigate, I don't know what is!

How you choose to organise your list is up to you. I use a simple list as I said above.

Connecting Plots

Before I start a solo session, I review that list and see if any of these plot hooks could be related. The goal here is two-fold.

The first reason is that if you connect plot hooks it create the impression of other events progressing 'off camera'. If you have met three NPCs all of whom are working towards an opposing objective, are they all the minions of a powerful Mau house? Now those three individual hooks become one. Later when you need to create a new hook, you can look at these existing connected hooks and see if they would work. It is easier to advance an exiting hook than to continuously invent new ones.

These connected hooks do not all have to be of the same type. It helps if you can see a connection, they could all relate to a place, or they all occurred while you were on the same mission. As soon as you can rationalise them into a single plot, do so.

The second reason is that a campaign with literally dozens of loose ends and unanswered questions can feel dissatisfying. If you can turn twelve loose ends in to four plots and then start to advance them you keep the sum of unfinished business under control. As you continue to need new opposing objectives or justifications for calamities and fortunate events you can choose, does it fit one of the existing ones or is this something new?

Reviewing this list before each session brings the available plots to the front of your mind. If you aggregate and connect plots at this point, the continuity that they create will add a layer of richness to the campaign.

These 'other plots' may start as loose ends or plot hooks, but soon they will take on the appearance of fully developed plots in their own right. At this point they can start to rationalise other actions. If an NPC you meet suddenly attacks for 'no reason', were they an assassin sent by that Mau diplomat you have been foiling for the past three months? When you nemesis turns up, out of the blue, is it a chance encounter or is now the moment she is ready to spring her trap?

In the same way that a random roll can guide your improvisation, so can connecting the seemingly random plot hooks on your list.

RUNNING SOLO

Being the only good dog in a game designed for a whole party is tough. Unless you have an NPC running with you, you are going to be denied encouragement dice, and you have no one to cover you when things get bad.

To balance this there are a couple of techniques that can help you have exciting adventures, without dying every two minutes.

Start Beyond Level 1

Try starting your adventures at second or third level. Your character will be a little less fragile and bit more capable.

Bonus Actions

You have the advantage that you know what the campaign is going to be like, whether combat heavy or all spooky investigations. You can choose your bonus actions to suit your campaign style, even before you start play.

Fortune Bowl

You are not going to get any fortune points just for great role play. All your role play is going to be excellent but only you are going to know anything about it. You will get a trickle from rolling calamities, but you may have to spend some to 'tilt' the game. At the start of each session add two fortune points to the bowl.

If you feel you have finished a mission, or a side quest give yourself you 1d6 Fortune. You can spend it on NPCs currently with you. I do not suggest you try running an entire party of solo characters. It tends to destroy the unique first-person experience of solo play.

Play With Time

You can do things in a solo game that would be extremely hard in a traditional group game. One of these is playing with the timeline. We see

it on TV and in the movies all the time but not so much in role playing games. There are two common instances of this.

Flashbacks

If you suddenly find yourself in a position where you think 'my character would have thought of that' but right now you are up to your muzzle in dead zombies, you can run a flashback.

Play out a single short scene, usually no more than a single skill test or action. The result of which is do you have the knowledge or not. The same could be done for items. Would you have remembered to bring a rope? If you did play a flashback scene, if necessary, and gain your rope. Sometimes even a short conversation with a merchant can produce a bit more richness to a campaign. Once your flashback is over, you are back in the thick of the action.

What Went Before

You reached the climactic final scene, and you died. Oops. This happens. It is a game and not a movie with a fixed plot. But what if you loved that character?

Go back and have other adventures with the same character but before your adventure started. Remember that we started at third level? Well, make yourself second level and play out something that happened before your solo game began.

In a solo game there is only one person to please. That is you. Your game, your character, your story. Death isn't something to worry about. You can create another character, drop them into the same world and carry on the same campaign but with a different, new character.

In the end the goal is to have fun.

The End.

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