

Session 03 Shadow-walking Begins

Politeness Costs Nothing!

Flora leans forward to talk to the cabbie, calming him and handing him a small piece of valuable jewellery to pay for the ride and any distress their “little trick” might have caused.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Florimel
Action	OVERCOME
Intention	CAIm the Cabbie
Roll	3
Approach Bonus	+4

I figured this would need a Great (+4) Result and that Florimel would be pretty well-practiced at this sort of negotiation.

With a result of +7, she succeeds with style.

The cabbie even agrees to misdirect the police about where he dropped them off, so they are in the clear for the incident at the shops.

Back on the Street of the Laughing Unicorn, they run through another sudden shower (Flora hasn't brought a coat) and into a coffee shop. At a cosy table in the window, there is finally time to talk.

Lexi unpacks her shopping bags, intending to show Flora the hiking gear, as she recaps what's happened in Tyrell since she arrived. “I was intending to try and Shadow-walk away from here, maybe head back to Earth?”. There's that raised eyebrow again, and Lexi scowls. “You don't think I can? I think I could...”

Flora holds up a hand and smiles placatingly. “Of course, I think you COULD! You're my brother's daughter and it's what we do. I just think it's not going to be very pleasant for you. Like THIS place, there's so much you didn't consider, didn't visualise. Muggers, Poverty, Credit Cards. You could easily have been picked up by local law enforcement and locked away. If they had taken my Card away from you and kept you in a cell, you wouldn't even have been able to call for help or shadow-walk anywhere. Tell them who you really are, and they'd lock you away in a mental ward – that's if they don't have some equivalent of electro-shock therapy to CURE you with!”

I think a GUILF roll would help see how well Lexi handles this “criticism” and whether her response convinces Flora to offer help or abandon her here. All three of Lexi's Aspects suggest she isn't going to ask for help. She could self-compel her Trouble or her “Rebellious” or her “Determined to Prove Herself” in order to regain a FATE Point by getting stroppy with her Aunt, but that would make it Very Unlikely (76+) Flora would help. If she politely thanks Flora and then tries to ask for more help it would need a Guile of Great (+4) with her current “Indebtedness” pushing it to Superb (+5).

I could just decide between “get stroppy” and “meekly ask for help” but I'll let Guile decide this time...

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Control Temper
Roll	2
Approach	GUILE + 2

She only reaches +4 so fails to bite back her indignation.

So Lexi will do a Self-Compel to snap at Flora and insist she can manage on her own. Gaining a FATE Point (she was at zero before this).

It will now be Unlikely (76+), that Flora will offer more help... [47]

Through gritted teeth Lexi says “It was nice of you to help with my cab fare, but I’m quite capable of handling myself from here. I know how to Shadow-walk – at least I know the theory and walking the Pattern will have unlocked the power. Enjoy your coffee Auntie.” She puts on the raincoat and the hat and sweeps out with her shopping bags, leaving Flora to pick up the bill!

First Steps

“I’ll show her. No time like the present”. With that, she starts to walk along the street and allows the slushing of the cars along the road to be a constant white noise. The yellow headlights and red taillights are refracted through the rain, and she imagines a more pleasant sky. One without the sharp, burning brightness that pierces the thin clouds in eerie celestial slanting columns.

Shadow Tyrell has a Pattern Axiom of **-1**, so Shadow-walking here isn’t too difficult. I’ll assume Lexi’s anger makes her try and push it, so will use the “10” minute minimum time and look for a Great (+4) result to initiate it. It gives her 1 Stress which she’ll take in her Pattern Stress track.

She just succeeds, without needing to Invoke an Aspect. It’s easier to Shadow-walk where the Pattern Axiom is lower, so she’ll go “downhill” to a place with **PATTERN-2** to start with.

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Start Shadow Walk
Roll	1 FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0	Broken 0

STRESS & CONDITIONS	
0 Stress	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0 Indebted	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0 Fatigued - 3 Stress (-1 on all Rolls)	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0 Broken - 6 Stress (-2 on all Rolls)	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0 PATTERN	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0 TRUMP	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Sensing that one direction seems “easier”, almost “downhill”, she mentally adjusts and lets the walking take her that way. As she rounds a bend, the burning sunlight between the clouds lessens. She notices other changes too, things she hadn’t asked for. There are fewer cars, and the high-rise buildings are becoming further apart as she approaches the edge of the city. An almost lifeless desert with the highway climbing in long curves towards distant mountains.

Shadow Axioms can change quickly in Shadows with negative Pattern, needing only a single Shadow Walk with that intention. Axioms are now TECH+4, PATTERN-2, MAGIC+1

The few cars passing her on the ground are looking a bit more rugged than the ones in the city. There are still a few vehicles in the air, mostly quad-rotor drones.

“Yes!” she punches the air, “It’s not so difficult after all. Now to work on the high-tech futurism and try and get it more similar to Earth’s.

She'll foolishly use the "10" minute minimum time again and now look for a Good (+3) result to initiate the next step. It gives her another 1 Stress which she'll take in her Pattern Stress track. Now that's empty, so future Stress would come off her standard Stress track.

0 PATTERN   

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Continuing Shadow Walk
Roll	-3 FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0	Broken 0

It's a good job there isn't a Fail with Style option!
 Because she's already Shadow-walking and this is a continuation, she continues to move through Shadow but is unable to reduce the TECH Axiom and has no control over the details that change. I'm going to assume this makes an Encounter Likely (26+)... [09]

The next ten minutes drain some part of her understanding of Pattern, as she tries to reduce the "High-Tech" qualities of the vehicles, but she seems to be getting nowhere with that, although the traffic has slowed to a trickle now and behind her, the City has already vanished over the horizon. The rain has stopped too, but the road is waterlogged and when a hover-craft truck goes by without warning, the vehicle's ground effect sprays her and batters at her through the raincoat.

Truck Stop

Maybe she should rest as she can sense that further effort will start to tire her, but as she's still in the process, she decides to continue a bit farther and imagines some kind of truck stop round the next bend where she could get a bed – she still has a little cash from Tyrell – will that still work here? Only one way to find out.

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Shadow Walking to a Truck Stop
Roll	-2 FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0	Broken 0

She'd just fail, but will spend her last FATE point to invoke her "Determination" and push on round the corner to a Truck Stop.

It will give her a point of Standard Stress

0 Stress      

Maybe she'd better rest for a few hours, allowing the Pattern in her blood to recover rather than tire herself out. She knows she could take more time over the changes and get where she's heading - Shadow Earth - more easily. "Tomorrow" she decides "I'll try it slower". As she walks into the truck stop, it's a not what she imagined. She hadn't really been looking into the vehicles, she was too busy concentrating on the Power. It looks like self-driving delivery vehicles are the future! It's primarily a re-charging depot for robot trucks. There is a central shop and a little block with toilets and sleeping pods for hire.

It seems 50/50 (51+) whether it will be manned... [86] so it's the second option, it's automated.

The entire truck stop is automated, the central shop has racks of vending machines that expect Card payment, and you need a valid card for the sleeping pods – IN ADVANCE! – so it's either a bit of

breaking and entering into either a Pod or the back of a parked delivery wagon, or she'll be sleeping in the rest-room!



As it's time for a bit of excitement, if she fails to break in, I'll have robot security drones emerge and try to zap her and catch her. This place is even more Chaotic (Pattern-2) than Tyrell and so far, she hasn't seen any people – maybe they've all been wiped out by something, and robots are just keeping the place running!

Lexi uses a multi-tool from her hiking equipment to prise a panel hatch off one of the sleeping pods. There's a lot of very high-tech circuitry in there!

I'll use half the current Tech Level (so 2) for the target score for getting in and then the Tech Level (4) as the target for not tripping an alarm.

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Jimmy open a Pod
Roll	-2 GUILLE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Bypass alarm (+1 for STEALTH Skill)
Roll	-1 GUILLE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Can You Try Again?

In general, you can retry a failed roll if it makes narrative sense and as long as you didn't get a NEGATIVE Result. Retries will always cause 1 Stress and always have a cumulative penalty of 1 on the Roll for each time you fail.

She failed to open a Pod (but not a negative result so I'll let her try again later but with +1 Difficulty (so 3) and 1 stress, and has failed to bypass the alarm. I could spend a FATE Point (if she had one), or accept some heavy cost to succeed (destruction of the multi-tool? Imminent arrival of security drones?) but I think I'll let it happen! As she failed both rolls, I'll assume she doesn't yet know there even was an alarm!

She COULD try to open another Pod... What the hell, the daughter of the guy who nearly destroyed the universe doesn't sleep in the restrooms!

I'll take that as a self-compel (as it's an unnecessary risk) and restore a FATE Point, back to 1.

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Open a Sleeping Pod
Roll	-1 GUILLE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Still not a negative result so she could still try again with another +1 and another Stress.

Failed again! She's getting annoyed now so starts hacking at the mechanism to get a Pod open. She decides to try smashing the hinges to loosen it first.

CREATE ADVANTAGE	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Smash the hinges
Roll	1 FORCE + 2
Fatig 0	Broken 0

I'll assume that a low-tech approach to create an advantage only has to beat half the Tech Level plus half the penalty for the previous fails (so 3).

Tie: You attain your goal but at a minor cost, such as the GM introducing a complication or presenting a tough choice

The minor cost is that she breaks the multi-tool, but she has got the Boost, so will try again to get a Pod open (target 4)

OVERCOME	
Character	Lexi
Intention	Get a Pod open
Roll	1 GUILLE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

She would have tied, but can spend the Boost for +2 to finally get it open. It's cost her 2 more stress (3 out of 6) and all her Pattern Stress boxes are gone too. Normally she'd get the Standard Stress back at the end of a Scene, but I think the Security Bot will arrive now, before she has chance to rest.

After breaking her multi-tool loosening the hinges, she finally prises open one of the Pods, revealing a comfortable compartment with a mini-bar and a vid-screen. The vid screen seems to be stuck showing adverts, but she eats a couple of bags of peanuts and drinks a tinned Gin & Tonic before a Security Drone arrives.

***** End of Session Three *****

The Security Drone is going to be a significant threat. Aiming to subdue (by hitting her with a cattleprod/taser) and then bind her and send for a pick-up vehicle to take her to jail. I plan to work out when she gets to the jail, whether there are actually any humans left alive **in this area** Unlikely (76+) **or in this Shadow at all** (maybe some Mad-max barbarians).

The Security Drone will have Combat +4, Armor 1, Sensors +3 and 6 Stress and do 3 damage with its Zapper. The net will be a +6 challenge to get out of once you are trapped in it and a +3 challenge to avoid while you are conscious.

