

Adventures of the Space Patrol

Retro-Cute Sci-Fi Role-Playing

By Ewen Cluney

Playtest Version 2

Powered by Fate

Credits

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Welcome to the Space Patrol!

Greetings, Space Agent! If you are reading this, you have been formally accepted into that most illustrious of organizations, the Space Patrol. Founded in Interplanetary Year 2930, the Space Patrol protects the many people of the solar system. Our motto is:

“We’re here to help!”

If you ever forget, you need only look at your gleaming Space Agent badge. Everywhere you go, there are people (and other things) who need help, and it is the job of the Space Patrol to aid them wherever and whenever we can. Some people apply to become Space Agents thinking they’ll be flying through space zapping green bug-eyed aliens, but nothing could be further from the truth. Not only are most green bug-eyed aliens friendly, but little things are every bit as important as big ones. If you don’t like the idea of stopping to help get a cat out of a tree, this isn’t the organization for you.

The Earth Branch of the Space Patrol was founded in Interplanetary Year 3491, or 1951 A.D. by the Earth calendar. It’s one of the smaller branches of the Space Patrol, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have to work hard here. Earth is primitive technologically, but it’s actually one of the most complicated planets in the known galaxy, and its people have complicated hearts.

Commander Neutron spends his days watching the Globitron, looking for people who need our help. When he finds someone, he’ll dispatch some of you, our proud Space Agents, to the scene to help. Different people need different kinds of help, especially when there are things from other planets causing problems.

Earth!

We have at last reached the FUTURE, the **Year 2000**, and humanity has finally arrived. Earth is not perfect, but people have conquered the greatest problems of war, hunger, and pollution. Humanity has yet to fully join galactic civilization, so everyday life is not so different from what it was in the past. People drink coffee in the morning, drive cars, work, go to school, eat hot meals, listen to music, fall in love, and so on. But the vast and exhilarating cosmos is out there, and every day there are people feeling its influence.

Or to put it another way, the setting of *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is basically the Earth you and I live on, but a bit shinier and happier, and all the more so with the Space Patrol looking out for people’s wellbeing.

About This Game

Adventures of the Space Patrol is a tabletop role-playing game for having fun, heart-warming, bold adventures with minimal preparation. As a player, you’ll become a Space Agent, one of the proud members of the Space Patrol’s Earth Branch, and help ordinary people with space-related problems. Along the way your Space Agent will make new friends and bravely work to solve the problem at hand.

Materials

Pencils and Paper: Each player is going to need a character sheet. The easiest thing is to photocopy them from the book or print them out from the PDF you can find on our website, but in a pinch you can use ordinary blank paper. You’ll still need something to write with though, preferably something you can erase.

The GM might also want to have a Mission Planning Sheet, but a blank sheet of paper (or an open word processor on your computer) will do fine for this purpose. It doesn’t hurt to give each participant a copy of the Rules Reference Sheet too.

Dice: Ideally, each player should have four Fudge dice (also known as Fate dice). These are special six-sided dice where each die has two  sides, two  sides, and two blank () sides. These are available

from many hobby gaming stores and online retailers. If you don't have Fate dice, see p. 51 for tips on how to substitute normal dice, cards, or even play the game without any random element at all.

Tokens: Rather than scribbling and erasing numbers or tick marks, I highly recommend using glass beads, poker chips, coins, extra dice, playing cards, or whatever else is on hand to keep track of Atom Points and Fusion Points. Having some kind of bowl or other container for Fusion Points is helpful too.

A Place and Time: You need to figure out a place and time to play the game. You might meet up at a friend's house, the local game store, a friendly restaurant or café, or maybe even online. You'll want a minimum of about two hours to play this game, preferably 3-4 just to be sure. If you're meeting together in person, make sure everyone is well-fed, hydrated, and ready to go.

You Might Also Want...

Playing Cards: The Game Master can use a deck of ordinary playing cards (without the Jokers) to come up with ideas for episodes quickly, but this isn't required to play the game. They also can be a substitute for tokens or even dice.

Sticky Notes/Index Cards: These are very handy for keeping track of temporary aspects of all kinds, as well as for representing zones during conflicts (p. 31).

What Is Role-Playing?

Adventures of the Space Patrol is a role-playing game. If you decide to play it (and I really hope you will), you'll need to get together with some friends. Through talking, scribbling on paper, and rolling dice you'll experience stories. I'll explain the rest as we go along, but if you're not familiar with these games, the "role-playing" part will need some extra explanation.

Role-playing is an activity where the participants take on the role of other people. Teachers sometimes use this to help students understand things better, or to practice certain skills (like speaking a foreign language or doing job interviews), and psychologists sometimes use role-playing as a tool to help people with their problems. Whatever the purpose of the role-play, you are pretending to be someone in a certain situation, and you can speak and act how you think they would. In the more useful kinds of role-play you may in fact take the part of yourself in a particular situation, but in a role-playing game (RPG) you take the part of a fictional character.

Different people role-play in different ways. For some it's a calculated performance or moving a game piece around, while for others it's more like slipping into another self for a little while. However you do it, you need to consider what your character is thinking and feeling, and express that through his or her words and actions. Your character's emotions and biases may lead him or her to do things that are illogical and disadvantageous. That's fine. People are irrational creatures, and while the characters in the game will have something they're trying to accomplish, for the players the overriding goal of playing a role-playing game isn't to "win" anything, just to tell an interesting story.

One of the important differences between a role-playing game and most other kinds of role-play is that for an RPG you don't physically act out what your character is doing. You can use some gestures if you think it will help, but for the most part you just describe your character's actions verbally, so that everyone else understands what your character is trying to do. For some things you might want to do, you'll have to engage the game rules to see if you can succeed, and what happens as a result.

Another important issue in any kind of role-play is of control. There are distinct limits to what you can and can't put into the fictional world you and your friends share. This is easier when you're role-playing a job interview, because unless the interviewee happens to be Superman, you can't start flying or shooting beams from your eyes. In an RPG, the fictional worlds tend to be a little more complicated than just an office where job interviews are held, so consistency is important. If you're a player of a conventional RPG, you have control over what your character thinks and does, but nothing else. You might well have a character who can fly or has heat vision, but that will be because you and your friends established his or her superhuman powers before you started playing, and not because you just happened to feel like it all of a sudden.

In most RPGs, one person at the table will have to be the Game Master, or GM for short. The regular players each play as one of the characters that will be the heroes of the story. The GM presents the rest of the world and the people (and other things) in it and acts as a referee for the rules. Although you'll already know whether a character can fly and such, playing an RPG presents all kinds of smaller questions, and a big part of the GM's job is figure these things out, with some help from the game's rules. The GM's job is a bit harder than a player's (but not *that* hard), and it has its own perks. Still, a lot of people find they strongly prefer one or the other.

Finally, the most important thing to remember about role-playing games is that their purpose is to be fun. If you're not enjoying yourself, talk to your friends about why. Sometimes you need to adjust how you're doing things for your friends, and sometimes the game you're playing isn't quite right for what you want. If that happens, you and your friends can try changing how the game works or (gasp!) play some other game that works better for you.

The Fate System

I based the rules of *Adventures of the Space Patrol* on the Fate system from Evil Hat, specifically *Fate Accelerated Edition*. If you're already familiar with Fate, you'll already understand a lot of the most important rules principles, but even if you're not, other Fate-based games can provide a wealth of advice and material that can enrich your game, especially if you want to tinker with it a bit. If you'd like to know more, check out www.faterpg.com.

For Fate veterans, here are the major things you'll find are different from standard Fate:

- The arrangement of the text draws on *Golden Sky Stories* for inspiration, so the rules are not located in quite the same places as in other Fate games. Likewise GSS directly inspired Bonds (p. 32) and Proton Points (p. 35).
- *Space Patrol* is geared primarily to short-term play and one-shots with minimal preparation, and thus lacks most of the Fate mechanics that point to multi-session play.
- There are optional rules for creating new characters and customizing existing one on p. 53, but by default players simply pick one of the game's premade characters.
- "Stunts" are called "Shticks." Shticks are unique traits of each character rather than being tied to skills, but otherwise work the same.
- *Space Patrol* adds the "Fusion Point" system (see p. 23), which is similar to the Fan Mail mechanic from *Primetime Adventures*. Also, I've renamed Fate Points to "Atom Points," though apart from the Fusion Point thing they work the same.
- In the standard *Space Patrol* rules players can customize their characters between sessions, but those characters do not improve per se. Milestones are thus not a part of this game, though they wouldn't be hard to implement. *Space Patrol* characters have a de facto starting Refresh of 3 by the way.

Space Agents

The first thing you need to do to play the game is to pick out which Space Agents you're going to play. Everyone playing (except the Game Master) needs one Space Agent of their own. If you haven't played before you can just pick out a character that you think looks fun, but pay extra attention to their Aspects.

Although it helps to have a good variety of Agents, in terms of both abilities and personalities, there's nothing wrong with having both Lunk and Craylor on the same team. Also, unless you can come up with a *really* interesting reason why, no two players can choose the same character.

You'll want to have your own copy of the sheet for your Space Agent. You can make a copy of that agent's page in this book, print it out from the file on our website, or just copy the necessary stuff by hand onto a blank Space Agent Record Sheet, or even a blank sheet of paper.

If you get tired of playing the characters in this section, take a look at the Appendix to learn how to make your own original characters.

Anatomy of a Space Agent

Name

Pretty self-explanatory, but this is the Space Agent's name.

Archetype

A Space Agent's Archetype is a short phrase that sums up what they are.

Quote

This is a typical line of dialogue from the Space Agent, though you'll undoubtedly toss out many other memorable lines yourself as you play.

Description

Here you'll find an overview of the Space Agent that tells you what kind of person he or she is and where he or she came from.

Suggested Opening Blurb

This is a suggestion for what to say for your Space Agent's introduction during the Opening Credits part of the game (see p. 19). You can read it as-is, or make up your own.

Gender

Male or female? Or something else?

Looks

What does the Agent look like?

Skills

Each Space Agent has five Skills: Action, Cunning, Heart, Investigation and Science. The higher an Agent's rank in a skill is, the better he or she is at tackling challenges related to it. You use your Skills when the GM asks you to make a check (see p. 33).

Shticks

Shticks are special tricks that Agents can use to better do their jobs. Each agent has three Shticks. Just because you don't have a shtick for something doesn't necessarily mean you can't do it. However, a shtick will typically either guarantee success or give a hefty bonus, often at a cost of an Atom Points.

Aspects

Each Agent has three Aspects. An aspect is a word, phrase, or sentence that describes something centrally important to your Agent. It can be a motto your character lives by, a personality quirk, a description of a relationship you have with another character, an important possession or bit of equipment your character has, or any other part of your character that is vitally important.

Aspects allow you to change the story in ways that tie in with your character's tendencies, skills, or problems. You can also use them to establish facts about the setting, such as the presence of magic or the existence of a useful ally, dangerous enemy, or secret organization.

Stuff

Each Agent has three things that they carry around to help accomplish their missions. An Agent's "Stuff" doesn't matter to the rules per se, but they can make a huge difference to whether or not you can do something. See p. 34 for more details.

Things That Aren't On The Sheet

For each Space Agent there are all kinds of little things that the description doesn't tell you. That's on purpose; this "blank space" is waiting for you to fill it in however you want. Even if you're playing an Agent out of the book, you can still put your own spin on it, even if you don't change a thing on the sheet. Is Jenny Jetstream actually smarter than she lets on? Is she allergic to cats? Does she have a habit of saluting hard enough to leave bruises on her forehead? Make your Agent your own!

Beeper, Cute Robot

“Ooh! Is it broken! Can I fix it? I can totally fix it! Here!”

Beeper (or BP3-J) is a maintenance robot that distinguished himself for bravery many times by going above and beyond the call of duty to help people out. He was nearly destroyed when he shut down a malfunctioning reactor and thereby saved an entire city, and thus Commander Neutron ordered him rebuilt, upgraded, and made a member of the Space Patrol.

The new Beeper is more determined than ever to do a good job and help people, though his upgraded computing capacity has left him with extra runtime that has in turn led him to become a little erratic in some ways. In particular, he'll try to fix things that don't really need fixing, and he's acquired a taste for old western movies.

Suggested Opening Blurb: I am BP3-dash-J, but you can call me Beeper! I am a BP series maintenance robot, and I can fix anything you need me to fix!

Gender: Robot (Male Voice Program)

Looks: Beeper is a small, round robot colored silver and yellow, with stubby arms and legs and friendly, cartoonish eyes.

Skills: Action 3, Cunning 2, Heart 4, Investigation 3, Science 4

Shticks:

- **Equipment:** Being a robot, Beeper naturally bears a certain resemblance to a random piece of equipment. By folding up his arms and legs, he gets a +2 bonus to Cunning checks for hiding, or +3 for hiding where there are other machines around.
- **Fix Anything:** Beeper has an exceptional knack for fixing things that are broken. You can spend an Atom Point to automatically succeed at fixing any one broken machine. If the machine is a character, this can either clear all of its Stress boxes or remove one Minor or Moderate Consequence.
- **Talk to Machines:** You have a natural ability to communicate with machines. You can hold conversations with any machine of any kind, even ones that theoretically can't talk. That doesn't necessarily mean they'll be able or willing to tell you anything useful, but it can't hurt to ask, right?

Aspects:

- Brave little repair robot
- Gotta fix everything!
- Totally Fearless

Stuff:

- Built-In Tools
- Sonic Broom
- Storage Compartment

Billy Smith, Plucky Kid

“Hey, what’s that? It looks neat! I love neat things!”

Billy is a pretty normal 10-year-old kid. He goes to school, he has some good friends, he watches cartoons, he has a pet dog named Dirk, and so on. Oh, and he’s also a Deputy Space Agent!

See, kids who show enough promise are sometimes allowed to become honorary members of the Space Patrol. They get to go on adventures with full Agents, and a lot of them become full Agents when they grow up. Some Space Agents once rescued Billy, and he just kept following them everywhere until Commander Neutron finally gave in and made him a Deputy.

Suggested Opening Blurb: I’m a boy from Earth, and I’m 10, but I have the awesomest job in the universe! I’m a Deputy Space Agent! Check out my badge!

Gender: Boy

Looks: A pretty normal 10-year-old boy with messy brown hair. Wears Jeans, a Space Patrol T-shirt (he used to wear shirts of his favorite baseball team), worn-out sneakers, and a baseball cap.

Skills: Action 2, Cunning 3, Heart 5, Investigation 4, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Befriend:** You have a curious knack for making friends with people and other things that you meet. If the GM allows, you can spend 1 Atom Point and make some kind of overture in the game, in order to start making someone a friend. This lets you create a Bond with a character that you couldn’t normally.
- **Courage:** You have a brave heart that helps you get through tough situations. When you’re making an unopposed check to do something dangerous, you can use your Heart skill instead of whatever skill it would normally involve.
- **Random Junk:** You carry around lots of random stuff in your pockets, which occasionally turns out to be very useful. You can spend 1 Atom Point to find any one small, ordinary object you might want, such as a paperclip, chewing gum, a rubber ball, etc.

Aspects:

- Plucky Little Deputy Space Agent
- Always Getting Captured
- Hey, mister, whatcha’ doing?

Stuff:

- Backpack
- Deputy Space Agent Badge (shiny!)
- Slingshot

Cosmo the Wonder Dog

“Hello there! I am Cosmo the Wonder Dog! We have just met but I want to become your friend!”

Cosmo is the product of the Space Patrol’s Animal Wonderfulness Research Project, a highly intelligent, loyal, and all-around great dog. One of the engineers put an experimental canine-human translator collar on him, which lets him communicate with people. His boundless desire to help others any way he can caught Commander Neutron’s attention, and he has since become a full Space Agent. His tendency to get distracted by squirrels, balls, sticks, cats, etc. sometimes makes it hard for him to concentrate on his mission, but

Suggested Opening Blurb: Hello everyone! I am Cosmo! I am a dog! Can we play?

Gender: A Good Boy! Yes You Are!

Looks: Cosmo is a healthy and athletic but quite ordinary-looking brown dog. His collar, which has a translator device and his Space Agent badge, is the only real clue that he’s not just any dog.

Skills: Action 4, Cunning 2, Heart 5, Investigation 3, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Track by Scent:** You have the full benefit of a dog’s sense of smell, which means you have an exceptional ability to identify and follow scents. Add +2 to any checks where your sense of smell benefits you.
- **Protector:** Whenever you make a Defend action to protect someone else, add +1 to the result.
- **Animal Speech:** Cosmo is of course a native speaker in Dog, and thus can effortlessly communicate with most other canines. By playing with the settings on his translation collar, he can also communicate with other types of animals. By spending an Atom Point, Cosmo can talk to one animal of any type for the rest of the scene.

Aspects:

- Wonder Dog Space Agent
- Let’s play fetch!
- Loyal Canine Companion

Stuff:

- Collar with translator and Space Agent badge
- Tennis Ball
- Dog Treats

Craylor, Martian Barbarian

"If you do not share your ice cream you will indeed witness the might of a Martian warrior."

The wastelands of Mars are a harsh and treacherous land, home to a fierce and bold race of red-skinned warriors. The barbarians of Mars have been friendly to the Space Patrol ever since Commander Neutron became the first offworlder to complete the Rite of Dashk'tlaag by defeating the dreaded Knerglaag with only a spear and his wits. While most Martian warriors are suspicious of the trappings of civilization, Craylor's curiosity has led him to see what lies beyond Mars by joining the Space Patrol. Earth is a strange world to him, but he enjoys learning new things there.

Suggested Opening Blurb: I come from the Martian deserts. Your world is strange to me, and I wish to learn more of it.

Gender: Male Warrior, By the Rite of Dashk'tlaag

Looks: A massively burly red-skinned man with intense yellow eyes. Wears a loincloth and leather boots.

Skills: Action 4, Cunning 2, Heart 4, Investigation 4, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Intuition:** Your keen eye lets you discern things about others that might not be immediately apparent. You can spend an Atom Point to find out one NPC's Power Level and Aspects.
- **Menacing:** You cut a very imposing figure, and when you try to look menacing, people tend to back off. Add +1 to checks made to intimidate or scare people.
- **Smash Things:** Your exceptional strength lets you smash through things that get in your way. You can spend an Atom Point to break through any one obstacle.

Aspects:

- Thoughtful, curious Martial warrior
- We have nothing like this on Mars.
- You have earned my respect.

Stuff:

- Satchel
- Spear
- Water Skin

Jasmine Goodbody, Arcturan Nurse

“Poor thing. Come here and I’ll make it all better.”

At the Space Patrol’s Earth Headquarters, Jasmine has a nickname: The Goddess of Healing. Although she’s quite modest about it, she is an exceptional medical professional (though the Arcturan Academy of Medicine expects nothing less) and a sort of aura of niceness that puts people at ease.

Suggested Opening Blurb: My name is Jasmine Goodbody, and I’m a nurse. Are you hurt? Let me take a look at that...

Gender: Woman

Looks: Jasmine is a gorgeous brown-skinned woman with long, flowing black hair. She has an achingly beautiful smile, and a stunning figure. She wears a retro-future nurse uniform in white with red highlights.

Skills: Action 2, Cunning 2, Heart 5, Investigation 3, Science 4

Shticks:

- **Calming Presence:** Your presence is naturally calming to people. Anyone in the same scene as you gets a +1 bonus to checks made to resist negative emotions.
- **Hands Off the Goddess:** Something about your sheer niceness and kindness makes people loathe to lay a hand on you. Anyone trying to do anything violent or mean to you takes a –1 penalty to the check to do so, and others around them probably won’t like it.
- **Healing Hands:** Jasmine’s medical expertise lets her fix most any medical problem imaginable. She can remove Minor or Moderate Consequences relating to injury, fatigue, etc. from others by spending an Atom Point, and she gets a +1 bonus to checks relating to medicine. This can still take a little time, and those she helps may still need some time to recuperate.

Aspects:

- Beautiful, Beloved Nurse
- Cool Under Pressure
- Too nice for her own good.

Stuff:

- Lollipops
- Medical Kit
- Thermos of Tea

Jenny Jetstream, Atomic Ranger

“Space Patrol to the rescue! Space Agent Jenny Jetstream reporting for duty!”

Jenny Jetstream is a model Space Agent, and a proud member of the Atomic Rangers, a class of Agents trained for mobility and flexibility. She’s honest and forthright to the point of being gullible, and sometimes has a hard time believing that people are actually capable of doing wrong.

Suggested Opening Blurb: Jenny Jetstream, Atomic Ranger of the Space Patrol, Earth Branch! Reporting for duty! As ordered! (salutes)

Gender: Young Woman

Looks: A slim, attractive woman of average height, with short blond hair and bright blue eyes. She wears a white and silver jumpsuit, and is seldom without her jetpack, even in situations where it’s wholly inappropriate.

Skills: Action 5, Cunning 2, Heart 4, Investigation 3, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Backup:** Once per episode you can spend an Atom Point to call up someone from the Space Patrol to help you out. This person will help out by making a single check with a skill rank of +6, and then leave.
- **Jet Pack:** You have a Space Patrol issue antigravity jet pack that lets you fly through the air (or in outer space). You can fly and hover slowly (up to a fast walking pace) as much as you like, and you can fly quickly by spending an Atom Point. If you fly quickly, you can move two zones per turn instead of one in a conflict, and you get a +2 bonus to any checks made relating to going fast.
- **Nick of Time:** You have a knack for showing up just when you’re needed. When you aren’t obviously trapped or too far to make it in time, you can spend 1 Atom Point to appear wherever one of your friends is.

Aspects:

- Loyal and Swift Atomic Ranger
- Gullible
- We’re here to help!

Stuff:

- Chocolates
- Magnetic Boots
- Repulsor Gun (pushes things back)

Katrina, Venusian Cat Princess

“Do I really have to? Can’t you do it for me? It’s not like it’s a big Denebian behemoth.”

Venus is home to the Venusian Cat People, a race of humanoids with certain cat features, including catlike attitudes. Katrina is the youngest crown princess of the Venusian royal family, and while she’s every bit as skilled and charismatic as her sisters, they’ve sent her off to work for the Space Patrol to get her out of their hair for a while. She’s not a big fan of “working,” but the stuff she gets to do as a Space Agent can be quite fun sometimes.

Suggested Opening Blurb: I’m a cat princess from Venus. Keep things fun for me and we’ll get along just fine.

Gender: Female

Looks: A curvy and beautiful young woman with tawny hair. She has cat ears and a cat tail, and yellow cat eyes. She has a rather extensive wardrobe, and is seldom seen wearing the same outfit twice.

Skills: Action 3, Cunning 4, Heart 3, Investigation 4, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Bribery:** You have some considerable material wealth to throw around. You can spend an Atom Point to bribe someone with something. This puts a special Aspect called “Bought Off By Katrina” on them for the rest of the episode, and you get to invoke it once for free.
- **Nine Lives:** You have an uncanny ability to get out of danger. Whenever you’re in immediate danger, you can spend an Atom Point to automatically get out of it, albeit in a somewhat undignified way.
- **Pounce:** Your quick reflexes let you jump in without any hesitation. Add +1 to any roll to do with acting before others.

Aspects:

- Prissy Venusian Cat Princess
- But I’m a princess!
- Play with me!

Stuff:

- Change of Clothes
- Jewelry
- Small Box of Catnip

Leonard Fuller, Crabby Old Spaceman

“Back in my day flying to the moon took six days and nights, crammed into a little landing module! And we LIKED it!”

Leonard was an astronaut back in the Good Old Days, and has flown on more space missions than he can count. He’s been to every corner of the solar system, but after decades of space travel he retired to his home back on Earth. The only problem was that he was lonely (not that he’ll ever admit it) and missed space too much to stay retired. That’s why he recently came out of retirement to work for the Space Patrol. He comes off as a crabby old man, but he actually cares a lot more than he lets on. Leonard is entirely at peace with his age, and it would be a mistake to underestimate him because of it.

Suggested Opening Blurp: I was exploring black holes while you were still in diapers! I know a black hole when I see one, kid!

Gender: Old Man

Looks: Leonard is an old man, nearly 70, who walks with a stoop and a cane with tennis balls on the end. His hair is a gray crew cut and he needs thick bifocals to see, but the gleam in his eyes show a sharp mind. He insists on wearing a spacesuit most of the time.

Skills: Action 2, Cunning 2, Heart 3, Investigation 4, Science 5

Shticks:

- **I Knew Your Daddy:** You’ve lived a long time and have been just about everywhere there is to go. When you meet someone new, there’s a good chance you’ve already met someone they know. By spending an Atom Point you can declare that you knew someone’s dad or similar. This gives you a +2 bonus to form a Bond with them and a +1 bonus to social checks made to persuade them for the rest of the episode.
- **Just an Old Man:** You may be on in years, but you’re spryer than people realize, and you’re certainly not above using that to your advantage. If you can convincingly pretend your old age is holding you back, you get a +2 bonus to Cunning.
- **The Sky Calls to Us:** Sometimes the sheer beauty of the cosmos overwhelms you and lends you strength to keep going. Any time you can see the stars or other aspects of space or space travel, you can spend an Atom Point to either clear all of your Stress boxes or remove a Minor or Moderate Consequence that is emotional in nature.

Aspects:

- Crabby Veteran Astronaut
- I’m getting too old for this.
- Tell grandpa what’s wrong.

Stuff:

- Gold Pocket Watch
- Spacesuit
- Sturdy Cane

Lunk Stonejaw, Terrestrial Enforcer

“... I don’t think you should do that to my friends. If you do I might have to get punchy.”

In the Space Patrol the term “Terrestrial Enforcer” is supposed to be a term of respect, but in practice it too often gets used as a synonym for “security guard.” Lunk, a hulking brute of a man, joined the Space Patrol because he just wanted to help people more than anything in the world. Somehow or other he wound up guarding the Globitron at Earth Headquarters. In theory this is an important job—Commander Neutron needs the Globitron to do his job, after all—but in reality it means standing there all day waiting for something to happen. Lunk was too nice to really complain, so he quietly did his job for a long time, until one day Commander Neutron asked him how he liked his job. Lunk turned bright red and reluctantly replied, “Kinda boring.” Since then, Lunk has been assigned to regular Space Agent duty, which he finds both exciting and fulfilling, even if he does sometimes fall into his old habit of standing in one place waiting for stuff to happen.

Also, there’s a certain girl he works with that he kind of likes...

Suggested Opening Blurb: Uh, hi. I’m kinda a big guy I guess. I can help, so, um, don’t forget about me, okay?

Gender: Man

Looks: Lunk is just massive, to the point where when he wears his white and silver Space Patrol jumpsuit people sometimes mistake him for a refrigerator. He has beady eyes and a fringe of black hair.

Skills: Action 4, Cunning 2, Heart 4, Investigation 3, Science 3

Shticks:

- **Imperturbable:** You’re very hard to perturb. You get a special bonus of +1 to checks made to resist attempts to upset your mental state.
- **Massive Strength:** Your exceptional strength lets you perform considerable feats of brawn. You get a special bonus of +1 to any action involving pure strength.
- **Wall of Me:** You have a way of putting yourself in harm’s way to the benefit of your friends. By spending 1 Atom Point, you can make it so that enemies in the immediate area must target or otherwise deal with you and no one else for one turn.

Aspects:

- Gentle Giant Enforcer
- You forgot about me.
- Big Teddy Bear

Stuff:

- Little Notebook (What’s in it? You decide.)
- Magnetic Boots
- Wall Ray (makes a temporary force field wall)

Natasha Sarkov, Galactic Spy

“Oh, come now. Surely you don’t want me to be stuck out here in the cold all alone, do you?”

Natasha was once a spy with the Galactic Intelligence Agency, known as much for her ability to charm her way into places as for her ability to sneak in. The only problem is, being famous and being a spy don’t mix. Targets she was supposed to be plying for information started asking for her autograph instead. Finally, she was forced to retire. Even with plenty of money to live comfortably, she couldn’t be happy without some adventure in her life, so she joined the Space Patrol.

Suggested Opening Blurb: You might know me as a former spy from the Galactic Intelligence Agency. I’m very skilled in infiltration, stealth, and... charm. (sly smile)

Gender: Femme Fatale

Looks: An exceptionally sexy woman in a slinky black dress, with long, wavy black hair and ruby-red lips.

Skills: Action 3, Cunning 5, Heart 2, Investigation 4, Science 2

Shticks:

- **Disguise:** By spending an Atom Point, you can convincingly disguise yourself as another person, who must be mostly human-like, and even imitate his or her voice. Observers can make opposed Cunning checks to try to discern whether or not you’re a fake.
- **Open Locks:** You have a knack for opening locks, whether by picking them, hacking a computer, or just using brute force. You can spend an Atom Point to open any one lock.
- **Stealthy:** You are exceptionally good at moving around without people noticing you. Add +1 to all rolls involving stealth.

Aspects:

- The Famous Natasha Sarkov, Galactic Spy
- Well, this is boring.
- You seem interesting.

Stuff:

- Shock Derringer (disrupts machines)
- Sonic Lipstick (records and plays any sound)
- Variable Dress (can look like any kind of dress)

Rick Fireball, Interstellar Daredevil

“Relax! I’ve got this one! And there’s a barf bag under the seat if you really need it.”

Rick Fireball is one crazy guy. He grew up around his family’s traveling aerobatics show, and he started flying a plane when he was 12. In the Space Patrol Academy he showed incredible talent, but a reckless attitude that infuriated his instructors and made him a hit with the girls. There was an incident with Natalie Neutron that Commander Neutron still hasn’t quite forgiven him for, but which made Rick a legend in the Space Patrol.

Rick sometimes misses his family’s traveling show, but he loves his job in the Space Patrol and all the danger it lets him face.

Suggested Opening Blurb: Danger is my middle name! Rick Danger Fireball! (casual salute)

Gender: Guy

Looks: A tall, slender guy with a shock of bright orangeish-red (dyed) hair and a wicked grin, dressed in a red and white flame-retardant jumpsuit.

Skills: Action 4, Cunning 4, Heart 3, Investigation 2, Science 3

Shticks:

- **Daredevil:** When piloting, you’re actually better at doing things that are crazy. Add +1 to all checks for dangerous or difficult maneuvers.
- **Safe Landing:** No matter what the situation, no matter how badly damaged your vehicle, you can always manage to bring it to a halt safely. It might not be usable after that, and you might not end up anywhere near where you want to be, but you and any passengers will be safe.
- **Where’d He Go?:** You have a certain knack for getting out of danger that catches people off-guard. When you are threatened, you can spend an Atom Point to disappear from the scene. Unfortunately, this only helps you, and it can leave your friends high and dry.

Aspects:

- The one and only Rick Fireball, Ace Pilot
- A legend in his own mind.
- Hello, ladies.

Stuff:

- Flame-Retardant Flight Suit
- Hair Care Stuff
- Chewing Gum

Sally Sprocket, Altairian Engineer

“Hydrospare, check. Neutron ram, check. Bubblegum... chewy.”

Sally is nothing short of a genius, and when her parents received a mysterious invitation for her to attend the Altairian Technical Academy with a full scholarship, they saw no reason to refuse. Little did they realize that they were sending their 12-year-old daughter to attend college on Altair IV, the Machine Planet. She came back to Earth a young woman with an in-depth knowledge of alien technology. Of course, she also picked up some quirks from her alien classmates, most notably a tendency to stand on her head when she's trying to think about stuff. Commander Neutron personally scouted her for the Space Patrol, and today she uses her talents for her home planet's safety and happiness.

Suggested Opening Blurb: Oh, hey, I was just fixing the tachyon interphase interositer. Do you need me to fix something?

Gender: Gal

Looks: A short young woman with brown hair in two pigtails and dark eyes. Wears overalls that were originally white, but usually covered in a layer of grime, and a black T-shirt and boots. Never without her toolbox.

Skills: Action 3, Cunning 2, Heart 3, Investigation 3, Science 5

Shticks:

- **Bench-Thumping:** You're good at what some call "percussive maintenance." If a machine breaks down, or if your efforts to repair something don't *quite* work, you have a knack for giving it a gentle tap that sets it right. If a machine is on the fritz (not completely broken), you can spend an Atom Point to make it work. If the machine is a character, this can remove one Minor or Moderate Consequence as well.
- **Inner Workings:** You're so used to crawling around inside big machines that you can just disappear into anything that's large enough.
- **Sabotage:** Although it breaks your heart to do it, you can sabotage a machine. Spend an Atom Point to do something to a machine. At any point before the end of the episode, you can trigger your sabotage to apply an appropriate temporary aspect to the machine.

Aspects:

- Expert Grease Monkey of the Space Patrol
- Lost in technical details
- Cute In Overalls

Stuff:

- Pet Squirrel
- Toolbox
- Welding Torch

Space Patrol Adventures

Setting Up

Although *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is meant to be a game you can just jump into quickly, there are a few things you need to do to prepare to play.

Gather Together

In order to play this game you're going to need a group of people to come together either in one place, or online. One person is going to need to be the Game Master (GM for short), and you'll need 2-4 more people to be players. You can have more than 4 if you really want, but personally I find that it gets a bit unwieldy. A typical episode takes around 90 minutes to 3 hours to play, depending on how many players there are and how complicated of a problem the Agents are tackling.

The Right Frame of Mind

The game of *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is at least as much about a particular attitude as it is the rules. When Conan O'Brien did his final episode of the Tonight Show, he took a moment to address the audience and said, "Nobody in life gets exactly what they thought they were going to get, but if you work really hard and you're kind, amazing things will happen." Not only did he give good advice for life in general, but this quote nicely sums up the ideal attitude of a Space Agent. They have their faults like anyone else, but their most important qualities are **kindness** and **optimism**.

Kindness is kind of obvious, but very important. This isn't a game about being mean. The job of a Space Agent, and thus the entire point of this game, is to help others. Space Agents are not perfect by any means—they can be gruff, taciturn, obnoxious, sly, clueless, selfish, insensitive, or any number of other things—but a core of kindness informs who they are and what they do.

Optimism is the belief that things can turn out all right in the end. It can take hard work—that's the whole point of the Space Patrol, after all—but you have to believe that things can become better, if only you work hard enough. It also means that no one is really beyond redemption. Real life sometimes presents us with truly irredeemable individuals, but *Adventures of the Space Patrol* takes place in a world where we all can in fact get along. The "bad guys" don't understand why what they're doing is wrong, and helping them understand is every bit as important as rescuing their victims. That doesn't mean it'll be easy, of course, but a happy ending is never truly beyond your reach.

Violence is a tricky issue for the Space Patrol. There are times when violence is unavoidable, but by itself it doesn't actually solve problems. If it was just a matter of hitting a bad guy with a ray gun, Commander Neutron would just set things up to do that from orbit, and the Space Agents would all be out of a job.

Contributing ideas can also be a very important part of playing the game. *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is not one of those Serious Business RPGs where you need to be careful about breaking a carefully-constructed world. This game is at its best when everyone is throwing out fun ideas along the way and the GM is running with them. You'll have to work out amongst yourselves how and how much you really want to do this, but I try to let my friends do so as much as they want. They'll add elements to the story, give non-player characters lines of dialogue, and generally contribute a million little things I wouldn't have thought of on my own.

Prepare Materials

You'll need to get together paper, pencils, dice, tokens, etc. to be able to play in person. See p. XX for a more detailed list of things you'll need.

Rules Basics

Everyone playing needs to have at least a basic understanding of how the rules of the game work, particularly dice rolls and aspects. The GM needs to have a reasonably firm grasp of all of the rules of the game. (There aren't too many.) If it's your first time playing, take a few minutes to go over the rules with your friends. You might also want to give everyone copies of the Rules Summary Sheet.

Select Space Agents

Each player will need to pick out a Space Agent from the 12 in the book. You'll find full descriptions of them starting on p. 5.

- **Beeper** is a little maintenance robot that Commander Neutron had promoted for exceptional acts of courage. He likes fixing things to a degree that borders on the obsessive, and is constantly looking for opportunities to help any way he can.
- **Billy Smith** is a plucky little boy who has joined the Space Patrol as a Deputy Space Agent. He's not the most skilled, but he has a lot of heart. Play Billy if you like the idea of being a nosy kid, and if you want a character with a knack for making himself useful in unexpected ways.
- **Cosmo** is a highly intelligent dog with a translator collar that lets him talk. Play Cosmo if role-playing a dog sounds fun!
- **Craylor** is a thoughtful yet mighty Martian barbarian. Play Craylor if you want to be powerful yet insightful, and if you think his culture shock would be fun.
- **Jasmine Goodbody** is a highly skilled nurse with a sort of "aura of niceness" that both calms people down and makes them disinclined to harm her. She's probably the least violent character in the game.
- **Jenny Jetstream** is an Atomic Ranger who zooms to the rescue with her jet pack! Play Jenny if you want a character that's pure-hearted to a fault and totally loyal to the Space Patrol.
- **Katrina** is an arrogant and kind of lazy Venusian Cat Princess. Play Katrina if you want to be a catgirl who flaunts her royal status and generally acts catty.
- **Leonard Fuller** is an astronaut who joined the Space Patrol because he was sick of being home retired. He can come off as being crabby, but he actually cares a lot. He also has a sharp mind and knows a lot about science and the world.
- **Lunk Stonejaw** is a Terrestrial Enforcer, a gentle giant who was recently promoted from a security guard job. Play Lunk if you want to be the big, strong guy who protects his friends.
- **Natasha Sarkov** is a galactic spy who became too famous for her own good. Play Natasha if you want a character that's sultry and sneaky.
- **Rick Fireball** is an Astro-Jockey, a master of operating any vehicle ever, and a total daredevil. Play Rick if you want to play a hotheaded nutjob who likes the ladies almost as much as he likes to go fast.
- **Sally Sprocket** is a highly skilled Alairian Engineer, able to fix, modify, or sabotage most any machine. Play Sally if you want to be a quirky, cute grease monkey girl who loves machines.

Once everyone has their Space Agents, take a little while to look them over in more detail, and introduce yourselves to the other players.

If you aren't short on time and you just can't find a Space Agent you want to play, there are rules for tweaking an existing one or making a new one on p. 53. You might also want to check our website for additional characters.

Setting Up the Table

Adventures of the Space Patrol works best when everyone is sitting around a table together, not too far apart. Make sure everyone has their character sheets, dice, and pencils ready to go.

The Atomic Pile: If you're using tokens to represent Atom Points (and I highly recommend that you do), the pile/bowl/whatever of tokens not currently in use is called the "Atomic Pile."

Starting Atom Points: Each player gets 3 Atom Points from the Atomic Pile to start with. The GM gets 10 Atom Points, but will not get any more over the course of the game.

The Fusion Pool: This is a shared pool of tokens that players can award to one another during the game. It starts out with 2 Fusion Points per player, and any time the GM spends Atom Points during the game they go into this pool. You may want to have a bowl or similar container for the Fusion Pool so you can tell it apart from the Atomic Pile.

If you're playing online, you'll need to figure out a way to handle Atom Points and Fusion Points. Establish a convention for keeping track of the current size of the Fusion Pool and for players to unobtrusively award points.

Scenario Prep

The GM is going to need to have a scenario prepared. This isn't all that hard—an experienced GM can do it in a few minutes—but it is very important. There's a step-by-step guide to preparing scenarios on p. 36. If you're in a hurry, or if you're not confident about planning an episode on your own, you can use one of the pre-made scenarios on p. 47.

If you as the GM need to sit down and prepare a scenario while the players are waiting, you can tell them that their Agents are sitting in the Space Patrol Earth Branch Headquarters' cafeteria waiting for orders, and let them have fun role-playing until you're ready.

Opening Credits

Before you start playing, you get to do an opening credit sequence. This is a little ritual to help everyone get into the right mood and quickly introduce the Space Agents that will be taking part in the episode. You might want to play some appropriate music while this is going on (the Appendix has some recommendations; see p. 55), but it's not required.

First, the GM reads the following in his or her best radio announcer voice:

It is the future, the YEAR 2000, and mankind has reached a new era of peace and prosperity. This dream of peace is watched over by a group who use their talents, courage, and kindness for the happiness of all. They are the proud members of the Earth Branch of the Space Patrol.

Commander Neutron watches over Planet Earth from Space Patrol Headquarters using the Globitron. When there's trouble, he dispatches his loyal Space Agents into the field to solve the problem and make the world a better place. Remember, the motto of the Space Patrol is, "We're here to help!"

Stay tuned to see the latest episode of... Adventures of the Space Patrol!

After that, the GM introduces each of the players and their Space Agents. Say "Starring!" and then point at each player in turn and say, "[Player Name] as [Space Agent Name]!"

As a player, when the GM points to you, it's your turn to throw out a quick blurb to introduce your Space Agent. Pretend that you're starring in a show, and the audience is seeing you with your credit showing on the screen. What do you say to the camera before it moves on to the rest of the cast? Speak in the first person, and make it pop! Each Space Agent has a "Suggested Opening Blurb," but you can make up your own if you want.

Understanding Aspects

An aspect is a word or phrase that describes something special about a person, place, thing, situation, or group. Almost anything you can think of can have aspects. A person might be the Greatest Swordswoman on the Cloud Sea. A room might be On Fire after you knock over an oil lamp. After a time-travel encounter with a dinosaur, you might be Terrified. Aspects let you change the story in ways that go along with your character's tendencies, skills, or problems.

There's an endless variety of aspects, but no matter what they're called they all work pretty much the same way. The main difference is how long they stick around before going away.

Character Aspects

These aspects are on your character sheet, such as your high concept and trouble. They describe personality traits, important details about your past, relationships you have with others, important items or titles you possess, problems you're dealing with or goals you're working toward, or reputations and obligations you carry. These aspects only change under very unusual circumstances; most never will.

Examples: Loyal and Swift Atomic Ranger; But I'm a princess!; Cute In Overalls

Situation Aspects

These aspects describe the surroundings that the action is taking place in. This includes aspects you create or discover using the Create an Advantage action. A situation aspect usually vanishes at the end of the scene it was part of, or when someone takes some action that would change or get rid of it. Essentially, they last only as long as the situational element they represent lasts.

Examples: On Fire; Bright Sunlight; Crowd of Angry Martians; Knocked to the Ground

To get rid of a situation aspect, you can attempt an overcome action to eliminate it, provided you can think of a way your character could accomplish it—dump a bucket of water on the Raging Fire, use evasive maneuvers to escape the enemy fighter that's On Your Tail. An opponent may use a Defend action to try to preserve the aspect, if they can describe how they do it.

Consequences

These aspects represent injuries or other lasting trauma that happen when you get hit by attacks. See p. 29 for how characters get Consequences, and p. 33 for how they can remove them.

Examples: Sprained Ankle; Fear of Spiders; Concussion; Debilitating Self-Doubt

Boosts

A boost is a temporary aspect that you get to use once (see Invoking Aspects on p. 31), then it vanishes. Unused boosts vanish when the scene they were created in is over or when the advantage they represent no longer exists. These represent very brief and fleeting advantages you get in conflicts with others.

Examples: In My Sights; Distracted; Unstable Footing; Flabbergasted

Things You Can Do During Scenes

1. Speaking and Acting

Of all the things in this section, this is the one that uses the rules the very least, yet is in many ways the most important. In playing the game, you get to decide what your Space Agent says and does. When the GM presents you with a situation, jump in and say and do things that express your character's personality and help move the episode towards a resolution.

When you have your Space Agent speak, it's best to speak for them yourself in the first person. You can't get everything done by speaking, but you might be surprised at how many problems you can solve by talking things over.

On the other hand, you can't get things done if you just stand around and talk the whole time. Sometimes you have to jump in there and do stuff! Try to make sure the things your Agent does make sense, at least for the cartoony pulp-action world they live in. Your Agent's description should give you a good idea of what he or she can do, and a lot of the time you need to think about what resources he or she has available.

Sometimes the things you want to do will turn out to be difficult enough that you can't automatically succeed at them. When the GM feels your Agent is trying something like that, she'll have you make a check (see p. 24).

Establishing Facts

This is also yet another part of the game where aspects play a role. When an aspect exists, we in turn agree that other reasonable things can come from it, so players can use them to establish facts in the game. You don't have to spend any Atom Points, roll dice, or anything to make this happen. Just by virtue of her having the aspect "The Famous Natasha Sarkov, Galactic Spy" you know that Natasha is famous, something she can leverage in certain ways.

When you establish facts of the setting this way, make sure you do it in cooperation with other players. If most of the group agrees that magic doesn't fit into how they picture the *Adventures of the Space Patrol* setting, you shouldn't unilaterally bring magic into it through an aspect. Make sure that the facts you establish through your aspects make the game fun for everyone.

2. Gain Atom Points

Atom Points are special points that players can use to help their Agents out of tight spots, use Shticks, and other things. You can spend them to invoke aspects (see p. 31) and to activate certain Shticks. If you get down to zero Atom Points, you can't use any of the things that require you to spend one. While you shouldn't be afraid to use your Atom Points (games of *Adventures of the Space Patrol* are relatively short), keep in mind that they are finite.

Remember that when a player spends an Atom Point it goes back to the Atomic Pile (the place you keep extra Atom Point tokens that aren't in play), but when the GM spends one it goes into the Fusion Pool (the pool of points players can award to one another).

Starting Atom Points

First, every Space Agent has 3 Atom Points at the start of each episode. Even if you had Atom Points left over at the end of the last episode (and even if you had more than 3 at the time) you still start with 3, so try to put them to good use when you play!

Fusion Points

"Fusion Points" are basically Atom Points that the players can award to each other for doing things that make the game more fun. At the start of the game the group shares a "Fusion Pool" of 2 Fusion Points per player, and any time the GM spends Atom Points they go into the Fusion Pool. When another player does something you think is neat, you can take a point out of the Fusion Pool and give it to them, at which point it becomes part of their current Atom Points. You can only give one Fusion Point at a time, though any

number of players can award Fusion Points to another player. Also, your character doesn't have to be present in the scene for you to give Fusion Points to other players, so even if you don't have anything to do yourself you can still encourage your friends!

If you're playing face-to-face, it's best to use some kind of tokens to represent Fusion Points. It makes the award more tangible, and lets you make such awards without disrupting the game.

The GM doesn't normally award any Fusion Points, though you can a little bit if you think it'll help prod the players to start awarding them on their own. The GM doesn't receive any Fusion Points though. If you want to show your appreciation to the GM, be sure to thank her for running the game, give her a hug, and maybe treat her next time you get food together.

Compelling Aspects

If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means your character's life is more dramatic or complicated, anyone can compel the aspect. You can even compel it on yourself; that's called a self-compel. Compels are the most common way for players to earn more fate points.

There are two types of compels.

- **Decision compels:** This sort of compel suggests the answer to a decision your character has to make. Katrina's "But I'm a princess!" Aspect might get her to commit some social faux pas for example.
- **Event compels:** Other times a compel reflects something happening that makes life more complicated for you. Billy has an "Always Getting Captured" aspect, which is pretty self-explanatory.

In any case, when an aspect is compelled against you, the person compelling it offers you an Atom Point and suggests that the aspect has a certain effect: you'll make a certain decision or a particular event will occur. You can discuss it back and forth, proposing tweaks or changes to the suggested compel. After a moment or two, you need to decide whether to accept the compel. If you agree, you take the Atom Point and your character makes the suggested decision or the event happens. If you refuse, you must pay an Atom Point from your own supply. Yes, this means that if you don't have any Atom Points you can't refuse a compel!

When the GM does a compel on a player's Agent, if the player accepts the Atom Point comes out of the Atomic Pile rather than the GM's points, but if the player refuses and pays an Atom Point, that goes into the GM's pool.

By accepting a compel, you're accepting that the GM gets to make something happen in the story (within reason). If the GM compels Billy's "Always Getting Captured" Aspect to have him get captured and you accept, you've agreed that Billy will get captured, so you don't get to make checks or anything to prevent his capture.

3. Make Checks

Just because a Space Agent wants to do something doesn't mean he or she will automatically succeed at it. Space Patrol missions involve all kinds of tasks that will take real effort and courage to succeed. When the GM feels that a Space Agent is trying to do something challenging, something where there's a real chance of both success and failure, she'll ask the player to make a "check," which uses a combination of an Agent's abilities and a die roll to see how effectively they can perform.

First you narrate what your Agent is trying to do. Your Agent's aspects and gear provide a good guide for what you can do. Leonard has the "Crabby Veteran Astronaut" aspect, so he can do all sorts of things relating to space travel (and being crabby). These story details don't have additional mechanical impact. You don't get a bonus from these kinds of things unless you choose to spend an Atom Point to invoke an appropriate aspect. Often, the ability to use an aspect to make something true in the story is bonus enough!

How do you know if you're successful? Often, you just succeed, because the action isn't hard and nobody's trying to stop you. But if failure provides an interesting twist in the story, or if something unpredictable could happen, you need to break out the dice.

The Ladder

The "ladder" is a scale we use to measure how effective or successful things are in this game. It has ranks from -2 through +8, as you can see in the table below. An Agent's skills each have a rank on the ladder, ranging from +2 to +5, and when you make a check you'll use dice to produce a new number based on your skill somewhere on the ladder.

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
+0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

The meanings of the skill ranks are kind of fuzzy (on purpose), and they mainly matter relative to other things. There's no direct way to convert a character's Action skill rank into how many pounds he can lift, because the question you need to answer isn't, "Can Lunk lift 300 pounds?" but "Can Lunk hold up the door long enough for Billy to get through?"

A rank of +1 is "Average," and a perfectly unremarkable person would have a rank of 1 in all five skills. A rank of +5 is as high as Agents can get, and that would be an Agent doing whatever he or she specializes in. Ranks of +7 or +8 are for really crazy things.

Choose a Skill

Each Space Agent has five skills: Action, Cunning, Heart, Investigation, and Science. These tell you how good your Agents are at doing different kinds of things, and when the time comes to make a check, you'll have to use a skill appropriate to the action you're trying to take. The GM will often tell you which skill to use, but you do have some wiggle room to try to accomplish something with another skill (one your Agent is better at!) by tackling the situation in a different way.

- **Action** is the skill you use for athletic feats like running, jumping, and flying, plus things like brawling, doing tricky maneuvers in a vehicle, and so on. Anything that's all about, well, action!
- **Cunning** lets you be sneaky and use trickery, charisma, stealth, and so on to get what you want.
- **Heart** represents the strength of your Agent's resolve, his or her will to do good deeds, make people happy, and make the universe a better place. Heart is especially important because it's the skill you use to create Bonds (see p. XX).
- **Investigation** is your Agent's ability to find clues and such that will help him or her solve whatever problem they're facing.
- **Science** is your Agent's ability to do things like work with machines, do experiments, make repairs, and so on. It's also his or her knowledge of science and technology.

If for whatever reason you want to use a rank lower than what you got from your Skill, you can reduce your effective skill rank by any amount you like (to a minimum of 0). You might do this to make your Agent be clumsy to put someone at ease, or to let someone hit your Agent rather than fighting back. If this turns out to be particularly disadvantageous and ties into one of your Aspects, the GM may decide to treat it as a compel (see p. XX) and give you an Atom Point.

Roll the Dice, Add Your Bonus

Now it's time to pick up dice and roll. By default in this game you will roll four Fudge dice, also known as Fate dice. (If you don't have or just don't like Fudge dice, see p. XX for some alternatives.)

Take the bonus associated with the approach you've chosen and add it to the result on the dice. If you have a stunt that applies, add that too. That's your total. Compare it to what your opponent (usually the GM) has. Each die will come up as **+**, **■**, or **-**. **+** counts as +1, **-** counts as -1, and **■** counts as 0. Add them together to get the total of the roll, which will range from -4 to +4. For example:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{---+---+} = +1 \quad \text{++++--} = +2 \\ \text{+----} = +0 \quad \text{-----} = -1 \end{array}$$

From there, apply the bonus or penalty (if any) from your roll to your skill rank to get your result.

Decide Whether to Modify the Roll

Finally, decide whether you want to alter your roll by invoking aspects (or in some cases by using Shticks). See p. 31 for more details.

Determine Result

There are two kinds of actions: Opposed and Unopposed. An "opposed action" is one where someone else is directly competing with or opposing you, such as a fight, an argument, or a race. An "unopposed action" is one where you're simply trying to accomplish something difficult, without someone working against you.

If a check is **Unopposed**, the GM picks a target number based on the action's overall difficulty. Rather than having a stock list of difficulties for each skill to be referenced in play, there are some rough guidelines, allowing GMs to better facilitate speedy play, and eyeball challenges as they arrive.

Rank	Description	Difficulty
+0	Mediocre	A normal person would succeed most of the time. If the target number would be lower than this, you probably don't need to bother with a check.
+1	Average	A normal person would have a bit of a challenge.
+2	Fair	Challenging. A very skilled Agent will succeed most of the time.
+3	Good	A major long shot for a normal person, a challenge for a highly skilled one.
+4	Great	Beyond the reach of a normal person.
+5	Superb	Something amazing. An expert will be challenged.
+6	Fantastic	Something incredible, and very skilled characters will be seriously challenged.
+7	Epic	Something absurd if not outright insane.
+8	Legendary	Success at this will go into the pages of history.

If it's **Opposed**, your target number is the other side's result. The GM (or occasionally another player if your Agents get into a scuffle for some reason) will also be making a check for whatever character they're playing.

Outcomes

Finally, it's time to work out what exactly your check accomplished. Compare your result to the target number, which is either a fixed difficulty or the result of the GM's roll for an NPC. Based on that comparison, your outcome is:

- You **fail** if your total is *less than* your opponent's total.
- It's a **tie** if your total is *equal to* your opponent's total.
- You **succeed** if your total is *greater than* your opponent's total.
- You **succeed with style** if your total is *at least three greater than* your opponent's total.

What the outcome means depends on which of the four actions you're attempting.

The Four Actions

So you've narrated what your Agent is trying to do, and you've established that there's a chance you could fail. Next, figure out what action best describes what you're trying to do. There are four basic actions that cover pretty much anything you do in the game.

Create an Advantage

Creating an Advantage is anything you do to try to help yourself or one of your friends. Taking a moment to very carefully aim your ray gun, spending several hours using the computers at headquarters to do research, or tripping the space pirate who's trying to rob you—these all count as creating an advantage. The target of your action may get a chance to use the defend action to stop you. The advantage you create lets you do one of the following four things:

- Create a new situation aspect.
- Discover an existing situation aspect or another character's aspect that you didn't know about.
- Take advantage of an existing aspect.
- Create a Bond (see p. 32).

If you're creating a new aspect or discovering an existing one:

- **If you fail:** Either you don't create or discover the aspect at all, or you create or discover it but an opponent gets to invoke the aspect for free. The second option works best if the aspect you create or discover is something that other people could take advantage of (like "Rough Terrain"). You may have to reword the aspect to show that it benefits the other character instead of you—work it out in whatever way makes the most sense with the player who gets the free invocation. You can still invoke the aspect if you'd like, but it'll cost you a fate point.
- **If you tie:** If you're creating a new aspect, you get a boost. Name it and invoke it once for free—after that, the boost goes away. If you're trying to discover an existing aspect, treat this as a success (see below).
- **If you succeed:** You create or discover the aspect, and you or an ally may invoke it once for free. You may want to write the aspect on an index card or sticky note and place it on the table to help you remember it.
- **If you succeed with style:** You create or discover the aspect, and you or an ally may invoke it twice for free. Usually you can't invoke the same aspect twice on the same roll, but this is an exception; success with style gives you a **BIG** advantage!

If you're trying to take advantage of an aspect you already know about:

- **If you fail:** You don't get any additional benefit from the aspect. You can still invoke it in the future if you'd like, at the cost of a fate point.
- **If you tie or succeed:** You get one free invocation on the aspect for you or an ally to use later. You might want to draw a circle or a box on the aspect's note card, and check it off when that invocation is used.
- **If you succeed with style:** You get two free invocations on the aspect, which you can let an ally use, if you wish.

Overcome

You use the Overcome action when you have to get past something that's between you and a particular goal—picking a lock, escaping from handcuffs, leaping across a chasm, flying a spaceship through an asteroid field. Taking some action to eliminate or change an inconvenient situation aspect is usually an Overcome action. The target of your action may get a chance to use the defend action to stop you.

- **If you fail:** You have a tough choice to make. You can simply fail: the door is still locked, the space pirate still stands between you and the exit, the enemy spaceship is still On Your Tail. Or you can succeed, but at a serious cost: maybe you drop something vital you were carrying, maybe you suffer harm. The GM helps you figure out an appropriate cost.
- **If you tie:** You attain your goal, but at some minor cost. The GM could introduce a complication, or present you with a tough choice (you can rescue one of your friends, but not the other), or some other twist.
- **If you succeed:** You accomplish what you were trying to do. The lock springs open, you disable the tractor beam, you manage to lose the alien spaceship on your tail.
- **If you succeed with style:** As success (above), but you also gain a boost.

Attack

Use an Attack when you try to hurt someone, whether physically or mentally. This could be things like throwing a punch, shooting a blaster rifle, or yelling a blistering insult with the intent to hurt your target. The target of your attack gets a chance to use the defend action to stop you.

The Space Patrol generally discourages the use of violence, but sometimes it's genuinely unavoidable. Also, in this game an "attack" doesn't actually have to be violence per se; it's just something that the target finds wearying, and can as easily be from an argument rather than a firefight. Even when violence does happen in *Adventures of the Space Patrol*, it should be cartoonish and unrealistic.

- **If you fail:** Your attack doesn't connect. The target dodges your punch, your shot misses, your target laughs off your insult.
- **If you tie:** Your attack doesn't connect strongly enough to cause any harm, but you gain a boost.
- **If you succeed:** Your attack hits and you do damage.
- **If you succeed with style:** You hit and do damage, plus you have the option to reduce the damage your hit causes by one and gain a boost.

Defend

Use Defend when you're actively trying to stop someone from doing any of the other three actions—you're slipping out of the way of the punch, trying to stay on your feet, blocking a doorway, and the like. Usually this action is performed on someone else's turn, reacting to their attempt to Attack, Overcome, or Create an Advantage. You may also roll to oppose some non-attack actions, or to defend against an attack on someone else, if you can explain why you can. Usually it's fine if most people at the table agree that it's reasonable, but you can also point to an relevant situation aspect to justify it. When you do, you become the target for any bad results.

- **If you fail:** You're on the receiving end of whatever your opponent's success gives them.
- **If you tie or succeed:** Things don't work out too badly for you; look at the description of your opponent's action to see what happens.
- **If you succeed with style:** Your opponent doesn't get what they want, plus you gain a boost.

Damage

When you're hit by an attack, the severity of the hit is the difference between the attack roll and your defense roll; we measure that in shifts. For instance, if your opponent gets +5 on their attack and you get a +3 on your defense, the attack deals a two shift hit ($5 - 3 = 2$).

Then, one of two things happens:

- You suffer **stress** and/or **consequences**, but you stay in the fight.
- You get taken out, which means you're out of the action for a while.

If you don't want to get taken out, you need to take enough stress and/or consequences to absorb all of the attacker's shifts. When you check a box of stress or a consequence, it takes up as many shifts as the number it has, though if you end up checking off more than the attack's shifts you don't get anything for it.

Stress represents you getting tired or annoyed, taking a superficial wound, or some other condition that goes away quickly. Your character sheet has a **stress track**, a row of three boxes. When you take a hit and check a stress box, the box absorbs a number of shifts equal to its number: one shift for Box 1, two for Box 2, or three for Box 3. You can only check one stress box for any single hit, but you can check a stress box and take one or more consequences at the same time. You can't check a stress box that already has a check mark in it!

Consequences are new aspects that you take to reflect being seriously hurt in some way. Your character sheet has three slots where you can write consequences. Each one is labeled with a number: 2 (mild), 4 (moderate), or 6 (severe). This represents the number of shifts of the hit the consequence absorbs. You can mark off as many of these as you like to handle a single hit, but only if that slot was blank to start with. If you already have a moderate consequence written down, you can't take another one until you do something to make the first one go away! A major downside of consequences is that each consequence is a new aspect that your opponents can invoke against you. The more you take, the more vulnerable you are. And just like situation aspects, the character that creates it (in this case, the character that hit you) gets one free invocation on that consequence. They can choose to let one of their allies use the free invocation.

If you're unable to absorb all of a hit's shifts—by checking a stress box, taking consequences, or both—you're taken out.

If you get taken out, you can no longer act in the scene. Whoever takes you out narrates what happens to you. It should make sense based on how you got taken out—maybe you run from the room in shame, or maybe you get knocked unconscious. In any case, you're out of the action for the rest of the scene. Once the scene ends you'll recover at least your Stress boxes (see p. XX) and become able to act again.

If things look grim for you, you can **give in** (or **concede** the fight), but you have to say that's what you're going to do before your opponent rolls their dice. This is different than being taken out, because you get a say in what happens to you. Your opponent gets some major concession from you—talk about what makes sense in your situation—but it beats getting taken out and having no say at all. Additionally, you get one Atom Point for conceding, and one fate point for each consequence you took in this conflict. This is your chance to say, "You win this round, but I'll get you next time!" and get a tall stack of fate points to back it up.

Getting Help

Sometimes characters will want to work together to better accomplish something. When an ally helps you, they give up their action for the exchange and describe how they're providing the help; you get a +1 to your roll for each ally that helps this way. Usually only one or two people can help this way before they start getting in each other's way; the GM decides how many people can help at once.

Social Checks

Players and GMs alike may want to roll the dice to figure out how well things go with social matters. That's fine, as long as it doesn't become a substitute for role-playing. After all, you can't entertain your friends and gain Fusion Points by rolling alone. Broadly speaking, Space Agents can use Heart when trying to interact in a positive, warm way, and with Cunning when being tricky. Sometimes characters can use other skills for social checks, depending on the situation, most notably Action for being menacing.

This can be an unopposed check if the GM simply wants to gauge how effective a character is in a social situation, or it can be an opposed check if you want to see if someone is tricked or persuaded. In many ways it's better for players to decide whether their Space Agents get swayed, but the randomness of the dice can make things more interesting too.

4. Enter Challenges, Contests, and Conflicts

Usually, when you want to do something straightforward—fly a rocketship through an asteroid field, disable the force field generator in the space fortress—all you need to do is make one overcome action against a difficulty level that the GM sets. You look at your outcome and go from there. But sometimes things are a little more complex. Challenges, Contests, and Conflicts are frameworks that let you have something more involved than a single check.

Challenges

A challenge is a series of Overcome and Create an Advantage actions that you use to resolve an especially complicated situation. Each Overcome action deals with one task or part of the situation, and you take the individual results together to figure out how the situation resolves.

To set up a challenge, decide what individual tasks or goals make up the situation, and treat each one as a separate overcome roll.

Depending on the situation, one character may be required to make several rolls, or multiple characters may be able to participate. GMs, you aren't obligated to announce all the stages in the challenge ahead of time—adjust the steps as the challenge unfolds to keep things exciting.

Contests

When two or more characters are competing against one another for the same goal, but not directly trying to hurt each other, you have a contest. Examples include a chase scene, a public debate, or a sharpshooting contest.

A contest proceeds in a series of exchanges. In an exchange, every participant takes one overcome action to determine how well they do in that leg of the contest. Compare your result to everyone else's.

If you got the highest result, you win the exchange—you score a victory (which you can represent with a tally or check mark on scratch paper) and describe how you take the lead. If you succeed with style, you mark two victories.

If there's a tie, no one gets a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs. This could mean several things, depending on the situation—the terrain or environment shifts somehow, the parameters of the contest change, or an unanticipated variable shows up and affects all the participants. The GM creates a new situation aspect reflecting this change and puts it into play.

The first participant to achieve three victories wins the contest.

Conflicts

Conflicts are used to resolve situations where characters are trying to harm one another. It could be physical harm (a dogfight in space, a battle with ray guns, a schoolyard scuffle), but it could also be mental harm (an argument, a tough interrogation, etc.).

Setting the Scene

First establish what's going on, where everyone is, and what the environment is like. Who is the opposition? The GM should write a couple of situation aspects on sticky notes or index cards and place them on the table. Players can suggest situation aspects, too.

The GM also establishes **zones**, loosely defined areas that tell you where characters are. You determine zones based on the scene and the following guidelines:

- Generally, you can only interact with other characters in the same zone. It's possible to interact with those in nearby zones if you can justify acting at a distance, such as by using a ranged weapon or doing something that you can accomplish by shouting.
- You can move one zone for free. An action is required to move if there's an obstacle along the way, such as someone trying to stop you, or if you want to move two or more zones. It sometimes helps to sketch a quick map to illustrate zones.

Determine Turn Order

Your turn order in a conflict is based on your skills. In a physical conflict, compare your Action skill, if you're trying to be sneaky use your Cunning skill, and so on. Whoever has the highest skill gets to go first, and then everyone else goes in descending order. Break ties in whatever manner makes sense, with the GM having the last word.

GMs, it's simplest to pick your most advantageous NPC to determine your place in the turn order, and let all your NPCs go at that time. But if you have a good reason to determine your NPCs' places in the turn order individually, go right ahead.

Exchanges

Next, each character takes a turn in order. On their turn, a character can take one of the four actions. Resolve the action as usual and determine the outcome. The conflict is over when only one side has characters still in the fight, though a lot of the time characters will be "out of the fight" for reasons other than getting taken out, such as surrendering, having a change of heart, leaving because of some other goal, etc.

5 Invoke Aspects

You invoke an aspect to give yourself a bonus or make things a bit harder for your opponent. You can invoke any aspect that you both know about, and can explain how you use it to your advantage, including aspects on other characters or on the situation. Certain circumstances will let you invoke an aspect for free, but normally it costs you an Atom Point.

Here are some examples of how you might

- I want to provoke Dr. Brainenstein. It's pretty obvious that he's Arrogant, so that should help me.
- I really want to scare this guy. I've heard he's Scared of Children, so I'll have Billy visit him in the cockpit.
- Now that the guard's Distracted, I should be able to sneak right by him.
- Being a Swift and Loyal Atomic Ranger, I should be fast enough to get there in time!

What does invoking the aspect get you? Choose one of the following effects:

- Add a +2 bonus to your total. This costs an Atom Point.
- Reroll the dice. This option is best if you rolled really lousy (usually a -3 or -4 showing on the dice). This costs an Atom Point.
- Confront an opponent with the aspect. You use this option when your opponent is trying something and you think an existing aspect would make it harder for them. For instance, an alien thug wants to draw his blaster pistol, but he's Buried in Debris; you spend an Atom Point to invoke that aspect, and now your opponent's level of difficulty is increased by +2.
- Help an ally with the aspect. Use this option when a friend could use some help and you think an existing aspect would make it easier for them. You spend an Atom Point to invoke the aspect, and now your friend gets a +2 on their roll.

Note that you can only invoke any aspect once on a given dice roll; you can't spend a stack of Atom Points on one aspect and get a huge bonus from it. However, you can invoke several different aspects on the same roll.

Also, if you're invoking an aspect to add a bonus or reroll your dice, wait until after you've rolled to do it. No sense spending a fate point if you don't need to!

Free Invocations

Sometimes you can invoke an aspect for free, without paying an Atom Point. If you create or discover an aspect through the Create an Advantage action, the first invocation on it (by you or an ally) is free, and if you succeeded with style, you get two freebies. If you cause a consequence through an attack, you or an ally can invoke it once for free as well. A boost is a special kind of aspect that grants one free invocation and then vanishes.

A Note to the GM on Aspects

Players *love* to use Aspects to their fullest, and that's a good thing! But it also means that you should expect players to have that +2 bonus (if not more!) a whole lot of the time, especially when it's for something they think is important. If an NPC is supposed to be in conflict with the players' Agents, make them pretty powerful, and don't hesitate to use your own Atom Points.

6. Use Shticks

Every Space Agent has three Shticks, different special abilities they can use. Some shticks cost Atom Points, some give you a bonus for certain kinds of checks, and some just let you do stuff you couldn't otherwise.

7. Create a Bond

Creating a bond is a special instance of Creating and Advantage. A bond is a special aspect that reflects your Agent's sentiment towards a non-player character in the game, like "Billy is my friend" or "I want to help Nancy pass her test." Bonds should never be negative; "I want to beat up the Mad Bomber" or even "I will bring Doctor Proton to justice" just won't do. Once you have a Bond, it lasts until the end of the episode, and it works just like any other Aspect.

You can create a Bond with someone after the first scene where they appear, or at any time thereafter. You might want to wait a little while to decide what kind of bond you want to create, but apart from possibly not being subject to compels, there's no benefit to doing so. In order to create a Bond, you need to make a Heart check, against a difficulty based on how that character feels about you.

NPC's Attitude	Difficulty
Affectionate	0
Friendly	2
Indifferent	3
Against	5
Hostile	7

- **If you fail:** You manage to annoy them in some way.
- **If you tie:** They're a little more favorably disposed to you, but you don't form a bond.
- **If you succeed:** You successfully form a Bond.
- **If you succeed with style:** You successfully form a Bond, and the NPC takes an exceptional liking to you.

If you create a Bond with someone, they'll become more favorably disposed to you, but that doesn't mean they'll do whatever you want.

All Bonds are erased at the end of the episode. That doesn't mean you're not friends with someone anymore, just that you don't have the Aspect related to them anymore (though of course if they show up in another episode, you get to create a new Bond).

8. Recover From Damage

At certain points in the game, Agents will be able to recover from damage. Stress goes away automatically, but consequences will take some time and possibly some effort to remove.

Stress

At the end of each scene, clear all of your stress boxes. Stress is fleeting, and easy to get rid of.

Consequences

Consequences general take a little more effort to remove, though you can remove all of your consequences at the end of an episode.

- **Rest:** Minor Consequences go away at the end of the scene, provided you get a chance to rest.
- **Treatment:** For Minor or Moderate Consequences you or another character who is treating you in some way appropriate to the consequence can make an Overcome action (target number equal to the shift value of the consequence) to remove it.
- **End of Episode:** All Consequences go away at the end of an episode. This is the only way to get rid of a Major Consequence.

Other Things

Things That Matter

In this game, and RPGs in general, there are things that the rules cover, and things that they don't, and both can be important to how the story unfolds. A vital part of the GM's job is managing this divide, especially since this game encourages everyone involved to kind of dance around the dividing line.

Think of the world of the game as a special imaginary place that everyone participating shares. You can do quite a bit of interaction with that world without any need to touch the rules at all. Your Agents can walk around town, talk to people and each other, peek into alleyways, buy coffee, or whatever just by you saying that you're doing so. For many things the GM will have to tell you what results, and once in a while the GM may need to rein things in a bit if they get out of hand.

Then, both the GM and the players can bring things into the game that involve the rules. The GM can ask a player to make a check to see if an Agent can accomplish something, and the flow of things momentarily diverts to the rules, which provide an answer to a very specific question (e.g., "How fast (on the game's scale of results) can Rick run right now?"), and then back again. Players can try stuff out, knowing or explicitly asking for the rules to come into play ("Can I make a Cunning check to try to sneak past him?").

Whether or not you're engaging the rules, you need to think about what things are available to your character. If you want to fly to Mars, you need to get a spaceship; without a vehicle, you'll be stuck on Earth.

Stuff

Equipment, gear, items, or “Stuff” as we call it in *Adventures of the Space Patrol*, doesn’t normally matter to the rules per se, but each Agent description includes a list of the important things they carry. Having an item doesn’t typically affect what you roll to do something, but it can often decide whether you can do something in the first place. Also, unlike most other character traits, NPCs can take Stuff away and use it themselves.

Tools

A whole lot of the items Space Agents carry with them are “tools,” things that let simply them do things that they might not be able to otherwise, or at least make them substantially easier. If Sally Sprocket has her toolbox, she can work on machines normally, but without it the GM might decide to raise the difficulty of checks she makes by a fair margin.

Vehicles

Space Agents don’t have vehicles among their Stuff, but they often get their hands on a vehicle of some kind, whether because Commander Neutron assigns one, or a suitable ride presents itself over the course of the episode.

In this game vehicles can be very important to the story, but they’re not represented in the rules per se. Instead, they tend to be more of a binary proposition. Either Rick is strapped into the rocketship’s cockpit and can fly to the moon, or he isn’t and he can’t. When the qualities of vehicles matter, good or bad, treat them as Aspects. If it really matters that Sally Sprocket has built a supercar that’s faster than the regular car the Agents are chasing, give it a “Turbocharged Supercar” Aspect. If you’re doing a conflict that’s a chase scene, Low On Gas or Engine on Fire are actually *better* aspects to impose than stuff like Out of Breath that you’d assign to people.

Weapons

The Space Patrol does not use any weapons that can actually hurt people (though Craylor insists he must carry a spear to be considered a man), but they do have certain special ray guns and such that can inconvenience someone in an interesting way. Generally you should aim for your narration and consequences from using weapons to be flashy and exciting without dwelling much on injuries.

Radios

Every Space Agent has some kind of radio that they can use to talk to each other and to headquarters. Charlie has one built into his metal body, Katrina’s is like a cell phone, Jenny has a headset, and so on. These radios will work most anywhere on the planet and as far away as the moon, but it is possible for the signal to be jammed or blocked.

An Ongoing Series

Although *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is geared towards having fun with single episodes, you can also use it to play through an ongoing series. There are a couple of special rules you can use to make the game mechanics support the ongoing game a little better, but the more important thing in turning the game into a series is how you handle the characters.

The players can vary up which Space Agents they play from one episode to the next if they wish, but for the most part you should be playing the same characters. The GM should try to build up a cast of recurring characters—both friends and antagonists—and play around with them in different ways.

Also, if you have more than one person who wants to try being the GM, you can switch around from one episode to the next. One of the nice things about a game as light and silly as this one is that you don’t have to worry so much about messing up if you’re GMing for the first time.

Character Development

In an ongoing series, characters can change and develop over time, so the stuff on their character sheets can change as well. At the end of each episode, players can change one of these things about their Space Agents:

- **Skills:** Move one point from one skill to another. A single skill cannot go below 1 or above 6.
- **Shticks:** Swap one Shtick out for a new one. You can use an appropriate shtick from another Space Agent (maybe they taught it to you?) or (with the GM's permission) create a new one.
- **Aspects:** Swap one Aspect out for a new one. The included Space Agents each have an Aspect that expresses who they are overall, an Aspect that's good for compels, and an Aspect that leads them towards positive interactions with others. It's best to keep this general pattern if you can.

Whatever you change, it should reflect something that happened with your Agent over the course of the episode.

Proton Points

Proton Points are another optional rule you can use if you're going to play *Adventures of the Space Patrol* with the same people many times. It's pretty simple, really. At the end of an episode count how many Bonds your Space Agent has. For each Bond they get one Proton Point. Unlike Atom Points, Proton Points stay with your character until you use them up, regardless of how many episodes might pass. During future episodes, you can use Proton Points in place of Atom Points, but once you use them they're permanently gone.

For example if you end one episode with three bonds, you get three Proton Points. If you use two of them in the next episode, you'll have one left over, and add that to whatever new Proton Points you gain from your Bonds in that episode.

Being the Game Master

This chapter has some extra things you'll need in order to be the Game Master for *Adventures of the Space Patrol*. If you've never run the game before, consider giving it a try. Being the GM is a bit different from being a player, but it's a lot of fun in its own way.

In many gaming groups, the GM not only runs the actual game but also takes care of the logistics of getting everyone together to play. Someone has to make the plans to bring everyone together at the same place and time (or get things set up to play online), and more often than not it's the GM who winds up doing it. In both real life and in the *Space Patrol* you need to take the initiative if you want to make things happen!

You'll also need to make sure that you have all the necessary materials as outlined on p. XX, and prepare a scenario to play.

Some Advice

Before we begin, here are some things to consider if you're going to run an episode of *Adventures of the Space Patrol*.

Match the scenario to the Space Agents. Give them interesting things to do, and tie the scenario into their personalities and interests. Sometimes you'll have an awesome idea for a scenario that just won't work for the Space Agents that the players have chosen.

Start things off with a bang and keep them moving! This game works best when things are kind of fast-paced and frenetic. Try to start off with a bang to set that kind of tone, and then let slower scenes come in naturally as a break in the action.

Keep it simple and short! This isn't a game for big, complex adventures. A good *Space Patrol* scenario has three to four scenes, and if you have two players focusing on the game (gamers love to get into side conversations) you can easily get through an episode in 90 minutes.

Move the action around a lot! You don't have to send the Space Agents flying all over the cosmos (though that's fun too), but try to keep things dynamic at least. It keeps things a little more interesting, and if they're traveling somewhere, you have the opportunity to make the trip more interesting for them. When I run the game, the Space Agents can seldom get from one planet to another without some kind of mishap.

When in doubt, compel! Compelling aspects is a very powerful tool for the GM. It both gives the players more Atom Points to work with (which makes them less hesitant to try doing stuff) and forces them to do something interesting. Although you shouldn't force the players to do things just the way you want, you can use compels to prod them in the right direction.

Scenes

One of your primary responsibilities during the game is to decide definitively when a scene begins and ends. This might not seem like that big a deal, but it is, because it means that you're the person primarily responsible for the pacing of each session. If you start scenes too early, it takes a long time to get to the main action. If you don't end them soon enough, then they drag on and it takes you a long time to get anything significant done.

The players will sometimes help you with this, if they're keen on getting to the next bit of action, but sometimes they'll naturally be inclined to spend too much time bantering in character or focusing on minutiae. When that happens, it's your job to step in like a good movie editor and say, "I think we've pretty much milked this scene for all it's worth. What do we want to do next?"

Preparing a Scenario

This section provides the Game Master with tools and advice to prepare a scenario for play. We'll guide you through a step-by-step process that will lay out the basic outline of an episode. For the first three steps you can use playing cards to get ideas randomly, but after that you'll have to get a little creative. I usually start by laying out three cards, and try to think up something using them as they are. If that doesn't work, I'll either rearrange the cards or draw new ones and stack them on top of the elements that aren't doing it for me until I get something I like.

If you want to make a more elaborate episode (say if you have a lot of time and/or players) you can double up on one or more elements and/or rearrange them. Have two people in trouble, more than one problem, one fake and one real alien culprit, etc. Also, you can of course have the alien thing turn out to be the one who's really in trouble, maybe even because of an Earthling.

If you don't have the time to put together a scenario, or you aren't confident enough, you can use one of the pre-made scenarios we've included starting on p. XX.

Working With the Players

Many RPG players like to be surprised by whatever the Game Master creates for them to enjoy, but it can also be fun for everyone to be involved in the scenario creation process. It requires that the players be able to separate what they know from what knowledge their characters have of course, but having multiple people offer up ideas can make things that much more interesting. If you want to go this route, I recommend involving them to varying degrees up through Step 7. Letting them help with the overall situation and how the Space Agents fit into it is okay, but letting them help set up the obstacles they'll face as players is a bit much.

1. Who's in trouble?

The first ingredient is a normal person from Earth who has a problem. The table below can give you a good starting point for any number of characters, but whether in advance or on the fly you'll need to flesh them out a little more. The very most important thing about the person who's in trouble is they need to be likable.

Card	Card	Card	Card
A♥	Carol, a hard-working single mother.	A♦	Jill, a lonely housewife.
2♥	Timmy, a little boy who loves baseball.	2♦	Kevin, an aspiring movie director.
3♥	Nancy, a little girl with leadership qualities.	3♦	Delilah, a beautiful actress.
4♥	Jimmy, a teenage boy who can't get a date.	4♦	Mike, a stressed Game Master.
5♥	Heather, a teenage girl who writes poetry.	5♦	Thomas, a tired police officer.
6♥	Mr. Lefkowitz, a strict math teacher.	6♦	Brent, who runs a comic book shop.
7♥	Miss Jackson, a pretty young English teacher.	7♦	Cindy, a veterinarian who loves animals very much.
8♥	Fred, an overworked engineer.	8♦	Mrs. Summers, curator of a museum with an exciting new exhibit.
9♥	Bill, a dedicated fighter pilot.	9♦	Patches, a neurotic cat.
10♥	Douglas, a bestselling author.	10♦	Fizzles, a lonely stray dog.
J♥	Chuck, a cheerful boy who helps out as much as he can.	J♦	Dr. Brown, a friendly mad scientist.
Q♥	Phyllis, a kind old woman who helps everyone around her.	Q♦	Alex, a skateboarder.
K♥	Bob, a friendly old man who paints beautiful paintings.	K♦	Leila, a gymnast with a major competition coming up.
Card	Card	Card	Card
A♠	Marcus, a charismatic gambler.	A♣	Sam, a guitarist who plays by the subway station for change.
2♠	Stephen, an arrogant talk show host.	2♣	Leah, a popular girl who secretly loves a boy who's a total nerd.
3♠	Carl, a mailman who hates dogs.	3♣	Jarvis, lead singer of an up-and-coming punk rock band.
4♠	Jack, a businessman who misses his wife.	4♣	Darrell, a diligent delivery man.
5♠	Phillip, a professor who loves to read.	5♣	Eric, a security guard who has to work a lot of overtime.
6♠	Maria, an artist in need of inspiration.	6♣	Michelle, a book store clerk who's starting to get annoyed with the customers.
7♠	Bernard, an old man who never leaves his apartment.	7♣	Ryan, a popular athlete.
8♠	Alice, a waitress who likes to collect interesting objects.	8♣	Beatrice, a very talented inventor.
9♠	Edward, a director who loves making movies more than anything else.	9♣	Diane, an eccentric lady with many cats.
10♠	Lily, a fun kindergarten teacher.	10♣	Derek, a pizza delivery boy who's down on his luck.
J♠	Simon, a blind man who buys fresh bread every day for the wonderful smell.	J♣	Jasmine, a cute waitress who works really hard.
Q♠	Celine, a comic artist who worries a lot about whether she's good enough.	Q♣	Keiko, a maid who works hard for her beloved Master.
K♠	Louis, a successful DJ.	K♣	Time Agent Tina, a time traveler who's gotten lost.

2. What's their problem?

Card		Card	
A♥	Far away from home, with no way to get back.	A♦	Lost something that belongs to a friend.
2♥	A family member is missing.	2♦	House (or other important building) is missing!
3♥	A family member is sick.	3♦	Separated from a group of friends.
4♥	Something important has gone missing.	4♦	Made a major mistake at school/work.
5♥	In love with someone, but they don't seem interested.	5♦	Transformed into another species!
6♥	In love with someone who is in love with someone else.	6♦	Transformed into the opposite gender!
7♥	Lost in the forest.	7♦	Followed around by an unwanted "pet."
8♥	Captured!	8♦	Accused of doing bad things they're sure they didn't do.
9♥	Lost their job/expelled from school unfairly.	9♦	Receiving mysterious and scary phone calls/messages.
10♥	Had an argument with a good friend.	10♦	Followed around by shadowing figures watching from afar.
J♥	A family member is in the hospital.	J♦	Need to get to an important event.
Q♥	Important test/project coming up, and things are going wrong.	Q♦	Sick with a strange disease.
K♥	Forgot something at school/work.	K♦	Something important is broken.
Card		Card	
A♠	Accidentally unleashed some kind of disaster.	A♣	Forcibly given a dangerous special power.
2♠	Mind-controlled!	2♣	A rival received a dangerous special power.
3♠	Shunned by their peers.	3♣	Stuck inside a craft that's going haywire.
4♠	An evil twin is causing trouble.	4♣	Made to look like a freak.
5♠	Powerful hunger for something inexplicable.	5♣	Made a new friend who seems great, but something's really weird about them.
6♠	A mysterious force field has them trapped!	6♣	A party is getting totally out of hand.
7♠	Wild animals have escaped!	7♣	Kidnapped by a giant monster!
8♠	Trapped inside a nightmare!	8♣	Pursued by what seems to be a ghost.
9♠	A new possession comes to life and causes problems.	9♣	A holiday celebration is ruined.
10♠	Turned into a monster!	10♣	A love one is turned into a monster!
J♠	An embarrassing secret could be revealed!	J♣	Falsely accused!
Q♠	Running late to something really important.	Q♣	Can't seem to get to sleep.
K♠	Being used as part of some kind of machine.	K♣	The world is going to end?!

3. What space thing is involved?

Next is the question of what thing from space is involved in the whole mess. Although whoever or whatever this turns out to be is likely to be the cause of the problem, they shouldn't be unlikable, and they definitely shouldn't be irredeemable. Whether a space pirate or a combat robot, make your adversaries able to come around in the end.

Card		Card	
A♥	Dream Crystals, alien crystals that make dreams become solid	A♦	Captain Atomic, Man of the Future, a former Space Agent who doesn't mean to cause trouble
2♥	Dr. Brainenstein, a mad scientist	2♦	GoRD-OS, a deranged supercomputer
3♥	Veronica, a Cat Princess of Venus	3♦	Gephelda, Dedebian Slime Witch
4♥	Venusian Carnivorous Plant	4♦	Gojiri, a 50-story giant lizard
5♥	A Pleiadeian Flying Saucer	5♦	Count Darkon, Galactic Lord of Darkness
6♥	The Cyber Doll Sisters, cyborg girls who just want to live in peace	6♦	The Eliminator, a dangerous robot from the future
7♥	Dangarn, Legendary Giant Robot	7♦	Battle Jennys, a horde of robot action figures based on a certain Space Agent
8♥	Bloogley, a green bug-eyed alien who just wants to make friends	8♦	Tobor, the Mechanical Man
9♥	A Copy Android	9♦	A tribe of Lunarian Amazons
10♥	Thag, Martian Barbarian Chieftain	10♦	The Califrax Empire
J♥	Vindlethrom, a Jovian (from Jupiter) collector of rarities	J♦	An unstable wormhole
Q♥	The <i>Starlight Zephyr</i> , an interstellar cruise ship	Q♦	Hoshikage, a space ninja.
K♥	Metallix, a big robot that likes pretty birds	K♦	The Head of Jo, an ancient galactic sage.
Card		Card	
A♠	Mikey X, a boy with dangerous psychic powers	A♣	The Micronians, a race of tiny little alien warriors
2♠	Scarg, a menacing combat cyborg	2♣	The Psilovan Virus, which makes people lose all of their inhibitions
3♠	Mo-Ran, a Robot Monster	3♣	Meepos, cute alien critters who will try to eat pretty much anything.
4♠	Queen Insectaria, Hive Mother of the Nephelax	4♣	Victor Samuels, Galactic Patrolman
5♠	Menolly, a mischievous space fairy	5♣	A portal into Opposite World
6♠	An alien probe whose signals are creating problems	6♣	Boledar, a Neptunian space merchant
7♠	Ellia, a Changeling who can look like anyone	7♣	Nexus, Pirate Queen of Andromeda
8♠	Doomworms, which burrow into your head and make you crazy	8♣	Velophene, a species of beautiful space jellyfish
9♠	Stellaroids, a super-addictive video game	9♣	Burearon, the dreaded Space Patrol auditor
10♠	Reconfiguroids, nanites intended to "improve" living beings	10♣	Star Spirit, interstellar superhero
J♠	V10-L3-T, a good-natured but ridiculously strong android girl	J♣	XL-23, a robot that can assimilate other inanimate objects
Q♠	The Men In Black, secret agents that try to cover up weird stuff	Q♣	Arachnotrix, Spider Queen of Thanatos IV
K♠	GodBreaker, the Ultimate Adversary	K♣	Time Agent Tina, a lost time traveler

4. What's really going on?

Drawing cards gives you a bunch of different elements, but you'll need to add a little more to create a situation for the Space Agents to confront. It's all good and well to say that Heather, a teenage girl who writes poetry is sick with a strange disease and Boledar, a Neptunian space merchant is somehow involved, but you'll need to figure out what actually happened. Did Boledar sell her something that made her sick? If he did, is it something she's willing to part with? Does she even know she has an alien thing that's causing this problem?

Sometimes the answer to this question will suggest itself right away, but it usually takes a little bit of thought. Remember that since you want the culprit to also be a reasonably sympathetic character, it's best to give them a well-intentioned reason for having done what they did.

5. What Non-Player Characters Are Involved?

Each episode is going to involve some Non-Player Characters, characters other than the Space Agents that play a role in the story. The person in need of help and the space thing that's involved will usually give you two NPCs, but you may need more to complete the story.

Power Level: Instead of giving NPCs a rank in each skill, just give them an overall Power Level, and use that as their skill rank for all actions unless there's some obvious reason to do otherwise (e.g., a Venusian Carnivorous Plant trying to make a Science check). Ordinary people will have a Power Level of 1 or 2 (maybe 0 if it's someone particularly helpless, like a baby), exceptional people can have a Power Level of 3 or 4, and powerful beings from space can have Power Levels of 5 or more. If an NPC is meant to be in conflict with the Space Agents, don't be afraid to make them powerful; they're likely going to be outnumbered anyway. An antagonist will genuinely need a Power Level of 7 or so to deal with having a whole group of Space Agents actively opposing them.

Stress/Consequence Boxes: When you have a major NPC that your Space Agents are supposed to take on directly, you can just give them the same three stress boxes and three consequence boxes as an Agent. Minor antagonists on the other hand just have between zero and two stress boxes and that's it. A character without any stress boxes is simply taken out from the first hit they take that gets any shifts at all.

Atom Points: NPCs don't have their own pools of Atom Points. Instead, the GM has an Atom Point Budget (depending on how the scenario is set up) for all of the NPCs. Also, although NPCs can and should do stuff that impairs them based on their Aspects, they don't gain more Atom Points during the course of the game like Agents do from compels.

Aspects: NPCs should definitely have some aspects, and the episode's culprit should have at least one that the agents can tag. However, you don't necessarily have to decide on an NPC's aspects right away. If a player wants to tag an Aspect that seems appropriate to the way the NPC has been acting (or is something that you think will make the game more fun) go ahead and write it down and let the player use it. However, don't go overboard giving Aspects to an NPC. You shouldn't need more than three of them.

Shticks: Don't worry about Shticks unless it's for something that an NPC really needs to do. Captain Atomic probably has a jet pack and the accompanying shtick, for example, but for the most part assigning an appropriate Power Level and vividly describing what an NPC does will be enough.

Unconventional NPCs

NPCs are usually people, aliens, animals, and other things we generally think of as "characters," but you can treat just about anything as an NPC in the rules, especially when you're treating an obstacle as a conflict. You can potentially write up a group of minions (like a horde of space pirates), an environment (like a treacherous mountain or an asteroid field), or even something totally intangible (like a curse or a spate of bad luck) as a single NPC. Sometimes it feels like the world is out to get you, and for a Space Agent sometimes it very literally is!

6. How do the Space Agents fit into it?

Although you can simply have Commander Neutron send the Space Agents to the scene and leave it at that, if you have time it's better to look for ways to make the emerging scenario more specific to the specific Agents who will be going on the mission. Any of the Space Agents might get a plea for help from an old friend, or run into someone in need of help in their everyday lives. This will let you give some of the adventures a little bit of a different feel from the more standard thing of the Agents being sent on a mission.

You can also bring in elements from the Agents' histories, though it's best to clearly communicate this stuff to the players. If someone's playing Katrina and your episode outline includes "Veronica, a Cat Princess of Venus," it'd be a waste not to do something with the fact that the two cat princesses are almost certainly related. Tell that player something like, "It's your older sister Veronica, the one who used to steal your toys." If you want to go this route, take input from the player too. If you want Jenny Jetstream and Captain Atomic to have worked together before, and the player wants them to have briefly been a couple too, run with it!

7. What Obstacles Will They Face?

Now that you have the overall situation, you need to think up some specific obstacles that will go between the Space Agents and their goals. An RPG session being the unpredictable thing it is there's no guarantee that you'll get to use all of the obstacles you think up, but it pays to have something in mind. An episode should have two to four obstacles, depending on how much time you want the session to take. Each one should be a little bigger than the one before, leading up to a big climax of some kind.

Types of Obstacles

Here are the basic types of obstacles in terms of the game's rules. Depending on how you choose to set it up, or how the players decide to tackle a given issue, you might wind up treating it as a different kind of obstacle. If there's a giant monster and you don't want it to be a big thing, you could treat dealing with it as a simple check. Likewise, if a player comes up with a particularly clever way of dealing with it, you might change it from a conflict to a simple check.

Simple Check: Some obstacles just need an Agent to get a sufficiently good result on an appropriate check. Don't have an ironclad requirement for a particular kind of check, and make sure that success or failure at that check will both be interesting in some way, even if it's not the nice kind of interesting. Players will often work together for a big, important check, and that's to be expected and encouraged.

Challenge: A challenge is essentially something like a simple check but a bit more involved, so that it required multiple checks to succeed. Challenges are great for investigations; Space Agents will often need to look for clues and find the true source of the problem. They're also handy for complicated technical tasks like repairing a flaming engine, disabling a security system, and frantically cleaning up that big mess you made.

Contest: These are for when multiple characters or groups of characters are competing to do something sooner or better. The quintessential contest is a race, but pretty much anything where characters are trying to outdo one another will work. Talent contests, eating contests, and so on can be fun for their absurdity.

Conflict: Conflicts are for when characters are going head to head and they'll only settle things when someone can't compete anymore. This can include actual combat, but this is a game where combat should be entirely non-lethal. When Space Agents do fight, their ultimate goal is to knock some sense into someone. On the other hand, you can potentially use the conflict rules for all sorts of other things.

Role-Playing: Sometimes merely role-playing convincingly and entertainingly is enough to get things done. You can sometimes work checks into a role-playing scene, but if the role-playing is good enough it's better to just let it stand, since the dice sometimes have their own ideas.

Obstacles For Specific Agents

Obstacles should play to different Agents' abilities. Try to give each Agent a chance to shine. If you've got Sally Sprocket coming along for the adventure, be sure to put in something that her amazing technical skills can help solve. If Rick Fireball is there, there's just got to be some kind of vehicular chase scene. Obstacles don't have to relate directly to skills and shticks either. Sometimes they can relate to how the players role-play through a situation, in which case the Agents' personalities can make a big difference.

Here's a quick overview of the different Space Agents and what kinds of things they can do:

Beeper is a tech character to a degree that's kind of obsessive. His need to fix things can solve all kinds of problems, but it can also create new ones.

Billy Smith is all about courage and friendship. A clever player can put his abilities to good use in pretty much any situation, since he can become friends with anyone, use his Heart skill to tackle any danger, and come up with random objects to help with most anything. Also, try to include opportunities to for Billy's curiosity to get the better of him.

Craylor is a big bruiser who's surprisingly thoughtful. He can easily make himself useful whenever there's a fight, or otherwise when feats of strength are required, but he's also got a perceptive, thoughtful side. He also doesn't know much about Earth (or places outside the Martian deserts in general), so his culture shock can be a lot of fun to play with.

Cosmo is, well, a dog. He's so pure and friendly that he's incredibly disarming to most. He's also good at finding things, especially if he can search by smell.

Jasmine Goodbody is a pure healer character, with an exceptional ability to calm people down and treat problems. Be sure to give her opportunities to use these abilities.

Jenny Jetstream is an over-the-top caricature of the ideal Space Agent. She's the most bound to the Space Patrol itself, and second only to Billy for heart. Her abilities aren't as unique as her peers, but her jet pack can be essential in certain circumstances, and her Backup and Nick of Time shticks let her make herself useful in pretty much any situation.

Katrina is a tricky character, not as sneaky as Natasha, but very effective in her own way. She can sway enemies, and she's quite willing to take advantage of her royal status, making her a fun character to throw into social situations.

Leonard Fuller is the crabby old spaceman. He knows a lot about science and the world, plus in his old age he just has a different perspective from other members of the Space Patrol.

Lunk Stonejaw is another big bruiser, similar to Craylor in a lot of ways, but with more of an emphasis on protecting his friends. Naturally, that means one way to give Lunk a chance to shine is to have someone threaten his friends.

Natasha Sarkov is the sneaky spy character. She needs opportunities to solve problems through sneakiness, though a clever player can put her skills to good use in most any situation.

Rick Fireball is the cocky daredevil guy. Give him opportunities to take crazy risks that can pay off in a big way if they pan out. Depending on how the player plays him, he can also be something of a ladies' man (or a wannabe ladies' man?).

Sally Sprocket is the main grease monkey tech character in the game. Any episode involving her should include opportunities to fix, modify, or sabotage machines. The simplest way to do this is to have the antagonist use some kind of device to do whatever they're doing, though in some cases the antagonist can be a machine.

Obstacle Table

This is an optional table you can use to generate ideas for obstacles using playing cards. As with the other random elements, they're kind of general, and will require a certain amount of fleshing out.

Card		Card	
A♥	Someone is hiding their true feelings	A♦	Something is guarded by an elaborate security system
2♥	Someone is angry at someone else	2♦	Need to figure out where someone went
3♥	Someone can't handle the weird stuff around them	3♦	You have to reach a destination before someone else
4♥	Someone won't tell you something you need to know	4♦	You have to reach a destination before something starts
5♥	Need to persuade someone to not do something	5♦	Need to figure out how to properly operate a device
6♥	Someone needs cheering up	6♦	There's a big mess you have to clean up
7♥	Someone is going to reveal a secret	7♦	Need to figure out who's lying
8♥	Someone is terribly lonely	8♦	Need to find the real one
9♥	Someone is unwilling to trust others	9♦	Something really scary is blocking the way
10♥	Need to prove yourselves to someone	10♦	Need to leave a very spooky place
J♥	Someone is clinging too closely to someone else	J♦	Need to get control of your vehicle
Q♥	You must help a new life come into the world	Q♦	Need to pass a difficult test
K♥	You must teach someone a moral lesson	K♦	You must protect someone from constant threats
Card		Card	
A♠	Friend is trapped in a crazy machine	A♣	Someone is running away from you
2♠	Need to get someone safely home	2♣	Need to teach someone to do something
3♠	An important object is missing	3♣	Need to find someone a suitable companion
4♠	Someone's stuck in an out-of-control vehicle	4♣	Need to come up with something good enough to please someone
5♠	Trapped in a sealed room	5♣	Need to figure out someone's weakness
6♠	Someone's pursued by a mob	6♣	Need to figure out where someone is
7♠	You have to traverse dangerous terrain	7♣	Need to win a game
8♠	Pursued by something dangerous	8♣	Need to take someone's place for bit
9♠	Need to figure out how a machine works	9♣	Something you need is badly broken
10♠	Need to sneak into a place	10♣	Help someone overcome their fear
J♠	Confronted by a big mob	J♣	Need to prepare someone for a major challenge
Q♠	Need to throw a great party	Q♣	You have to put on a good performance
K♠	Need to escape a facility before it blows up	K♣	Ordered to perform a seemingly impossible menial task

Running an Episode

So you've got your scenario all ready, and your friends have gathered together to play. Now what?

Discovering the Problem

A typical Space Patrol mission starts when Commander Neutron steps back from the Globitron and calls in a team to deal with a problem he's spotted. He tells them what he can, and sends them out into the field.

On the other hand, the Agents might encounter the person who's in trouble right away, or they might run into someone else who's worried about them, or just find some clues to get them started investigating. One way or another, the game's afoot!

Confronting Obstacles

The meat of a game session is where the Agents confront and overcome the obstacles the GM has devised. Sometimes the players will neatly go through the set of obstacles you planned out, but most of the time you're going to have to wing it at least part of the time, and come up with one or two new obstacles along the way.

Regardless, it's up to you as the GM to decide when the Agents have overcome an obstacle. You can never be sure they'll solve a problem in the way you imagined, and those kinds of surprises are one of the many pleasures of RPGs. Never, ever shut the players down just because they want to approach a problem in a way you didn't think of. Let them try stuff out, and unless there's a really good (or at least amusing) reason for it to be otherwise, their actions should at least change the situation in some way. Likewise, while dice rolls should mean something (otherwise why bother?), don't let the Space Agents sit there waiting for someone to make a good enough roll.

Also, overcoming an obstacle doesn't necessarily require making checks in the first place. It's good to have some interesting challenges and action in each episode, but Agents can solve some problems by doing something fairly simple, or by talking to someone. If a player playing Jenny Jetstream role-plays a stirring, tearful plea to the monster and you think he should be swayed, just let it happen.

Sometimes, whether because of a bad die roll, a bad decision, or someone purposely trying to mess things up, the Space Agents will fail. Make failure interesting! Change the situation, and give them a new twist to deal with.

A Climax and a Resolution

The climax is where everything that's been going on comes to a head and hopefully ends in a satisfying way. It's a really big obstacle that comes at the end, and finally fixes the problem that brought about the conflict in the episode.

A Playful Epilogue

If you have time after the episode's problem gets solved, you can do an epilogue. Give the Space Agents a chance to see the fruits of their efforts, the smiling faces of the people they've helped, before you lower the curtain on the episode.

Some Other Things to Consider

Going Places

As the GM, it's pretty much up to you whether an episode has the Space Agents staying on Earth or running all over the universe. If the Space Agents need to, they can get a rocketship and blast off to other planets or solar systems with ease. While this can make for a more chaotic game, it lets you have adventures in all kinds of exotic places that are quite different from Earth.

Using Commander Neutron and the Space Patrol

Commander Neutron is the Space Patrol Earth Branch's highly respected leader, and something of a plot device. His Globitron lets him know about what's going on all over the Earth (and let's not think too hard about the implications of that), so he can find problems for Space Agents to tackle, and furthermore he knows when they're in trouble or just goofing off. However, he's too important to the Earth Branch to go out into the field himself except in the direst of emergencies. (If he does, he has a Power Level of 7, with the aspects of Full Authority of the Space Patrol's Earth Branch, The Space Patrol Exists to Help Those In Need, and Workaholic.)

Like a lot of things, I haven't really provided much from which to characterize Commander Neutron, basically so that you can give him whatever spin you like. I tend to think of him as being like the Chief from the anime series *Giant Robo: The Animation*, but you could make him more like Charlie from *Charlie's Angels*, Professor Utonium from *The Powerpuff Girls*, or anything else that you think would be neat.

The Space Patrol expects Agents to act independently for the most part. Agents can requisition things like rocketships to go blasting off to Pluto or wherever, but other Space Patrol personnel are normally too busy with their own jobs to help directly.

Sample Scenarios

A scenario is a full write-up of the plans the GM needs to run an episode of *Adventures of the Space Patrol*. This book includes two scenarios to help show you how it's done, and to save you a little time.

Scenario 1: Standing Up For Myself

Celine is a comic artist who worries a lot about whether she's good enough. She's always shy and generally inoffensive, so when she shows up at her day job and everyone thinks she was mean to a customer and told off the manager, it turns her world upside down. It turns out that there's a group of miniature aliens running around in a shapeshifting robot vehicle that has taken on her appearance.

Important NPCs

Celine, a Comic Artist

Power Level: 2

Stress Boxes: □□□

Aspects: More Talented of an Artist Than She Realizes, Shy and Reserved

Celine is a young woman in her 20s who more than anything wants to be a professional comic artist. Despite her lack of confidence, she's managed to become a part-time freelancer, but has to also work part-time at Starbooks to make ends meet. She likes coffee and even likes making coffee for people, but doesn't like dealing with customers, especially mean ones.

Leona, Comics Editor

Power Level: 2

Stress Boxes: □□□

Aspects: No-Nonsense Comics Editor

Leona is an editor at Tengu Comics, a popular independent comics publisher. She's fiercely self-possessed, and passionate about comics. Leona sees Celine's talent, but ultimately requires results.

The Kyutians, Tiny Aliens

Power Level: 6

Stress Boxes: As a Space Agent

Aspects: Band of Tiny Alien Warriors, In a Shapeshifting Humanoid Robot Vehicle, Armed to the Gills, Aggressive and Panic-Prone

The Kyutians, led by Captain Phoenix, are a race of alien warriors who by human standards happen to be about 4 inches tall. They have a matriarchal society, and as such will assume that women are in charge and men are mere "drones." There are six of them piloting a humanoid robot vehicle that can change its appearance and also conceals numerous weapons.

Specific Agent Tie-Ins

Since the action starts off in a café within walking distance of Space Patrol HQ, pretty much any of the Space Agents could be familiar with Celine from when they stop in for coffee. Agents who already know Celine should quickly realize that if people think she was being mean, something is clearly wrong.

Prologue

Commander Neutron dispatches the team of Space Agents to a Starbooks coffee shop that happens to be within walking distance of headquarters. The usually placid shop—which not a few Space Agents frequent for their morning lattes—is in the midst of a great shouting match, and the Commander wants the Agents to find out what's going on.

Obstacles

Calm the Café

When the Space Agents arrive at Starbooks, they find Mrs. Donnelly (Power Level I, Obnoxious Coffee Fiend) in a iced coffee-stained dress yelling at Tom the manager (Power Level I, Overworked Café Manager, Skilled Barista) and a cowering Celine. The Agents will have to calm the situation down (a Challenge) enough to stop the shouting so they can actually start getting to the bottom of things. Mrs. Donnelly wants something done about her dress, or failing that for Tom to fire Celine. Tom wants this disruption to his café to stop, but would prefer to just scold Celine and leave it at that.

Calming the situation could be a Challenge, or possibly even a Conflict if you want to get elaborate, but it can also just be pure role-play if the players get into it enough.

Find the Perpetrator

It comes out that both Tom and Mrs. Donnelly saw Celine get mad at Mrs. Donnelly (in Tom's version of the story Mrs. Donnelly was being quite rude) and throw an iced coffee at her. Celine then supposedly yelled at Tom, calling him a "stupid drone insulting his superiors," and stalked out. Celine meanwhile says she was actually late to work because the bus was running late. To that Tom has to admit that through the shop window he saw Celine get off of the bus less than a minute after she apparently stalked out of the café.

Apparently there are two Celines! The obvious next step is to find Celine's mysterious doppelganger. The investigation can be a Challenge, with each success getting the Agents a bit closer to their quarry. The doppelganger (i.e. the Kyutians' robot vehicle) is wandering around at random, flipping out at the slightest provocation. This means there's a trail of witnesses:

- A street vendor who tried to sell "Celine" a handmade necklace and got a photon interositer (whatever that is) as payment.
- A man who'd tried to ask "Celine" for an autograph and got hit with a freeze ray.
- A rude businessman whose car "Celine" apparently smashed with her bare hands!

Stop the Kyutians

It turns out that Leona, Celine's editor, grabbed what she thought was Celine and insisted on having lunch at a nice Italian restaurant. The Kyutians are having a hard time following the conversation, not to mention trying to operate their robot vehicle through a meal. When the Agents confront the doppelganger, the Kyutians decide that their mission has been compromised and totally panic. Their android vehicle flails around, revealing all sorts of weapons and generally going nuts. This makes a perfect Conflict.

Situation Aspects: Panicked Civilians, Plates of Pasta

Zones: Main Dining Room, Side Dining Room, Outdoor Seating, Kitchens

Epilogue

Upon their defeat, the Kyutians bow to this superior force and promise to leave Earth alone. With the fake Celine revealed and subdued, the real one can now patch things up, though she might not actually want to if the whole thing has changed her view of her life. In any case, she'll give the Space Agents her heartfelt thanks.

Scenario 2: When It Rains It Pours

Jimmy, a teenage boy who can't get a date, has suddenly found all of the girls flocking to him. This is because Nexus, the Pirate Queen of Andromeda, gave him a pendant as a present. Neither Jimmy nor Nexus realized that it's cursed and it can only be taken off by someone who truly loves him. Luckily, Nexus really is in love with him, if only she'll admit it.

Important NPCs

Jimmy, a Teenage Boy

Power Level: 2

Stress Boxes:

Aspects: Down on his Luck, Winning Smile, Magical Cursed Girl-Attracting Amulet

Jimmy is a perfectly ordinary teenage boy, with the perfectly ordinary problem that he hasn't had any luck with the ladies.

The Pegasus, Nexus' Pirate Spaceship

Power Level: 5

Stress Boxes: As a Space Agent

Aspects: Advanced Security Systems, Irrational Space Pirate Crew, Bristling With Weapons

Nexus, Pirate Queen of Andromeda

Power Level: 6

Stress Boxes: As a Space Agent

Aspects: In Love With Jimmy, Space Buccaneer

Specific Agent Tie-Ins

Female Space Agents are no more immune to the effects of Jimmy's curse than anyone else, which could make things much more complicated for Jenny, Katrina, Natasha, or Sally. (Though maybe Venusians are immune for some reason?) You might want to have Commander Neutron give them a special shield to protect them if you think it'll be a major problem.

Billy might know Jimmy from somewhere. They could even be brothers!

Being the Pirate Queen of Andromeda, Nexus really gets around. Any of the Space Agents could have tangled with her before for any number of reasons.

Prologue

Captain Neutron informs the Space Agents that a boy named Jimmy seems to be pursued by a large number of girls, and needs the Space Patrol's help.

Obstacles

Get Jimmy Out of Danger

The Space Agents find that a horde of teenage girls (Power Level 3, Crazy About Jimmy, 2 stress boxes) is pursuing a terrified Jimmy. There's some unnatural force making them go after him, and for the moment there isn't any actual cure. The Agents will have to figure out some way to get him to safety. If they try to subdue the girls this could be a Conflict, while other tactics to hide Jimmy will likely be a Challenge.

Find Nexus

From there, Jimmy fills them in on what's been going on, how Andromeda gave him the amulet and then, blushing, blasting off in her ship, the *Pegasus*. To find her, the Agents are going to need a spaceship, which of course the Space Patrol can provide. HQ tracked the *Pegasus* heading into the asteroid belt, a well-known pirate haven, so they'll have to navigate the asteroid belt. This will be a Challenge.

Nexus' Ship

The *Pegasus* totally dwarfs the patrol ship, so that taking it head-on isn't an option. Two obvious courses of action are for the Agents to either try to talk their way in or to try to sneak in. In either case, this can be a Conflict against the ship. With the Captain resting (fretfully) in her quarters it's the other pirates the Agents will have to argue with, or failing that they may be able to infiltrate the ship and make their way Nexus. If things take too long or just get seriously out of hand, Nexus will storm out of her quarters to see what's going on.

Confront Nexus

When the Space Agents finally confront Nexus herself, they're not going to get a fight unless they go out of their way to start one. Nexus is torn because she wants to be with Jimmy but doesn't want to drag him into her dangerous piratical lifestyle. The final scene is thus most likely going to involve simple role-play to make her understand what's going on. She won't hesitate to help Jimmy, though she'll definitely hesitate to express how she really feels.

Epilogue

Andromeda is able to remove the amulet from Jimmy with ease. The big question is what comes next. If they Jimmy and Andromeda get together, the two of them have to figure out what they want to do with their newfound relationship. Jimmy is thrilled at the idea of having a girlfriend, but more than a little intimidated by the whole space pirate thing.

Appendix

This chapter has some extra stuff that lets you change up the way this game works a bit, but isn't necessary to just sit down and play. If you want to get really ambitious, because *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is based on the *Fate Accelerated Edition* rules, you can potentially find other useful stuff in most any Fate or Fudge game.

Alternate Randomizers

If you don't have, can't get, or just don't like Fate dice, you can still play *Adventures of the Space Patrol!* This section has several different alternatives you can use. If you're playing online with a dice bot, you can just set it up to roll 4d3-8 to get the usual Fate dice result.

Standard Dice

4d6 Counting Method: The simplest way to substitute standard dice is to just roll four six-sided dice and count every 1 or 2 as a , every 3 or 4 as a , and every 5 or 6 as a .

2d6 Subtraction Method: This changes the probabilities a bit (bigger numbers become much more common), but it's not hard to use. You'll need two dice of different colors. One is your Positive Die, and the other is your Negative Die. Roll both, and then subtract the number on the Negative Die from the number on the Positive Die. If you roll a 4 on the Positive Die and a 1 on the Negative Die, your result is 3 (because $4 - 1 = 3$). As you might have noticed, with this method it's possible to get a +5 or a -5.

Chart Methods: These are two methods that require you to roll some dice and check them against a chart to get your result. You can either use three six-sided dice (3d6), or do a percentile roll with two ten-sided dice. To do a percentile roll, you'll need two 10-sided dice you can tell apart, and designate one as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit. When you roll them, just put them together to get a number from 1 to 100 (two zeroes count as 100). So if you roll a 4 on the tens die and a 2 on the ones die, your result is 42.

Whichever kind of dice you use, roll them and check the appropriate chart to get your result. If you go this route, you should probably copy it onto your character sheet.

Dice Roll		Result
3d6	d%	
3-4	1	-4
5	2-6	-3
6-7	7-18	-2
8-9	19-38	-1
10-11	39-62	+0
12-13	63-82	+1
14-15	83-94	+2
16	95-99	+3
17-18	100	+4

Cards

Here's a simple method for using ordinary playing cards, though it will need to be one where the Jokers are of different colors. Just draw one card in place of the dice, and check its rank and suit against the table to the right. If you want to make it faster and you have a deck of cards you don't mind writing on, you could add the numbers to each card with a permanent marker.

Card Trait	Value
2, 3, 4, 5	Zero
6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1
K, Q, J	2
Ace	3
Joker	4
Red	Negative
Black	Positive

Non-Random Play

A lot of gamers really love the clatter of dice on the table, the tension of waiting to see whether or not Lady Luck will smile upon them, but that's not the only way to play an RPG. (And every now and then you meet a player who seems to have such consistently bad luck with dice that you can't blame them for wanting to play a game without them.) In *Adventures of the Space Patrol* (and the FATE system in general) it's relatively easy to take the randomizers out because of the way things are set up. Unless you're having an impressive lucky (or unlucky) streak, whether or not you invoke an Aspect is more important than the dice to whether or not you succeed in the first place. Non-random (or "diceless") play requires a significant change to *how* you use the rules, but not to what those rules are per se.

When you make a check, you essentially drop the die rolling step and just use the character's skill rank plus any bonuses from aspects or other factors. That means that a character's competency for any given task is equal to his skill rank, plus however much he's willing to boost it by spending Atom Points and such. Although the game always involves a bit of resource management with Atom Points, in non-random play they take on extra significance because they're the main thing that can change the outcome. Or to put it another way, usually when the GM calls for a check she's saying, "How lucky do you feel?" but in non-random play that question becomes "How much are you willing to spend?" This is especially true if you assign a difficulty of 6 or more, since (apart from certain things where they get a +1 bonus from a Shtick), Space Agents just plain won't be able to succeed without spending Atom Points.

Non-random play also makes transparency a much more important issue. The rules kind of gloss over the question of whether or not the GM should announce the difficulty of an unopposed check to the players, or whether to reveal an NPC's Check Number for an opposed check. Some GMs like to be the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain, while others prefer to do things more out in the open. For non-random play with *Adventures of the Space Patrol*, I would definitely recommend the latter. In a game that's meant to be heartwarming I'd rather not be leading the players into wasting their single most important resource in the game. On the other hand, this means that every check is a matter of figuring out if you can pull together the resources to succeed, and judging whether it's worth it to do so. That in turn means that the Space Agents become much less likely to fail checks that the players consider important.

Opposed checks become a little more complicated, however, because there's the question of what's fair in terms of who reveals what they've decided to use when. When it's an NPC, the GM can just decide in secret and let the player work out his own character's Check Number out loud. Should to Space Agents be competing at something, you may want to resort to passing notes, or just have them take turns.

Creating New Agents

I decided to use pre-made characters rather than a more open character creation system basically for speed and to reinforce the kind of fiction I want the game to create. You most definitely can make new Space Agents of course, though you should make sure the GM approves before you play one in the game. Here are some rules and guidelines for making a new character:

Concept: The first thing you need is an idea for a character. A good Space Agent character is simple, punchy, and easy to grasp. They tap into one or two archetypes that people are already quite familiar with, maybe with a twist to make it a little more interesting.

Skills: Each Space Agent gets a total of 16 skill ranks. No given skill can go over 5 or below 1.

Shticks: A Space Agent gets three Shticks. You can mix and match Shticks from the existing characters, or make up new ones in the same general pattern. Shticks should reinforce the kinds of things you want that Agent to do, and generally make them more fun to play. Other Fate games include plenty of Stunts (the more standard name for Shticks) that you could use, though Space Agents shouldn't have Shticks that directly relate to fighting.

Aspects: Agents also get three Aspects. As you might have guessed, aspects are pretty free-form in how you go about creating them. They can represent possessions, traits, catch-phrases, things that often happen to the character in stories, etc. Good Aspects reinforce what the character is about, and give opportunities for Compels to earn more Atom Points. The included Space Agents each have an Aspect that represents who they are, an Aspect that's good for compels, and an Aspect that leads them towards positive interactions with others. *Fate Core* has an entire chapter on Aspects, starting on p. 55.

Stuff: Each Agent gets three signature items as well. These should be separate from stuff included in Shticks and Aspects, and should not include any lethal weapons, because the Space Patrol doesn't use any.

Details: You don't have to write up a detailed biography or anything, but you should be able to explain to your friends what your new Space Agent looks like, and his or her general background and abilities.

You can also tweak an existing character to be a bit more to your liking. If you'd like to make a suave male version of Natasha or some such, just take a character as a starting point, and change a few things to be more to your liking.

Design Notes

There are a lot of game designers I admire, from Jason Morningstar to Mike Mearls to Jun'ichi Inoue, but Ryo Kamiya is probably my overall favorite. His games are fascinating and innovative, and perhaps most important of all, they're unabashedly fun. *Golden Sky Stories* is an amazing game, and where RPGs typically provide exhilaration and intrigue (and sometimes horror), Kamiya has created a game that's heartwarming. To me, the mere idea that an RPG can be that way is one of the most important new concepts in the medium I've yet encountered. Between gamers exploring new ways of playing games, and designers exploring new ways of creating them, the emotional range of RPGs has only expanded over time, but "heartwarming" seems underrepresented, especially as an emotional core for a game.

For a long time now I've felt that while Fate typically came in massive tomes of 300+ pages, the core of what makes it really awesome was far simpler than that. I originally wrote *Adventures of the Space Patrol* to be such a Fate variant, but in 2013 Evil Hat released not only the new *Fate Core* book, but *Fate Accelerated Edition*, which was everything I'd wanted in a rules-light version of Fate and then some. At 48 pages and around 12,000 words total, it's a sleek, eminently manageable game, with the rules for actions and conflicts simplified and honed to precision, far better than I had done with my original *Space Patrol* variant. It didn't take long for me to realize that this was exactly the rules set I wanted for *Adventures of the Space Patrol*, and this final version is a rewrite to use FAE (plus a few elements of *Fate Core*) though the OGL. It retains several differences, particularly in how it handles characters, but on the whole anyone who knows FAE should be able to jump right in.

The genre and style of *Adventures of the Space Patrol* has a more complex pedigree. *Golden Sky Stories'* Japanese title is *Yuuyake Koyake*, which means "sunset" in Japanese, but it's also the title of a beautiful children's song, about walking home hand-in-hand under the setting sun, the shining moon and golden stars. I was inspired to try to create a game based on a Western children's song, and the extended version of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," which tells of the little star guiding a traveler on his journey, struck a chord. At the time I had recently bought a book of the art of Shane Glines, a very talented professional animator and artist, and his picture of a girl in a jumpsuit with a bubble helmet, ray gun in hand, informed the overall aesthetic of the game. Thus we have the cheesy-yet-cute retro sci-fi *Space Patrol* helping ordinary people out, not unlike the *henge* of *Golden Sky Stories*.

This is in some ways a departure from how I usually approach game design, because I typically can name a genre and/or write a list of a dozen titles that inspire me. *Adventures of the Space Patrol* is about a look and a feeling, and while I'm familiar with the likes of Flash Gordon and Commando Cody, in designing this game I haven't felt the slightest bit beholden to any of them. The end result is something like a cross between *Yuuyake Koyake* and *Spirit of the Century*, with pulpy sci-fi adventure in the service of heartwarming everyday stories. Although it's an implementation of the FATE rules, the way I've presented those rules owes an awful lot to *Yuuyake Koyake*. I also painted the setting in the broadest possible strokes (which shows a bit of *In a Wicked Age* influence) with the aim of letting you fill in the gaps with whatever you want.

What you do with this game is now up to you, of course. I had a lot of fun creating it, and I hope more than anything that you have fun playing it.

Other Media

I didn't create *Adventures of the Space Patrol* with any particular series or existing works in mind, so I can't really say there are any must-see movies or TV shows for you to really "get it." *My Life as a Teenage Robot* has a lot of the silly/stylish cartoon sensibility I'm looking for though, and *The Thrilling Adventure Hour* podcast (www.thrillingadventurehour.com) is hilarious and captures the right kind of retro cheese, especially in "Sparks Nevada, Marshall on Mars."

Below are a few other things that you might look to in order to get ideas and/or get a general feel.

Video

Astro Boy

Atomic Betty

Dexter's Laboratory

The Fairly OddParents

Flash Gordon

Forbidden Planet

Futurama

GalaxyQuest

Gravity Falls

Monsters vs. Aliens

Mystery Science Theater 3000

Star Trek: The Original Series

Music

Sometimes I like to play music during role-playing, though it takes some practice and care to keep it from being a distraction. Needless to say you can use whatever kind of music you like, or none at all, but here are some albums and songs that I think are especially *Space Patrol* like, though in a variety of different ways.

Blockhead, Music By Cavelight

Blue Man Group, The Complex

Bob Thompson, The Sound of Speed

Colorpulse, Escaping the Triangle (see www.colorpulsemusic.com)

Genki Rockets, Genki Rockets I: Heavenly Star

Gorillaz, Demon Days

Masamichi Amano, Giant Robo: The Animation Soundtrack

Mellow, Dragonfly (CQ Movie Soundtrack)

Pierre Henry, "Psyche Rock" (also known as the *Futurama* theme song)

The London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ed Wood Movie Soundtrack

Muse, Black Holes and Revelations

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