

RED PLANET



Jess Nevins

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR
FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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FATE[™]
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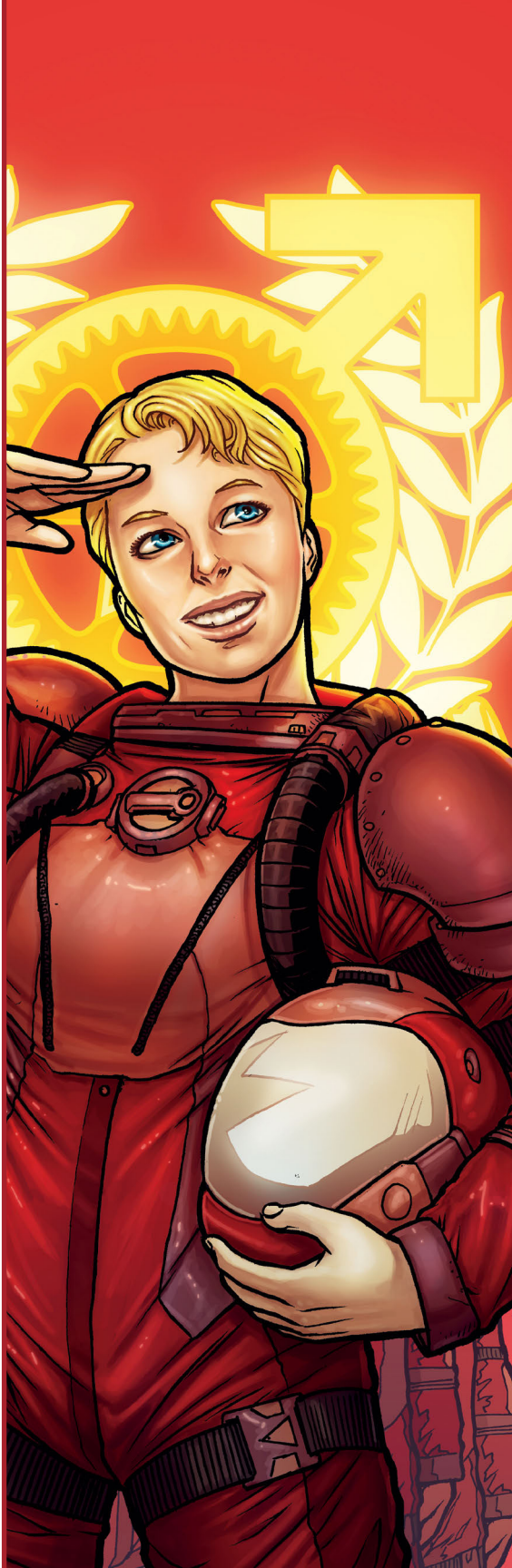
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the person standing at your counter can make copies of this thing, they can.
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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in
this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, communist
pulp heroes, two-dimensional conqueror aliens in flesh suits, capitalists,
space ships, space travel, really anything having to do with space (keep
reading), four-armed Venusian apes, or the solar system (because come on
it doesn't work like that) is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

Dedicated to the victims of capitalism and communism around the world.

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INTRODUCTION

(EXCERPT FROM THE GRADUATION SPEECH BY GENERAL SECRETARY NATALYA NARTOVSKAYA TO THE ACADEMY CLASS OF 773)

...Today is the day that you leave the Academy to take your place as Citizens of the Union of Materialist Republics. Today is the day you begin your service to the people; today is the day you begin to fulfill your life's mission. But before you leave, let us spend a moment looking back to appreciate how far we've come and the sacrifices our predecessors made to create the Union.

It is 773 post-Revolution. You know, because of what you have been taught about our ancient history on Earth, about the First Revolution, led by Lenin, Trotsky, and Kamenev; the insane royalist dictatorship which it overthrew, the hatred of the capitalist countries for the new Bolshevik government and their military attempt to crush it. So too, you know about the grave crimes the Bolsheviks committed, which led to the Second Revolution and countrywide instability and chaos. You know that during that chaotic time the scientists Los and Spiridonov built the *Nikolay Przhevalsky*, filled it with the men, women, children, and equipment of fourteen collectives, and took off from Heiss Island for Mars. And you know the difficulties the *Nikolay Przhevalsky* had to overcome to reach Mars, and the native Martian royalist dictatorship which had to be overthrown when we landed, in the Third and final Revolution.

You know about our history on Mars, because to be ignorant of one's history is to forget the debt one owes to our ancestors and predecessors. You may not celebrate the older holidays of our tradition, but you know of them: Year 1, Month 1, Day 29, the day the native Martian regime fell; 3.13.22, the day that the construction of New Moscow was completed; 7.21.14, the day that the last reaches of Mars were fully explored and settled, the final republic named, and the Union of Materialist Republics declared; 94.4.30, the day that the so-called Union of Soviet Socialist Republics began their long war with us; 99.6.15, the date that the construction of the Academy—yes, this very Academy—was completed; 181.26.13, the day we learned, to our ever-lasting regret, just how far the plots of the Geometrists went; 256.33.18, the date on which the bases on Phobos and Deimos were completed; 277.16.20, the date we first landed on Venus—the same day on which we began our war with the feudalists there; and especially 521.29.7, Peace Day, the date that we signed the peace treaties with the so-called United States of America, the supposed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Geometrists.

For 252 years, the Union has known peace, and thanks to the blessedly wise and foresighted leadership of my predecessors, every republic and our colonies of Jupiter have prospered. The harvests have generally been good, and even during the years of drought or storms the collectives and the states and the republics share what they have so that all may live well. Technology has advanced far beyond what was available to the people when the *Nikolay Przhevalsky* left Earth, so that today the scientists of the Union can truthfully say that science serves the people, and not the reverse.



But history is not a primary interest to most of you—I know it is not for my daughters. You're more interested in what is happening now—and for good reason. History on Earth was blood and mud and capitalist oppression of the proletariat, and history has ceased largely to have meaning within the Union, where all republics cooperate and internal conflict is a thing mostly unknown to us.

What you are more interested in is serving the Union in your roles as soldiers, farmers, scientists, and so on. And, of course, in music and film and travel and love and all the other things that young people—twenty-one- and twenty-two-year-olds—are concerned with. But—and I'm afraid this may not please some of you—you may be done learning your history, but history is not done with you. History means nothing, now, within the Union. But the history of the solar system is still being written, and we are a part of that. External conflict, the war between economic systems, the defense against an other-dimensional invasion: these are all realities which you, as the new generation of Citizens, must deal with. Peace with the capitalists of the United States and the corrupt dictatorship that is the U.S.S.R. is tenuous at best, and grows more doubtful every day. The silence from the feudalists of Venus is worrisome. The truce with the Geometrists of the second dimension seems to hold, but how long can we rely on them to keep to the treaty they signed many generations ago? The graduates of the Academy, the new Citizens of the Union, must be ever vigilant for the inevitable war or wars to come...

WELCOME TO RED PLANET

Red Planet is a setting for *Fate Core*. It is a game about a utopia under threat, defended by brave women and men who use their wits, their ray guns, and their faith to defeat and hopefully convert the enemies of that utopia. There are planets, and aliens on those planets, and corrupt foreign spies and extradimensional invaders—and stalwart characters to oppose them.

Red Planet is a Soviet science-fiction pulp game, in that that genre's where many of its influences come from. The Martian Union of Materialist Republics is a communist utopia based on hopeful Soviet sci-fi pulps, but the world of *Red Planet* has many other elements from Soviet sci-fi pulps: spaceships, ray guns, alien monsters, noble communist heroes from various classes working together, the fate of civilizations at stake. This is all added to the familiar tropes from American pulp sci-fi.

The solar system, 1300 years in our future, is a place of contrasts. There is the Martian utopia and the hell world that Earth has become. There is the high-tech Union, the much-higher-tech Geometrists of the second dimension, and the low-tech Venusians. There is civilized Mars and Earth and untamed Saturn and Jupiter. There are pirates in the asteroid belt and generation ships being built on Pluto. There is the known solar system and the recently discovered mystery world, Planet Ten.

It's a dangerous solar system in many ways. The Americans and Soviets hate the Martians as much as they hate each other. The Geometrists want to invade Earth and Mars and wipe out humanity altogether. And there are the usual accidents that happen when traveling through space.

But you, Citizen of the Union, don't care about the danger. You have a perfect society to maintain and defend, and a creed—progressive materialism—to spread, and you're happy to risk your life to do so, because you know that your actions help the people and the Union and ultimately all humanity, and what nobler goal could there be?

Red Planet is also a game about fighting for a better way of life for everyone. You are Citizens of an actual, functioning, happy utopia, a civilization in which everyone works and sacrifices for the benefit of everyone else—a culture in which a form of communism, the economic and philosophical ideal, actually works.

Consequently, *Red Planet* characters are not out for themselves, and do not live in a world in which adventuring for personal gain is one's ultimate goal. You aren't murderous sociopaths killing monsters and stealing their stuff; you are Citizens living in service to a perfect society, defending it against its enemies. *Red Planet* is meant to be a hopeful universe, one in which the better angels of our nature (to quote Abraham Lincoln) triumphed and built a wonderful civilization. Your goals should be hopeful ones: defeating the agents of bad, evil, and wrong economic systems—and ultimately, the systems themselves—so that all of humanity, not just the Citizens of the Union, can live in peace and prosperity.

No small goals, we admit. But we know you're up to it.

A NOTE ON HISTORICAL ACCURACY

Red Planet is a roleplaying game. It is a fantasy based on the idea that an idealized fictional philosophy similar to communism but called progressive materialism could appeal enough to people's better natures to make them willingly and joyfully belong to a communist civilization—a civilization which would in turn act peacefully toward the new beings and cultures it encountered and would only wage defensive wars against its opponents.

In reality, of course, our world tried a variety of communism: Marxism-Leninism. It resulted in the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Union, a corrupt and, yes, evil one-party dictatorship. Here's a reminder of what the Soviet Union did:

- Enacted a man-made famine in the Ukraine known as the Holodomor or "extermination by hunger," an attempt at the genocide of the Ukrainian people by the Stalin regime. The Holodomor killed 2.5 to 7.5 million Ukrainians.
- Executed 800,000 political prisoners.
- Sent hundreds of thousands to gulags, with an estimated 1.7 million deaths.
- Killed an estimated 400,000 kulaks (farmers) through forced resettlement.
- Executed an estimated 100,000 "enemies of the people" during the Russian Civil War.
- Murdered an estimated 750,000 prisoners during Stalin's Great Purge.
- Killed over 100,000 "national contingents" during the 1930s.
- Massacred over 150,000 Poles during World War II.
- Explicitly condoned the rape of an estimated 2 million women by Soviet soldiers during the retaking of Eastern Europe and Germany in 1944 and 1945.

A true estimate of the deaths caused by the Soviet Union can never be known; 15 million is the low end of the current estimates, with the high end being 60 million. This does not take into account the untold millions of lives devastated by the killings and rapes, constant political repression, and detainment in prisons and gulags; the millions of non-Soviets wounded and killed around the world by Soviet agents and proxies; and the millions more killed in places like China and Vietnam by governments and armies following some variation of communism.

Capitalism has its own unimaginably huge list of victims, tens of millions of names long. But let no one reading *Red Planet* be under the slightest illusion: communism, in the real world, killed millions of people.

What Is Pulp?

The pulps were a type of magazine, named after the wood-pulp paper they were printed on. They printed a wide variety of fiction, in every genre. What we now think of as “pulp fiction” was actually a particular approach taken by writers to these genres: high-adventure, from two-fisted detective to science fiction, with an emphasis on narrative speed, violent plots, quickly sketched colorful characters, and potent emotions strongly expressed. A pulp fiction hero is larger than life in all regards: if he is a fat detective, he is grossly obese and the best detective in the city; if she is a former circus strongwoman, she’s the strongest woman anyone’s ever seen. And pulp fiction stories are larger than life, as well: a space cop and a space pirate are stuck on a planetoid and have to science their way to freedom; three mercenaries in the Amazon discover a lost city of conquistadors; a woman must choose between her dull husband and the drunk detective who has captured her heart; and so on.

Pulp moves quickly and wastes no time. Pulp aims to entertain on a basic level; it doesn’t have time for the complexity of real life, or sophisticated emotions, or stylistic nuance, or middle-class angst. Pulp is about conflict with the highest stakes, whether the fate of planets or of one relationship. Pulp is about fun (even extreme) concepts set in motion. In pulp, there is no biology or chemistry or physics, there is SCIENCE! In pulp, there are no seedy criminals, only masterminds and mob bosses. In pulp, the thing an astronaut uses the most is her blaster, not her oxygen tank.

Evil Hat’s *Spirit of the Century* is pulp. *King Kong* is pulp. So is *Star Wars*. So are the *Bourne* movies. So is *Bound*.

The setting of *Red Planet* is that of space opera, the conflict between planets and races with the fate of civilizations at stake. And certainly the dominant storyline of *Red Planet*—the threat that the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and Geometrists pose to the Union and to Mars—is pulp sci-fi. But any kind of story can be told in the world of *Red Planet*, from hard-boiled detective (a team of observers walking the streets of New Moscow, tracking down shipments of food that have gone missing) to double-gun military adventure (a squad of soldiers ordered to hold their post against the waves of Venusians) to espionage (a team of Special Citizens assigned to steal a secret from the Pentagon) to something based entirely on heartfelt conversation (a group of explorers trying to convert the inhabitants of Planet Ten to progressive materialism).

You can do most anything you want with *Red Planet*. Just remember to keep it pulp—and fun!

The Science and Technology of *Red Planet*

Accurate science was of much less concern to pulp science-fiction writers, especially Soviet pulp science-fiction writers, than was plot. Consequently, the science and technology of *Red Planet* are of the SCIENCE! variety. Science serves plot, rather than the reverse, and the available technology is the tech of our science fantasies: clean, functioning, stylish in the Constructivist fashion, and above all imaginative.

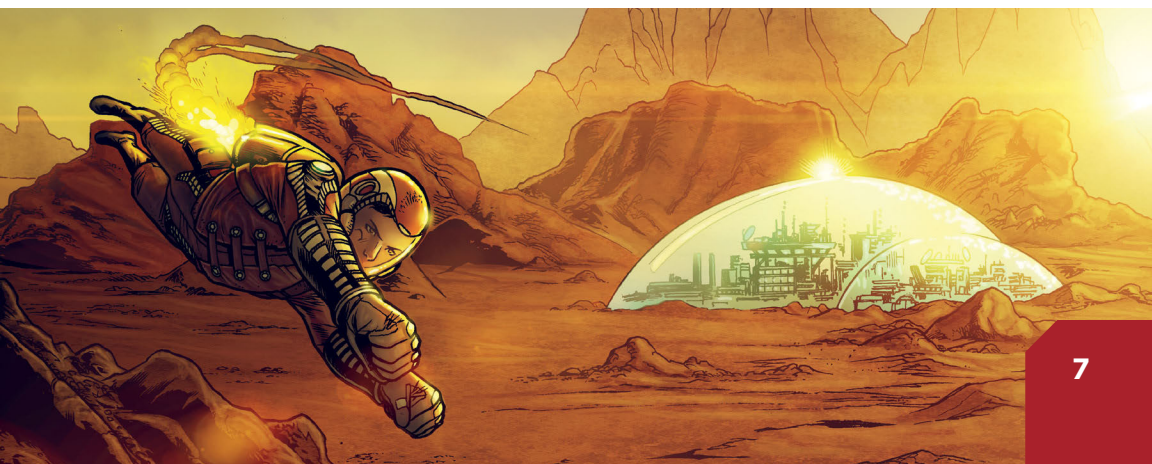
Here is a brief list of scientific facts in the universe of *Red Planet*:

- Most of the planets of the solar system have Earth-like atmospheres.
- Antigravity is a functional technology based on the element “trirodov.”
- The square-cube law doesn’t apply to living beings.
- Faster-than-light communication is possible.
- Something as small as a handheld gun can produce a very damaging laser blast or death ray.

Here is a brief list of items of technology common on the Mars of *Red Planet*:

- Hand-blaster ray guns (standard issue for everyone)
- Wrist communicators (standard issue for everyone)
- Flying suits
- Giant, slow-moving terraforming machines
- Jet-pack spacesuits (standard issue for anyone in space)
- Advanced computers (but not robots or A.I.—those are too close to slavery for the Union’s tastes)
- Dirigibles in addition to planes and flying suits
- Flight craft that operate as well in the emptiness of space as in a planet’s environment
- Enormous space battleships and dreadnoughts
- Clean and safe atomic energy plants

If you want to stat up these items for your game, you certainly can, but don’t sweat the details—the writers of the pulps never did. Just make them stylish and pulpish.



A NOTE ON *RED PLANET*'S SOURCES

As mentioned before, *Red Planet*'s default setting is space opera, but the source material of *Red Planet* varied widely as far as their genres were concerned. Here are some other genres and concepts that appear in Soviet pulp:

- Polar exploration with the goal of resurrecting frozen explorers.
- The discovery that London exists inside a pocket dimension which happens to be a barrel.
- A mad scientist creates ectoplasmic zombies which rebel against their creator and join the U.S.S.R.
- A sorceress bewitches the vice-regent of Novgorod.
- A noble Soviet policeman reforms criminals and turns into patriotic communists.
- A Russian bandit aids mad scientist in creating an airship.
- An American Doc Savage–James Bond combination creates global communist utopia.
- American and Soviet secret agents duel psychically.
- A Soviet expedition explores the Hollow Earth.
- Satan tempts a Scandinavian family.
- A Russian mad scientist/Satanist/sorcerer creates zombie “quiet children” to psychically enslave neighbors.
- A female vampire terrorizes Moscow.
- Cultists attempt to bring about the birth of the “dove child” prophesied to save mankind.

Adventure, espionage, horror, dark fantasy—it's all there, and can all fit in the world of *Red Planet*. You'll want to tailor some of these concepts, if you use them, to the setting: the Americans and Soviets would ruthlessly exploit the resources of the Hollow Earth, and perhaps Satan or the vampires are simply extremely powerful psychics, and the ectoplasmic zombies would be turned into Special Citizens. But the universe of *Red Planet* is a big one, with room for anything.

The Solar System

Mercury

Population: 0

The desert planet of the solar system. Intensely hot, very windy, covered entirely by desert with only the occasional brackish oasis to relieve the monotony. At regular intervals across the planet, there are alien ruins, pyramids and ziggurats and cubes and globes, accompanied by the crumbling remains of statues of alien humanoids. The only life forms on Mercury are the many bugs, tiny, small, big, and huge, ranging from the ever-present clouds of alien locusts to mutated giant scorpions to the occasional giant beetle or dragonfly-like winged creature.

Not a viable prospect for terraforming, although if necessary a subterranean base could be established here. There's no reason to go here, no natural resources to be tapped, and no intelligent life to be examined, so the Union does not maintain any bases here. It is a very occasional hideout for the most desperate of space pirates, though.

Aspects: BUGS—MILLIONS OF THEM; LONE AND LEVEL SANDS STRETCH FAR AWAY

Venus

Population: 300 million (native)

The jungle planet of the solar system. Thick cloud cover eventually gives way to widespread jungles with numerous large lakes and long rivers. The environment is humid and hot. Plants are aggressive and carnivorous; animals tend to be on the larger side, ranging from dinosaur-like reptiles to enormous four-armed “gorillas.” The frog-like native Venusians are unusually strong, thanks to their closeness to the sun's cosmic radiation, but are aggressively xenophobic and extremely committed to their backwards culture. The native civilization is stuck at the feudal level, with numerous kingdoms and the occasional continent-spanning empire, but only capable of creating primitive weaponry: swords, shields, armor, and such.

Venus is a primary target for wholesale conversion to progressive materialism once the native culture is overcome. As it is, a number of converts have been made from the Venusian serf class, and of course there is widespread scientific improvement of the Venusian animals, but progress remains slow due to the Venusian hatred for outsiders, especially those who intend to disrupt their class structure.

Aspects: EVEN THE PLANTS HATE US; A STRANGE KIND OF CHIVALRY



Earth

Population: 15 billion

In the old dating system it is the year 3378, and there are two competing cultures: oppressive, exploitative capitalism—as seen in the ruthless corporations that run the United States of America—which has spread throughout both American continents, and the corrupt and evil pseudo-communist dictatorship that is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which has spread throughout much of Europe and Asia. Each power is locked into a death spiral of vicious, unchecked war with the other. Attempts at large-scale geoengineering projects (such as damming the Mediterranean and draining the Aral Sea for irrigation) and proxy wars (the so-called World War III), some waged using biological, chemical, and nuclear weaponry, have destroyed much of the environment. The U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. do their best to ensure that countries that might threaten their positions of power—China, India, Kenya—are crippled economically, environmentally, and if necessary militarily. And the discovery of the Hollow Earth, which should have been a revelation and a potential salvation for humanity, meant only a new environment for the Americans and Soviets to exploit and drain as well as a new battlefield on which to fight their endless war.

The U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. are, along with the Geometrists (page 17), the main enemies of the Union. The poor of both countries, and the rest of humanity, are ripe for conversion to progressive materialism and relocation to Mars, but a wholesale, civilization-wide conversion can only take place once the militaries of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. are defeated, and that has not yet happened. Union bureaucrats and observers theorize that the rulers of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. continue to tighten their grip out of fear of revolution and the knowledge of how tenuous their power is, and that if the ruling class could be toppled the entire corrupt system would fall, but for now that remains just a dream.



ASPECTS

U.S.A.: LIFE IS HARD IN THE GHETTO; SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST CORPORATE SHARKS; THE 1% AND THE 99%

U.S.S.R.: “EVERYONE GETS ‘DISAPPEARED’ EVENTUALLY.”; PRESERVED PSYCHIC HEAD OF JOSEF STALIN; THE 1% AND THE 99%

Rest of the World: BIO-CHEM-RAD DANGER ZONES; FAVELAS STRETCHING OUT TO THE HORIZON; MALTHUSIAN NIGHTMARE

Hollow Earth: HIDDEN ATLANTEAN RUINS; STUCK IN THE TRIASSIC ERA; UNSPOILED ENVIRONMENT IN THE PROCESS OF BEING SPOILED

Moon of Earth

Population: 50,000

Earth’s moon holds a very large U.S.A. military base, the only base either the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. has off the Earth. From the moon, the U.S.A. launches missiles at the U.S.S.R. and stages the occasional raid on Mars, although the U.S.A.’s Space Navy flight is small compared to the Union’s. Earth’s moon is a significant military asset for the U.S.A., its primary advantage over the U.S.S.R. and an ever-present threat to the Union’s peace and safety. Consequently, the U.S.A.’s base on the moon is a primary target for Union Space Navy attacks and raids by daring Union Citizens, as well as the subject of the occasional raid by Soviet cosmonauts.

Aspects: MORE BOMB CRATERS THAN METEORITE CRATERS; TEEMING WITH SOLDIERS

Mars

Population: 30 million

The home to the Union of Materialist Republics. There are twenty republics, whose official names are simply numbers, 1 (*odin*) to 20 (*dvadzat*), but in common usage their old, pre-arrival names are still used: Diacria, Arcadia, Acidallium, Lacus, Casius, Cebrenia, Memnonia, Tharsis, Coprates, Oxia Plaus, Sabaeus, Iapygia, Tyrrhenum, Elysium, Phaethontis, Thaumasia, Argyre, Noachis, Hellas, Eridania. The two poles are home to military bases rather than collectives, although the biggest military base is the Space Navy base which honeycombs Olympus Mons.

Mars was terraformed centuries ago and is now primarily an agricultural planet, with farms taking up most of the space in each collective and jobs related to farming being the most common among workers; making sure every Union member is fed remains a primary concern among the secretaries. Farming collectives take up 90% of the land on Mars. The largest and most notable city is the planet's capital, New Moscow. The other notable landmark is the city-sized Academy, the university of Mars, which annually teaches its hundreds of thousands of students skills ranging from advanced farming to piloting Space Navy dreadnoughts.

The native Martians had a capitalist society before the *Nikolay Przhevsky* landed, in Year 1, and sparked the Revolution that resulted in the destruction of Martian culture and the establishment of the Union. The native Martian bourgeois were re-educated, while the native Martian proletariat were welcome with open arms into the Union. Now, 772 years later, there is no trace left of the original class divide among the native Martians. They have all been fully assimilated into the Union and serve as Citizens just like ordinary humans, a source of no small pride to the Citizens of the Union.

Aspects: FARMS AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE; THE NEW MOTHERLAND; UTOPIA WITHOUT SHADOWS



Phobos and Deimos

Population: 10,000 (Martian)

Mars's two moons, home to the largest Union off-planet Space Navy bases in the system. Relatively small and cramped, especially compared to the comfortable size of planetary bases, the bases on Phobos and Deimos are bustling places, even more so since the two moons were boosted into high orbit. These bases serve as Mars's first orbital defense and the Union's initial point of contact with the colonies in the rest of the solar system, and everyone on Phobos and Deimos takes their duty *very* seriously, since if a threat to the Union exists—a runaway comet or incoming American spaceships—it must be detected by the men and women on Phobos and Deimos before it reaches Mars. Service here is an intense affair, so most of the Martian population cycles through here at regular intervals so as not to get burned out.

Aspects: ALWAYS ON DUTY; EVERYONE SERVES THERE SOMETIME; THE MOTHERLAND'S SHIELD

Asteroid Belt

Population: 150,000 (Martian, human, Venusian)

Regrettably, the solar system's space lanes are not entirely peaceful. Renegades from Earth, Venus, and even Mars flock to the tiny outposts here and have made a kind of outcast civilization, one based on barter (from mining the asteroids), black market trade (with the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.), and piracy (preying on Union shipping). It's the rough part of the solar system, where life is cheap and blasters are cheaper. The Union's policy is not to wipe out the outposts—that would cause an unacceptable loss of innocent life—but simply to prevent and defend against piracy. But no matter how many pirates are captured, there always seems to be more out there.

Aspects: ARRR MATEY!; REFUGE FOR NON-CONFORMISTS



Jupiter

Population: 250,000 (Martian)

A young planet, filled with fast-growing vegetation, quickly mutating animals, enormous and fierce storms, and unpredictable geologic behavior, including overnight volcanos and suddenly appearing islands. Ruins of an Atlantean nature have been found here, but there are no sentient beings on Jupiter, merely a staggering variety of semi-sentient alien creatures, many of a quite bizarre appearance. Jupiter is home to thousands of Martian farming colonies and scientific laboratories, as Union farmers attempt to tame the world and make it the breadbasket of Mars, while Union scientists labor tirelessly to discover a way to uplift entire species of Jovian animals.

Despite the many Martian colonies and laboratories here, and despite the vast areas terraformed and made into arable land, most of Jupiter—and it is twenty times the size of Mars and ten times the size of Earth—is untamed wilderness. Outside of the colonies it is a dangerous world, full of the adventure that the now-settled Mars lacks. Because of this, Jupiter is an often-requested destination for young Martian Citizens looking for thrills to accompany their postings.

Aspects: ABANDONED ATLANTEAN COLONY; INFINITE DIVERSITY IN INFINITE COMBINATIONS; THE UKRAINE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Saturn

Population: 10 billion (native)

Largely a water planet dotted with a few islands, Saturn has flourishing aquatic life, in a range of bizarre forms, and flourishing aerial life, also in strange variety. There is a dominant lifeform, the flying aliens known colloquially as the floating jellyfish, but all attempts to communicate with them have failed, and it remains unknown whether they are sentient and if so what kind of culture they have. Apart from the jellyfish, there is no sign of intelligent life, just a staggering range of sea creatures and air creatures.

Although Saturn lacks arable land, much of its aquatic vegetation and sea life are edible by Martians. Consequently, Saturn is a primary target for eventual colonization, and the Union has already begun enacting plans to establish floating farms and subterranean colonies there.

Aspects: THE JELLYFISH AREN'T LIKE US; WATER—THE SOURCE OF ALL LIFE; WHAT HIDES IN THE RINGS?

Uranus

Population: 0

A dark, barren planet, frozen, rocky, and dead. Uranus has no native life forms that Union scientists have been able to find. Too cold for farming, with soil unpromising for terraforming, and with no native life forms for Union scientists to examine, Uranus has been skipped by Union colonizers and avoided by Union explorers and pilots. Apart from the initial mapping of the planet back in the year 619, Uranus has not been precisely charted, and it remains an unknown, unexplored planet. Rumors, spread by credulous Space Navy soldiers and the occasional chattermouthed or imbecilic space pirate, maintain that there are life forms on Uranus, life forms that don't show up on Union flight-craft detectors, life forms that deserve the names "vampires" and "ghosts." But these are unsubstantiated rumors, and no one in a position of power on Mars gives such rumors much credence. Still, odd and unfortunate coincidences befall Union ships that are forced to land on Uranus—coincidences that the Union bureaucrats find hard to justify or explain.

Aspects: BLANKS SPOTS ON THE MAPS; THE SHADOWS SEEM TO MOVE; THAT WASN'T THERE YESTERDAY

Neptune

Population: 100,000 (Martian)

Wracked by extreme weather patterns, Neptune has a frigid atmosphere and is in many ways similar to Uranus, being dark, rocky, and covered with ice. However, the initial Martian explorers and pilots, in their first exploration of Neptune in the year 632, discovered that Neptune's environment and soil is rich not just in water, ammonia, and methane, but also in gold, platinum, plutonium, uranium, and the anti-gravity element known as trirodov, named after its discoverer, the scientist Grigorii Trirodov. Consequently, Union mining colonies were quickly established on Neptune and for the past 140 years have been shipping valuable elements back to Mars for use by the Union.

The mining colonies are largely automated, but even the biggest diggers, drills, and harvesters require human operators, so thousands of workers are sent here every year. Life in the mining colonies is hard, even with the machines doing the lion's share of the physical work, so workers are cycled out after a year's service, lest they become burned out by the work. To have served your year on Neptune is a point of pride for many workers.

Aspects: AN ENTIRE PLANET LIKE THE SOUTH POLE; MINERAL-RICH BEYOND ANYONE'S WILDEST DREAMS; ROUGHEST POSTING IN THE SYSTEM

Pluto

Population: 50,000 (Martian)

An unpromising dwarf planet covered in snow tens of feet deep and continually swept by blizzards, Pluto was until very recently the planet most recently discovered in the solar system. There is no native life larger than tiny fish eking out their existence beneath the yards-deep, continually frozen icecap. Nonetheless, the Union established a substantial Space Navy base here in the year 644 and has built it up ever since. Unique among the Union Space Navy bases in the solar system, the Pluto base's primary mission is not military—though the base is on constant guard for alien visitors from outside the solar system—but exploratory: the Pluto base is the building site for the generation ships, which will eventually be sent to Proxima Centauri, Barnard's Star, Luhman 16, WISE 0855–0714, and Wolf 359. The Pluto base is far from home on Mars, a very cold posting, and one entirely reliant on supply ships from Mars for food and living supplies, but the Pluto posting is considered one of the best in the entire Union, since it is from Pluto that humanity will launch itself into the greater universe.

Aspects: ALL ALONE IN THE NIGHT; JUMPING-OFF POINT TO THE UNIVERSE

Planet Ten

Population: Unknown

A planet discovered only this year by Union scientists, who used mathematics to detect its existence by its effect on the asteroids of the Kuiper Belt, and then used advanced technology to fix its location in the solar system. Nothing else is known of Planet Ten, as it is a staggering 45 billion miles from the Sun, a distance that would require almost a year to traverse with the fastest Union Space Navy ships from Mars. Naturally, three squadrons of Space Navy ships, filled with some of the Union's best explorers and pilots, were dispatched to Planet Ten to see what this new addition to the solar system, this mystery planet, holds. Civilized aliens? A long-lost Atlantean colony? Another element- and mineral-filled resource like Neptune? Or simply another frozen rock, like Pluto? We do not know, but we will soon find out.

Aspects: STRANGE ENERGY READINGS; WHAT LURKS BENEATH THE CLOUD COVER?

Country of the Geometrists

Population: 100 million estimated (native)

The Country of the Geometrists exists in two-dimensional space, and all of their actions since their discovery indicate that their culture's primary goal is to invade three-dimensional space. Union scientists theorize that the population of the Geometrists may be too great for two-dimensional space to contain, which would explain why they are so desperate to conquer the Earth and now Mars. The Country was discovered on Earth the year before the *Nikolay Przhevalsky* left for Mars, and only then by accident, when members of a supposed diplomatic mission from the Country of the Geometrists contacted a Soviet mathematician in Petrograd and attempted to subvert him. The mathematician rejected the subversion attempt and told Moscow of his visitors. Ever since, the Geometrists have tried by every means possible to conquer Earth and Mars, from subtle (bribing government officials) to overt (attempts at all-out military invasion).

The Geometrists seem to be religious fanatics—with titles translating to Coadjutor, Magister, and Exarch—with an undying devotion to the Geometrist way of life, a devotion that has so far proven immune to all attempts at conversion to progressive materialism. The Geometrists have technology far in advance of the Union's, with a specialty in techno-organics. They seem also to have psychic abilities, not the least of which is their ability to travel “up” from the second to the third dimension, and back “down” to the second dimension. Union scientists still have not cracked the secret of dimensional travel, nor have Union Special Citizen psychics displayed the ability for dimensional travel that the Geometrists seem to possess.

The Geometrists, with their advanced technology and psychic abilities, pose a formidable threat to the Union and to the Earth. Fortunately, to date every Geometrist who has traveled into the third dimension has eventually gone mad; two-dimensional minds were clearly not meant to be exposed to three-dimensional reality over a prolonged period of time. Unfortunately, even insane Geometrists can do a great deal of damage, and their actions and plots put the Union in constant danger. To date, Union scientists have been unable to devise a military weapon or device that would allow Union soldiers to fight the Geometrists on their home ground of the second dimension. All battles with the Geometrists take place in our dimension, rather than theirs.

The Country of the Geometrists is, with the Earth, the primary enemy of the Union.

Aspects: EXPAND OR DIE; INVISIBLE TO THREE-DIMENSIONERS; WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND PSYCHICS GO BAD?



CHARACTER CREATION AND CLASSES

Red Planet characters are created in the same way as *Fate Core* characters. You'll still make a character idea, a name, a high concept, a trouble, the three Phase Trio aspects, a skill pyramid of one Great (+4), two Good (+3), three Fair (+2), and four Average (+1) skills, three free stunts, mental and physical stress tracks each with 2–4 boxes, and a refresh of 3, which you can use to buy more stunts.

However, in *Red Planet*, you'll also choose your character's **social class** from the list below. The Union is a hierarchical civilization: every person belongs to a social class—by choice, and one's class can be changed if wished—and each class serves the Union. Each social class gives your character a bonus in two skills, which applies after you assign skill ranks, so you can increase skills beyond the normal starting cap of Great (+4).

BUREAUCRAT

The bureaucrats are essential parts of each collective, state, and Republic government, for the bureaucrats are the ones who memorize facts and analyze documents, no matter how inconsequential, in order to maintain beneficial status quos and to detect anomalies which can then be corrected or capitalized upon. You are a data-detective, advising the Secretaries about unusual situations that must be addressed. Each bureaucrat knows their responsibility is to make the life of all Union members as easy as possible through data analysis and document processing.

Bonus: +1 Investigation, +1 Notice

EXPLORER

Explorers do just that—explore, whether the unknown (to humans) jungles of Venus, the inner rocks of the asteroid belt, the rings of Saturn, or the moons of Planet Ten. But the duties and responsibilities of the explorer go beyond discovery and charting new locations. You are also responsible for first (and second, and third) contact with alien beings and civilizations, and it is up to you to show the aliens how benign the Union is, how well it treats strangers, and how, ultimately, progressive materialism is the way to peace and prosperity for all. This duty applies to Earth, as well, and to the lost humans of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

Bonus: +1 Empathy, +1 Rapport



NEW MAN/WOMAN

Those men and women of exceptional physical and intellectual abilities, who master the sciences, the humanities, and the physical arts. Experts in everything from sambo, the martial art of the Union armies, to the poetry of Mirra Lokhvitskaya to piloting ships to wiring circuitry, the New Man and the New Woman of the Union are the best, the most talented, the most special men and women the Union have to offer. But to those to whom much is given, much is demanded, and the responsibilities, duties, and demands upon the New Man and the New Woman are many and heavy. Most unique and unusual situations require the attention of the New Man and the New Woman, and many of them have sacrificed all in the service of the Union.

Bonus: +1 to any two skills

OBSERVER

Even in the utopia that is the Union, there are still situations which call for men and women with a special gift for discovering secrets and uncovering plots. Sometimes you are called upon to discover a Geometrist spy; sometimes you must go undercover on Earth to find out what the Americans or the Soviets are planning; and sometimes, most regrettably, you must investigate questionable circumstances on Mars. You serve the people and the Union, always, but even utopia has its enemies and, sadly, its Citizens who forget who they serve, and you are called upon to uncover and ultimately defeat them. Do not, however, allow your enemies to defeat your idealism. Remember: compassion beats cynicism, every time.

Bonus: +1 Deceive, +1 Investigate

PILOT

The vehicles of the republics include everything from anti-grav wing-suits to planes to rocketships. If it exists, you pilot it. You may be a courier for a collective, using your jet-pack to ferry documents, or you might be the pilot of one of the Space Navy's dreadnoughts, or you might drive one of the flying drill-cars exploring the caves of the Hollow Earth. You might be a reckless hotshot or an ice-cold technician. But, always, you fly in the service of the people and the Union.

Bonus: +1 Pilot, +1 Shoot

SCIENTIST

Those women and men who make the scientific and technological discoveries which benefit the people of the Union. They can be laboratory technicians or inventors, biologists or physicists, researchers or analysts. But while you may pursue scientific and technological advances for any number of personal reasons, your ultimate motive must be to serve others, not yourself.

Bonus: +1 Craft, +1 Resources

SECRETARY

The secretaries are the party officials in each Republic of the Union. Note that the word “leader” is not used, for Secretaries—like the secretaries of the capitalist United States of America—serve; they do not lead. Secretaries of the Union help set policy and make decisions that affect the lives in each collective, state, and republic, but they are ultimately and always servants of the people, and every action they take must be taken to make the lives of Republic members as good as possible. Secretaries may think in utilitarian terms—“sacrifice a few to help the many”—but never in selfish or personal ones.

Bonus: +1 Contacts, +1 Resources

SOLDIER

The enlisted men and women of the Union’s army and Space Navy. It is a worthy profession, considering that each soldier is called upon to risk her or his life in combat against enemies of the Union, whether Geometrists, Venusians, Americans, or Soviets. The Republic armies are led by elected non-commissioned officers, although once elected the officers lead through orders and the soldiers obey, no questions asked. You are expected not only to be able to fight by hand or weapon, lead troops, and operate army equipment, but also to help collectives during natural disasters, distribute food during famines, and hunt down dangerous creatures. The armies of the Union fight the enemies of the people, which include hunger and poverty in addition to the Venusians and Geometrists.

Bonus: +1 Fight, +1 Shoot

SPECIAL CITIZEN

All are equal under the laws of the Union; everyone has the same rights and responsibilities. But some Citizens have something about them that sets them apart practically, if not in the eyes of the law. A Special Citizen may be a brain-in-a-jar, kept alive after their body died and given strange psychic powers in the process; a cyborg, given new metal or plastic limbs and parts to replace those lost in battle or which never grew due to a birth defect; an uplifted animal, given sentience by the Union’s scientists; or a wagner, given temporary superpowers and named after the process’s inventor.

Bonus: +2 Will (brain-in-a-jar); +1 Athletics, +1 Physique (cyborg); +1 Notice, +1 Physique (uplifted animal); +1 Athletics, +1 Physique (wagner)

WORKER

The backbone of the Union, the profession of most of its people. Though many workers are farmers, they are also office workers, librarians, writers, or rocket-loaders. It is the noblest of professions in the Union, as without workers the Union would fail—everyone, *everyone*, depends upon the worker. Workers not only do their jobs but also police their unions and collectives—ensuring that everyone is doing everything they can and should, since so much depends upon workers—and sometimes the weight of that responsibility is too much.

Bonus: +1 Contacts, +1 Physique

MOTTOS OF THE UNION

- Compassion Always, Cynicism Never.
- Courage Is the Path to Progressive Materialism. Courage Leads to Fearlessness. Fearlessness Leads to Serenity. Serenity Leads to Love. And Love Leads to Compassion.
- From Those According to Their Abilities, to Those According to Their Needs.
- How Can You Help Another Person Today?
- For the People to Succeed, We Must First Believe It Possible.
- If You See Something, Say Something: We Can't Help Unless We Know About It.
- The People, the Union, Your Collective, Your Squad—Then You.
- Service to the People Is the Ultimate Privilege.
- The Strength of the Pack Is the Wolf, and the Strength of the Wolf Is the Pack.
- Watch Each Other: You Never Know When Someone Else May Need Help.
- What Good Can You Do Today?
- What You Plant Now, You Will Harvest Later. As You Sow, So Shall You Reap.

Skills and Conversion

These skills are used just as in *Fate Core*: Athletics, Burglary, Contacts, Crafts, Deceive, Empathy, Fight, Investigate, Lore, Notice, Physique, Provoke, Rapport, Resources, Shoot, Stealth, and Will.

These skills are new or replacements for skills in *Fate Core*: Pilot (replaces Drive) and Renown.

Pilot

The ability to fly a craft of some kind. The first settlers of Mars realized that although their new home was subjectively small—a little over half the size of the Earth—it was still objectively huge, and so decided to orient their society around flight rather than ground transportation. Consequently, passenger trips are taken by dirigibles, ranging from one-person balloons to large cross-continental liners, and every child deems it their birthright to learn how to fly the family jet-pack or wing-suit or plane when they turn eighteen. Pilot replaces the Drive skill from *Fate Core*.



Overcome: Pilot is the equivalent of Athletics when you're in a flying craft—you use it to move in the face of difficult circumstances, like rough weather, cramped space, or flying obstacles. Pilot is also ripe for contests, especially chases and races.



Create an Advantage: You can use Pilot to determine the best way to get somewhere while flying, and succeeding well enough might allow you to learn features of the route defining them as aspects, such as ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS or RUNAWAY COMET.

Advantages created using Pilot often revolve around getting good positioning, doing a fancy maneuver, or putting your opponent in a bad position.



Attack: Pilot isn't usually used to attack, though you can always ram an opponent with your craft.



Defend: Avoiding damage to a flying craft in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Pilot. You can also use it to defend against advantages being created against you or prevent actions by someone trying to get past you in a flying craft.

In the world of *Red Planet* (as it was in the pulps themselves) there are two kinds of flying combat: atmospheric combat, which takes place in the atmosphere of a planet, and space combat, which takes place in outer space. Atmospheric combat is similar to the air-to-air combat of World Wars I and II: balletic, nimble, defense-oriented. Space combat is similar to 18th- and 19th-century nautical combat: lumbering, slow, with an emphasis on pointing, shooting, and then boarding. Atmospheric combat involves small flying machines, from planes to wing-suits to jet-packs. Space combat involves spaceships, which are generally much larger, from twelve-person supply ships to the thousand-crew dreadnoughts. Some stunts are limited to only atmospheric combat and some to only space combat.



ATMOSPHERIC COMBAT

Atmospheric combat involves maneuvering into the position to shoot your enemy down. Pilots who attack without first gaining some sort of advantage over their target cannot generate more than one shift, no matter which stunts they have or how good their result is.

To generate multiple shifts when attacking a flying craft, the pilot of the attacking craft must first create an advantage on the defending craft. This aspect does not need to be invoked, but it must exist.

SPACE COMBAT

The principles and practices of atmospheric combat sometimes appear in space combat, but much more common is the tactic of boarding an enemy ship and taking possession of it, rather than destroying it altogether.

Space combat has the same restrictions to generating multiple shifts as in atmospheric combat.

You can roll Pilot to attempt to board a flight craft with yours. If you succeed, you board the defending craft, attaching **STUCK TOGETHER** and **OPENED DOORS** to both flight craft. If you succeed with style, you surprise your enemy, who never saw you coming or didn't anticipate you trying to board them. If you tie, both vehicles get a situation aspect representing the damage done to them in the crash, which lasts until the end of the scene, and both vehicles must fill their lowest free consequence slot. If you fail, you miss your target completely.

Renown

The Union is a communist society: wealth is equally shared with everyone. As such, there are no individual fortunes, though some people have greater access to a variety of wealth and material resources than others—that's what the Resource skill stands for. But there is one feature of the Union that is entirely individualistic, one thing that an individual can justifiably earn and claim as her or his own, and that's Renown. Renown stands for a person's fame and reputation, how well known and respected they are in their farm, collective, profession, state, republic, or even the Union itself, how much glory they've gained through their actions.



Overcome: Like with Deceit, Provoke, and Rapport, you can use Renown to get what you want out of people, in situations that aren't interesting or dramatic enough to play out in a contest or conflict. Whether it's bluffing your way past the guards, trying to sway an argument, or shutting someone up, Renown is the skill to use.



Create an Advantage: You might use Renown to get information out of someone, convince them to do something they might not want to do, or generally just get your way. You might also learn someone's aspects by seeing how they respond to you.

Renown also allows you to psych people out in a conflict in a non-hostile fashion, force them into a humbled posture, flatter them, or otherwise use your reputation to your advantage. In a conflict, it allows you to bring in particular boasts or information or hints of influence to enhance your efforts—you might remind someone of all you've accomplished or threaten them with retaliation or promise them future advancement.



Attack: You can make mental attacks with Renown, cowing an opponent into doing what you want. Keep in mind that your relationship with the defender and the circumstances you're in figure a great deal into whether or not you can use this skill.

When using Renown, you don't need to get to know your opponent beforehand—awe at another's vaunted reputation is a universal enough language that you can make mental attacks as long as you're in the right situation.

Not all attacks with Renown have to take the form of cowing your opponent; you can also use it to evoke an uncontrolled, positive emotional response like being flattered ("She asked me for help!") or temporarily losing cynicism or negative attitude ("I got to help a New Man!").



Defend: You can use Renown to defend against attempts to create advantages against you with Provoke or Will. Keep in mind that to do this, you need to be in a position to use Renown against the attacker—it's hard to use Renown when you're masked or gagged, for example.

Conversion

In the world of *Red Planet*, the Union of Materialist Republics is a utopia founded upon the principles of progressive materialism. The PCs' role is in defense of this utopia against their military enemies, the Geometrists, and ideological enemies: the capitalist U.S.A., the corrupt U.S.S.R, and the feudal Venusians. But the Citizens of the Union are not content to merely play defense. Every Citizen knows that progressive materialism is the way to true happiness for individuals and cultures, and the way forward for human civilization. Most Citizens are good people and want to bring happiness and peace and prosperity to non-Citizens, and the best way to do that is to persuade them of the moral and economic rightness of progressive materialism, and then get them to join the Union.

So most Citizens will, whenever possible, try to convert the enemy rather than merely kill them. (Geometrists have proved immune to conversion, unfortunately.) After all, killing a man or woman destroys whatever potential they had to do good in the universe, while converting them and turning them into a Citizen of the Union allows that man or woman to spend their life helping others.

Conversion is a mental conflict, with Rapport attacks against Will defense. If a character concedes, it reflects their inability to win the discussion or argument: they're shut up by the other person. But anyone taken out in a conversion conflict has their mind and personality permanently changed, gaining an appropriate aspect such as TRUE BELIEVER, RECENT CONVERT, ZEALOT, or GOING ALONG WITH THE CROWD.

Obviously, true conversion—the only kind Citizens of the Union are interested in—cannot take place on pain of death. It can take place in fraught circumstances, even combat, but not in a “convert or die” situation.

Conversions can only be attempted by one person in the scene at a time. Mass conversions—that is, you against mobs of four or more NPCs—work differently, as you're no longer conversing with them but giving a speech at them. This is a kind of challenge, in which you roll four times against Good (+3) difficulty. The four rolls represent the stages of the conversion:

- Your first roll uses Notice, to analyze the crowd and understand how they are reacting to your arguments.
- Your second roll uses Empathy, to analyze the crowd and understand their emotional response to your words.
- Your third roll uses Will, as you try to impose your will on the crowd.
- Your fourth roll uses Rapport, as you try to use your charm and personal magnetism to persuade the crowd to convert.



On each of your four rolls, you might accumulate victories:

- If you succeed with style, you gain two victories.
- If you succeed, you gain one victory.
- If you tie, you gain one victory, but your next roll in this conversion increases to Great (+4) difficulty.
- If you fail, all of your remaining rolls in this conversion increase in difficulty by one step.

Failures are cumulative. In other words, failing the first roll makes the difficulty of the three remaining rolls Good (+3), failing the second roll makes the difficulty of the two remaining rolls Great (+4), and so forth.

The number of people you convert in the mob depends on the number of victories you get throughout the rolls: If you get all 8 victories across your four rolls, you convert all of the mob. If you get 6–7 victories, you convert three-fourths of the mob. If you get 4–5 victories, you convert half of the mob. If you get 1–3 victories, you convert a quarter of the mob. And 0 victories means that you completely fail.

The background of the audience—their nationality and place in the solar system—can also affect the difficulty of mass conversion.

- For pirates, increase the difficulties of the Will and Rapport rolls by one step, as they are rebellious and resistant to having their minds changed by outsiders.
- For Soviets, increase the difficulties of the Notice and Empathy rolls by one step, as they are notoriously stoic and hard to read.
- For Venusians, increase the difficulty of the Will roll only by one step, as Venusians are headstrong.
- For Americans, don't adjust the difficulty at all. Americans are deeply unhappy with their country and its leadership and are open to the new and better way that progressive materialism represents.

Stunts

Aerial Ballet: +1 to defend or create an advantage with Pilot when engaged in an atmospheric or jet-pack flight. *Atmospheric craft and jet-packs only.*

Feint: You can use Pilot in place of Deceive to create an advantage related to feints and misdirection while at the controls of your flying craft. *Atmospheric craft and jet-packs only.*

First Shot Counts the Most: In your first attack against a new target in atmospheric or space combat, you gain +2 to Shoot.

Full Burn: When you roll Pilot to go as fast as possible, you can mark your craft's first stress box to gain a +1 bonus. If your first stress box is marked, you can mark your craft's second stress box to gain a +2 bonus.

Hard to Shake: +2 to Pilot whenever you're pursuing another craft in a flying contest.

Hide in the Clouds: You're a master of the ambush. +2 to create an advantage with Stealth when piloting a craft.

Juke: Once per atmospheric conflict, you may clear all of your stress boxes. If you do, the GM gets to write down a free situation aspect with a free invocation. *Atmospheric craft and jet-packs only.*

Knows How to Work the Crowd: You gain +1 to Rapport during any mass conversion attempt.

Line Up the Shot: You pull a specific maneuver which points your guns exactly in the direction you want them to fire. When you use a free invocation on an aspect related to targeting as part of a Shoot attack, you can spend a fate point to prevent the defender from marking any stress box to reduce the hit. *Spacecraft only.*

Locked In: In space combat, you gain +2 to all Shoot attacks. If your Shoot attack fails, they get a +1 to their next attack against you. *Spacecraft only.*

Pilot's Eye: You can use Pilot instead of Notice when flying a craft to spot enemies.

Reflected Glory: Once per scene, you can roll Renown against an NPC's Will to declare that the NPC is thrilled to be asked to do something by you, as it adds to their reputation simply by virtue of you having asked them to do that something. Your target gets +1 to their Renown until the end of the scene. Also, you place an aspect on the target with no free invocations.

She'll Hold Together: You can spend a fate point to ignore, until the end of the scene, a mild or moderate consequence on whatever it is you're flying. The consequence slot is still filled, but the consequence cannot be invoked or compelled against you.

Social Capital: You can use Renown in place of Resources when dealing with someone from the same nation.

Taste for Close Quarters: +2 to overcome or create an advantage with Pilot when you're attempting to close the distance between you and something you intend to attack or board, entering the same zone as it.

Trained Missionary: +2 to Rapport attacks during a conversion attempt.

SPACESHIPS

The Union is at its core a communist society, not a capitalist one, so there are no companies which put out competing designs—of anything. So spaceships, like most other material goods in the Union, are standardized. The following are the commonly used models for each type of spaceship. Improvements are always possible, of course, but once a spaceship is improved, the improvement is immediately copied.

Dirigible

Helium-buoyed dirigible with minimal armor and no weapons. Used to transport supplies and passengers. The basis of the Union's transportation system on Mars.

Explorer

The standard spaceship of the Union.

Dirigible

ASPECTS

ATMOSPHERIC SHIP; ROOM FOR SUPPLIES AND CREW; MASSIVE

ARMS AND ARMOR

None

STUNTS

None

STRESS

Physical

Explorer

ASPECTS

WORKS IN BOTH ATMOSPHERE AND SPACE; SINGLE-PERSON CRAFT

ARMS AND ARMOR

Hull: Armor:1

STUNTS

Nimble: The explorer grants a +2 bonus when using Pilot to defend or create an advantage.

Computer-Aided Targeting System: The explorer grants a +1 bonus when using Shoot to fire its guns.

STRESS

Physical

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Mild (2):

Fighter

The standard combat spaceship of the Union.

Fighter

ASPECTS

WORKS IN BOTH ATMOSPHERE AND SPACE; TWO-PERSON CRAFT

ARMS AND ARMOR

Mega-Watt Laser: +1 to Shoot, Weapon:2

Reinforced Hull: Armor:2

STUNTS

Maneuverable: The fighter grants a +1 bonus when using Pilot to create an advantage.

Mega-Blast: Once per scene, the Mega-Watt Laser can instead grant Weapon:4 to a successful attack.

STRESS

Physical

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Pirate Ship

The standard spaceship of the pirates of the asteroid belt.

Pirate Ship

ASPECTS

WORKS IN BOTH ATMOSPHERE AND SPACE; CREW OF TWELVE; RAMSHACKLE BUT TOUGH

ARMS AND ARMOR

Mega-Watt Laser: +1 to Shoot, Weapon:2

Reinforced Hull: Armor:2

STUNTS

Computer-Aided Targeting System: The pirate ship grants a +1 bonus when using Shoot to fire its guns.

Close-Quarters Craft: The pirate ship grants a +1 bonus when using Pilot to board another ship.

STRESS

Physical

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Plane

The atomic-powered plane used by Union officials and agents when time is of the essence.

Supply Ship

The standard supply ship of the Union Space Navy.

Plane

ASPECTS

ATMOSPHERIC FLIGHT CRAFT

ARMS AND ARMOR

None

STUNTS

Jet: The plane grants a +2 bonus to overcome with Pilot.

STRESS

Physical

Supply Ship

ASPECTS

WORKS IN BOTH ATMOSPHERE AND SPACE; CREW OF SIX; ROOMY

ARMS AND ARMOR

None

STUNTS

None

STRESS

Physical

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):



COMMON TECHNOLOGY

Blaster Rifle

The heavy rifle of Space Navy servicemen and servicewomen. Reserved for combat situations only.

Flying Suit

A common piece of equipment on Mars. Used by the average Citizen to get around.

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun

The standard-issue weapon for all Space Navy servicemen and servicewomen.

Jet-Pack Spacesuit

A combination spacesuit and jet-pack, standard issue for anyone going into space. Allows you to fly quickly in zero-gravity environments.

Wrist Communicator

The standard-issue communication device for all Union Citizens; it has unlimited range within a planet's atmosphere.

Blaster Rifle

Aspect: HEAVY WEAPON
Heavy Blast: Weapon:2

Flying Suit

Aspect: ATOMIC-POWERED
ATMOSPHERIC FLIGHT SUIT

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun

Aspect: STANDARD WEAPON
Blast: Weapon:1

Jet-Pack Spacesuit

Aspect: ATOMIC-POWERED
SPACE FLIGHT SUIT

Wrist Communicator

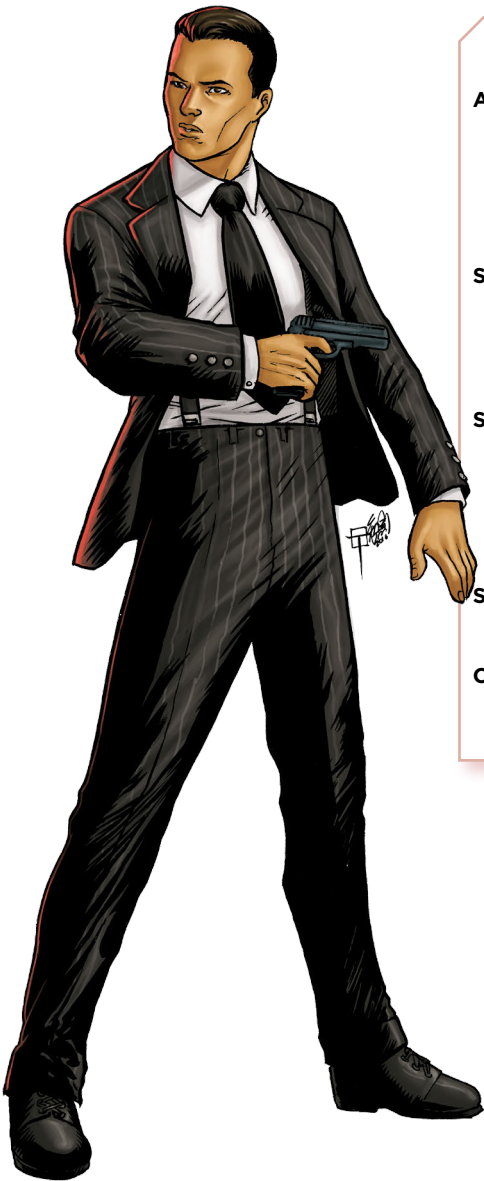
Aspect: COMMUNICATES
ON ALL FREQUENCIES



TYPICAL NON-CITIZENS

American Spy

The type of American the Citizens of the Union usually encounter while on a mission, whether government agents or spies working for the ruling corporations.



American Spy

ASPECTS

CAPITALIST TO THE CORE; CORPORATE
STOOGES;
EXPLOIT THE EXPLOITABLE; OUT FOR
MYSELF

SKILLS

Good (+3): Deceive, Shoot
Fair (+2): Athletics, Fight, Physique
Average (+1): Investigate, Notice, Will

STUNTS

No Taste for Personal Danger: +2 to
create an advantage with Athletics
when you take cover behind someone
or something.

STRESS

Physical Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Moderate (4):

American Prole

American Prole

ASPECTS

OPPRESSED AND HATING IT

SKILLS

Average (+1): Physique

Geometrist

Every Geometrist active in the third dimension is a special agent on an extremely dangerous mission, as every Geometrist knows that too much exposure to the mind-bending realities of the higher, third dimension will drive any Geometrist insane.

Geometrist

ASPECTS

TRUE BELIEVER; THE COUNTRY MUST EXPAND; TWO-DIMENSIONAL BEING; NOT MEANT TO EXIST IN THE THIRD DIMENSION

SKILLS

Epic (+7): Will
Good (+3): Shoot
Fair (+2): Intimidation, Lore, Notice

STRESS

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Mild (2):
Moderate (4):

STUNTS

Flesh Suit: A three-dimensional techno-organic suit encasing the Geometrist's two-dimensional body. The flesh suit essentially acts as armor, taking all the physical harm intended for the Geometrist. The Geometrist is immune to physical harm until their flesh suit is taken out. Gives Good (+3) Athletics and Physique to the wearer. The Geometrist can psychically leave the flesh suit and return to the second dimension at any time.

FLESH SUIT STRESS

Physical

FLESH SUIT CONSEQUENCES

Mild Physical (2):
Moderate Physical (4):



Native Martian

Native Martians, though physically superior, are visually indistinguishable from humans, although cross-breeding between them is impossible.

Pirate Captain

The leader of a band of pirates in the asteroid belt. Notable in some way for their resistance to the Union, whether it's their resistance to conversion or the ruthlessness with which they attack Union Citizens and ships.

Native Martian

ASPECTS

FULLY ASSIMILATED

SKILLS

Average (+1): Athletics, Physique

Pirate Captain

ASPECTS

IDEOLOGICAL REFUGEE FROM THE UNION; I'M BAD BUT NOT A BAD GUY;
A HARD LIFE LIVED HARD

SKILLS

Great (+4): Will

Good (+3): Pilot, Shoot

Fair (+2): Investigate, Notice, Physique

STUNTS

Rally the Troops: By using their action, the pirate captain can give their crew a +1 to all rolls until the beginning of the pirate captain's next turn.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Pirate

ASPECTS

RUTHLESS; I FEAR AND RESPECT THE CAP'N

SKILLS

Average (+1): Shoot

Soviet Agent

The type of Soviet the Citizens of the Union most often encounter, usually agents on a mission for their despotic masters. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a corrupt oligarchical dictatorship hiding behind a warped, false version of communism.

Soviet Agent

ASPECTS

DEPRAVED; COMMUNIST IN NAME ONLY;
OUT FOR MYSELF

SKILLS

Good (+3): Fight, Shoot

Fair (+2): Deceive, Physique, Will

Average (+1): Burglary

STUNTS

Vicious: +2 to attack with Fight against
a wounded enemy.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):



Soviet Prole

ASPECTS

LONGS FOR LIBERATION

SKILLS

Average (+1): Physique



Venusian Gorilla

Eight feet tall, covered in white, brown, red, or black fur, strongly muscled with four powerful arms, the Venusian “gorillas” are vicious, hot-tempered, meat-eating brutes who are nearly as populous on Venus as the native Venusians. They are only semi-sentient animals, but can be surprisingly cunning.

Venusian Gorilla

ASPECTS

HUGE AND POWERFUL; SAVAGE ALIEN PRIMATE

SKILLS

Great (+4): Athletics, Physique

Good (+3): Fight, Provoke

Fair (+2): Deceive

STUNTS

Four Arms: Venusian gorillas ordinarily use their second pair of arms to walk on and balance themselves, but when pressed they can use them as extensions of their will. Once per scene, a Venusian gorilla can take a second action of a purely physical nature during their turn.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Venusian Tooth Beast

After the native Venusians and the gorillas, the tooth beast is the most common large creature on Venus. Equally mobile on sea and land, it consumes everything within reach. Comparable to an oversized Earthly velociraptor, but with webbed feet and hands. Hunts in herds, and is unusually intelligent for a reptile.

Venusian Tooth Beast

ASPECTS

SAVAGE ALIEN DINOSAUR; ALWAYS RAVENOUS;
PACK TACTICS

SKILLS

Great (+4): Fight, Physique

Good (+3): Athletics, Provoke, Stealth

Fair (+2): Deceive, Will

STUNTS

Consume: +2 to attack with Fight when biting.

Flank: When multiple Venusian tooth beasts are attacking the same defender, each can give the others a teamwork bonus to their Fight attacks without spending an action.

Jump Attack: The tooth beast can attack with Athletics from up to two zones away. If it succeeds with style, it pins the defender to the ground, making them PRONE. They remain prone until they remove the aspect by overcoming Great (+4) difficulty.

STRESS

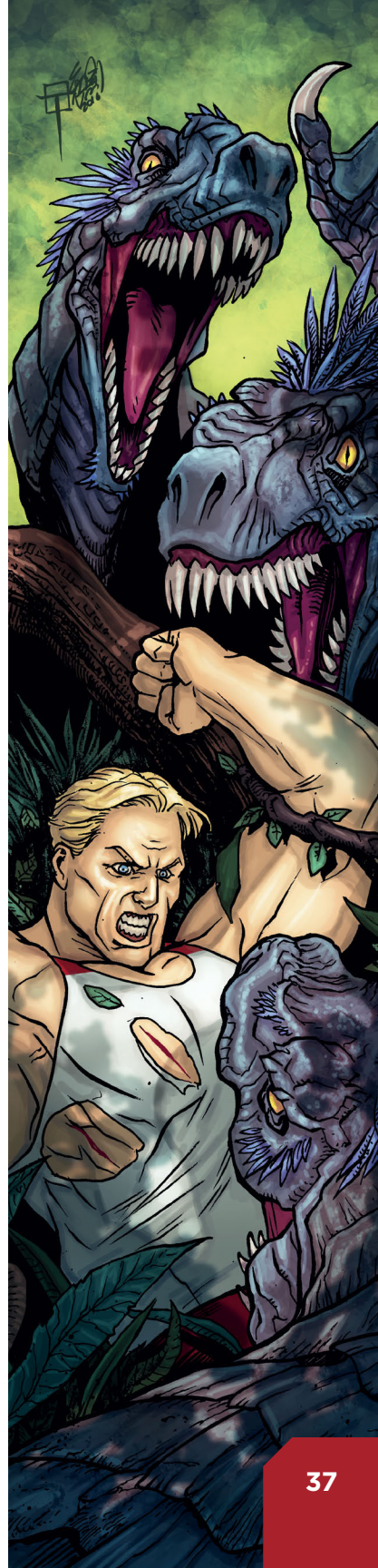
Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

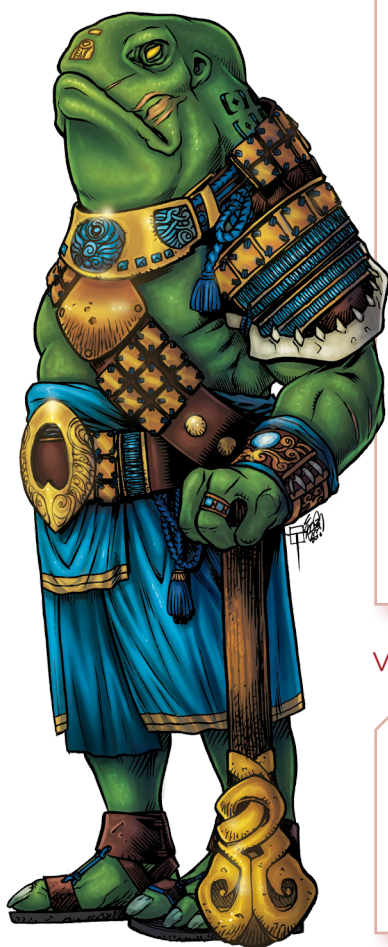
Mild (2):

Mild (2):



Venusian Warrior

The Venusians are short, squat, frog-like creatures whose culture breaks down roughly into the same four classes as feudal Europe: peasants, artisans, warriors, and rulers. And with the exception of the peasants, the Venusians like it this way and don't want it to change, and don't think much of outsiders and their different ways. Because of this, the Union Citizens' encounters with the Venusians almost inevitably end in bloody conflict. Fortunately for the Union, the Venusians' technology is also on the same level as feudal Europe, so the Venusians don't pose any immediate threat.



Venusian Warrior

ASPECTS

PROUD KNIGHT OF MY REALM; ALIENS ARE EVIL; CHIVALROUS; GLORY IS FOREVER

SKILLS

Good (+3): Fight, Physique

Fair (+2): Athletics, Will

Average (+1): Provoke

STUNTS

Honor Is All: +2 to create an advantage with Will or Provoke when taking a big, dramatic action on the battlefield in the name of honor.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Venusian Peasant

Venusian Peasant

ASPECTS

UNHAPPY WITH THE STATUS QUO

SKILLS

Average (+1): Physique

SAMPLE ADVENTURE: 34 CHERNYKH

A Geometrist has, with the help of a group of American astronauts, built a giant Space Gun on a secret base on the asteroid 34 Chernykh. The Space Gun will be fired into the sun, causing a massive solar flare which will fry all technology on the Earth and Mars, leaving them vulnerable to a Geometrist invasion.

The **plot trigger** is the theft of a supply ship within sight of the player characters. The ship is carrying the anti-gravity element trirodov, which the Geometrist Droungarios Megaris needs to properly fuel the Space Gun. Without the trirodov, the solar flare will only reach the Earth, not Mars.

Droungarios Megaris is expecting the stolen supply ship at a certain time, and if the supply ship doesn't arrive on time, she will go ahead and fire the Space Gun anyhow. The PCs have limited time to act.

Scenes

Military Base Ascræus Mons

Description: Ascræus Mons is the second-largest military base on Mars, honeycombing the vast extinct volcano (480 km in diameter, 18.1 km in height) of Ascræus Mons. Space Navy ships and servicemen and women are everywhere in the base, doing their jobs or getting ready to ship out—it's a typically busy military base.

The PCs are visiting Ascræus Mons as tourists, enjoying their vacation time by taking one of the standard tours of military bases. While on the base, the PCs see an incoming supply ship from Neptune suddenly halt, a few hundred yards above its designated landing strip, spin around, and reverse course, zooming away from the base toward outer space.

If-then: If the players don't act on their own, then the base commander, Yevdokia Bershanskaya, will eventually order them to Field 431, the nearest flight strip, and take the first available fighter to catch the supply ship.

If the players question Yevdokia Bershanskaya about the supply ship, then she will defer to Iskusstvennyy Grazhdanin #17, her second-in-command, who is fully informed on the ship's cargo and crew. #17 will also discuss his own background, as a liberated Geometrist android, if asked.

Situation Aspects: ENORMOUS SPACE NAVY BASE; SHIPS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO DO THAT

NPCs: Base Commander Yevdokia Bershanskaya, Iskusstvennyy Grazhdanin #17, Union Soldier

Fleeing Supply Ship

Description: A typical Union supply ship, made for a crew of six with lots of cargo space. It's racing at full burn toward the asteroid belt, sacrificing engine health in exchange for speed.

For the GM: John Anderson, an American spy, has taken control of the ship and is holding the original crew hostage. He is piloting the ship toward the asteroid 34 Chernykh, where the Geometrist is anxiously waiting for the supply ship and the trirodov it carries.

If-then: If the players don't try to shoot the supply ship down or to board it, then Anderson will try to lose them in the asteroid belt. The supply ship doesn't have weapons, so it can't fight back.

If the players try to use their ship's navigation computers to project the supply ship's course, then they will discover that the ship is headed for 34 Chernykh.

If the players board the ship, then Anderson will try to fight for an exchange or two before giving up when he discovers how outnumbered he is by the PCs.

If the players kill Anderson when boarding the ship, then the original crew can tell the PCs the direction (toward the asteroid belt) that Anderson had the ship going in.

Situation Aspects: HOSTILE PILOT; HOSTAGES ON BOARD; THE RACE IS ON

NPCs: John Anderson, Supply Ship Crew



Asteroid Belt

Description: The belt of floating rocks between Mars and Jupiter.

For the GM: The asteroids are in motion, which makes navigating them difficult. Complicating matters is the fact that the PCs' laser detection screens pick up the incoming signals of three pirate ships on a direct course to intercept their ship. The pirates intend to capture their ship, loot it, and then take it and the PCs back to the pirate base, where the PCs will be made slaves. Avoiding both the asteroids and the pirates is a Pilot challenge against Good (+3) difficulty.

Unlike in most challenges, however, the pilot won't roll four times with different skills, but will instead roll four times with Pilot against Good (+3) difficulty.

- If you succeed with style, one pirate crashes into an asteroid, destroying them, and you gain two victories.
- If you succeed, you attack the pirates and gain a victory.
- If you tie, you gain one victory. Also, you roll to attack the pirates, and then the pirates roll to attack you.
- If you fail, you take damage from an asteroid collision equal to your margin of failure.

When you have made all four rolls, count your victories.

- If you have 5+ victories, you escaped the pirates by losing them in the asteroid field.
- If you have 3–4 victories, you have to deal with whatever pirates remain.
- If you have 0–2 victories, you have to deal with whatever pirates remain, and the situation aspect **OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED** is put into play.

If-then: If the PCs discover that John Anderson has a specific time when he's expected back, and that if he doesn't return on time he doesn't get paid, and if the PCs are trying to get the supply ship or their ship to 34 Chernykh by the Geometrist's stated time, then add the situation aspect **RACING AGAINST THE CLOCK**, which means that evading the asteroids becomes a challenge against Superb (+5) difficulty.

If the PCs wreck their ship, then they will be picked up by the incoming pirate ships and taken to the pirate base.

Situation Aspects: LARGE ROCKS IN MOTION; INCOMING PIRATE SHIPS

NPCs: Pirates

Pirates' Base

Description: A jerry-built base made out of ships which crashed on one of the largest asteroids in the belt and were later connected together to make one single base for the pirates. Cramped in spots, roomy in others, the base is full of refugees from Earth, Mars, and Venus who out of necessity have taken to the life of the space pirate. It has primitive stores, repair shops, and all the other necessities of a large base in space, but with the brawling, boozing, whoring atmosphere of a pirate's port from out of fiction or movies.

For the GM: The base is full of docked pirate ships and pirates, and those serving the pirates, milling about on business. Initially, nobody on the base is well inclined toward the PCs. Bogdan Volkov, captain of the *Bloody Death*, is the oldest and best-known ship's captain on the base, so all of the pirates defer to him. Bogdan is a native Martian who fled from Mars rather than serve the culture which subjugated his own. (His ancestors were among the Martian royalists who were defeated by the just-arrived colonizers on the *Nikolay Przhevalsky*.) He's been a pirate for thirty-two years and a captain of the *Bloody Death* for twenty-two, and is well known to and respected by the pirates of the belt. He likes the pirate life, but realizes that his run of good luck can't last forever. Needless to say, he is not well intentioned to the PCs.

If-then: If the players are in the position to question Bogdan Volkov, then he will tell them the location of 34 Chernykh; he knows about the Geometrist's plans. He approves of them, though—frying Earth and Mars will lead to good opportunities for pirates.

If the players try to buy or bribe their way off of the pirates' base, then they will meet with a friendly reception—the pirates are, after all, motivated by the lure of money, however they can get it.

Situation Aspects: JERRY-BUILT; HOSTILE TOWARD UNION CITIZENS

NPCs: Pirates, Bogdan Volkov

34 Chernykh Staging Area

Description: The base on 34 Chernykh is constructed around an enormous cylindrical object, clearly manufactured, which protrudes from the asteroid and towers over the base. The base's staging area is a large excavated area used by arriving and departing ships' crews and is the only entrance into the base. The landing strip is exposed to space, but the staging area is inside the asteroid itself and is well supplied with oxygen.

For the GM: The staging area is full of a dozen American astronauts. They were well paid to construct the base and the Space Gun, and they will attempt to capture or kill the PCs. However, conversion of the Americans is possible; they are uneasy with the Geometrist and the work they've done for her.

If-then: If the PCs arrive in anything other than the single supply ship from “*Fleeing Supply Ship*”, then the Geometrist will know that something is wrong, and will begin the Space Gun’s firing sequence, creating a situation aspect of FIVE-MINUTE COUNTDOWN.

If the players get into a shootout with the Americans, the Geometrist will notice and begin the Space Gun’s firing sequence, creating a situation aspect of FIVE-MINUTE COUNTDOWN.

Situation Aspects: IN THE SHADOW OF THE SPACE GUN; CROWDED; FULL OF HOSTILES

NPCs: American Astronauts

34 Chernykh Control Room

Description: This is the control room for the Space Gun, full of sleek, miniaturized computers far in advance of anything the PCs have ever seen before. Inside is the Geometrist, Droungarios Megaris, and her four robot guards.

For the GM: As soon as the players enter the control room, Droungarios Megaris will order her robots to kill the intruders. Unfortunately for the Droungarios, she is falling prey to the negative effects of three-dimensional space on two-dimensional beings, and is twitching and trembling and speaks with a shaky voice (hence the situation aspect IN THE PRESENCE OF INSANITY); she is nonetheless determined to see her mission through to the end, even if it means going fully insane or dying.

Droungarios Megaris is a high-ranking agent of the Geometrists sent to the third dimension on a special mission. She is committed to the mission and the Geometrists, but has spent too much time in this dimension, which has warped her mind, so that she is now a single-minded fanatic welcoming suicide if it will accomplish her goal of firing the Space Gun. A short, average-looking woman, she looks like she ordinarily has a cold, determined expression on her face—but now, there are facial tics and head twitches and occasional Tourette’s-like outbursts, as she’s beginning to feel the effects of the third dimension.

If-then: If the Space Gun’s firing sequence was not set in motion in the previous scene, then it is set in motion by the Droungarios as soon as the PCs enter the room, creating a situation aspect of FIVE-MINUTE COUNTDOWN. Once set in motion, the Space Gun’s firing sequence cannot be aborted.

If the players attempt to destroy the Space Gun’s controls, then they’ll face Epic (+7) difficulty—it’s very well armored and programmed.

Situation Aspects: IN THE PRESENCE OF INSANITY

NPCs: Droungarios Megaris, Robot Guards

Non-Player Characters

Yevdokia Bershanskaya, Ascraeus Mons Base Commander

The no-nonsense commander of Ascraeus Mons. She's having a bad day—the usual headaches of running an enormous military base, and now an inbound supply ship has abruptly reversed course and won't respond to communication attempts. Fortunately, there's a group of capable Citizens at hand that the commander can dispatch to deal with the supply-ship problem.

Yevdokia Bershanskaya

CLASS

Soldier (+1 Fight, +1 Shoot)

ASPECTS

GRUFF; NEVER WITHOUT MY CIGAR

SKILLS

Good (+3): Contacts

Fair (+2): Rapport, Resources

Average (+1): Fight, Shoot, Will

Iskusstvennyy Grazhdanin #17

CLASS

Soldier (+1 Fight, +1 Shoot)

ASPECTS

NEVER A SLAVE AGAIN; PROGRESSIVE
MATERIALISM IS LOGICAL; STEEL
IS BETTER THAN FLESH

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): Will

Great (+4): Shoot

Good (+3): Fight, Physique

Fair (+2): Athletics, Rapport

STUNTS

Tactical Programming: You can use Fight to create advantages in squad-level (ten to twenty people) tactical situations.

Iskusstvennyy Grazhdanin #17, Base Commander's Lieutenant

A former Geometrist android, #17 was liberated from Geometrist programming by a clever Union scientist and now serves in the Union Space Navy of its own free will.

Union Soldier

The enlisted men, women, and uplifted beasts of the Union's Space Navy. Ascraeus Mons is full of them, but they've all got places to be and things to do, and while they can spare a moment to discuss the supply ship's odd behavior, they can't help the PCs—they've all got orders that need following.

Union Soldier

CLASS

Soldier (+1 Fight, +1 Shoot)

ASPECTS

ENLISTED CITIZEN; FOLLOWS ORDERS

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun

SKILLS

Fair (+2) Fight, Shoot

Average (+1) Empathy, Will

John Anderson

Formerly an American agent, Anderson was bribed by Droungarios Megaris to pretend to be a convert, sneak on to the supply ship, disable the crew, and hijack the ship to go to 34 Chernykh.

John Anderson

ASPECTS

TYPICAL AMERICAN CORPORATIST BLOODY-HANDED RUNNING DOG; STAYS BOUGHT

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun, Jet-Pack Spacesuit

SKILLS

Great (+4): Pilot

Good (+3): Fight, Shoot, Will

Fair (+2): Athletics, Physique

STUNTS

Full Burn (page 27)

No Taste for Personal Danger (page 32)

Pilot's Eye (page 27)

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):



Supply Ship Crew

The crew of the supply ship *Krasnaya Apu #155*, they were taking a load of minerals, including trirodov, from Neptune to Mars when their newest member, the former American John Anderson, pulled a blaster on them and hijacked the ship. They are average Citizens, relatively brave but definitely not suicidal.

Supply Ship Crew

ASPECTS

JUST WANT TO DO MY JOB;
PATRIOTIC WITHIN LIMITS

SKILLS

Average (+1): Pilot

Pirates

Refugees from Earth, Mars, and Venus, the pirates run together out of necessity more than ideology and are loyal only to their crewmates. Their primary interest is making enough money so they can go to Earth or Venus and live well; as the saying goes, “There are no old pirates. Just old corpses.”



Pirates

ASPECTS

SPACE PIRATES; OUT FOR THEMSELVES

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun, Jet-Pack Spacesuit

SKILLS

Great (+4): Pilot

Good (+3): Shoot

Fair (+2): Fight, Physique

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Bogdan Volkov

ASPECTS

CARRIES A GRUDGE AGAINST THE UNION;
PIRATE CAPTAIN

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun, Jet-Pack Spacesuit

SKILLS

Great (+4): Pilot

Good (+3): Renown, Shoot, Will

Fair (+2): Fight, Physique

STUNTS

Line Up the Shot (page 27)

Locked In (page 27)

She'll Hold Together (page 27)

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Droungarios Megaris

ASPECTS

MUST SUCCEED IN MY MISSION;
THREE-DIMENSIONERS ARE OBJECTS,
NOT PEOPLE; I'M A DROUNGARIOS—
RESPECT THAT; LOSING MY GRIP

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun,
Jet-Pack Spacesuit

SKILLS

Epic (+7): Will
Fantastic (+6): Resources
Superb (+5): Craft
Great (+4): Shoot
Good (+3): Lore, Notice
Poor (-1): Empathy, Rapport

STUNTS

Flesh Suit (page 33)

Iron Will: +2 to defend with Will
against mental attacks.

She Who Must Be Obeyed: The
Droungarios can use her turn to give
orders to her enslaved Robot Guards.
If she does, they gain +1 to all rolls
relevant to those orders until the
beginning of her next turn.

STRESS

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

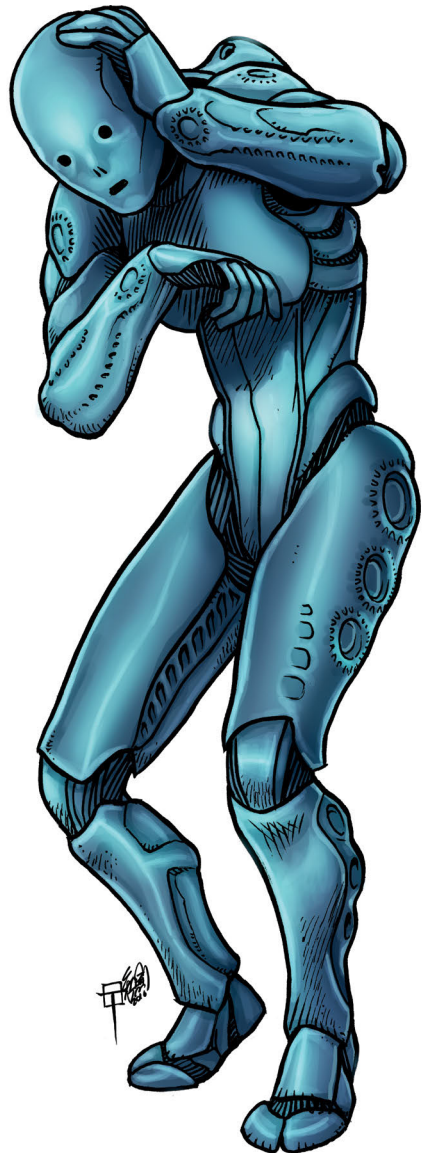
Mild (2):
Mild Mental (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

FLESH SUIT STRESS

Physical

FLESH SUIT CONSEQUENCES

Mild Physical (2):
Moderate Physical (4):



Robot Guards

Droungarios Megaris's armed guards. Sleek and smooth and human-looking, made from milky-white plastic and gleaming silver and chrome, with rounded edges and human-seeming limbs, as opposed to the big and clunky Union machinery, boxy, clumsy-looking, and made from matte metal.

Robot Guards

ASPECTS

MUST FOLLOW ORDERS; OBEY THE DROUNGARIOS, SENTIENT SLAVE

SKILLS

Good (+3): Shoot, Fight, Physique

STRESS

Physical

NOTES

Anyone who succeeds with an overcome action using Craft against Fantastic (+6) difficulty can grant a Robot Guard independence from the Droungarios's orders. This doesn't mean it's automatically the friend of the one who frees it from its service, but it does mean that the GM must consider what is in the freed robot's best interests and act accordingly. A liberated robot has Fantastic (+6) Will. Finally, an independent robot replaces its aspects with these: YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME, OVERWHELMED BY NEWFOUND FREEDOM, and SENTIENT ROBOT.

American Astronauts

A group of American astronauts that Droungarios Megaris suborned with cash to work for her. They are well paid and will do as she orders, but at the same time they are uneasy with the Droungarios's ultimate goal.

American Astronauts

ASPECTS

HIRED HANDS; CORRUPT AMERICANS; QUESTIONING OUR DECISION

GEAR

Hand-Blaster Ray Gun, Jet-Pack Spacesuit

SKILLS

Good (+3): Craft, Pilot

Fair (+2): Fight, Shoot

Average (+1): Athletics, Physique



Pre-Generated Player Characters

While you can make up your own characters for *Red Planet*, here are some pre-generated characters you can use in the **Chernykh 34** adventure, convention games, or any situation where time may be limited.

- **Galina Yurkova:** A Special Citizen, she is an uplifted Venusian gorilla, newly graduated from the Academy and eager to help the Union, especially her fellow primates.
- **Ludmilla Tsereteli:** A New Woman, fifty-something but still as vital as ever, she is a veteran of the “quiet war” against the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., hardened but not cynical.
- **Natalya Zeigarnik:** A scientist, her inventions have become the talk of all of Iapygia Republic, and there is talk of her being transferred to New Moscow itself.
- **Abram Pushkin:** An explorer, his rate of conversion has rarely been matched.
- **Vasily Maksudov:** A pilot, he built his own flight pack as a teenager from spare parts and now serves all of Argyre Republic as an on-call courier/flyer/Ivan-on-the-spot.
- **Yulian Korzhev:** A soldier, he is a long-time veteran of the Union Army and has fought in numerous hot-spots throughout the solar system.

Galina Yurkova

CLASS

Special Citizen (+1 Notice, +1 Physique)

ASPECTS

High Concept: UPLIFTED VENUSIAN GORILLA

Trouble: TRUE BELIEVER—JUST ASK ME, I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT

Other Aspects: HOT-TEMPERED LIKE MY ANCESTORS; SO MANY PRIMATES YET TO BE FREED; FRESH OUT OF THE ACADEMY

SKILLS

Great (+4): Physique, Rapport

Good (+3): Empathy

Fair (+2): Provoke, Pilot, Will

Average (+1): Athletics, Contacts, Fight, Lore, Notice

STUNTS

Four Arms (page 36)

Revert: Once per session, by spending a fate point or taking a moderate consequence, you can revert to your bestial, pre-uplift self until the end of the scene. Your bestial self has Great (+4) Athletics and Good (+3) Fight and Provoke, but any skill relying upon more-than-animal intelligence becomes Mediocre (+0). However, after the reversion ends, you are filled with shame for having become a mere animal again rather than the intelligent, uplifted being that you are.

Trained Catechist: Once per scene, you gain +2 to overcome with Rapport when you act on behalf of the Union against its ideological foes.

Zealot: You can use Rapport in place of Will to defend against Deceit, Rapport, and Provoke attacks.

REFRESH: 2

STRESS

Physical

Mental



Galina Yurkova

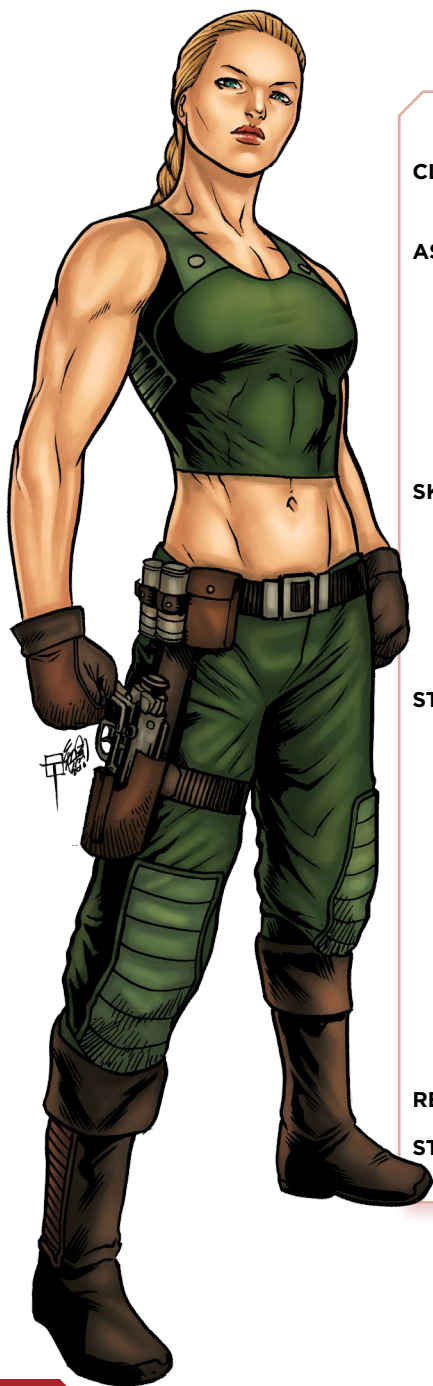
The dominant life form on Venus, besides the Venusians themselves, are the eight-foot-tall, four-armed creatures whose resemblance to a certain Earth primate was strong enough that the first explorer to discover them dubbed them “gorillas,” and—though scientists despair of this usage, as the Venusian gorilla actually belongs to the Venusian domain of kingdoms, phyla, classes, and so on, and not those of the Earthly domain—the name stuck. Semi-sentient, amazingly strong, and open to social interaction with Union explorers, the Venusian gorillas have proven to be perfect subjects for the surgical operations that “uplift” them, giving them human-level intelligence. Many thousands of Venusian gorillas have been uplifted and become useful Citizens of the Union.

Galina Yurkova is one of these. Captured as an infant and uplifted in the labs of the Tharsis Republic, Galina grew up on a farm and when mature was sent, as every Citizen is, to the Academy to be educated and evaluated for the ways in which she could be most useful to the Union. Despite her physical attributes, she has been told that she tests best as an explorer, which surprised but pleased her, since she desperately wants to bring the gifts of uplift and progressive materialism to all those like her, whether on Venus or on Mars or on Earth.

Ludmilla Tsereteli

Born on a farm in a quiet collective in Phaethontis, about as far from New Moscow as it’s possible to be, Ludmilla Tsereteli quickly demonstrated that she was no ordinary girl. Mastering reading, math, literature, and science at a very young age, she graduated from school and became one of the youngest in the history to be accepted into the Academy. Her obvious capability in every imaginable field led to her being chosen as a New Woman, and being deployed, at age fourteen, in the field against the enemies of the Union.

That was nearly forty years ago, and now she is a weathered veteran of the “quiet war” against the two governments of Earth and their many agents. When she’s been home in Phaethontis, she’s made the time to marry and raise two children, but most of her time has been spent on Earth, in the capitals of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., destroying their military hardware, capturing and converting (or, regrettably, removing) their agents, foiling their anti-Union plots, and generally acting as the blunt edge of Union policy toward the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. It’s been a hard life, but a rewarding one for her, knowing that she’s saved the lives of Union Citizens and materially advanced Union policy on a near-daily basis.



Ludmilla Tsereteli

CLASS

New Woman (+1 Fight, +1 Stealth)

ASPECTS

High Concept: LARGER THAN LIFE

Trouble: THE BLOOD STAINS WON'T WASH OFF

Other Aspects: I KNOW BETTER THAN YOU;
I DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO HELP THE UNION

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Fight

Great (+4): Stealth

Good (+3): Shoot

Fair (+2): Athletics, Burglary, Physique

Average (+1): Investigation, Lore, Pilot, Will

STUNTS

Good at Almost Everything: When you use an Average (+1) skill, roll six fate dice and keep the best four for your roll result.

Hardened: You gain a +2 bonus to defend with Will.

Master of Sambo: You are a skilled martial artist. Once per scene, when you attack an opponent who absorbs your hit by taking a consequence, you gain +2 to your Weapon or Fight rating until the end of the next exchange.

REFRESH: 3

STRESS

Physical

Mental

Natalya Zeigarnik

CLASS

Scientist (+1 Craft, +1 Resources)

ASPECTS

High Concept: INVENTOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

Trouble: RELUCTANT WARRIOR

Other Aspects: I'D RATHER BE IN MY LAB;
LET ME INVENT THE SOLUTION TO THIS
PROBLEM; SCIENCE HOLDS THE ANSWER TO
EVERY QUESTION

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Crafts

Great (+4): Resources

Good (+3): Lore

Fair (+2): Renown, Shoot

Average (+1): Contacts, Pilot, Rapport, Will

STUNTS

I Know Machinery: Whenever you succeed with style on an overcome action to modify, repair, or damage a piece of machinery, you gain a situation aspect instead of a boost.

Stun Blaster: Natalya's personal invention, the NON-LETHAL MIND-BLASTER. She hopes to persuade the Secretaries and the commanders of the army and Space Navy to adopt it, as its wounds are non-lethal and thus far more merciful to the enemy. You gain +2 to Shoot rolls when attacking with the Stun Blaster, which has Weapon:2.

REFRESH: 3

STRESS

Physical

Mental



Natalya Zeigarnik

The middle daughter of a pair of noted scientists, Natalya Zeigarnik distinguished herself as a kind of child prodigy by single-handedly repairing her collective's tractors at age six. The usual schooling and term in the Academy followed, and she was sent back home to use her talents to maintain and improve the varied machines of the Iapygia Republic. But Natalya's curiosity and imagination could not be contained by just working on pre-existing machines; she felt and feels a deep urge to create new machines which could help the Citizens of the Union.

So she invents, everything from flying rain-seeders to heat-rays to super-strong mechanical gloves for use on the farms. Her laboratory is a nonstop fount of creation, and the workers of Iapygia have profited from her work. Now Natalya has caught the eyes of the General Secretary of Iapygia, who has arranged for her to be transferred to New Moscow, where her talents can be put to use in creating advanced technology for use against the Union's enemies. As a patriot, Natalya is happy to go where the Union needs her, but a small part of her regrets that she will be creating instruments of death rather than machines designed to help life. But as they say, needs must when the Union calls.

Abram Pushkin

Growing up in the shadow of Olympus Mons and its massive flight base, Abram Pushkin knew, from a very young age, that he wanted to shake the dust of Mars from his clothes and imitate the space pilots, to go Out There—to the other planets and to the stars—and to discover new places and alien beings. That drive to explore has never left him, not for a second, but it has become tempered by the knowledge that exploration and discovery bring with them special responsibilities toward the places and people one discovers. At the Academy Abram was not surprised when he was made an explorer—but learning about the additional responsibilities that explorers have was a surprise.

Nonetheless, Abram is a good man who devoutly believes in the benefits of progressive materialism and the Union's way of life, and he embraces his new role wholeheartedly. So every new trip he takes, whether into the unmapped slums of Rio de Janeiro or over the southern jungles of Venus, he always keeps in mind that on Earth, exploration meant conquest and exploitation of the discovered, but that on Mars, exploration means the opportunity to share the good news with the discovered, and to ultimately make them Citizens. Abram has a winning way about him and is usually persuasive when he gets going.

Abram Pushkin

CLASS

Explorer (+1 Empathy, +1 Rapport)

ASPECTS

High Concept: SILVER-TONGUED MISSIONARY OF PROGRESSIVE MATERIALISM

Trouble: THE UNION IS RIGHT, ALL OTHERS ARE WRONG

Other Aspects: CAN I JUST SAY SOMETHING; THE THRILL OF MEETING THE UNCONVERTED; A RELUCTANT UTILITARIAN

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Rapport

Great (+4): Empathy

Good (+3): Notice

Fair (+2): Lore, Pilot, Will

Average (+1): Contacts, Physique, Renown, Shoot

STUNTS

A Good First Impression: +2 to the first Rapport roll you make during a scene.

I Have Your Best Interests At Heart: +2 to Rapport rolls made during a conversion attempt.

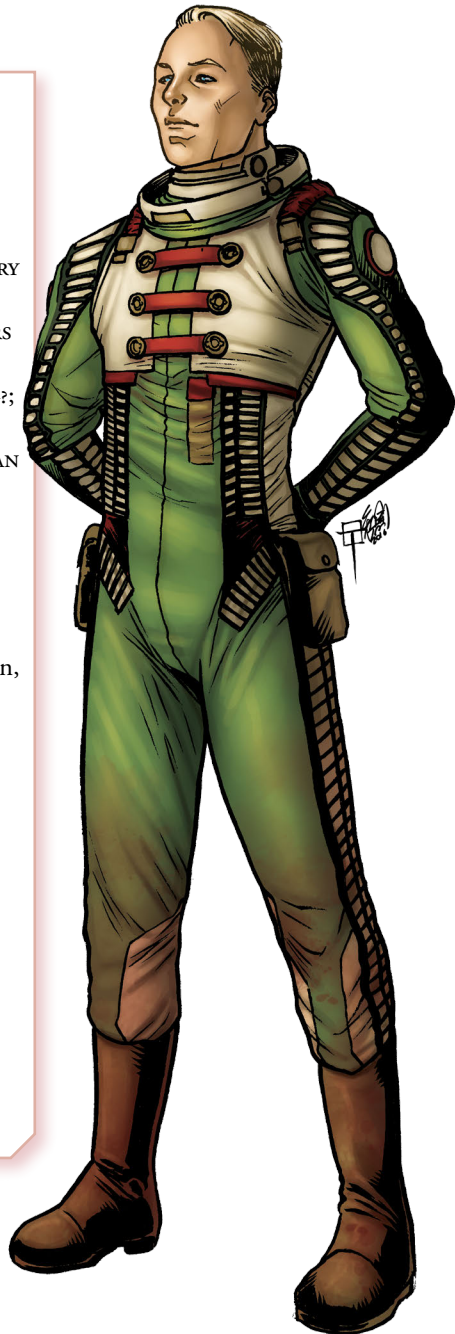
Progressive Materialism Is My Sword and My Shield: You gain Armor:2 against mental attacks.

REFRESH: 3

STRESS

Physical

Mental



Vasily Maksudov

On the farm in his collective in the Argyre Republic there seemed to be little need for pilots—but that’s what Vasily Maksudov wanted to be most. The skies called to him, and the call wouldn’t be denied; as a teenager he built his own flight pack out of spare tractor parts and a little pilfered trirodov and secretly, at night, cruised the skies over the collective and its neighbors. That sort of talent and drive was quickly discovered by the evaluators at the Academy, and he was made a pilot and given the opportunity to fly larger and better-made vehicles than the ramshackle flight pack he’d put together.

Now he flies—oh, how he flies. Always in the service of the Argyre Republic, of course, whether as a crop-duster, cloud-seeder, courier, or pilot ferrying passengers from one part of the republic to another. He longs for more prestigious assignments—he’d love to fly one of the long-range patrol ships of the Space Navy, the kind that make it out to Pluto, or a fighter on a mission against the Soviet Air Force, or even just a supply ship making the Mars–Neptune–Mars run—but he knows that even a crop-duster provides a valuable service to the Union.

Yulian Korzhev

Yulian Korzhev was once from Eridania, and if you pressed him he’d remember this—after a moment—but he hasn’t been home in twenty six years. He’s a career soldier, joined the Space Navy fresh out of the Academy and never looked back. He’d always known that he was a fighter by temperament, and the broadcasts and movies he saw as a child inspired in him both a love of the Union and a deep hatred of those who worked against it. The best way to put his hatred and skills as a fighter to use was to serve on the front lines against the Union’s enemies, and that’s exactly what he’s done these twenty-two years as a soldier.

He’s seen it all—just ask him. Things ordinary Citizens wouldn’t believe. American attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Oceanus Procellarum. Geometrist laser beams glittering in the darkness above Uranus. Soviet agents on suicide runs trying to get at the main Space Navy field on Phobos. Rampaging terror birds on Venus. Firefights on Space Navy destroyers boarded by desperate space pirates. Even what may have been a vampire lurking in the alleys of New Moscow. Nothing surprises him anymore, except perhaps mercy from another soldier.

Vasily Maksudov

CLASS

Pilot (+1 Pilot, +1 Shoot)

ASPECTS

High Concept: INTO THE WILD BLUE/
BLACK YONDER

Trouble: MORE AMBITIOUS THAN IS
CALLED FOR

Other Aspects: LONGS FOR GLORY;
BORED COMPETENCE;
CAN THIS THING GO A LITTLE FASTER?

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Pilot

Great (+4): Shoot

Good (+3): Notice

Fair (+2): Craft, Will

Average (+1): Contacts, Fight, Provoke,
Stealth

STUNTS

Hard to Shake: +2 to Pilot in any pursuit-
based contests.

Pilot's Eye: You can use Pilot instead of
Notice when flying a craft to spot enemies.

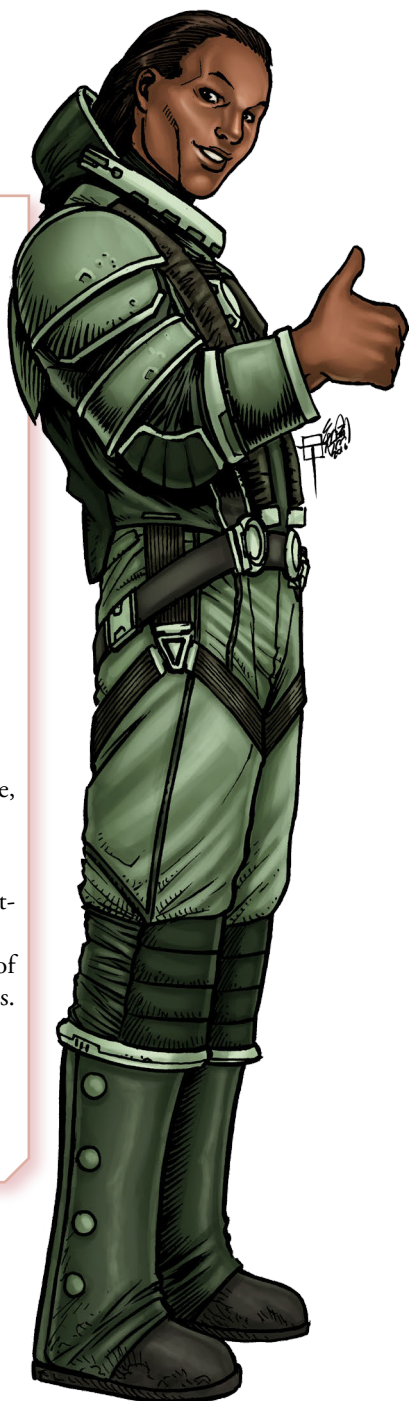
She'll Hold Together (page 27)

REFRESH: 3

STRESS

Physical

Mental





Yulian Korzhev

CLASS

Soldier (+1 Fight, +1 Shoot)

ASPECTS

High Concept: WARRIOR WHO'S SEEN IT ALL

Trouble: UNBECOMINGLY RUTHLESS IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNION

Other Aspects: I'M ONLY ALIVE WHEN I FIGHT; THE ONLY GOOD AMERICAN IS A DEAD AMERICAN; NOT FIT FOR LIFE OUTSIDE THE SPACE NAVY

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Shoot

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Renown

Fair (+2): Provoke, Notice, Physique

Average (+1): Athletics, Lore, Stealth, Will

STUNTS

Hardened: You gain a +2 bonus to defend with Will.

Not Easily Distracted: When you attack with Shoot, the defender can't invoke situation aspects that would interfere with your ability to aim.

Twenty-Year Veteran: When relying on the respect generated by the reputation you've earned in military service to the Union, you can overcome with Renown in place of Contacts or Rapport. Against those who don't care about or aren't impressed by your service, however, this stunt has no effect.

REFRESH: 3

STRESS

Physical

Mental

WHAT COMES NEXT

Red Planet doesn't want the world to remain unchanged by the characters' actions. *Red Planet* characters are *supposed* to work to change the world, in the favor of the Union; when a major milestone occurs, the change which takes place should shake up not just the campaign, but the universe. The characters should have achieved something during the story arc that changes a regional or planetary-level aspect, or have changed a location so much that a new issue is created to replace it.

Although the Union of Materialist Republics is a utopia, it is an active one, not content to stay the same, but pushing outward, physically (in its colonization of the solar system and ultimately other solar systems) and culturally (in its attempts at converting Venusians and the humans of Earth). Similarly, it is a utopia, but it is an embattled one, fighting the "quiet war" with the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. and a getting-hotter war with the Geometrists.

In other words, the universe of *Red Planet* is dynamic, not static, and the players' actions will feed this dynamism. Players might want to just play a Communist Flash Gordon game of pulp sci-fi high adventure, and that's fine. But equally fine will be if the players strive for nobler goals: sufficiently destabilizing the U.S.S.R. so that its new aspect is something like RUDDERLESS or ON THE BRINK OF REVOLUTION; overthrowing the corporate elites dominating the U.S.A. and giving it the new aspect INTERNECINE CORPORATE CHAOS; finally discovering the key to interdimensional travel and giving the Country of the Geometrists the new aspect FIFTH COLUMN.

The players can play any kind of game they want to with *Red Planet*. But if they want to change the solar system for the better, they should.

Think big!

Save humanity!