

# Space Opera Roll Call:

a Dice Throw Table for Generating  
Space Opera Action

Words by Robert Garitta

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**Surreal Estate  
Games**

# Space Opera Roll Call

The premise of this book is pretty simple, use a few die rolls (or drops) to create the outline of an adventure. I've used themes primarily from space opera but there is no reason you couldn't use it in a super hero setting or for secret agents (in a very gonzo sort of story). It plays heavily to evil villain stereotypes, I will admit, and improbable technology but there's no reason you can't tweak the ideas to your liking.

The next page has a number of icons in columns organized by antagonists, goals, weaponry, specialty, additional, and allies. The next page has the same icons unlabeled.

Antagonists: What is the evil leader like?

Goals: What are they after?

Weaponry: What stands out about their defenses. Gun toting goons are implied as well.

Specialty: What bizarre technology do they use?

Additional: Any other oddities in use, in case the first roll wasn't enough.

Allies: Who else is after the bad guys and could be helpful? They can also be a pain in the wazoo.

Rename them whatever you want if you wish. The table can be used to generate random elements by dropping dice or tokens on them or you can write in your own or you could write in die rolls next to each using the unlabeled table. Write in the numbers you assign to each icon to keep things straight if you have to. You could number each column one to ten or each row one to six depending on your tastes.

After the tables I give a few ideas about each icon, again in general terms. You have to work them up to fit your setting and group.

As with all my stuff you can get the best use out of this by ignoring most of it. Just roll for what you want, or don't roll at all or just pick a roll and read across it.

The icons I've used can be found here: <http://game-icons.net/>

This entire book is free to copy, paste etc. Just don't go selling it. I'd have some nerve making it my property when I've repurposed other people's ideas and icons. If you like some of the ideas here hit the internet and look for some Golden Age SF or check some classic movies out. You'll know them when you see them.

Good rolling!

Robert Garitta 2017



Penitent



Golden Age



Vintage



Specialty

Eater Goo



Abductor



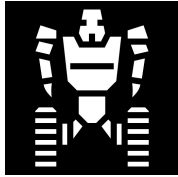
Sane Dr.



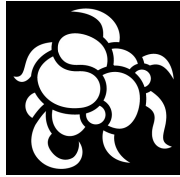
Mad Dr.



Artificial Life



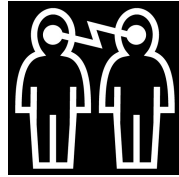
Tankbot



Infested



Jailer



Institute



Mystic



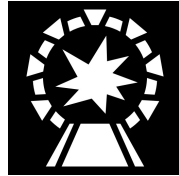
Power



Lifelike



Undead



Portal Tech



Pirate



Deathly



Journeyer



Spiderbot



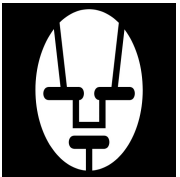
Giant



Death Ray



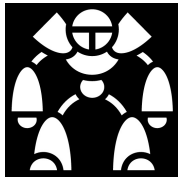
Order



Maimed



Respect



Golem



Mutant



Potion



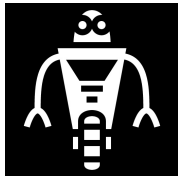
Leader



Poisoner



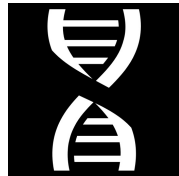
Tyranny



Scoutbot



Man Eaters



Bio Lab



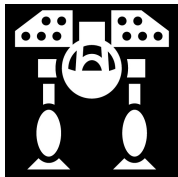
Temple



Gemini



Praise



Missilebot



Morphs



Station



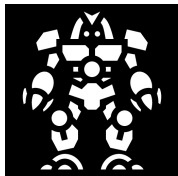
Vigilante



Contained



Destruction



Megabot



Body Swap



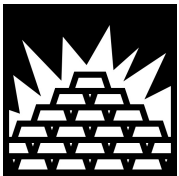
Healing



Victim



Cyborg



Treasure



'Borg Lt.



Back Ups



Bubble



Agency



Synthetic



Anarchy



AI



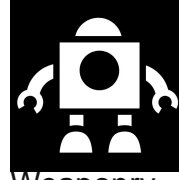
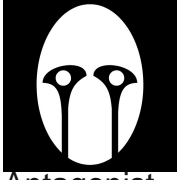
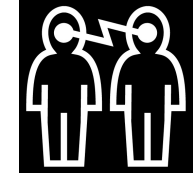
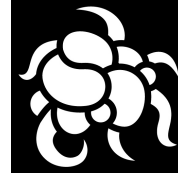
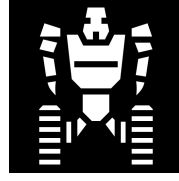
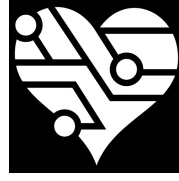
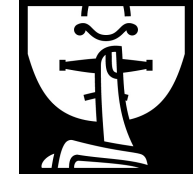
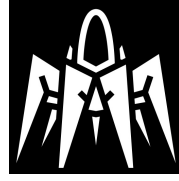
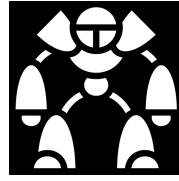
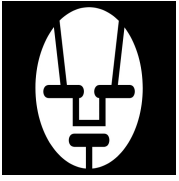
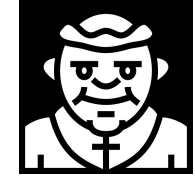
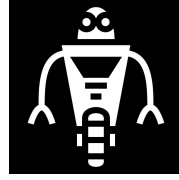
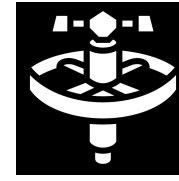
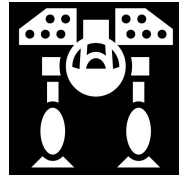
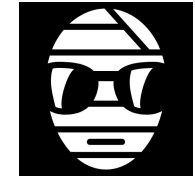
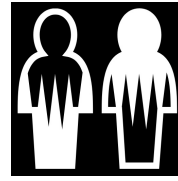
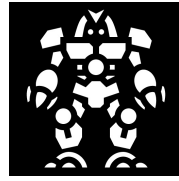
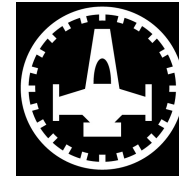
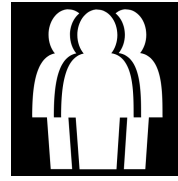
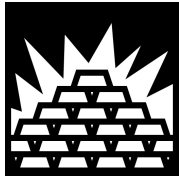
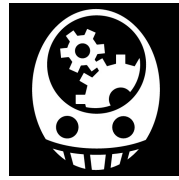
Paleo



Spawn



Hero



Antagonist

Goal

Weaponry

Specialty

Additional

Enemy



The character is artificial: android, clone, genemod etc. Increase hit points one third. They may possess immunities, to toxins or disease. This is a prime candidate for a recurring villain who returns from the dead (after a trip to the repair bay). They may even be an escaped experiment!

The character's parts are not all factory original. They may have a small hidden weapon or sensor. They have light body armor from their new construction and may or may not pass for a normal human.



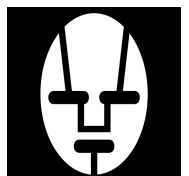
This character had a mishap and requires special equipment to survive. He might need temperatures below freezing, near boiling or have a special breathing mix. The containment suit is equal to the best armor available and can support them in any environment long enough for a quick escape.

The character possesses two or more distinct personalities. Each may have a different form (a la Mr. Hyde) or they could be a quorum of AIs that simulate different aspects of their personality. This makes them extremely unpredictable.



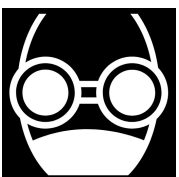
Poisoners let toxins and pathogens do their dirty work. They may be master assassins or given to extortion on a grand scale. They will always have samples ready for use. They are meticulous about their work and most other things. It's why they are still alive. They have a bonus to resist hazardous substances.

The character is not quite dead. The nature of their injuries impairs them in many ways, even with future medical technology. They have a third less hit points. They may have additions similar to the cyborgs. They also have one or more bots or service providers who are usually heavily armed.



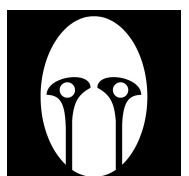
Deathly people (?) are fixated on death. They may be unliving by conventional standards, or lead a death cult. They have great charisma and are able to induce fear and loyalty in ordinary folks.

Mystics possess powers most people do not. They may be psionic or possess other abilities. In a setting where powers are common they possess especially potent versions or unique powers that few can equal.



The mad doctor or scientist is a classic. They possess extensive schooling and may hold several advanced degrees. Their researches break laws, ignore safety procedures, and make a mockery of ethics. Their obsessions and issues give them a unique outlook, making their work cutting edge.

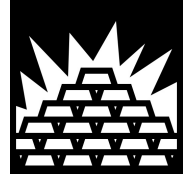
Some opponents are the result of tragedy. Sometimes it is a tragedy they set in motion themselves. They are more likely to question their actions and goals and treat those opposing them with respect and mercy. Their minions are people with similar backgrounds and fanatically loyal as a result.





The target is government or some authority. Grand thinkers may go after all governments or work for a single government that is outlawed against all others. Such authorities might have wronged them in the past or they might have misconceptions.

Money, loot, treasure, filthy lucre. The opponent is in this for one goal, their own enrichment. This is a fairly predictable motive. Enough treasure can be used as bait.



This goal involves the death or destruction of a person place or thing. The target usually exists in a physical sense. Making war on a concept is possible. I will triumph over Death itself! Is a common idea. The target might even deserve retribution. But the destroyer will often go too far to claim victory.

Some people want praise and glory for their actions. They might be cagey about it professing to be patriots or whatever. But the only thing that matters is their personal glory and recognition. They shouldn't hold their breath because their methods go too far.



Everyone must bow to the leader. The character will rule all. Scientific types and mystics will use various gadgets, drugs or powers to subjugate their mindless 'followers'. Mystic and Deathly types use their innate powers of charisma and fear to cow dissent.

While no one can equal the villain's accomplishments (in their own mind at least) a few people are capable of understanding and truly appreciating their feats. These people will be sought and brought to bear witness to the mastermind's victory



Some people are on a personal quest, whether to find Atlantis, be the first man on Proxima 3 or travel backwards in time. They really do not care if anyone knows it. It's personal. Unraveling their agenda can be very difficult because they won't leave clues or write a monologue to share with the good guys.

The antagonist is seeking extranormal power(s). Money, rulership, armaments aren't enough. They want to be gods themselves. They will cheat and kill for artifacts, formulas and arcane substances. They will kidnap and coerce ancient masters for their lore. It seldom ends well.



Life! Sort of. That's the plan. The antagonist wants to play Creator. There are many methods. They may create a self aware machine, modify existing lifeforms or create totally new ones. This usually requires a lot of time and materials which they make up for with obsession and a crime spree.

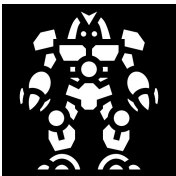
Start an era of peace and prosperity and banish all ills. It's the most idealistic of motives. The execution leaves a lot to be desired. Just ask Karl Marx. The end results are never as expected and the means are not justified.





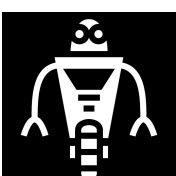
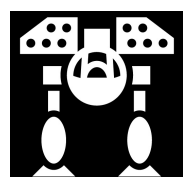
The bad guys have a powerful artificial intelligence working for them. It could have great powers of prediction (when it has enough data) or be a master at disabling other computers (like ones controlling security and defense systems). The AI might be very naive, unaware of it's master's nature, and lonely.

The cyborg is op of the line for loyal lieutenants, they often owe their lives and shiny bits to their masters. They have 3-4 weapons installed and half again as many hit points. Optionally they also have a kill switch or self destruct to ensure their loyalty or at least their silence



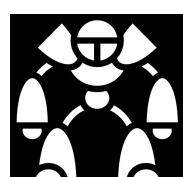
They built a robot. A really big robot. These things are great for painting buildings. They work in pairs, one holding the spray gun and the other moving the building up and down. They have limited intelligence (you don't want them getting ideas) and often carry a pilot internally.

These robots range from human sized up to tank sized. They are characterized by firepower. they have at least 3-6 weapon systems and all their problem solving involved a suitable application of high explosives. Again, not too bright because you don't want them getting ideas.



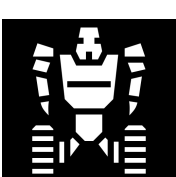
Scoutbots are human sized or smaller. They are built for speed and stealth, tracking any emeies and reporting back on secure channels. They are brighter than the other robots. Downloadng one's data banks could be very useful if you manage to capture one.

it's a robot! It's a drone! A golem is a 'bot or android that is teleoperated by remote control. The user operates the golem from a VR cockpit miles away. Any robot will hesitate to risk its existance but a golem will let you raise mayhem like you're playing a first person shooter on 'Easy' evel.



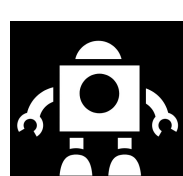
Spiderbots operat much like the scoutbot, except they are smaller cheaper and more numerous. They can attack much like a swarm of shiny rats but are only a nuisance to well equipped adventurers.

The bad guys have very lifelike android on their staff. It could be a heavy, a spy or even a loyal lieutenant. Lieutenants have human level intelligence. Spies nearly so but with a huge database devoted to mimicking their target. Some mimic humans so well extensive tests are required to find them.



Tankbots are blunt instruments of ill omen. They range from somewhat larger than human to vehicle sized and pack a punch. Some have controls and room for a human crew or to transport troops.

The bad guys are old school. They have technology from years or decades ago. Their gear uses old computer languages that modern systems can't read or hack. Modern defenses might be useless their 'obsolete' weaponry. They're also pretty cool looking.





The bad guys bring back the dead. Not the recently dead either: raptors, t-rexes, killer giant penguins, cave bears and the like. Their soldiers may be riding dire wolves (on steroids). They may even have access to a pole of Neaderthal or Giganthopithecus for day labor and strongarm duties.

They make new friends all the time! The evil mastermind has clones. Lots of clones. It's the dark underside of 'one uniform fits all.' A villain with access to this sort of technology could keep coming back indefinitely or could replace your friends and allies with his own minions.



Another come back from the dead trope is swapping bodies with someone when your is messed up and leaking. This is more insidious than cloning or using android replacements. There is no way to tell you are someone different unless you get a good mind reader on the job.

Paleo-cloning will restore monsters from our past. Morph technology takes harmless modern life forms and makes them into apex predators. Cross a flock of butterflies with piranha. Induce gigantism and turn your weaponized hamster loose downtown!



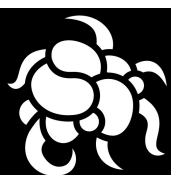
Plants can kill you with toxins already but these genetically enhanced beauties will eat adventurers alive. Everyone knows to keep an eye out for guard dogs but who suspects a guard rhododendron? For good measure the plants could be carnivores and have toxins as well.

Most mutations are harmful, to your enemies. The evil mastermind has a horde of mutations working for him, humans (or animals) who take several side steps and a pirouette on evolution's march. They may have some enhanced characteristics, mental power or shoots lasers from their eyes if you go gonzo.



Giant creatures are intimidating! But most creatures can't be much bigger than they are without alteration. A human tops out at 4.5 meter before their spines crumble under their own weight. Insects have it even worse. A giant will have their anatomy reinforced giving them high armor class and damage.

Corpses that are somehow reanimated are even better for scaring people than giants. The unliving are naturally resistant to damage. Bullets and beams do little lasting damage and an axe might work best (or called shots). Many forms of undeath are infectious making them even scarier.



An infestation is a type of goo or slime that grows rapidly. It can quickly fill urban centers, trapping people. Under control it could be used to quickly construct a headquarters or fortress (but tell it to stop growing.) It is generally very hard to hurt with conventional weapons and requires something like fire or acid to kill.

Eater goo is the most terrifying form of slime. An infestation can trap or suffocate but eater goo eats everything. Extremely tough materials (or inert ones like gold) may hold them off which is good since you couldn't store or transport them otherwise. Researching a toxin for eater goo can be an adventure in itself.







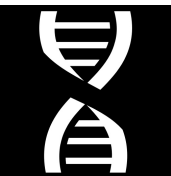
The bad guys have instant monsters. Quick growing seeds or eggs that sprout or hatch by remote control or at a predetermined time. While the creatures that spawn are not unbeatable they will have numbers and often surprise on their side.

They have shields. If energy shields already exist then the bad guys have better shields than the good guys. Finding a weakness could be an adventure hook. If there are no available shields then they will seem unstoppable, at least at first. Instead of stronger shields their shields can recharge faster or block scans.



The minions enjoy full medical coverage ... just don't get too caught up in the appearance. The bad guys have state of the art and beyond medical facilities. This can help the villain return from the dead or allow blackmail by treating ill dependents of powerful people.

The bad guys have an extensive headquarters, a space station if it fits the setting. All the secret weapons and other goodies are held here. Nothing less than a major offensive will breach it and this is often impossible due to other factors (it is in hostile territory or hidden by a nebula etc.)



Bio labs provide an explanation for the various bizarre beings making up a large fraction of the mastermind's forces. State of the art medical and research facilities are included. The bio lab can earn income making controlled or rare substances for sale.

The bad guys practice better living through chemistry. They have one or more special mixture to enhance strength, speed or endurance or perhaps provide a healing surge. Coming down off the potion will greatly impair the takers.



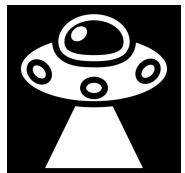
The death ray is the crowning achievement of weapon technology. It can be a powerful destructive force or the equivalent of a neutron bomb, wiping out organic life and nothing else. This can make memorable derelict spaceships, full of skeletons in spacesuits (yes that's a thing, look it up.)

GOing from Point A to Z, and skipping all the other letters. Teleportations is great for surprise attacks and escapes. If teleportation exists in the setting then this version has some enhancements, such as being invisible to sensors or working somewhere it usually doesn't (like going through shields or deep underground).



The bad guys possess technology for confining powerful beings and artifacts (maybe even spaceships or stations). This can be a very powerful force bubble or a pocket dimension (like the Spectral Zone). Extreme versions might see cities shrunk and bottled.

Abductors are small scout ships fitted with excellent cloaking device technology. They are often used for kidnapping enemies or subjects to experiment on. They seldom have heavy weapons but their defenses are as good as a battlecruiser's. Abductors often have grapples or tractor beams to snag people





This is a hero of the 'beat on the bad guys until they fall down variety'. He is predictable but hard to kill and could be a severe problem to any mastermind if they have someone to point them in the right direction.

The Agency has many eyes and ears. It's operatives have had a hard time surviving encounters with the bad guys. They are looking for good field operatives. The Agency provides information and some sneaky tech support. But how far do you trust them?



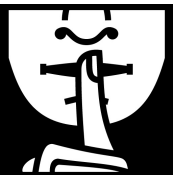
A former victim of the bad guy wants to help. They suffered a loss at the villain's hands and they want revenge. They may be highly capable themselves. They did survive after all. They can also be blinded by revenge and go to any length to achieve it.

Smart, stealthy, and capable the vigilante has made some progress in thwarting the bad guys. They have numbers on his side and he needs help to finish the job. He may want to take over the operation and can be a control freak because only he can get the job done.



The Temple is a secluded and mysterious religious sect. They have access to secret knowledge that may aid your struggle. They can supply a sanctuary, wisdom, and bandages. They may not take a more active or violent role.

The Leader has made it their mission to bring the villain to justice (or trial if there are newspeople present). As the leader of a nation they have many resources, but their actions are easy to follow. They also have so many followers a few spies are unavoidable.



The true purposes and extent of the Order are unknown but they do want to aid your fight. Their very secrecy can work against their purposes. They need front people to do the heavy lifting. Exactly what help they can give is also unknown. How do you know they are really on your side.

The Pirate is an outlaw but he has a code he lives by. He was wronged by the same people you oppose and is willing to help. While he has at least one (and maybe more) ships and men he is also pursued by the Patrol. Is his aid worth the risk of being branded an outlaw?



The Institute was founded to research and develop powers of the mind. Some of their personnel were victims of the bad guy's experiments. Others had their research stolen or extorted. Now they want to make sure it stops. How much of your plans are your own idea though?

Sane doctors outnumber mad doctors by a sizable fraction. It is hard to tell the two apart at times. The doctor might also make certain concessions to acquire some mad research materials or be kidnapped to witness a mad technological breakthrough.

