



INTRODUCTION

A Few Words

The very first idea I had for *Space and Steel* was the idea of a sword fight under multiple moons on a desert with green sands. Not exactly a normal beginning to a creative endeavor, but it was an image that stuck with me.

So I sat down and tried to figure out what exactly that image meant, how it might occur, and why. The first thing I realized was that this wasn't a typical fantasy scenario. Having not long before read [A Princess of Mars](#) by Edgar Rice Burroughs I was deeply aware of the tie Barsoom, what the inhabitants in his books called Mars, had to my core concept. The heroic swagger of John Carter, predecessor to so many science fiction protagonists, as he bested creatures twice his size and actually used swords in a science fiction story was something worth emulating.

Burroughs was also responsible for the long line of attractive alien women who appear in all colors of the rainbow, a contribution that led to a certain Captain's downfall many times.

In fact, it was the way that Burroughs treated travel to other worlds and yet still kept clear ties to later works like Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers, that led me to

look at the genre known as "Sword and Sorcery" for further inspiration. Fritz Leiber's stories of two adventurers who get in over their heads fighting unspeakable horrors, invisible men, and their fellow humans felt a fine resource. Robert E. Howard's Conan was another, although I never actually read the original stories until rather recently.

In the realm of science fiction I found that works by writers like Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury, and Isaac Asimov also provided examples of strange world exploration and survival that fit my purposes well. Their young adult short stories contained tales of adventure, while some of their more mature work set about showing how civilizations and societies forced to stretch across the stars might function.

And there were, lastly, the very old black-and-white serial adventures that Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon became famous for. Men in silver outfits meant to represent the height of alien technology and fashion flying around, setting things straight with a good right hook almost as often as their ray-guns.

These stories, films, and ideas all played a pivotal role in the design of the setting

concepts and system rules that went into *Space and Steel*. Hopefully their influence will show through in the pages that follow, making for an entertaining and fun game.

An alien civilization built on slavery and mental domination sliding into unspeakable madness. Ancient ruins holding unknown power. Assassins climbing the walls of a floating keep. Asteroid cities circling always in daylight, their heroes patrolling the stars on rocket-fueled packs. Strange tribal kings on newly liberated worlds attempting to bring a thousand different kinds of creature together.

Heroes, villains, pirates, priests, kings, thieves... all this and more is open to the characters in *Space and Steel*. What path will they take?

Roleplaying

Roleplaying games are, for those of you who have made it this far without knowing, about reaching into a story and directing some of the action. Unlike a book, where all the decisions are made by the author, roleplaying games are an opportunity to create a character in an unfamiliar world or situation and decide what they do.

Most roleplaying games, this one included, have two types of participants; the player, and the person who leads the story. There are many different names for the person who runs the game, but here we will just call them the Game Master (**GM**). It's the game master's job to control everything that is not within the immediate power of the characters that the players have created.

While the overall story of a game is a collaborative effort between the GM and

the players it is the GM who speaks for the non-player-characters (**NPCs**), decides the results of various actions, and plants the seeds of the overall story. Like someone trying to direct an improv group, things might not always go where the GM expects them to, but there are some advantages to basically controlling the chain of events.

To keep most games from eventually becoming cases of "because I said so" arguments, most roleplaying games have rules that determine what is and is not possible. *Space and Steel* is no different here, representing the abilities of the characters in **Attributes** (basic capability) and **Traits** (specializations that better define the character).

Attempts to take actions that are contested, like fighting, or particularly difficult are settled by rolling two 10-sided dice (**2d10**) and comparing the results to the Attributes and Traits. More detailed descriptions of the system and how to create a character are given later on, but the basics are fairly simple.

Final Thoughts

Most people don't like to be lectured, so I'll keep this short.

Roleplaying games are just that, games. While there is nothing at all wrong with taking a game seriously, if it ever comes to the point that you or someone else in the game isn't having fun (because of a disagreement, disruptive player, general low energy) it may be time for a break.

Pick it up again later on, play a different game, or find something completely different to do, but don't ever let it ruin what could have otherwise been a good time.

