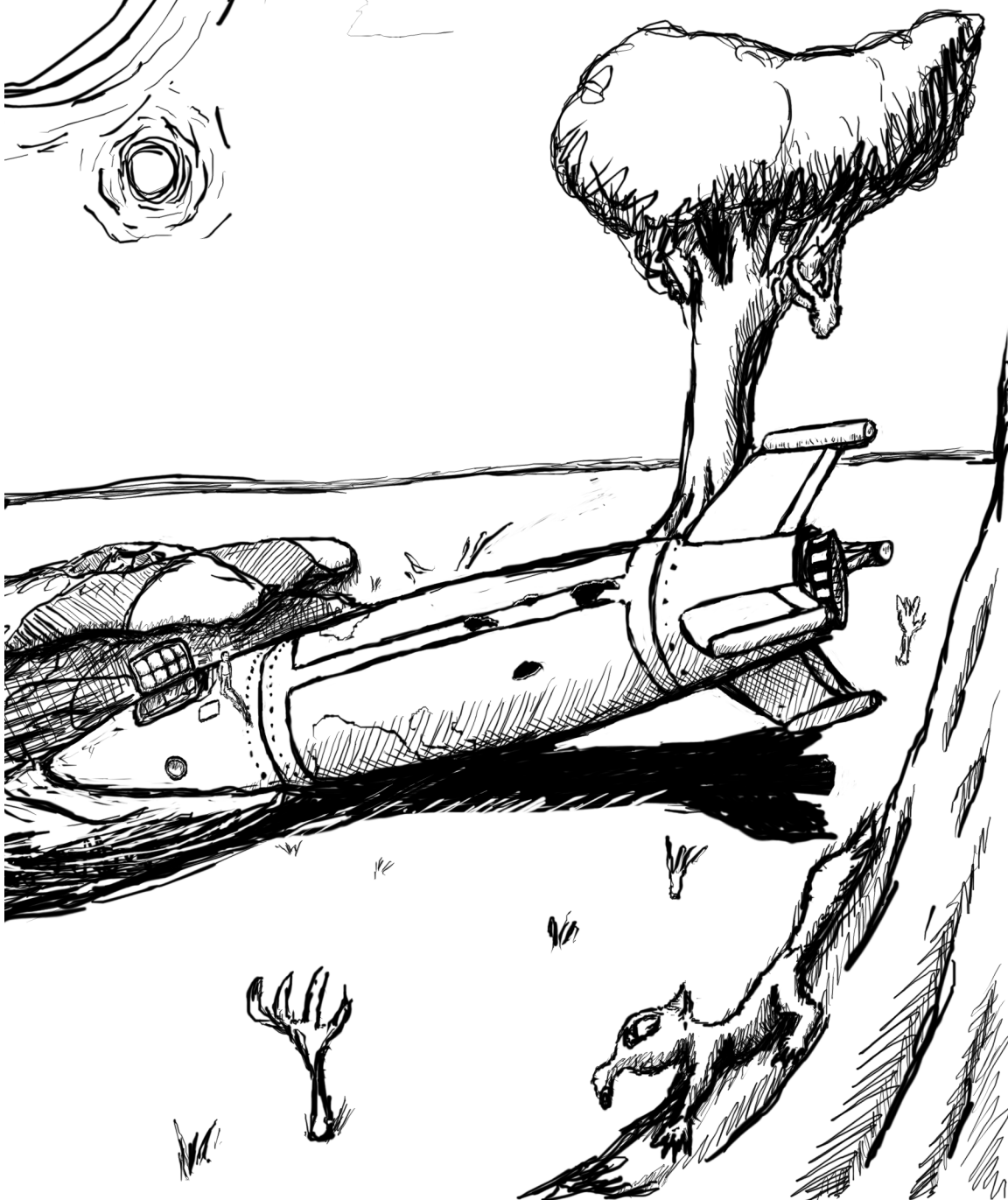


I ♥ Rockets



# I ♥ Rockets

By Emmett O'Brian

Thanks to Dan Maruschak for his help and ideas. Dan suggested the name I ♥ Rocket Ships for this game among other things.

This game is designed to show what it's like to be on the autism spectrum and try to integrate into society. There are pitfalls that no one will warn you of because they're not even aware you can't see them. Most people have communication abilities that are difficult to describe and they don't even know they're using since it's so natural to them.

# Landfall

The hull heated up quicker than expected which meant the Journeyman was coming in at a steeper angle than intended. There wasn't much that could be done about it, the micrometeors tore into the fuel tank. Only a lighting fast thruster burn toward the only habitable planet in the system gave a hope of survival. A moment later and the fuel would have been gone.

It took a month to get to this point though. Plenty of time to pull up the meager records available for our destination. An exploration ship set down on the planet two years ago. The inhabitants are bipedal air breathers, they're suspected to have limited telepathic abilities. The society was capable of low industrial technology. The resources we need should be available and we have a plan to refuel as long as we don't land in the ocean.

The skin of the Journeyman creaks and groans under the intense heat of reentry. The inflatable heat shields are holding but some of the super heated air is getting into the meteor puncture holes and making them bigger. We might lose the whole tank if we're not lucky.

The emergency chutes opened. That's a relief since they've never been used before and mechanisms like that can break down. Another few seconds before we hit the ground. Who knows what that will break.

# The Representative

One player will take the role of the Representative or the Rep for short. This player represents the artificial intelligence that translates for the crew and the aliens they need to talk to. It's translations are accurate if not overly literal of the spoken word. For known languages and cultures it would be able to interpret idiom and intent behind a phrase but it has no available context to start out with.

If the Journeyman is lost for any reason, the crew will not be able to communicate with the aliens. The Journeyman rocket starts with 3 health.

# Character Creation

The other players make a character for themselves. These are the crew of the Journeyman. They are a competent starship crew but they're not superhuman. They know how to use the resources of their ship and they have a chance of getting it back up into orbit. They are not exobiology experts or chemistry geniuses.

Pick a suitable spacefarer's name for your character.

Select your specialty. This will give you special roles in repairing the rocket. Once an option is chosen by one player, other players should try to not duplicate the role but nothing will be ruined if a few specialties are repeated.

- 1 Pilot +1 to launch site prep
- 2 Navigator -1 day to travel to the settlement
- 3 Mechanic +1 to making fuel
- 4 Miner +1 to repair the fuel tank
- 5 Cargo Chief +1 to collecting water
- 6 Some other position, talk among the other crew members and work out something

Another thing that makes the player characters different is their goals. Pick a reason that your character wants to go home.

- 1 Family is waiting for you at home -1 to relationship rolls
- 2 You're wealthy but your bank account means nothing here -1 repair rolls
- 3 You want to return to a "modern" culture -2 to card value for this crew member
- 4 This world is ugly and strange to you +1 day to the group traveling to the settlement

5 Eating the local food makes you ill -1 to survival rolls

6 Something else, talk to the Rep and work out something interesting

Each crew starts with 5 health.

# The Crash Site

The location that the Journeyman lands in has the resources to solve one problem but makes another problem harder to solve.

Select one advantage or roll

- 1 Metals available to repair the fuel tank
- 2 Abundant water to split into hydrogen and oxygen
- 3 Bright sunlight for solar cells to generate fuel
- 4 Good launch site
- 5 Nearby settlement
- 6 The rocket landed on an important and auspicious day on the alien calendar.

Select one problem or roll, re-roll if the problem contradicts the advantage.

- 1 No suitable metals to repair the fuel tank
- 2 Water is scarce for splitting into hydrogen and oxygen
- 3 Frequent cloud cover and dense foliage make getting solar power to generate fuel difficult
- 4 Unsuitable launch site
- 5 Distant from settlement
- 6 The rocket destroyed something important when it landed. Discuss what it was.

## Setup

Right after the crash, the Rep shuffles and lays out a deck of cards (with jokers) face down in a grid pattern 6 by 9 in reach of all the players.



# Aleutf

The Aleutf are a species of intelligent bipedal humanoids. The AI will translate their name to “path” for a time before it registers as a proper name. They are highly agile and of similar physical strength to a human. They are telepathic with each other while in close proximity but not with humans. Aleutf are barely aware of their telepathic ability as much of this communication is done subconsciously.

Names are difficult for the AI as many Aleutf names are common verbs or occasionally numbers. The AI will directly translate names as the common words. If the Representative desires, they can make bird noises that the Aleutf make when speaking their names. A human speaking an Aleutf’s name will sound odd and “hollow” to the Aleutf because the subconscious transmission of thought that carries much of the meaning behind the name is not occurring. They may insist that the Rep is not pronouncing their names right. The rep can record everything that is said and play it directly back to the Aleutf but they’ll still insist it’s being said wrong.

## Common Aleutf Names

Roll 1d6 for the vertical column and then 1d6 for the horizontal row to randomly generate a name.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Run	Walk	Jump	Slide	Hop	Drop
2	Tell	Call	Say	Talk	Watch	Report
3	Make	Work	Give	Try	Help	Bring
4	Know	Think	Find	Mean	Hear	Belive
5	Get	Take	Use	Keep	Pull	Win
6	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six

The Aleutf have a complex social structure that is determined by their telepathic link with each other. They

arrive at a near instant understanding of Aleutf in their range. This is problematic for the players because they transmit nothing and do not pick up on the telepathic queues. No one has a designated name for their position in society, it is simply understood where an individual fits in.

Like names, there is a lot of meaning that is subconsciously communicated about jobs. Hearing the crew talk use the spoken titles will sound demeaning to the Aleutf.

### **Common Aleutf Jobs**

- 1 Field worker (Farmer, Landowner, Tree surgeon)
- 2 Machine runner (Technician, Machinist, Factory owner)
- 3 Goods seller (Salesperson, Merchant, Shop owner)
- 4 Hoop runner (Athlete)
- 5 Box runner (Truck driver, Postal worker)
- 6 Head binder (Doctor, Nurse)

### **Sports**

Sports play a very important role in Aleutf culture. These sports are played even on a local level beyond what a human can compete at. There are four or more popular sports that the Representative should mash a random noun with the word "hoop" or "race". The majority of sports use various sized hoops of braided wood and grasses instead of balls. Recently metal hoops covered in vulcanized rubber strips have become available but there is an ardent debate on their effect on the sports they're being used in.

Roll for at least four sports that the village is highly involved in.

Start with two sports that have the word "Hoop" in the name and then two that have the word "Race" in them.

Roll 1d6 for the vertical column and then 1d6 for the horizontal row to randomly generate the rest of a name.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Hole	Post	Relay	Line	Goal	Basket
2	Grass	Dirt	Floor	Turf	Water	Mountain
3	Foot	Knee	Hip	Hand	Arm	Head
4	Bottom	Top	Loop	Distance	Endurance	Pole
5	Tag	Tackle	Kick	Punch	Drop	Throw
6	Cycle	Rider	Wagon	Sled	Skate	Board

## Law and Justice

Like many things the concept of law and justice is fluid to Aleutf. It is governed by the collective thoughts of the group. Although there are laws, they are not judged in a formal way. The group's feelings strongly guides how they are applied if at all.

If it helps, think of the law being applied in a wild west town where the sheriff is fickle and likely to follow the whim of the crowd.

# The Settlement

The settlement is vital to the crew being able to lift off again. The crew will need help to get the materials they will need to repair their rocket but may also need help hauling water or maybe even the hauling the rocket to a better location.

The settlement is not a major metropolis but transportation and communication is available that can get resources from larger cities. The players should have a conversation about what the settlement looks like. Each player is encouraged to make up one detail about life in the settlement.

It normally takes a week of travel to go to the settlement and come back. If the advantage "Near by settlement" was chosen, this time is reduced by two days.

If the crew wants to move quickly, everyone traveling can take one point of damage and take a day off the travel. Have the crew describe how they got hurt.

The following are roles for specific Aleutf take in relation to the crew. No one will call them by these names, they're only for the Rep's reference. Assign names to these individuals and then roll for what their job is. These individuals will often seek out the crew when they visit.

## The Heavy

Someone in the settlement is the heavy, the leader of the settlement. Record the name and occupation of the Heavy. When Aleutf are near the Heavy, they feel safe but take great offense if the Heavy is disrespected. However the heavy gives a +2 to any bonus from the cards.

## The Bully

Someone will oppose the player characters, they are respected for their physical prowess. Record the name

and occupation of the Bully. While Aleutf are near the Bully they will be distrustful and critical.

### **The Guide**

Someone will try and bridge the gap between the player characters and the settlement. Record the name and occupation of the Guide. While Aleutf are near the Guide they are more understanding. Any help requests with the Guide present get a -1 to heat

When the crew approach the settlement roll 1d6 twice on the settlement sheet to find out who they run into first.

# Help Conversation Rules

The player characters will need help. They can attempt to fix the rocket by themselves but the difficulty will be very high. They may also need help gathering food and maybe getting medical attention.

To ask for help, at least one member of the crew has to travel to the village.

Have a conversation about what the crew is going to ask for. This conversation should whenever possible include descriptions of things the crew says and their reaction to the Aleutf. The Rep can inject details about what is going on in the settlement and the interests of the Aleutf.

When the players ask for help, they will flip two cards attempting to match the face value of the card. The rep will note the suits of each of the cards by making a tick mark on the settlement sheet.

The player characters have disturbed the Aleutf. The suits of the cards indicate the type of disturbance. After the first card is flipped, the players create the social rule they broke by discussing what was said and where the conversation went wrong.

This rule is written on the settlement sheet along with the suit of the transgression. If any descriptions of the crew's actions break the rules written on the settlement sheet, the Rep ticks off another mark by that suit without another card flip.

The suit with the highest number of transgressions is called heat.

Clubs means they appeared too aggressive. Possibly they spoke too loudly, maybe they spoke out of turn or they didn't give enough respect to the person they were speaking with. If the Heavy is present, clubs count double.

Spades means they appeared foolish. Without their psychic link the crew didn't understand something that was obvious to the Aleutf. Maybe what was said has an obvious double meaning to the Aleutf. When the Bully is present, Spades count double.

Diamonds means they missed what the Aleutf consider common courtesy. Maybe they didn't engage in enough pleasantries, maybe they appear lazy to the Aleutf or didn't show interest in important pastimes.

Hearts means the characters appeared cold and dispassionate in a way that makes them seem uncaring. Maybe a child fell and the Aleutf didn't feel a psychic cry of pain from the crew, maybe there was a tragedy that seems obvious to the Aleutf but was difficult to pick up on without telepathy or the players did notice and even attempted to show concern but the attempt felt hollow to the Aleutf.

If a match is not found, the players can return to their rocket or try again. If they want to keep trying one card is flipped back over and a player flips another card, trying to match the one that is still face up. Each time a card is flipped, the Rep notes the suit on the settlement card.

The players may keep trying but each flip intensifies the feelings of distrust the Aleutf feel. It is not necessary to create a new social rule for each flip after the first.

1st flip (2 cards)

2nd flip Obvious disturbance +1 to heat

3rd flip Severe distress +2 to heat

4th flip Open aggression +4 to heat

5th flip Enmity +8 heat

The crew can let the heat on them cool off by waiting and surviving off the land. For each week waited, the crew can reduce one heat.

As heat increases, the mood of the Aleutif sours toward the players. The value of the heat is subtracted from the card value. If the card value is negative because of heat, the Aleutif riot and the negative value is how much damage is done to the crew's health. The players decide how to distribute the damage. If there is any disagreement, the Rep will assign remaining damage. The Journeyman can be included in this damage.

### **Special Cards**

All face cards have special effects.

Jack	The roll is at +5. If the roll passes, heat is reduced by 4. If it fails, heat increases by 2
Queen	The roll automatically passes
King	The roll automatically passes and heat is reduced by 4 because of the triumph
Joker	As soon as one joker is flipped, the roll fails.



# Moves

There are four basic moves the players can make. Each has it's own effect.

Each crew member involved in the move rolls 2d6. The Representative adds the value of any help the players have attained by flipping cards. The value of the card is reduced by the current heat.

The base difficulty for all moves is getting an 8 or higher. Different advantages and disadvantages will change this number. The skills of the characters or their difficulties along with the site advantage and disadvantages.

Rocket repair moves require half the crew to get the base difficulty for the move to be successful. This is because a teamwork and a lot of work is needed to be successful.

The Relationship and Survival difficulties can be reduced if one of the characters gets a 12 or higher.

# Survival

The crew will need food and water for each week they're stranded. The players describe the kinds of food they are looking for and what their methods to find it will be. Searching for food takes one day.

Players that are looking for resources roll for survival, each roll 2d6. If someone rolls 8 or over the move is a success and the crew has enough food and water for one week. If one week goes by without food, the crew takes off one health.

Whenever a player passes their roll, they describe the food item they discover.

The players can get help for this roll if desired. A roll of 12 or greater reduces the base chance of a survival success roll by one but this can only be done once per turn. For example, if the players go for help and they find a match, say a 8 of spades, and four players roll for survival, whether only one or all four succeed the survival success number drops to 7. The next time the crew goes for help and someone gets a 12 or over, the base survival rate drops to 6.

What's Fun - Getting to make up the kind of food that's found.

What's Tense - The danger of not having enough to eat and losing health.

# Relationships

The crew can spend time in the village trying to get to know the people there, possibly helping with their needs and learning their ways. This move may also be used if the crew are seeking justice for things that have been done to them.

For every day spent building relationships, the players that are involved roll 2d6 if any one of the players roll an 8 or over, 1 heat is erased for every point over the target and the next time that Aleutif is present when the crew asks for help they get a +1 to the card value. If a player rolls a 12 that Aleutif gets a permanent +1 to card value each time they are present.

If half the total number of crew roll 8 or over, the difficulty number for forming relationships is reduced by one.

Failed rolls mean the player flips a single card and then returns it to a face down position. The Rep notes the suit for the heat. The player describes what got in the way of a positive relationship forming.

If successful the Representative names the Aleutif that the relationship was made with and the player then discusses what they learned about the village and the people in it.

If the Journeyman landed on an auspicious day, relationship rolls difficulty rolls is reduced to 7.

If the Journeyman destroyed something important when it landed, relationship difficulty rolls are increased to 9.

Help cannot be used in these rolls.

What's Fun - Making friends and declaring new lessons.

What's Tense - Getting it wrong and making things worse.

# Medical Attention

The crew can attempt to improve their health with medical attention.

Players that are trying to heal a crew member each roll 2d6. A crew member gets one health back for every point 8 or higher (up to five). Each attempt takes one week for the both the crew member being healed and the one giving medical attention.

Medical attention rolls can use help from the village.

What's Fun - Restoring health

What's Tense - Loosing time due to a character being laid up.

# Repairing the Rocket

Each time the crew tries to repair the rocket, they pick from the list of projects and then roll if their character is not otherwise occupied. Each attempt takes a week. If half the total number of crew (even if they are not helping) roll 8 or over the job was a success. Only players that are working on the project can roll but the group still needs a number of successes equal to half the total crew.

If the repair roll fails, the journeyman takes one damage.

## Projects

Hull repair. Improves the Journeyman's health by 1 (maximum of 5)

Repair the fuel tank. Step 1

Collect water for making fuel. Step 2

Erect solar panels to split water. Step 3

Stand up the rocket for launch. Step 4

If the project being attempted has an advantage chosen for it, it's difficulty is reduced to 6.

If the project being attempted has a disadvantage to it, it's difficulty is increased to 10.

Once the four primary repair steps are complete the Journeyman can take off and the game ends in success.

What's Fun - Getting closer to take off

What's Tense - The stakes are high as either the Journeyman gets closer to taking off or it gets worse due to damage.

# Process

## Set Up

Generate 6 Alutif Names and Occupations, record them on the settlement sheet

Generate 4 Sports two with "Hoop" and two with "Race" in the name

Lay out cards in 6 x 9 grid.

Invite players to the table

Describe the crash of the Journeyman

Select Player Character roles

Select Player Character reasons for leaving

Select crash site advantage

Select crash site problem

## Action Loop

1. The crew picks a move to make, Survival, Relationships, Medical Attention or Repair the Rocket. The crew can split up if desired.
2. Ask if the characters are getting help from the settlement. Traveling to the settlement and back normally takes 1 week.
3. If no, roll for the task and determine success or failure, role play the results with the crew
4. If yes, Describe the crew approaching the settlement and role play an encounter.
  1. Roll 1d6 twice on the list of named NPCs to see who they encounter first.
  2. Once the players explain what they need help with, have one player flip the first card
  3. Record the suit of the flip once in the heat chart and once in the Social Rules chart. Have the players describe the what rule they broke in the interaction.
  4. Continue flipping cards, trying to get a match. Record each suit flipped in the heat chart. Keep in mind any relationship bonuses. Describe the mood of the Aleutif as each card is flipped. Players can stop at any time.
  5. If a match is found, subtract the current heat from the cards face value and roll to resolve the current move. Remember any penalties the crew has for their characters.
  6. Record any effects of the roll.

## **Finish**

Once each stage of repairing the rocket is complete, ask the crew what they want to do. At this point they can launch the Journeyman and return home.



Settlement Sheet

Heat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Clubs												
Spades												
Diamonds												
Hearts												

NPCs

		Name	Relationship	Job
1	The Heavy			
2	The Bully			
3	The Guide			
4				
5				
6				

Sports

Name	Description

Social Rules

Suit	Description

# Crew Sheet

Name		Name	
Job		Job	
Job Bonus		Job Bonus	
Return Reason		Return Reason	
Negative		Negative	
Health		Health	

Name		Name	
Job		Job	
Job Bonus		Job Bonus	
Return Reason		Return Reason	
Negative		Negative	
Health		Health	

Name		Name	
Job		Job	
Job Bonus		Job Bonus	
Return Reason		Return Reason	
Negative		Negative	
Health		Health	

Weeks

## The Journeyman

Health				
Repair Fuel Tank	Collect Water	Make Fuel	Launch Site	

## Landing Site

Advantage	
Disadvantage	

