

SPACE

1889[®]



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 **HELIOGRAPH**
INCORPORATED

The Three Faces Of MARS

0 1000 2000 3000
Miles





FRANK CHADWICK

SHADE

1889

GDW

Kurtz

TO TESSA,

Who believed in the ether from the beginning.



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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO the world of **Space: 1889**, a world filled with scientific wonders, strange civilizations, international intrigue, and, of course, adventure. **Space: 1889** is a science-fiction role-playing game, but one with a difference: It is set in the 19th century at the height of Victorian colonial expansion.

How is this possible?

The 19th century saw the birth of science fiction, and the works of the early masters of this genre, H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and Arthur Conan Doyle, still have tremendous appeal. Their speculations about interplanetary travel and alien civilizations were based on sound principles of science as it was then understood. Since then we have discovered that principles like the “luminiferous ether,” then widely accepted, have no real foundation in fact.

But what if they did? What if instead of quantum mechanics and relativity, there was only “the ether”? And what if the fertile, brilliant mind of a young inventor named Thomas Edison had turned its power to harnessing the ether for science?

The answer to that question is what **Space: 1889** is all about.

WHAT IS ROLE PLAYING?

SPACE: 1889 is a role-playing game, which means that the players

each take the role of a single character in an adventure. These characters will be quite detailed, and players will assume the roles of their characters in adventure after adventure, gradually accumulating more knowledge, greater skills, and more prestige. Each adventure is a story, and the player characters are its heroes, but with an important distinction: Their actions are not determined by an author, but rather by the players themselves.

One person does not control a character, but instead serves as the referee. The referee's responsibilities include resolving events and encounters, playing the parts of other characters in the world with which the players come in contact, and, most importantly, serving as the eyes and ears of the players. He describes the world to them as they would experience it, in all of its exotic, beautiful sights, its strange sounds, even its smells and the way it feels.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RULES

ALL THAT players really have to read in this book are the first three chapters: “Introduction,” “Characters,” and “The Victorian Age.” This will tell them what sort of world they are adventuring in, show them how to generate a character, and explain how the proper Victorian adventurer behaves. Players may read the chapters on basic game mechanics as well, as it will help speed play if they know the basic steps of combat, travel, etc. They should read only those parts of the background sections that their referee tells them to.

Referees will need to read the entire book and become familiar with both the rules and the background.

The last 16 pages of the book are printed on heavy white paper and are perforated for easy removal from the book. These are reference charts designed to make the referee's life easier. If you do not want to tear pages out of your book, you have permission to photocopy as many copies of these pages as you need for your personal use with the game.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

THIS BOOK is almost all you'll need to play. You will also need several (six or more) six-sided dice as well as paper and pencils. Graph paper is also useful for drawing the interiors of buildings, caverns, etc.

Dice are used to resolve tasks, combat, and random events. As a general rule, if a number is listed to roll, the player must roll that number or less to achieve the indicated result.

GDW also produces an extensive line of supporting materials for **Space: 1889**, including novels, sourcebooks, adventures, and board games. Any or all of these can prove useful to the referee and players, but none are absolutely necessary. This book is a complete game by itself.

A NOTE ON GENDER

FOR EASE of expression, all references to characters and referees in this book use the masculine pronoun. This should in no way be interpreted as excluding either female players or characters. Although Victorian society did not encourage women to embark upon careers of danger and adventure, the large number of women who did so anyway is ample proof that it was possible. For more on this theme, see the section of “The Victorian Age” entitled “Victorian Women.”