

THE STATION (v1)

A TTRPG about trust among the stars, by **Portalier Press**

The Station is a fiction-first micro-TTRPG set on a vast and tumultuous space station. Most of you are **The Crew**: a group of **player characters** from the same spaceship who do not belong on this station, who are docking here together temporarily and tenuously working together toward a common **Crew Goal**. One player is the **Game Master**, who embodies the station, its systems, and all others who live there, and generates obstacles to the crew's goal.

Set-up: Players select a gender, age, occupation/role, and one of the following Archetypes for their character: **Maverick, Paladin, Utopian, Uncanny, Rookie**. Players select a POV from their chosen Archetype. Each player starts with **4 hit points** and **4 resources**.

Each player establish a Relationship with each other character (**friends, allies, strangers, lovers, family, nemeses, estranged**); for each relationship, roll a d4: that relationship takes that many Splinters, or moments of broken trust from the past that linger. Name those Splinters, and expand on their meaning. The crew names their **ship**, which is docked at the station, and has **4 ship resources**.

Each player establishes a **personal goal** for their character, and the game master, in consultation with the players, establishes the **crew goal**.

How the game works: Players free-play in scenes until they, or the game master, identify a **problem** – an obstacle to their goal. A player can use a **move**, if it makes sense within the fiction, to roll a d6 to attempt to solve the problem. Other players can assist a move roll, adding 1d4 to the roll; the player can also burn a resource or one of the ship's resources to add a d4. The GM will rate how effective the crew's approach is, and roll a number of d4 in Opposition:

Very Effective	1d4	Ineffective	3d4
Effective	2d4	Problematic	4d4

If the result of the player's Move roll is **equal or greater** to the result of the Opposition roll, it is a **success**. If it is **double the Opposition roll or greater**, the player can additionally **take a Resource or a Hit Point**.

If the result of the Move roll is **less than the result of the Opposition roll**, it is a failure. The player who took the move must lose: a hit point or resource belonging to that player character; or a point from one of the ship's resources. Additionally, Splinters develop between the player taking the move and all players who assisted; name those Splinters now.

Note that the player always accomplishes the intent of their move; whether it solves the problem, however, relies on the move roll.

If a Player uses a Flaw Move, it solves the problem without a move roll, but the player takes a Splinter with every other character in the crew. If a Player uses a Power Move, it immediately solves the problem without a roll, and clears 1 Splinter from each of their relationships, but they lose 1d4 Hit Points. A Power Move can only be used once per session, and only if the character has already used a Flaw Move this session.

If a relationship between two characters reaches 5 Splinters, those characters cannot assist one another in moves, or share the same Scene. If the crew and ship reach 0 resource, the crew are stranded penniless on The Station, and automatically fail their crew goal. If a Player reaches 0 Hit Points, they die, and their Resources are immediately lost.

If the crew completes their crew goal by the end of the session, each character regains 1d4 hit points and resources; each Relationship removes 2 Splinters; and the Crew receives a reward from the GM. If a player completes their personal goal, that character is retired, and must build a new character for any further sessions.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

THE MAVERICK	<i>Cool, vicious, impulsive</i>
Choose 1 POV: <i>"This world is cruel. To survive, I have to be crueller."</i> <i>"I was weak once, and lost everything. I will never be weak again."</i> <i>"This world only respects violence, so I'm never going to hold myself back."</i>	
Moves: — Make a ruthless choice — Lie to manipulate a situation — Take a stupid risk that could get someone killed — Use violence in a cool way — Ferret out a deception — Punch someone	
Flaw Moves: — Choose yourself over the Crew — Execute the guilty with impunity	Power Moves: — Reveal a hidden vulnerability to connect with someone — Sacrifice yourself for what truly matters

THE PALADIN	<i>Righteous, compassionate, hopeful</i>
Choose 1 POV: <i>"I live in service of what is right, not what is law."</i> <i>"Doing evil in good's name is no better than doing evil out of selfishness."</i> <i>"Everyone deserves a chance to make better choices."</i>	
Moves: — Use your words — Do the right thing at personal cost — Appeal to someone's better nature — Make an onerous oath in good faith — Step in to prevent violence or conflict — Make a political misstep to preserve life	
Flaw Move: — Choose your morals over the Crew — Refuse to punish the guilty	Power Moves: — Abandon someone to the consequences of their actions — Sacrifice yourself for the good of the innocent

THE UTOPIAN	<i>Lawful, cautious, perceptive</i>
Choose 1 POV: <i>"If I follow the rules, I will always be safe."</i> <i>"The most dangerous force isn't malice, but chaos."</i> <i>"Someday I will rule the system, and all will benefit."</i>	
Moves: — Follow the rules — Engage the law to your benefit — Benefit from your sterling reputation	
— Argue in favour of the system — Make a detailed plan — Notice a small detail of great consequence	
Flaw Move: — Choose the system over the Crew — Reveal a secret to the system	Power Moves: — Manipulate the system — Sacrifice yourself to protect the system

THE UNCANNY	<i>Strange, distant, chaotic</i>
Choose 1 POV: <i>"No matter how lost I get, I will always be alright."</i> <i>"Boring and safe is worse than interesting and dangerous."</i> <i>"Doesn't everybody find this place as strange as I do?"</i>	
Moves: — Be a weirdo — Bumble into a solution — Ask the perfect question	
— Break something innocuous — Get lost in an unfamiliar place — Make an unexpected ally	
Flaw Move: — Choose your curiosity over the Crew — Act impulsively and make a situation worse	Power Moves: — See the world for its ugly truth — Break the system to make way for something new

Optional additional Archetype, for games with 3+ Player Characters:

THE ROOKIE	<i>New, unformed, flexible</i>
Your POV is: <i>"I need to figure out who I am."</i>	
You can use Moves and Flaw Moves from any player you are sharing a scene with. When you do, replace your POV with theirs.	
The Rookie can use any move belonging to another player in the same scene.	
The Rookie can use any Flaw move belonging to another player in the same scene.	
Power Moves: <ul style="list-style-type: none">— Show a member of the Crew that they were wrong all along— Sacrifice yourself to protect another's dream	

Influences

TTRPGS:

- **Stars Without Number**
- **Sleepaway**
 - Moves; simple interpretable actions funnelled through character
- **Wickedness**
 - Follies mechanic, and progression through character flaw
- **Slugblaster**
 - Fractures (inspiration for Splinters), and the balance between individual archetypes vs. crew goals

Video Games & TV Series:

- **Mass Effect**
 - The 'Renegade'/'Paragon' system, which was bedrock inspiration for the project
- **The Expanse**
 - The relationship between crewmembers' own foibles and goals and their needs as a crew