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# WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A game by  
Epidiah Ravachol



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*It's a game you play with friends in a social setting.* Gather two to three friends and get comfy. This should take about 15-20 minutes.

*It's an exploration of intriguing or fanciful scenarios.* Tell your friends you'll be playing modern-day bank robbers who have the perfect cover: they're also astronauts scheduled to launch that day.

*It's a chance to be someone you're not.* Take turns asking each other three questions about your personal astrorobber. Pick one to be the mastermind of the bank heist. Pick another to be the commander of the space mission. Pick a third who has secretly decided to turn himself in.

*It's a celebration of sticky situations.* Start things off *in media res*. Set the scene as you would in a movie. Our astrorobbers are in the bank the day of their launch. Masks are on; guns are out. Tell us who else is there, what they are doing, and what has gone wrong.

*It's collaborative daydreaming.* Once the scene is set, pick a player to be the focus. All other players can tell us what anyone else in the story is thinking or doing. Tellers, cops, security guards, hostages, anyone except another player's astrorobber. The player in focus can only tell us what their astrorobber is doing or thinking.



*It's exercise for your personal sense of drama.* Discuss what is happening & what everyone's doing until someone does something that is **Hard** to do or could inflict **Harm** on someone, even themselves. Call them out when you see this happen. You can help make this happen by playing your astrorobber as reckless or other folks as brave, belligerent, or needy.

*It's a way to trick ourselves into creating interesting things.* If you call someone out for doing something **Hard**, have a 3<sup>RD</sup> player tell us what needs to happen before the task can be done. If you call someone out for creating **Harm**, have a 3<sup>RD</sup> player tell us who was harmed & to what extent. If you call someone out for doing something that is both **Hard & Harmful**, have a 3<sup>RD</sup> player tell us how they failed & endangered the whole crew. If the person called out was in focus, end the scene & read on. Otherwise continue playing as above.

*It's something you've been doing all along.* After a scene ends, take turns setting up new scenes with new astrorobbers in focus. Tell us who is there & what is going wrong. Is it a car chase, a hostage crisis, an unplanned truck stop visit to change into flight suits, or a shoot out on the launch pad? Whatever naturally follows. The game ends when each astrorobber has died, been arrested, or slipped into orbit.

