

Cosmomania – Character Briefs

1. Soviet Engineer, 1957.

You are a Soviet engineer working on the first satellite to be placed in orbit (Sputnik). The satellite is hand-made, and very simple, built with hand tools in primitive conditions. You work in complete secrecy, but you understand the significance of what you are doing. Your boss, Sergei Pavlovich Korolyov, is a visionary leader and space pioneer who will lead the Soviet Union into space, to the Moon, to Mars... this is will ensure the pre-eminence of the Soviet Union over the imperialist United States.

2. Soviet citizens in 1961, reacting to the news that Yuri Gagarin was first in space. You live in Community Apartment B1-93-46 outside Moscow in the Soviet Union. You are incredibly proud that the first human in space was a Soviet citizen, and you are caught up in the wave of nationalism surrounding the event.

3. Young woman in New York City, 1969, watching the moon landing “live”. You were there during the “Summer of Love” and are a bit anti-establishment and against the war in Vietnam which is raging. Even so, the idea that a human is walking on the Moon has floored you, and given you hope that humanity can overcome any problem it sets its collective will against. However, you can’t help but be a bit bitter about the cost, and wonder whether some of that money shouldn’t have been spent here on Earth instead.

4. French citizen, 1979, after the first European rocket Ariane has been launched. It’s Christmas, and you are playing with your new “computer” which has just entered the market. You are proud of your country’s participation and leadership in the Ariane program, and foresee a day where Europeans are a space-faring superpower to rival the United States and the Soviet Union.

5. 1997, university student in dormitory. You just watched the Pathfinder rover land on Mars over this new thing called “the internet” last summer, and now you’re watching the launch of a new international probe to Saturn called Cassini. You are impressed that humanity has begun to work together in space rather than competitively, and has begun to look at longer-term goals such as exploring the more distant planets of our solar system.

6. 2003, Chinese family celebrating launch of first Chinese astronaut. China has put a man in space, showing that it has the technology and might to compete with the other superpower, the United States.