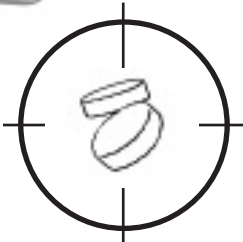
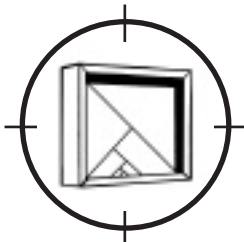


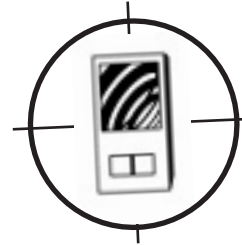
SECRET AGENT GADGET INSTRUCTION MANUAL



Smoke-Screen Pellets: When you need to distract someone or something, use the GPF's Smoke-Screen Pellets. These sticky blue pellets emit smoke so thick it's impossible to see anything through it for two minutes. Just throw them at your target – they activate on impact.



Portable Map: Small enough to fit in your Book Bag, this wooden square opens up to the size of your Magic Map. Just place the jigsaw piece inside as normal and it will transport you to your next mission. Perfect when you're travelling and away from home.



Mind Eraser: When you need to erase somebody's short-term memory, hand them the GPF's Mind Eraser. Just flick the switch on this rectangular box and tell them to stare at the swirling spirals inside. After a few minutes, they'll forget what happened in the last 48 hours.



Gripper Gloves: If you need a little extra grip, slip on a pair of Gripper Gloves. These gloves have a special grip fabric that prevents you from slipping, even on the smoothest of materials. Great for climbing shiny poles, steel columns or any outdoor structure.



Chapter 1: The Night Sky

It was a clear, dark night, and Jack Stalwart was lying on his back gazing at the stars. He was with his local Scouts group on a camping trip in the New Forest in England. As part of the activities, his troop leader had told Jack and the other boys to observe the night sky, try to spot the constellations and think about the possibility of life beyond planet Earth.





‘Do you see that star over there?’ asked Jack’s friend Richard, pointing to a brilliant white light. ‘It’s not a star,’ he said, ‘but the International Space Station – the brightest light in the night sky.’

Jack knew that Richard was right. The International Space Station – also known as the ISS – was a man-made satellite that orbited 220 miles, or 354 kilometres, above Earth. It was the biggest laboratory in the sky, where scientists carried out research on everything from cancer to how plants grow and the effects of living in space.

Astronauts were constantly being ferried to and from the ISS. It took them about two days to get there. Once they were there they could stay for months, and the longest any astronaut had lived on the station was two years. Jack knew a lot about the ISS because the GPF



received daily ‘live’ updates.

The GPF, or Global Protection Force, was the organization that Jack worked for. He was a secret agent for them, travelling the globe to protect the world’s most precious treasures. But no one knew anything about that – not even his family or his best friends.

Richard and Jack continued staring at all the stars. Their other friend, Charlie, was lying beside them, making a note of the constellations they could see, like Orion.

‘I can’t believe we’re finally going to send a human to Mars,’ said Jack. He stretched out his arms, placed his hands behind his head and thought about how amazing it was.

Tomorrow’s Mars mission was all over the news. After decades of planning, a team of Americans and Russians were

sending six astronauts – three men and three women – to the red planet.

It would take more than a year to complete the journey, but it didn’t matter how long it took. Sending a human to Mars was one of the biggest things in space history – as important as when the American astronaut Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon.



‘I know,’ said Charlie. ‘It’s incredible. I wonder what the astronauts are doing right now.’

‘Did you know,’ said Jack, ‘that my dad’s going to be there? He’s going to see the rocket lift-off up close.’ Jack couldn’t help but brag about his dad, who was an aerospace engineer. During his career, he’d helped design some American spy



satellites, and parts of the International Space Station.

Since moving to England, Jack’s father only worked on special projects. A few years ago he’d been awarded the job of designing the Mars spacecraft itself. He was in Russia right now, supervising the final details before the rocket was launched.

‘That’s what I want to be when I’m older,’ said Charlie.

‘An aerospace engineer?’ asked Jack, still thinking about his dad.

‘No, you silly,’ said Charlie. ‘An astronaut!’

‘You – an astronaut?’ said Richard, teasing Charlie. ‘You don’t have what it takes!’

‘Yes, I do,’ said Charlie. ‘You watch,’ he told them. ‘I’m going to be the first person to walk on Jupiter!’



Jack and Richard looked at each other, and then cracked up laughing. There was no way Charlie was going to ‘walk’ on Jupiter. Except for a tiny rock core, Jupiter was nothing but a big ball of gas.