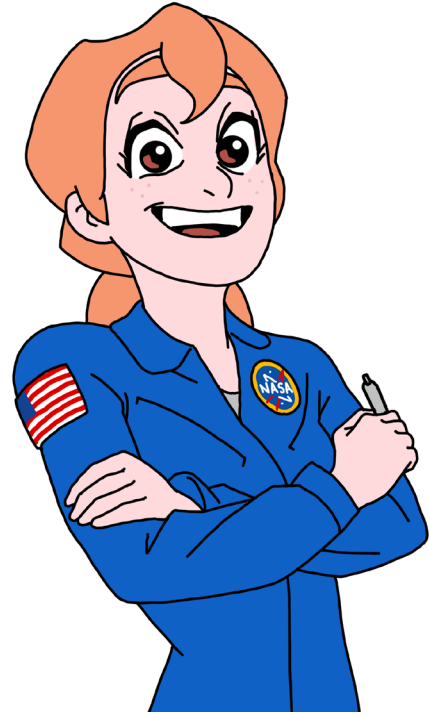




created by
Stanley Von Medvey

MORGAN

Morgan is a young astronaut at the beginning of her career. She's your big sister, if your big sister could fly jets. She's been to space once... a two week stay aboard the International Space Station! Now she's training for the next big thing: Mars. But that's years away! She volunteers her time at the Highland Community Science Center to tutor kids in math and science. Morgan is gregarious and kind, but also a bit secretive and mischievous. She's an introvert who works hard at public speaking. Dislikes authority but trains at being a team player. She is always seeking to be good at something that doesn't come naturally to her. She's an infectious optimist and loyal friend, but deep down struggles with doubt and negative thoughts like anyone else. If she winks at you, you know she's done something she wasn't supposed to do, but you can also bet that it was absolutely worth it. "To be honest, I'm way more interested in what you think!"



MAE

Your niece who'll correct you even if you aren't wrong. Mae is a pretty intense kid, a fidgety, restless tinkerer who belongs in a maker lab all day long with her legos, origami, and weird puzzles... which she relates everything to. "Yeah, a reaction wheel is EXACTLY like a fidget spinner." She's aggressive and over-competitive, often to her detriment. A perfectionist; if she makes a mistake, it's a meltdown. Despite her claims to the contrary, Mae is actually very affected by people's words, has a lot of internal doubts and struggles with self image. Wrestling with these feelings can often pull her head out of the school game, and sometimes her grades take a hit. She's hoping some after school tutoring will make up the lost ground on her road to being perfect.

LEO

He was once a loud, brash kid with no trouble expressing his opinions, but trouble at home has made him turn inward and towards his main talent/escape - music. School just doesn't have a lot to offer him right now. Despite being quiet most of the time, he cracks jokes or pulls pranks that get him in trouble. He's been having the hardest time in the sciences and math, and an intervention with mom made him come to the community center for tutoring. He's glad to be somewhere other than the house, and away from everyone at school. He's good natured but likes cynicism and sarcasm. What most people don't understand about Leo is that he still has a lot of strong ideas and opinions about most things. He wants to be optimistic, just can't figure out how.

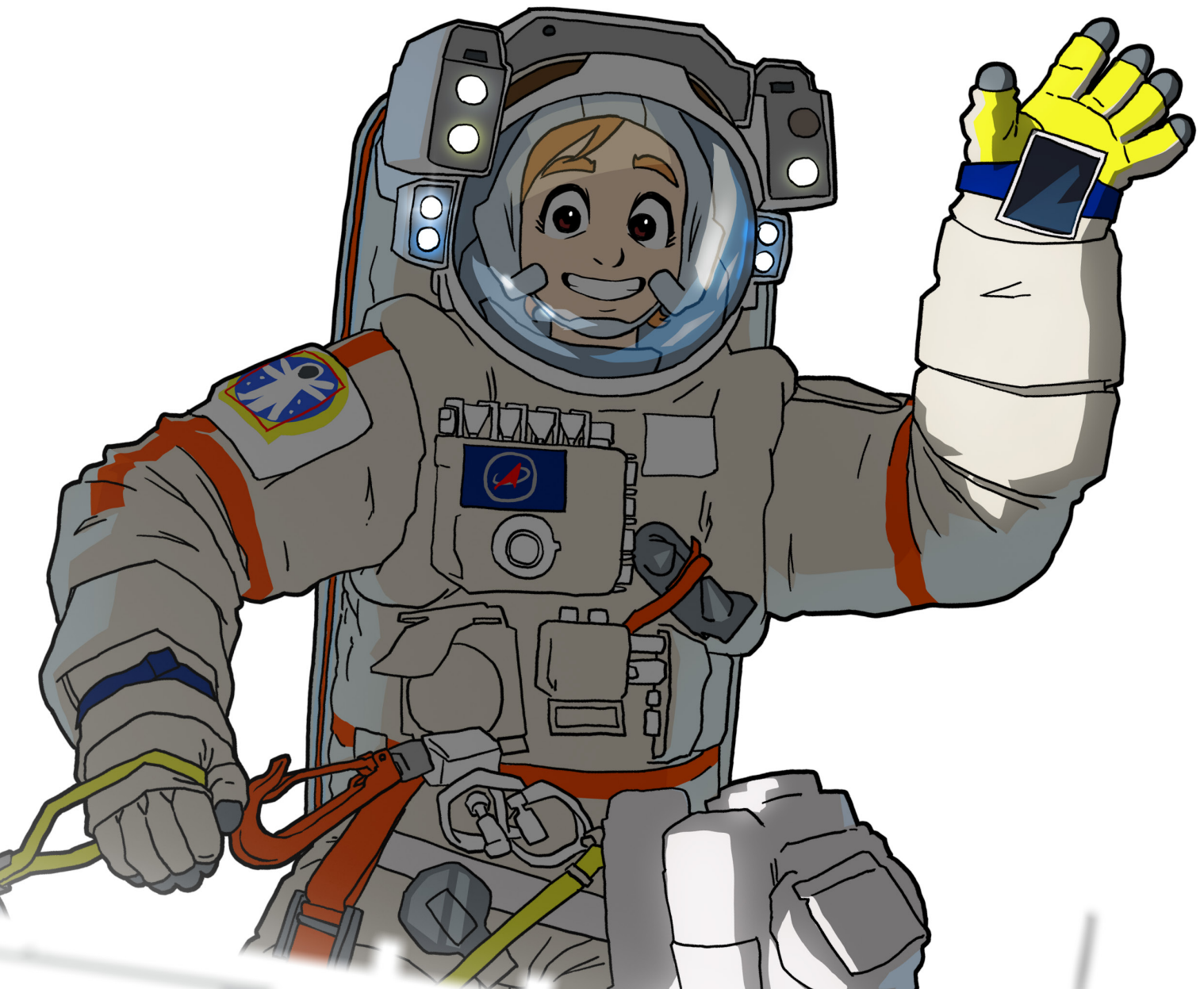


The Show

Ready to Fly is part dramatic narrative, part variety segment show. Every episode we open with a personal challenge at school or home that Mae or Leo desperately need perspective on. Once a week after school, Mae and Leo meet up at the entrance to the Highland Community Science Center where Morgan, an astronaut, is their science tutor. Morgan is often contending with a grown up version of the same crisis, but uses the responsibility of mentoring to recommit herself to values she shares in stories. The stories are experienced at the “speed of thought” by herself and the kids, allowing them to travel through time and space with a conversational degree of freedom. The kids are often able to see intimate moments in the lives of explorers and scientists that are otherwise bowdlerized and mythologized in popular culture. The narratives have interludes where Morgan, Mae, Leo, or a guest star can explore a concept relevant to understanding the scientific context of the story. The concepts will be drawn from high school curriculum, but expanded on by depicting them in thrilling visions of the future - the “reward” if we collectively rise to personal challenges. An episode usually spans multiple visits to the community center, and comes to a close after we’ve seen each character take meaningful steps to resolve their crisis, energized by the potential of a thrilling future and powerful legacy they want to be a part of.

The World

Ready to Fly is about the idea that being a normal, flawed human being doesn’t prevent you from doing great things. It uses stories from the past, present and future of space exploration and science to demonstrate the idea that people of many talents and walks of life can make meaningful contributions to the human endeavour. Highland Community Science Center is at the top of a large hill in a fictitious county somewhere in the western United States. The ideas explored are visualized at the speed of thought - even though Morgan, Leo and Mae might be sitting on a couch talking, in their minds eye we see them doing and interacting across time and space, being where they need to be and seeing what they need to see to understand the full gravity of the stories being shared. Occasionally Morgan takes them on a field trip in her astronaut corvette - to various real world locations and spaceflight centers.





 **HIGHLAND
COMMUNITY
SCIENCE
CENTER**
Highland Community Science Center

“RAPID UNPLANNED DISASSEMBLY”

Leo is losing sleep trying to write the perfect text message to a girl! Morgan is unhealthily obsessing over a critical thruster component she's responsible for that's about to be put to a serious test. Perspective comes from learning about rocket explosions, beginning with Willy Ley and Wernher Von Braun's claptrap clunkers exploding in aerodrome hangars. The prospect of catastrophe and failure should be looked at for what they are - an incredible gift and an opportunity to improve! The reward can be reusable rockets - or the courage to hit send.

“EJECT, EJECT, EJECT”

Mae is learning to drive, but for her, the highway is a white knuckle experience. Morgan has to use the eject handle for the first time, and it's made her afraid to get in the cockpit again! She knows astronauts are supposed to stay cool under pressure - a look at Neil Armstrong facing a stuck thruster on Gemini, ejecting from the lunar trainer, and nearly running out of fuel on Apollo 11! When faced with a tough problem and the instinct to panic - you have to work the problem! Mindfulness in the face of a challenge can get you smoothly merging into traffic - or working with a compassionate veteran to regain your flight legs.

“RECOVERY VEHICLE”

Leo is getting overwhelmed by homework, sports, and his class schedule! He is treasurer for the student council and just blew their budget on a pizza party because he distracted and rushed the planning. Now they are short on funds for a trip! Morgan has had a string of “deaths” in the simulator, because she's losing sleep over planning a family reunion. Neither wants to ask for help or take a break. The Skylab astronauts were so overworked that they actually had a day long mutiny, and NASA learned an important lesson! After a night out having fun with the kids, Morgan asks her dad to help with the reunion planning. Leo tells his mom what happened and she works out a plan with the teachers to set things right.

“DIFFERENT ORBITS”

Mae has an older brother that everyone compares her to, he's perfect in every way! She's so anxious about it she just failed a test. Morgan struggles to get along with a young female Russian cosmonaut that seems to effortlessly make friends with the top brass, while Morgan seems to only ruffle feathers. Inspiring stories from the life of Sally Ride, the first American female in space, and how she handled obtuse male interview questions in the public eye. Mae is given another chance to recover her test grade, and with a renewed focus on her strengths, she nails it. Morgan takes the rival cosmonaut out for coffee and they make a positive connection.

“SOLO FLIGHT”

Leo keeps cancelling plans with his friends, and the social debt is adding up. The truth is, he's afraid of going out without his mom around. Morgan has a pub/hangout she never visits anymore because the friend she used to go with died in a training accident. Inspiring tales of solo round-the-world expeditions, antarctic crossings, and spacewalks are on the menu, and Morgan realizes she needs to show the kids how facing the unknown by yourself can reap great personal rewards. Leo, understanding that the motivating and kind words of his mother are something he can carry with him, shows up at a house party.

“MARS, BRINGER OF WAR”

Mae is aggressively challenging other kids in chess club to matches, and when some of them beat her, she gives them the cold shoulder. Morgan has been taking snipes at other astronauts in front of program managers, and it was brought up at a review. To get the jitters out she surprises the kids with a field trip - the Mojave desert! They will meet teams competing in a new NASA lander competition, and learn how sportsmanship and knowledge sharing among the teams gives everyone the best shot at the real goal - making a landing! Morgan and Mae recognize a lot in one another and make a pact to be friendlier to everyone.

“A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION”

Leo gets called to the board and writes “algebra sucks”, scoring a huge laugh - and a detention. Another student has offered to help him study, but Leo does things alone. Morgan has had a string of hard landings in the trainer jet. The most experienced pilot offers help, but she doesn't trust her flying troubles with anyone but herself. They could both learn to appreciate the remarkable history of cold war cooperation between American and Russian spaceflight teams; the Soyuz-Apollo docking began an overcoming of distrust and sharing of what were once secrets that resulted in the International Space Station, even while political players on both sides stared at each other with daggers. Morgan and Leo decide it's best to engage with others and reveal their concerns in a spirit of growth and mutual benefit.

“HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM”

Mae finds out that she didn't get first chair in her audition and is devastated. Morgan finds out she didn't get selected for a near term mission and it's hitting her hard. Both feel like their circumstances conspired against them. Time to dive into the ultimate story of delayed recognition: John Harrison and his pursuit of the longitude prize in recognition of his brilliant work creating the first high precision seagoing timepiece. Morgan knows what it's like to long for something and not get it, and so do many astronauts. The road to a space faring future is paved with false starts and dashed dreams, but Mae and Morgan understand that sometimes sheer tenacity is the only remedy! Mae begins practicing for next year, Morgan signs up at once for relevant courses.

“LOSS OF SIGNAL”

Leo's parents are divorced, and he's been stuffing down feelings of guilt. He can't focus at school with this emotional burden making him lose sleep and appetite. Morgan's grandmother has passed away, and she feels like she didn't spend enough time with her because of her astronaut schedule. Stories from the Challenger and Columbia incidents of engineers that feel like they could have done more, back up crews that escaped death. The road to the future is necessarily going to be paved with such tragedies, and the ability to manage feelings of remorse will matter strongly. Morgan and Leo lend shoulders to one another as they appreciate the challenge of forgiving oneself.

“CANALS”

Mae has a plant growth experiment for the science fair - her hypothesis is that plants will grow better when her favorite boy band is playing versus silence. She's been telling friends that it definitely has an effect before doing any experimenting, and now she feels cornered into fudging the data. Morgan is dealing with the fallout from a colleague's scientific fraudulence, so when she catches wind of Mae's attitude, she won't stand for it. Time to learn what happened when astronomer Percival Lowell convinced a generation that Martians were an advanced civilization on very shaky evidence. Even decades later after Viking revealed a barren, lifeless world, many still clung to Cydonian ghosts and conspiracy theories for decades to come. Mae gets the point, and decides she'd rather have a boring and obvious outcome that's truthful than an exciting but damaging lie.