



Preface

Amateur astronomers lead busy lives. After a long day at the office, or looking after young children, the last thing you'd like to do is to drag out a large telescope and have to wait for more than an hour to receive adequate gratification at the eyepiece. This niche is often better suited to a small, grab 'n' go telescope and/or binoculars. In addition, more and more of us are on the move, traveling for both business and pleasure, desiring to bring a small, portable instrument along for the ride.

Or maybe, you're one of the growing army of casual observers, not quite committed enough to own a larger instrument but curious enough to see what a smaller, portable setup can accomplish. Perhaps you live in a high-rise apartment building with limited room to use a large telescope. Is astronomy an anathema? Are you a daytime astronomer, interested only in solar observing? Maybe you're a dedicated lunar and planetary observer, or do you enjoy seeking out the treasures of the deep sky? If your observing schedule fits one or more of the above scenarios, then you need an observing book dedicated to your fastidious needs—enter grab 'n' go astronomy.

After surveying the rich, varied, and constantly changing milieu of grab 'n' go telescopic culture (Part I) and their accessories, this book sets out to demonstrate the amazing things that can be achieved, even with a modest investment.

After surveying the market for small, ultra-portable telescopes, dedicated chapters on solar, lunar, and planetary are presented before delving into the rich milieu of deep sky objects on offer to both suburban and rural observers. The latter will be divided into separate chapters, where we present the full pantheon of celestial objects—including open and globular clusters, emission and planetary nebulae, galaxies, double and variable stars—on show at different times of the year.

The observing part of the book (Part II) is designed to get the observer to think about the objects he or she is viewing. Quite a bit of science is included in the text

to help you decipher what you're seeing. In addition, questions have been included to ponder, as well as activities to share in and moments to just pause for thought. This approach resonates well with my conviction that grab 'n' go astronomy can be educational as well as fun to undertake.

Each chapter can be read independently of the other, and the reader is encouraged to dip in and out of the book as and when appropriate. Above all, we hope that this will encourage folk to maintain their interest in observational astronomy and disseminate that knowledge to young people and novice adults alike.

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