1548 - High Velocity Times at Space High

Threeforged 2015

High school — in space! Welcome to Space High, the finest intergalactic institution for young beings in this galaxy or the next! Students are looking for glory and personal connections as they try to navigate high school — in space!

Players will need:
- two sets of tokens of different colors
- a sheet of paper
- index cards
- writing utensils
- a handful of d12s
  - you can use any size dice but d12s look the most alien, so they are the best

GAME SET-UP

Put the two types of tokens in the centre of the table; this is the token **pool**. Decide which colors are Relationships and which are Achievements. When you earn tokens, those comprise your **stash**.

Establish together what your idea of space high school is. Are there humans? How many students attend? What kind of alien cultures go to this school? What are the current trends in Space education? Use the sheet of paper to write down a brainstorm of what everyone thinks about space high school. Try to include elements that you are interested in seeing, so that it is easier for the rest of the players to know what kinds of things should be included in the game.

What are galactic fashion and teen-being culture like? Space high school probably looks a lot different from the human high school that most players probably attended. List the things that are cool in space high school, and things that are uncool. Be creative! Make gelatinous bodies the height of cool, and the color orange total social suicide.

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters should be fun to create and fun to play! Take these things into consideration when designing characters, who are all students at space high school:

- How many limbs do they have? (None, 2, eight, etc.)
- What color and texture is their skin? (Pink and shiny, blue and gelatinous, brown and smooth, etc)

- What do they eat? (Blood pudding, souls, strictly fruits and vegetables, etc)
- How did they get into this prestigious school? (Scholarship, parents paid their way, they work three jobs to afford it, etc)
- What do they look for in a personal relationship?
- What is their favorite subject in school?
- What extracurricular activities do they participate in?
- Anything else that seems interesting!

Remember- these characters go to space high school! The things that are important to them may be different than human high school students. If anyone finds themselves stumped, feel free to reach out to fellow players to help generate more ideas.

MECHANICAL OVERVIEW

Each player will have a Goal, such as "Become captain of the zero-G spaceball team, and lead them to victory over the Arcturan Academy!" Can't figure out a good goal? Embrace your inner high schooler and cheat by picking something off of the list below and pretending that you came up with it yourself.

Goals - In Space High!

- Become captain of the zero-G spaceball team and lead them to victory over the Arcturan Academy! Also, maybe learn to play zero-G spaceball at some point in there!
- The cutest boy and/or girl and/or sentient gas cloud in school is currently going steady with someone else. That person is a jerk. Show how much nicer you are than them (preferably by ruthlessly humiliating them in public) and win your crush's love!
- Enter the science fair with your project on "The Role of Chroniton Particles in Temporal Polarization Events" and win...at all costs!
- Be elected "God-Emperor of Space Prom" and use your imperial powers to punish your enemies!
- Put the gang of ruthless bullies known as the "Naked Singularities" in their place!
- Save the school from the secret invasion of the insidious aliens that only you know about!
- Lay the groundwork for a secret invasion by the insidious aliens that only you know about!
- Mr. Collins gave you a B in Chrono-Kinetics when you clearly deserved a B+. Replace everyone he loves with flaky discount androids!
- Be elected class president-for-life!
- Infect the class president-for-life's brain with your reproductive spores!

Every goal will require 10 tokens to accomplish. At least four of these tokens will be relationship tokens and at least four will be accomplishment tokens. Decide whether your goal depends most on developing your relationships or accomplishing specific objectives and let that determine what type of tokens the last two will be.

For example, Alice's character, Agrinox XIV (a swarm of hyper-intelligent bees from Tyraxos 7), wants to be elected "God-Emperor of Space Prom". She thinks that this will require a lot of politicking, so she decides that it will require 6 relationship tokens and 4 achievement tokens.

Bob's character, Buoog the All-Knowing, a teen android, wants to win the science fair. This might require some relationship building (schmoozing with judges, etc), but he thinks it will mostly be about nailing his research and being on point with his construction paper and space-glue-stick poster-making skills, so he decides that he will need 4 relationship tokens and 6 achievement tokens.

Write down your goal and the tokens you need to complete it on an index card. You earn tokens by playing tests during scenes. Play an Interpersonal test with another character to earn Relationship tokens. Play a Procedural test to earn Achievement tokens.

GETTING STARTED

Once each player has finished creating their character, determine who will start the game as the spotlight player. The player who has most recently been abducted by aliens will be the first spotlight player. If there is a tie in this regard, the first spotlight player will be whomever is most likely to be abducted by aliens in the future (argued using whatever criteria you choose). Spotlight proceeds clockwise thereafter.

Starting with the spotlight player, take turns introducing your characters to the rest of the class as if it is the first day of school for this semester. When it's your turn, describe what your character looks like as they stand, hover, or otherwise claim the floor and tell the rest of the class what they did over their summer (or other arbitrary chronological period) vacation.

Finally, tell the other players your character's goal and how many tokens of each type they need to accomplish it. You may wish to leave your character's goal a secret to the other *characters* but you must tell the other *players*.

SCENES

This game is played in scenes. The spotlight player will set the scene by determining where it is taking place, who is present, and what their character's goal is. Be creative with your locations! Take a ride on the hyper elevator while bickering with your best friend or eat lunch together in the floating gardens!

When you have the Spotlight, you play your own character and any other players whose characters are present should play theirs. If a player thinks it makes sense for their character to

be present but the spotlight player didn't include them when setting up the scene, they may ask the spotlight player for permission to be included, but the spotlight player gets the final say on whether their character is present or not. It should also be noted that the spotlight player shouldn't be a big jerk about it. If it makes sense that a character should be in a scene, allow it, even if it might make things harder for you mechanically.

In addition to the other Players' Characters (PCs), many scenes will likely require additional **Supporting Characters** (SCs). Supporting characters might be teachers, other students, administrators, or mysterious aliens. Feel free to make up these characters as needed and let other players who don't have characters in the current scene play them. Whenever a new Supporting Character is introduced, write their name on an index card and put it in the middle of the table for future reference.

While the scene is in progress, all players should speak for their own characters and narrate their actions. Additionally, every player should feel free to add details about the environment or other minor characters who might be present.

At some point near the end of the scene, a test should occur in which the spotlight character tries to get something they want. Once the test has been resolved, wrap up the scene and let the next player have the Spotlight. Scenes can be minutes, days, or months apart. They can even occur out of chronological order, but all of the events of the game should fit into one academic year.

TESTS

Tests are the mechanical means by which you earn the tokens you need to win the game and the fictional means by which you advance the story. Tests should fit the action in progress and should decide something consequential in the fiction. If a test feels forced or trivial, ask for help from the table to tweak it to something that fits better. No test can ever directly achieve your goal, but each test you win should move you closer to it in some way.

There are two kinds of tests. If you are trying to change the dynamics of a relationship for better or worse, you will take part in an interpersonal test. Otherwise, you will take part in a procedural test.

Procedural Test:

Hacking the airlock control panel, winning a debate, or punching an alien right in its stupid face are all examples of procedural tests. Basically, if you aren't attempting to change the state of a relationship, you are likely doing a procedural test.

Procedural tests can either be opposed by other PCs, opposed by an SC, or unopposed. Usually it should be obvious which should be the case in any particular circumstance, but sometimes it might make sense to create a new Supporting Character to oppose you rather than to just run a test unopposed. Unopposed tests are typically the least risky, but also the least rewarding. (They are also boring and you should always endeavor to avoid boredom in space, lest the space madness get hold of you!)

If you are unopposed, say because you are hacking a terminal in an otherwise empty room, you will roll against a simple d12. If there are any other characters present in the scene, they can choose to support you. If you accept their help, they will roll with you in the test and share in the victory. If they want to oppose you, it doesn't sound like an unopposed test anymore, now does it? They become your opposition and you run the test as a PC opposed test.

If there is really no opposition, you and every player whose character is supporting you will roll a d12. Another player will roll a d12 to represent the difficulty of the task. Compare the highest die that you or your helpers rolled against the difficulty die. If there is a tie for victory, reroll it. If your die roll is highest, you describe the results of your success and get an achievement token. Otherwise, the player who rolled against you describes the results of your failure and no one gets any achievement tokens. Boring!

If you are opposed by a PC, each other PC in the scene can offer their support to either the spotlight character or the opposition character. If their support is accepted, they will join the test, adding their die roll to their respective side. Each player involved in the conflict rolls a d12. Whoever rolls the highest wins the test for their side. Each player on the victorious side gets an achievement token from the pool.

For example, Agrinox XIV, the swarm of intelligent bees, needs to sew thousands of tiny prom gowns and tuxedos to outfit itself for the space-prom, so it gathers all of its supplies and perches on a bench to sew. Sewing the gown will be an unopposed test and it has asked Buoog the All-Knowing to be there to help. If he chooses to help, they will each roll a d12 and another player will roll a single d12 against them. The difficulty die rolls a 7 and Agrinox only rolls a 1! Ordinarily it would fail, but luckily Buoog the All-Knowing is helping and rolls an 8. The outfits are made successfully and Agrinox XIV is ready to make its grand entrance at the space prom. Both Agrinox and Buoog add an achievement token from the pool to their stash.

If on the other hand, Buoog had decided that he wanted to be a jerk and run off with all of Agrinox's materials instead of helping, it would have turned into a PC opposed test with Buoog acting as the opposition. Whichever character rolled the highest would then add an achievement token from the pool to their stash.

If you are opposed by a Supporting Character, each other PC in the scene can choose whether to offer help to you or to the SC. You can accept or reject proposals for help, as normal, but the SC will always accept all offers of help. Each player rolls a d12 and the SC rolls

one d12 + one extra d12 for every two tally marks on its index card, rounding up (0 tally marks = 1d12, 1-2 tally mark = 2d12, 3-4 tally marks = 3d12, etc.)

If the spotlight player wins a test against an SC, they get a number of achievement tokens equal to the number of d12s that the SC rolled and everyone who helped them gets one achievement token. If the spotlight player loses a test against an SC, every PC who sided with the SC gets one achievement token.

After every test that an SC acts as the opposition of, add a tally mark to their index card.

For example, Chuck, the human, is trying to cheat on an exam in Mr. Collins' Chrono-Kinetics class. Agrinox XIV is attempting to help by flying a single bee over and whispering answers in his ear. Doobie the Space-Marmot decides to support Mr. Collins by loudly telling Agrinox to keep its bees on its side of the room. This is the first scene that Mr. Collins is acting as opposition so he has no tally marks on his card and only rolls a single d12. Chuck rolls a 4, Agrinox XIV rolls a 7, and Mr. Collins rolls a 5. They *would* be in the clear, except Doobie rolls a 12! He takes an achievement token and narrates Mr. Collins looking up, after hearing his complaining, and catching a bee in the act of whispering an answer to Chuck. Chuck and Agrinox XIV don't get any achievement tokens and will likely be looking at some severe punishment for space-cheating.

Interpersonal Test:

Whether you are trying to forge a new friendship, turn a friendship into something more sexy, forge a pact, or strike fear into the heart of an enemy, you are taking part in an interpersonal test. Interpersonal tests always have a target; they can never be unopposed.

If the target of the test is a Supporting Character, it plays like a procedural challenge. All of the PCs present in the scene choose sides and dice are rolled. If the player wins, they get 1 relationship token per die rolled by the SC and all of their supporters get a single relationship token. If they lose, they get nothing, but every PC that supported the SC gets a single relationship token.

For example, After being caught cheating by Mr. Collins, Chuck and Agrinox XIV are talking to him during detention. They start crying and doing the universe's saddest waggle-dance, respectively, while begging for forgiveness. They each roll a d12 and Mr. Collins, who now has a single tally mark on his card, rolls 2d12. If they win, they can each take two relationship tokens (because Mr. Collins rolled 2 dice) and narrate Mr. Collins feeling sorry for them and letting them off the hook. If they lose, however, they get no relationship tokens and might even be facing space-disciplinary hearings!

If the target of the test is a PC, things get more interesting. No other PCs can be involved. The spotlight player and the player of the PC being targeted close their eyes and the spotlight player slowly counts to three. During this time, each player chooses to either put their thumb up or thumb down. Thumbs up means that your character will be generally friendly, honest, or cooperative. Thumbs down means that your character will be hostile or deceitful. Once the spotlight player finishes counting, both players open their eyes and see the results of the test.

If both players have their thumbs up: Hooray, they cooperate! Each player takes a relationship token and adds it to their stash.

If one player has their thumb up and the other player has their thumb down: Betrayal! The player with the thumb down describes the result of the test steals a relationship token from the stash of the player with their thumb up. (If that player doesn't have a relationship token to steal, take one from the Pool instead).

If both players have their thumbs down: Double Betrayal! Each player rolls a d12, rerolling ties. Whoever wins describes the result of the conflict and may choose to steal a relationship token from the other player's stash or be "nice" and just take a token from the pool.

For example, Agrinox XIV wants to patch up its relationship with Doobie after the incident in Mr. Collins' class, so it invites Doobie to meet up at Spacebucks for a cup of Andromedan Roast Coffee. They chat for a while and seem to be having a good time, so they do an interpersonal test. Alice, Agrinox XIV's player, and Dave, Doobie's player, each close their eyes. Alice counts to three while putting her thumb up. Alice and Dave open their eyes to discover that Alice's thumb is up, while Dave's thumb is down. Dave takes a relationship token from Alice's stash and adds it to his. He explains how he tells everyone that Agrinox XIV was crying and pathetically begging him to take it to space-prom. Agrinox XIV should have known better than to trust a Space-Marmot named Doobie!

ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL

When one player has enough tokens of each type to accomplish their Goal, that player will have the Spotlight next, for the final scene.

Set and play out the scene together in which the Spotlight character achieves their Goal. This is the climax of your space high school story, so make it grand! There will be no testing during this final scene — the Spotlight character WILL achieve their Goal. Friends should prosper and antagonists should suffer. This is the nature of comedy — in space!

If multiple players achieve their token counts at the exact same time, then they will share the Spotlight for the final scene. Describe how they cooperate to achieve their Goals simultaneously!

After a long struggle, Agrinox XIV has enough tokens to achieve its goal of becoming God-Emperor of Space Prom. The next scene is of the prom itself. Alice describes the judges reading the results of the God-Emperor competition and unveiling thousands of tiny crowns and sashes for Agrinox XIV's constituent bees to don. Agrinox XIV buzzes happily and invites Buoog to dance with it. Buoog does a very convincing robot dance and Agrinox waggles all over the place. After the dance and a fearful round of applause from all of Agrinox XIV's cowering subjects, it gives its first order. Doobie is to be expelled - from the airlock! Ha Ha Ha! Everyone laughs! Murder is fun - in space!