



KIDS ON BIKES

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CONVERTING KIDS ON BIKES CHARACTERS TO TEENS IN SPACE CHARACTERS

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Hi everybody! It's Doug, kicking off Free Content Fridays!

If you picked up a copy of *Teens in Space* and are thinking about how to convert existing characters from your *Kids on Bikes* game, awesome! It's exciting when we get attached to the histories of our characters, and it's good to have a way to keep their stories going in different ways! I'm here to help with that.

1. THE NARRATIVE

First and absolutely foremost, both *Kids on Bikes* and *Teens in Space* are all about the narrative. You'll want to think of a reason to send your kids out into the cosmos! Here are a list of ideas that you might use—but you can definitely come up with your own or combine a few of these together!

- **Discovery!** The gang discovers a spaceship that crash landed...but they're able to get it back up and running. If you had a working spaceship, you'd use it, right? I know I would, so maybe it's as simple as that.
- **Help!** A creature from outer space comes to earth and needs the gang's help. Maybe it's someone they've known all along, like the weird old woman who keeps to herself but seems to like the gang. Maybe the powered character who you've been playing with finally reveals their mysterious origin story the gang. Maybe it's a quiet, Reese's-Pieces-loving alien who wants to get home...but needs to bring the gang with him. Whatever it is, a big part of most narratives in *Kids on Bikes* is a creature who needs help from your players. This adventure doesn't have to be any different!

- **Chosen!** The gang is selected for a mission and sent out into space by some group here on earth. Maybe it's a secretive government group. Maybe it's an incredibly public selection process that the gang has to try out for...whether they want to or not.
- **Kidnapped!** This kind of hook is what Ryan Schoon wrote for us at the end of the most recent Free RPG Day material, so you know it works! Without agreeing to it, maybe you're all just snatched up into space. Tall grey men have been known to steal more than just cattle, after all!
- **Ooops!** The gang finds themselves going off-world not because they want to—and not even because they meant to. Maybe they accidentally stowaway on an alien ship and are off planet before they realize what's happening. Maybe they stumble onto a nefarious plot and are sent out into space to keep them quiet.
- **Runaways!** The gang finds themselves having to escape earth to flee some grave threat to the whole planet. Maybe the planet's dying and the only way to survive is to take to the cosmos. Maybe aliens have conquered the earth and the only way to fight back is to run away and learn how to resist.
- **Simulation!** Maybe your party isn't actually going into space at all. Maybe they're pulled into a video game that seems a lot like *Teens in Space*. You could even feel free to use that as the title!
- **Just a game!** This is something that the Kollok 1991 livestream did recently. One of the players ran a game for a bunch of his friends (of course with a few twists that I won't spoil) that was *Kids on Bikes* characters playing as *Teens in Space* characters. This could be a good way to dip your toes in the water without to playing a full campaign of *Teens in Space*.

2. THE MECHANICS

Out of the narrative, you'll want to choose a mechanical way for the gang to each get their Improvement Points that are so important for the character creation in *Teens in Space*. Again, if you come up with something that you like better, go for it!! But here are a few ideas, followed by the Narrative reasons that I think would mesh well with them.

- **The Chrysalis Machine** In Jesse Roberge's adventure prompt in *Strange Adventures #1*, the gang encounters a machine that can transform anyone who enters it (but mainly kids). If your players want to become a different species, this might be a good way to do it! (*Good for Discovery, Help & Chosen*)

- **Good Old Fashioned Experimentation** Maybe when they're abducted, the players are genetically modified to be a new species or just to have new powers. This is one of the only two ways that I'd suggest using if you want to become a new species rather than staying as an augmented human. (*Good for Kidnapped, Chosen & Runaways*)
- **Actually Always Aliens** Maybe everyone in the gang was actually an alien all along. This would be a major pivot in your *Kids on Bikes* story, and if you don't do it carefully, it could seem pretty out there. But, if this was something that you lay the groundwork for, it could answer some mysteries the gang has uncovered before—and open up quite a few new ones! This is the second way I'd suggest letting existing characters become an alien species. (*Good for Discovery, Help, Chosen & Kidnapped*)
- **Nanotech or Cool Gadgets** In *Teens in Space*, one of the ways that characters can do the amazing things they do is through technological upgrades. When the PCs get introduced to the space aspect of their adventure, they could also be introduced to the gadgets that give them powers! (*Good for Discovery, Chosen, Ooops, Runaways & Help*)
- **Just Get Upgrades** It could be that the characters are totally aware of getting these upgrades and are selecting them entirely themselves for characters who are like them but not them. If they're playing a game, this would probably make the most sense! (*Good for Chosen, Runaways, Simulation & Just a Game*)
- **Exposure** I'm using this as a way to include any “x-factor” that gives the characters new powers. It could be that something's awakened in them, it could be that they're exposed to some outside force or chemical, or it could be pretty much any way a superhero could get their powers! I'd say, though, that cosmic radiation is always a strong choice!

3. THE CONVERSION

After that, the mechanics of the conversion should be the same as if you were creating characters from scratch in *Teens in Space*. Players should get some kind of a ship, just as they would, and they'll upgrade themselves and the ship in the same way; with 10 Improvement Points to split between themselves and the ship. Just follow what's outlined in the rulebook!

The only difference will be the Tropes, which don't line up one for one with the Tropes in *Kids on Bikes*. Don't worry about it. Those are really just there to give players some guidance when creating their characters, but by now, your players should have a good sense of who they are. They don't need the

background questions, either...but it might help them to think about which Trope sounds the most like their character, just purely based on its title! Don't worry about whether the stats line up or not!

4. THE END

If you and the other players love *Teens in Space* so much that you want to stay in the stars, great! Depending on the way that they wind up among the stars, though, it might be natural for it to end. Simulations and games can't go on forever (or can they?), and if they're kidnapped, chances are, they want to get back home. They might be willing to help for a bit, but they might not want to give up everything they ever had. (After some of the narrative ways of shifting to *Teens in Space*, though, it may not be possible to ever go back to normal, especially with Runaways or some of the options for Chosen.)

Having your characters running around a small town with the kinds of powers they need to make their way in the universe would probably break your game. Of course, maybe it wouldn't, and if that's the direction you want to go, great!

But if you think there's a chance that things will go back to the kind of normal that you have in *Kids on Bikes* (which is to say, not normal at all but with really normal people facing it), you might want to build a mechanism into the adventure take the powers away to start with. Of course, if they're in a simulation or playing a game, this would be expected. Or, if they get to use cool gadgets and nanotech, that might get taken back after they use it to help the species they need to help. If they were experimented on, if they entered the Chrysalis Machine, or if they were exposed to something that gave them their powers, that might only have short-term effects or require regular doses to keep those "upgrades" active. The only one it would be really hard to come back from would be that the players were, in fact, always aliens. This one can't really end—so make sure you're committed to choosing it before you drop this bombshell on your players!

If you have any other suggestions, we'd love to hear them! Pop over to the Facebook group, *Kids on Bikes* (Community), and let us know what you think!

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