

Night at the Galactic Grand Ball

A freeform larp for four by Casey Johnson, with acknowledgments to Jacqueline Bryke and the works of Jenna Moran

The time: the distant space-future. Maybe man has spread into the stars. Maybe the galaxy is inhabited by empires of intelligent dinosaurs and mystical bog witches. Whatever you think is sweet, really.

The location: the fabulous kingdom of Space Monte Carlo, a beautiful and fantastic blank slate that we assure you has no relation to mundane countries of similar name.

The event: the Galactic Grand Ball, only the greatest space ball to be put on, where anyone who's anybody will be attending, an evening and night of dance and drink and perhaps even... *love?*

The attendees: All of *Society*. The *Magical Space Prinxe*. The *Nemesis* of love. And of course, the *Beloved*.

The goal of play is to enact a story about how love is found with the Beloved over the course of the night, or how their heart was not won. Each character operates on one of three levels: the Character (who they play in the story), their Narrative Voice (their honest thoughts or narrative role, signaled by proscribed hand signals), and the Player (players should establish an OOC signal before play; this game suggests crossing an arm over the chest, such as one would to pledge allegiance to a flag. Allegiance to any flags is strictly optional.). Characters cannot perceive the Narrative Voice directly, but players are encouraged to incorporate their comments as seems entertaining. Narrative voices are encouraged to interact but to not overshadow the actual play of Characters. Players can perceive all talk but must be forgiven should they miss or forget it.

Each player should choose one of the four attendees, and build them in the following order together.

Additionally, your character may appear as you wish, for who are we to obstruct the whims of space-love?

The Beloved

You are the individual whose heart the other players seek to woo. Answer these following questions with the group; as with all character questions you have the final authority on their answering.

- What drives you away from the prinxe?
- What separates you from the popular crowd?
- What makes you beautiful?

You play the Beloved in all scenes; however, if you are not present or present and so choose, you may offer your honest commentary on the proceedings by speaking past the back of your hand, as though you are sharing a secret.

The Magical Space Prinxe

You are a magical royal of undefined gender, and you wish to win the heart of the Beloved by the end of the ball. You are both space royalty and of a magical sort, and are encouraged to indulge in melodrama and thematic magical shenanigans. When making yourself, answer these questions as with the Beloved:

- Why must you win the Beloved's heart?
- What sets you apart from the other party-goers?
- What is your secret?

You play as yourself, but by dramatically clasping your hands before your chest you may also speak as the argument for love in a scene.

Society

You are anyone who's anybody, which is to say all characters who are not already players. You also wish to woo the Beloved for a variety of related reasons. It is encouraged that you play a variety of characters with strong and/or peculiar mannerisms in your quest to win the heart of the Beloved. When making yourselves, answer these questions with the group:

- What draws you all to the Beloved?
- What prejudices do you entertain?
- Why do you dislike the Prinxe?

You may play as many or as few characters as you like, though we will note that the ball does have more than four attendees. By cupping your mouth as though speaking into a megaphone, you may voice the collective

opinion of society on a matter, should they be present or not. You may also interrupt another scene in which the other players falsely think themselves in solitude.

The Nemesis

You are the argument against love, along with being an evil magical space monarch. Your goal is not to woo the Beloved or to be wooed, but rather to argue against love and complicate things for the other players. When making yourself, answer these questions:

- Why do you fight against love?
- How has the Magical Space Prinxe wronged you?
- Why is Society undeserving of love?

We suggest that you appear in your capacity of evil magical space monarch sparingly, as firstly it is your power to -should you so choose- introduce one complication a scene for the other players, and secondly it is your ability to speak as the argument against love by holding your hands to your head like small devil horns.

Before play

Consider your Grand Galactic Ball- what do you want it to be like? Players should determine a handful of aesthetic bullet points for their space ball to adhere to, and are encouraged to come up with a sentence or two describing the feel of things or some feature of the ball and its locale

Play

Play is divided into seven scenes, each roughly an hour of the ball: the first is always the arrival at the Ball and introduction of principle characters; the last is always when the clock strikes space midnight, marking the end of the ball and at the end of which the Beloved must announce who, if anyone, has won their love. Suggested scenes include:

- *A proposal to dance*
- *Meetings on dark balconies, away from the lights of the ball*
- *Conversations over dinner*
- *Whispered secrets in the gardens*
- *Slipping into a private room*
- *An argument over drinks*
- *A marvel or delight is revealed to the guests*
- *Something has made someone cry*
- And so forth

Not all player's characters need be present for a scene, as each player may still speak on and interact with present characters, and some may choose to or ask to appear regardless of perceived solitude. Scenes end when a majority of players feel they have come to a natural close; this is to be communicated OOC. At the end of each scene, the players should choose what to frame the next scene with and determine how to continue. Any player may define the particulars of the environment as needed; in the case of conflict this game endorses the opinion of the creator of that feature, should the other players not reject it outright.

Additionally, the Beloved may choose to give Favors, in whatever form, to another player at the end of a scene. Favors have no mechanical weight whatsoever- only a moral one.

What if we disagree or reach conflict?

The intent of this game it to be social in nature; if physical conflict should come into play, we suggest it remain in the realm of duels of honor, and not to the death. *Should* someone wish to kill another, it requires the approval of both parties, and we make no guarantee against them choosing to stand back up later by virtue of advanced magical space science.

In matters of a character's health, capabilities, or personal history, we endorse the opinion of the player with the most relevant role to the problem. Otherwise we suggest attempting to reach a majority consensus.

What if we can't reach consensus?

If resolution cannot be reached, you are no longer playing *Night at the Galactic Grand Ball* and these rules will be of no use to you. We wish you the best of luck.