

My Alien Girlfriend

A Romantic Comedy Cortex Prime Setting



It has been a weird couple of days.

I was having a pretty normal day. I had just got out of school and was on my way home. That's when a spaceship landed on my head.

Ouch, right?

Next thing I know, I'm on a sci-fi medbay. There is this gorgeous girl looking over me. Turns out I basically died!...but they put me back together.

Off-putting news, to say the least.

The girl decides to stay with me for the next few months for observation. She might look human, but she isn't and this revival tech was never made for humans. Well, one thing led to another and now we're dating. Never thought I'd have a girlfriend before.

Now, things are a little complicated.

Her friends came over and, well, they're rowdy aliens. Her family comes to visit and, well, they're aliens. Her exes want a fight and, well, aliens! And on and on!

I love her, but I would like a quiet, normal life, you know?

General Rules

The following are some general rules mods for My Alien Girlfriend.

Dramatic Order

My Alien Girlfriend uses the Dramatic Order for Conflict. See page 98 of the Cortex Prime Handbook.

Traits

Characters in My Alien Girlfriend have the following Traits.

Relationship

Relationships are at the heart of My Alien Girlfriend. Everyone has some kind of Relationship with another character and/or acting due to their Relationship to another character. It's a Romantic Comedy, after all. As such, Relationships are part of the Prime Set: Relationships + Demeanor. Every Relationship has a Trait Statement defining the nature of the Relationship. Cortex Prime Handbook page 55.

Demeanor

Demeanor is a specialized form of Role based around a character's personality. Every character in My Alien Girlfriend has a bit of every Demeanor within them. The question is how much they align with that Demeanor. Demeanors are part of the Prime Set: Relationships + Demeanor.

- **Demure:** How refined, formal, and 'civilized' you are.
- **Ditz:** How free-spirited, work-in-the-moment, and strangely-lucky you are.
- **Fierce:** How strong-willed, fiery, and determined you are:
- **Rambunctious:** How over-the-top, flashy, and extravagant you are.
- **Mature:** How understanding, emotionally mature, and pragmatic you are.

See Cortex Prime Handbook page 58-59.

Distinctions

As characters move along a Pathway, they unlock Distinctions. Distinctions have SFX that are unlocked when they reach the following ranks: d4, d8, and d12. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 50 for rules on Distinctions.

Abilities

As aliens are an expected sight in My Alien Girlfriend, it is expected for characters to have Abilities. Abilities have a die rating and a list of SFX that are unlocked as the Ability advances. These Abilities represent either innate Alien traits or unique gear that the character has access too. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 54 for rules on Abilities. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 194-213 for a list of Abilities. Abilities unlock one SFX per die rating: 1 at d4, 2 at d6, 3 at d8, 4 at d10, and 5 at d12. You may pick any available SFX to unlock when you rank an Ability.

Resources

Even in the wider galaxy, the evils of inequality run rampant. There are haves and have nots, outside the most equitable of civilizations. Resources can simply represent a well-connected character or one with massive legions at their command. A high Resource character could be a King or a well-connected thief, for example. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 56.

Signature Assets

Some of the characters in My Alien Girlfriend may acquire tools, contacts, spaceships and other assets that are central to their character. These elements of their character are represented as Signature Assets. Signature Assets have a rating and potentially SFX. As Abilities can be gear, some may wonder what the difference is between Abilities as Gear and Signature Assets. Abilities as Gear would be a Space Patrol's Multiuse Laser Pistol, a generic off the rack piece of equipment. A Signature Asset would be the famed pistol of the Queen of Space Pirates, a unique one-of-a-kind item of value that posses unique attributes. Think the difference between a standard space ship and one-of-a-kind super advanced ship made by a famed genius, for another example. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 56.

Stress

Characters in My Alien Girlfriend use Stress. Stress serves the function of absorbing damage as well as helping characters grow.

Stress comes in the following types:

- Afraid
- Angry
- Confused
- Injured
- Insecure

Overdoing It

To fit the comedic tone, *My Alien Girlfriend* has a unique mechanic: overdoing it. When a player rolls the maximum value on a dice in the pool, the GM can offer to give a plot point to the player. If the player accepts, they must use the dice for either their value or their effect dice. If they do, the value of the die is doubled or the size is stepped up twice. However, a d8 complication is added to a random character. If in person, you spin the bottle. If online, you can use some other randomizers like using a dice roller that allows for any sized dice, assigning a number to each player, or dealing each player a random card and having it happen to either the highest or lowest value. This complication represents how the overdone success has made life more complicated for the group. If the GM is selected as the target, they pick on GMPC to take the complication.

Character Creation

My Alien Girlfriend uses the Pathways system of character creation. See Cortex Prime Handbook page 73 to 77. [The pathway map can be found by clicking this hyperlink](#). I would like to thank user nyvinter on the Cortex Discord for the awesome pathway template.

Before one can go through the Pathways system, one must first have an idea for their character. To do that, one needs some idea of a premise.

My Alien Girlfriend is based on the franchise *Tenchi Muyo*. However, it seeks to remove some of the numerous problematic elements.

When going through the Pathways, there should be a central figure called "the Human." This figure is a human from Earth. The Human does not need to be the only human in the group nor must they be completely genetically human. The Human can be any gender identity, ethnicity, etc.

Then, there is another central figure, their "Alien Partner." While the game is called "My Alien Girlfriend", that's because the gender-neutral "My Alien Partner" is not a good title. The Alien Partner can be of any gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.

The only requirement is that "The Human" and the "Alien Partner" are in a romantic relationship and their trait statement should reflect this fact.

Every other character are individuals floating around these figures: family, friends, rivals, exs, former criminal partners, space pirates out for revenge, etc. The player characters should be neutral enough that they can interact with the two central figures without immediate conflict, but that is not the case for Extras.

Throughout the Pathways, players are encouraged to drive conflict in their game world by tying individuals to competing organizations, traumatic situations experienced by other characters, creating love triangles, and so on. To help this conflict brew, the GM has a step at every level of the Pathway to drive wedges into the Pathway map.

Remember, making conflict is not hurting your character. You can't win a tabletop game. You can write in d12 for every stat, give yourself every Ability at d12, give yourself unlimited Resources, and so on and still you wouldn't have "won" My Alien Girlfriend. The goal is to have fun with a group of friends.

There are no "winners and losers" in My Alien Girlfriend. As long as everyone engages in mutual respect and drives the story in a direction that ensures everyone gets to play, that spotlight is shared and uncomfortable subject matter is not brought up, that people listen to each other and avoid bigotry, then conflict will ensure there are fun scenes for players to enjoy.

Playing a Tabletop RPG with Protagonists

People have lives. Sometimes, players will miss games. This inevitability is completely understandable but always causes disruptions. My Alien Girlfriend arguably makes this problem worse because there are two central figures in the story. What do you do if one or both can't make it? What if they drop the game all together?

I propose a few solutions:

1. The central figures are shared characters. Everyone has their own character and take turns playing the central figures every session. During character creation, the GM makes the central figures while everyone makes their own characters on the Pathway map.
2. If it's infrequent, then there are always episodes of harem anime like *Tenchi Muyo* where the focus is entirely on side characters.

Going off solution one, having shared central figures ensures that no player missing a session will derail a game. Someone else will play them. They can feature in every session, and not feature at all when it feels appropriate. Central Figures can even be GMC when sessions simply don't focus on them enough, using their normal character sheet.

Solution two is for groups that really like tight ownership of characters. I somewhat advise against this solution. It works well if people don't expect the disruption to last but will kill the game if the disruption is prolonged or permanent.

I heavily suggest solution one from the getgo. Players who like tight ownership of their characters will not feel attached to the central figures if they are made by the GM. It is difficult to shift to solution one later as one player would have really defined the central figures up to that point. Lastly, you can always do solution two with solution one.

Growth

My Alien Girlfriend uses the Growth Pool mechanic from Cortex Prime Handbook page 83.

My Alien Girlfriend characters grow between sessions. The growth pool is generated by Stress and by challenging Relationship statements.

You can get Growth Dice one of two ways:

- Challenging a trait statement.
- Taking stress

At the end of every session you have the opportunity to do a special kind of scene called a tag scene, where you can try to improve your character's traits.

Tag scenes shouldn't be very long—just enough narration for everyone to get an idea of how you want your PC to change. After that, you get to do two things: rewrite statements and step up traits.

For every trait statement you've challenged in the session you get to make a choice: did your PC change perspectives? If so, you can rewrite your statement to reflect your new belief about the trait and put it back to its original die rating. Your Relationship statement with Jason may change from ***Jason would never let me down d8*** to ***Jason isn't the friend I thought he was d8*** or ***Jason will answer to me d8***.

If your PC didn't change perspectives, you can keep the statement the same, but the trait it's attached to must stay at the reduced die rating. If you stay at the lowered die rating, add another die to your growth pool equal to the new die rating. So, if you stepped down Jason from d8 to d4, you'd add a d4 to growth in addition to the d8 you added when you originally challenged it. If you step down a Value, step up another Value.

Start with a base 2d6 growth pool; for each of the five stress types, add a growth die equal to the highest level of stress that was reached during the session. For example, if the character took Angry d10 stress and Insecure d6 stress during the session, they can add a d10 and a d6 to their base growth pool, giving them d10 + 3d6 growth dice. Then, add the size of any Values or Relationships they challenged during the session. Then, if they lower a Relationship by sticking with it, add a die equal to the new, smaller Relationship die.

The maximum size of a growth pool is five dice— If you took more than five, you can replace smaller dice with higher dice to optimize the size of the pool. For example, you can remove the starting 2d6 if you already have five dice and have a d8 to add to the Growth Pool.

The difficulty of the task depends on the goal. First, the Trait being Grown determines the first part of the difficulty as follows:

d4	d6	d8	d10	d12

Then, you take the desired result of your Growth, which is always the current value plus one step. For example, if your current Skill is a d8, then you can only grow it to d10 and thus you add a d10 to the difficulty.

Then, you add either 2d8, if you took no damage nor challenged any trait statements in the session or 2d6, if you did either of those actions.

With both pools created, you make a check. If the player succeeds, then their Skill grows and they clear their Growth pool. If they failed, they simply lose the smallest dice from their pool. Regardless, they cannot try to grow another Trait in this Tag Scene. If you step up a Value, step down another Value.

Player characters can attempt to learn an extra Specialty Material this way. However, to do so, the Trait is considered a d12 difficulty and the current Value is considered a d8, thus adding a d10 to the difficulty. A Player character can never have more than two Specialty Materials.