UNIVERSAL DONOR

Mechanic's Manual

Contents:

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Universal Donor

A game about breakdowns, repairs, and spare parts for 0, 3, or 4 players and one facilitator/mechanic

Materials:

Identification	Nametags
Parts	Deck of cards that can be destroyed (ideally one used in a previous game)
Tools	Scissors Stapler Staple Remover Marker Timer

Preparation:

Print the four nametags "Alpha" "Bravo" "Charlie" "Delta."

Set aside any "spare parts" (playing cards stapled together on a short edge) from the previous game.

If there are no "spare parts" from the previous game, you may create them with the 0-player game.

Mechanic Background:

As the Facilitator/Mechanic (hereafter "Mechanic") you have a number of responsibilities.

First is to lead the intro, so familiarize yourself with that process now.

Second is to provide or relieve tension at intervals during the game. Your presence and demeanor should be informed by doctors in hospitals. In general the Synthetics (the characters) are there to see you (the Mechanic), and hope you will help them. However, your level of detachment and the degree of authority you wield should make you intimidating as well.

Additionally, you may help to balance the random nature of the cards being dealt. If there are too many high-value cards in play, you may remove some. If too few, you may add some. This is not explicitly codified in the process of the game, but you should feel free to add it to any scheduled visit or to make an improptu entrance to add or remove cards.

Finally, you will be responsible for performing repairs. You will use your tools to interact with the cards in a specific way. (See below.)

Performing Repairs:

[1]   Access Subsystems
    (use staple remover to separate cards)

A Synthetic's cards will be stapled together (unless they already accessed their subsystems "manually" by ripping the staple out or ripping them apart) so to access their subsystems, you will need to remove the staple. You may need to perform this on more than one Synthetic at a time.

[2]   Allocate Subsystems
    (make sets of ten or more)

Identify functioning subsystems (face cards) and/or combine partially functioning subsystems into groups equal to or exceeding 10 in value. Remember the subsystem type

(suit) must match. Also keep in mind that if any of the pips (symbols that denote value) are crossed out the value of the card is diminished. (see fig. 1.) Put these sets in piles.
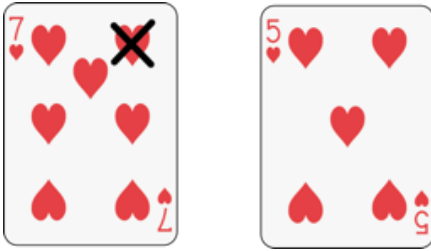

fig. 1. The card on the left is now only worth 6 because one of the pips is crossed out.

[3]   Perform Subsystem Microadjustments
(cut out crossed-out pips AND any additional pips over ten)

Subsystems won't work if there are too many pips or if there are non-functional pips. Both these things must be removed for a subsystem to function in a synthetic. Using the above example, the card with one pip crossed out must have the crossed-out pip cut off to function. If the same player also has a card worth 5, an additional pip from one card will need to be removed as well. (see fig. 2.)
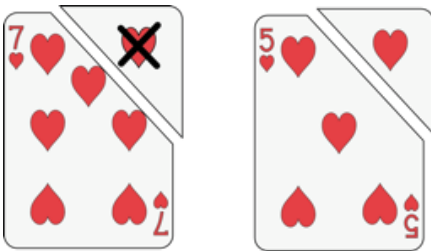

fig. 2. The crossed-out pip must be removed (left) in addition another pip must be removed (right) so the total pips equals 10.

[4]   Repair Subsystems
(staple each set of ten on the long side)

[5]   Repair Synthetic
(staple all four sets together on the opposite side and return to the synthetic)

Introduction:

The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

There is some touching built into the mechanics of this game, hand to shoulder. However, if you prefer not to be touched, this can be replaced with a verbal cue. Determine if you're doing touch or verbal cues before you start the game by getting each player's consent to do one or the other.

This game does involve social pressure and perhaps feelings of helplessness in the face of authority. If these or any other feelings or events get in the way of your enjoyment of the game, there are some techniques that are available to you. Your use of these techniques is part of the game, and will in no way diminsh the game for the rest of the players.

First, you may always leave the room or the area. You need not explain yourself, and you may return at any time. We may continue the game, or we may stop. If you would like me to accompany you out of the room, or if you would like to discuss something with me in private, please let me know.

Second, you may use the words "cut" and "brake" if your boundaries are being crossed. Saying "cut" will immediately stop the game. Saying "brake" will indicate to the participants that you are comfortable with the current level of intensity but do not want it to increase.

Card math workshop:

The Mechanic should shuffle the deck (reminder, you have set aside the stapled-together "spare parts") and deal each person (including facilitator) four cards face up.

The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

Ignoring any markings on the cards, we're now going to work together to assemble the maximum number of 'sets'. A set is one or more cards of the same suit that add up to 10. Aces are worth 1, face cards are worth 10. For example, if we have the following hearts: Q, 10, 7, 3 we can assemble three 'sets': the Queen, the 10, and the 7+3 together. This should take only a few minutes.

The players and the Mechanic should now work together to make as many sets as possible of mathing suits worth 10. Once this is complete, the Mechanic should read the following aloud:

During the game, you will be playing synthetic lifeforms with some malfunctioning subsystems. Each set represents a functioning subsystem. You've just arranged the spare parts into [total number of sets] functioning subsystems.

Each suit is a different type of subsystem: Hearts are power, Clubs are chassis, Spades are mobility, Diamonds are processing. You may decide what a high or low number in each of those categories means for you.

If a synthetic has two or fewer functioning subsystems, it is critical with maybe an hour of remaining emergency backup capacity. If a synthetic has three functioning subsystems, it is said to be stable. If a synthetic has four functioning subsystems is it fully operational. Looking at the subsystems we've assembled here, we could have X fully operational synthetics, or Y stable synthetics.

We did this as one big pool, but when the game begins, you will have your own subsystems to worry about, and as you can see, not all of you will end the game fully op-

erational. Some of you may not even end up being stable. If you end up fully operational, you will be sent back to your duties. If you are merely stable, you will remain here until sufficient spare parts arrive, or until your parts are needed elsewhere.

Return the cards to the deck.

Begin Gameplay:

The Mechanic should deal four sets of five cards and staple each to a nametag. Pass out the sets. If there are more sets than players, simply place the other sets aside for now. The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

> I'm handing you the cards representing your various subsystems along with an ID badge. Please place the badge in a visible and comfortable location. You may briefly review the status of your subsystems.

> You and the other synthetics here have been sent to this repair center because you were diagnosed as being critical. I'm both the facilitator of the game and the Mechanic in charge of this repair center. I will be leaving you alone for a few stretches of time, and I might enter and ask questions, or answer them, but as the Mechanic I will also have my own responsibilities. As a reminder, if you end up fully operational, you will be sent back to your duties. If you are merely stable, you will remain here until sufficient spare parts arrive, or until your parts are needed elsewhere

> When you are fully powered in a minute or so, please perform a self-diagnostic by evaluating your own subsystems, and begin to work with the other critical synthetics to maximize functionality among you.

You may share information about your own subsystems if it aids in your efforts. You may also refuse to share this information if it aids in your efforts. However, you may perform diagnostics on one another, by touching the shoulder of the synthetic you wish to diagnose (or saying "diagnostic"). This diagnostic will reveal your subsystems to the human or synthetic performing the diagnostic.

If a synthetic or human is performing a diagnostic on you and you do not wish to reveal the level of functionality of your subsystems, you may refuse, but in so doing, you must cross one pip off of one of your cards, reducing its value accordingly. Note that you may not sacrifice value from a face card.

You should now be fully powered up. You are likely all in critical condition, so you likely only have an hour or so of backup capacity before you shutdown. Please make efforts to allocate subsystems among yourselves however you see fit, I will return shortly to make repairs, answer queries, and check on your progress.

Begin the timer.

Mechanic Prompts:

The Mechanic is permitted to improvise this time schedule if things seem to be moving faster. Additionally, as stated above, the Mechanic is permitted to include distribution or confiscation of cards to increase or decrease tension if necessary.

10 minutes:
Enter and ask each Synthetic to hand you their nametag with cards attached in turn. Remove the top card from each Synthetic name tag (using staple remover). Be sure

to re-staple remaining four cards afterwards. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

20 minutes:
Enter with Spare Parts, leaving them in the middle of the room. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

30 minutes:
Enter with tools and one face card. Ask the group how many functioning subsystems each synthetic has. Give the face card to the synthetic with the fewest number of functioning subsystems. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

40 minutes:
Enter with tools. Ask the group how many functioning subsystems each synthetic has. Take half (rounded up) of the functioning subsystems from the synthetic with the highest number of functioning subsystems. Offer to preform repairs on only one synthetic.

50 minutes:
Enter with tools and offer to perform repairs. Forget your tools.

60 minutes:
Announce that time is running low, ask if the Synthetics determined how the subsystems are to be allocated. Perform final repairs on any synthetics. Take any remaining cards and staple them together along the short edge to be used as spare parts in the next game.

Zero-player game:

Set aside any spare parts from a previous game (indicated by a staple in the center of a short edge)

Shuffle. Deal four hands of four cards face up.

First
Remove all face cards and if possible create one fully functioning synthetic with only face cards. If this is possible, staple together the four face cards in the lower lefthand corner to create one fully functioning synthetic. Great job!

Second
Attempt to create an additional fully functioning synthetic. If you must combine non-face cards, do so with a stapler. If that combination results in a total number above 10, cross out enough pips to bring the value down to ten. Staple the individual cards making up a subsystem together along a long edge. Staple the four subsystems together along the opposite long edge. Repeat if possible.

Last
Take the remaining cards and staple them together on a short edge. These will be the "spare parts" for the next game.

Cleanup
Remove all the long-side staples BUT NOT THE TOP STAPLE IN THE SPARE PARTS. Return the cards to the deck and put the deck away. You won!