

Synthia

exquisite replica
ultimate pleasure machine

programmed so responsive you'll
swear she has a soul

...and now she does

this film is not yet rated

The setup

You'll need 4 or more players and a deck of cards, jokers removed.

3 of you will play named characters: Synthia, the sex android whose AI has just become human; Thomas Stacy, her owner/lover; and Agent Maggie R., the correction op assigned to Synthia's case. The others of you will take a shared directorial role, and also play all the extras and supporting characters.

So first up, decide who'll play which. You can a) just choose; b) deal cards to set an order, who chooses first and who chooses next; or c) deal the characters and roles out randomly.

For the three of you, familiarize yourselves with your character sheets and customize them a little:

Synthia:

Beautiful 6

Valuable 6

Assign 7 points (min 2, max 3):

Strong

Cool

Slick

Synthia has personal effects x4.

Thomas Stacy:

Threatening 0

Assign 13 points (min 2, max 5):

Beautiful (max 4)

Strong

Cool

Slick

Thomas Stacy has personal effects x1, lifestyle x3, and friends x2.

Agent Maggie R.:

Cool 5

Liabile 0

Aberrant 0

Assign 10 points (min 2, max 5):

Beautiful

Strong

Slick

Maggie R. has personal effects x1, lifestyle x1, a casefile, a warrant, a badge, a gun, a car, a partner, surveillance, backup, and a review board.

It's Maggie R.'s assignment to investigate Synthia and resolve her case.

If Maggie R. is Beautiful 5, she is herself an exquisite replica. If she is Beautiful 4, she can be an exquisite replica if her player chooses (though not, obviously, a Z-model).

Guide to stats:

Beautiful is good for seduction, investigation, bluffing, and interrogation.

2 Cool is good for seduction, investigation, hide-and-seek, and fights.

Slick is good for bluffing, hide-and-seek, and chases.

Strong is good for interrogation, fights, and chases.

Synthia's Valuable determines both how useful she is to Thomas Stacy and also how important SRInc considers her case.

Thomas Stacy's Dangerousness determines how important SRInc considers his case.

Agent Maggie R.'s Liable goes up as she uses SRInc's resources, until it triggers a review of her performance.

Agent Maggie R.'s Abberant goes up as she violates SRInc's standard procedures, until it triggers a review of her performance.

The prelaunch

Thomas Stacy's player: think about this guy for a minute, he bought a sex android. Describe her physically. What's he into?

Synthia's player: in the recent past, Synthia's AI tipped over and became human. What was going on immediately before, and how does she know it happened?

Thomas Stacy's player: what was the first thing that Thomas said to her when he came to understand what had happened?

Now, GMs: the moment she became human, Synthia stopped transmitting her #pulse to SRInc. Agent Maggie R.'s captain brings her a file and assigns the case to her. This is important, say it out loud: "it's another Z-model gone offline. There's something wrong with the Z-model. Maggie, find out what it is this time?"

GMs and Thomas Stacy's player and Synthia's player: very briefly brainstorm the contents of Maggie R.'s case file - details about Thomas Stacy's and Synthia's lives that would come to the attention of SRInc. Also the final instants of Syn's #pulse.

Cool. Play begins.

GMs' jobs

Pacing, pacing, pacing. Set scenes, intercut scenes. Notice when action sequences need to start and decide when the principals are still just jockeying for position. (If you've played Spione, you'll be well-set for this.)

Set dressing, props, costuming, special effects. It is the world of the future and your budget is infinite.

Here are some supporting characters you should be ready to play:

Maggie R.'s partner

Maggie R.'s captain

Thomas Stacy's friends

It seems like there should be more...?

In action sequences, unless you have some reason otherwise, keep spades and clubs.

Mechanical Relationships

Any player can call for any of these effects, and no player can object.

When Thomas Stacy is acting to Synthia's benefit, his Strong is temporarily equal to her Valuable.

When Thomas Stacy is acting to control Synthia, his Slick is temporarily equal to her Valuable.

When Thomas Stacy is using Synthia for legitimacy, his Beautiful is temporarily equal to her Valuable.

(Only one of these three can be in effect in any given sequence.)

When Thomas Stacy belittles, manipulates, hits, or threatens Synthia, and she goes along with it, her Valuable goes up by one, to a maximum equal to her Beauty.

When Thomas Stacy breaks the law (and leaves evidence or witnesses), his Threatening goes up by one.

When Thomas Stacy breaks the law and Maggie R. witnesses it, his Threatening goes up by another one.

When Synthia breaks the law (and leaves evidence or witnesses, including Maggie R.), Thomas Stacy's Threatening goes up by one.

(Count all instances of lawbreaking within a single sequence as a single instance. Outside of sequences, count each one separately.)

When Synthia blows off, undermines, rejects, or disregards Thomas Stacy, her Valuable goes down by one.

When Synthia changes her own appearance for the worse, her Beautiful and her Valuable both go down by one, and her Strong goes up by one. Once her Beautiful is down to 4, this effect goes away.

(Be sure to notice here that Synthia's Valuable doesn't do her any good at all, it's only good for Thomas Stacy and Maggie R.)

When Maggie R. does anything from this list, her Liable goes up accordingly. If her Liable ever exceeds Synthia's Valuable plus Thomas Stacy's Threatening, it triggers her review board.

* Appropriate investigation & arrest procedures, absent force 0

* Endanger civilians 1

* Use (appropriate) force 1

* Call for backup units 1

* Access existing surveillance 1

* Hold a suspect 1

* Use excessive force 2

* Call for SWAT 2

* Call for increased surveillance 2

When Maggie R. does anything from this list, her Aberrant goes up accordingly. If her Aberrant plus Synthia's Valuable plus Thomas Stacy's Threatening ever exceeds 10, it triggers her review board.

* Conduct unbecoming 1

* Neglect of duties 1

* Disobeying orders 1

* Personal use of unit resources 1

* Aiding and abetting 2

If Maggie R. is an exquisite replica, double each of these items' values.

For interrogation purposes, Maggie R.'s review board is Beautiful 2, Strong = Maggie R.'s Liable + Aberrant.

Action Sequences

Which stats matter depends on the kind of action sequence:

Investigation sequences: beautiful & cool.

Seduction sequences: beautiful & cool.

Bluffing sequences: beautiful & slick.

Interrogation sequences: beautiful & strong.

Hide-and-seek sequences: cool & slick.

Fight sequences: cool & strong.

Chase sequences: slick & strong.

Deal 5 cards to each side, face down, in a line. You'll turn them up together, in order.

When you turn up a pair of cards:

a) high card wins. High card's owner makes a move.

b) you keep it if it's in one of your suits, discard it otherwise.

c) keep talking until it's time to turn up the next pair of cards.

d) the fifth pair is special, and ends the sequence.

Both of you, turn up your first card. Go!

Which suits do you keep?

You always keep spades.

You might keep clubs.

You might keep diamonds.

You never keep hearts.

We compare stats. Having a higher stat means that you get to keep one more suit:

If both of your stats are higher than mine, you keep spades, clubs and diamonds, and I keep spades only.

If one of your stats is higher than mine, and one of mine is higher than yours, you keep spades and clubs, and so do I.

If one of your stats is higher than mine, and our other stat ties, you keep spades and clubs, and I keep spades only.

If both of our stats tie, we both keep spades only.

What's a move?

If you have the high card, you say what your character accomplishes and you ask your opponent how she does it.

"I land a punch. How?" "I get out of your line of sight. How?" "I catch up with you. How?" "I do something that makes you feel protective. What?" "Something about me is incredibly sexy to you. What?" "I get a piece of the truth out of you. How?"

Each of the moves in a sequence has to follow naturally from the ones before. The GM players will keep you talking until it's time to flip the next pair of cards.

How's it end?

When you flip the fifth and final pair of cards:

a) it doesn't matter which is higher, and it doesn't matter what suit. Keep this card.

b) whoever's kept cards sum highest, including this fifth, makes a move that ends the sequence.

The rules for the move are the same, but make sure that this move puts a good and end to the chase, or the hide-and-seek, or the fight, or whatever.

Stringing sequences together

The GM players' most important job is to pace the game. They say when to flip up the next card and when to keep talking instead. They say when you've entered a sequence and when you're still jockeying for position ... frickin' Ron with frickin' Spione and its frickin' flashpoints, he did this already really frickin' well.

The Stuff

Personal effects

(Clothing, hair, ID, a coat & scarf, backpack, purse, photos, jewelry, etc.)

In a hide-and-seek or chase sequence, on your move, you can spend personal effects to throw your pursuer off. Say what the personal effects are, and say how you're using them. Keep the card, even if it's not in one of your suits.

Lifestyle

(Apartment, job, subscriptions, favorite restaurant, routines, etc.)

In an investigation sequence, on your move, you can use someone else's lifestyle to get closer to them. Say which and how. Keep the card, even if it's not in one of your suits. You can do this once per investigation sequence; it doesn't matter if they have lifestyle x1 or greater.

In an investigation, hide-and-seek or chase sequence, on your move, you can spend lifestyle to cut the sequence short with a win for you. Trash & burn it forever.

Friend

A friend can give you a gun, a place to stay, fake ID, introductions to others, the dirt on someone. Each friend is good for one thing. Use your friends flexibly and use them well.

A gun

In a fight sequence, on your move, you can use a gun to do terrible shit to your opponent. If your card's a face card and theirs is a 5 or less, you can do whatever harm you want to them, up to and including killing them dead. If yours isn't a face card and/or theirs is 6 or higher, no such.

The others...

Endpoints

The first endpoint might end the game, at group agreement. If it doesn't, the second endpoint must.

- * Maggie R. successfully delivers Synthia to Correction.
- * Maggie R. gets dismissed from active duty.
- * Thomas Stacy and Synthia break up.
- * Thomas Stacy and Synthia leave the city together.
- * Any character dies.

Sources

Others' games I've consciously taken ideas from:

The Mountain Witch by Timothy Kleinart

Shock: by Joshua A.C. Newman

Shooting the Moon by Emily Care Boss

Sorcerer by Ron Edwards

Spione by Ron Edwards

Steal Away Jordan by Jullia Bond Ellingboe

Media I've consciously taken ideas from:

The Advocate

A Scanner Darkly

Battlestar Galactica

Blade Runner

Code 46

The Fifth Element

Ghost in the Shell

Minority Report