

The background is a dark space filled with numerous small blue stars. A prominent red nebula or comet tail is visible on the left side, extending towards the center. Several bright stars have lens flare effects. The title 'STARSHIP TYCHE' is centered in the upper half of the image.

**STARSHIP
TYCHE**

"A Joy Forever"

Season 1

A JOY FOREVER

Designed and Written by Berin Kinsman

Thanks to Leonard Balsera, Tim Dyke, Harvey Hart, Fred Hicks, Peter Hyams, Stephen Kandel, Byron Kerr, Robin D. Laws, C.W. Marshall, Brad Murray, Steffan O'Sullivan, Mike Olsen, Gene Roddenberry, Amanda Valentine, and Clark Valentine for the foundational works that make this adventure possible.

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A Joy Forever

Episode 3

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever: its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness."

-John Keats

Players and Crew Members

This episode assumes that you are using the Tyche and her crew, as provided in the *Starship Tyche RPG* core rulebook, but that's not required for play. You can use any ship or any player characters, substituting them for the named characters mentioned, inserting equivalent characters based on their high concept and other aspects. The gamemaster should further make any tweaks necessary to the story to make it fit with the troubles and other aspects of original characters created by your players so that this story becomes truly unique to your series.

Gamemasters and Continuity

This episode is intended to follow the published adventure *The Tunguskium Gambit*. The Tyche is headed directly from that encounter back into more clearly-defined Coalition space, specifically to a tunguskium mining colony where they can refuel and affect any necessary repairs.

If you've haven't played that episode, that's okay. These adventures were written so that they can be played as stand-alone stories and in any order. When played together there are some arcs and bits continuity that will be revealed, but that's more of a bonus. You won't be missing anything important if you're not playing that way. Read over the story synopsis, and make whatever adjustments you need to fit this adventure into your own series continuity.

Story Synopsis

The Tyche rescues a ship full of beautiful women betrothed to inhabitants of a mining colony, but they harbor a dark secret!

As the Tyche is headed to the planet Bascom, they receive a distress signal from a cargo ship headed to the same planet. The *Buell*, captained by merchant trader R.C. Cherryh, is bringing a load of luxury and entertainment items to the colony, but is currently being attacked by Merchant Pirates. The Buell's engines are overheating as the small ship tried to outrun the pirates while keeps its shields at full. They are sorely in need of rescue.

The crew discovers that Cherryh's "cargo" includes three female colonists, who are relocating to Bascom to find husbands. The mining colony is small but growing rapidly, and generating wealth faster than the miners can find ways to spend it. Once on the planet, the crew and the women are savagely attacked by a miner who appears to be in the throes of a psychotic break. The colony's general manager, Peter Sheppard, insists that the assault is a local matter under his jurisdiction, and does not want the Fleet officers to pursue an investigation.

An autopsy reveals that the deranged miner had been taking a drug called Joy, a synthetic methamphetamine that allows worker to endure long shifts without fatigue or pain. After extended use, it can lead to a psychotic break. The reveal is that Sheppard is not only aware of this but has been running the drugs in order to keep his workers under control and meeting the colony's quotas. The other reveal is that Cherryh's women are scientists, and were brought there by Sheppard to help improve the quality of the drugs and try to eliminate the worst of the side effects. Unfortunately, while the crew has to deal with this, more and more miners begin to break from prolonged use of Joy...

Act 1: Merchant Pirate Attack!

On the way to the Bascom mining colony, the Tyche picks up a distress signal. On the view screen appears a round-faced man with Victorian-style mustache, sporting a purple silk suit, who identified himself as R.C. Cherryh, captain of the *H.M.S. Buell*. A check of the computer data banks with a Mediocre (+0) result will show that the acronym stands for "hereditary merchant ship," a designation used by some merchant guilds within the Coalition to designate that the ship is owned and operated by one of the merchant trader families; Cherryh likely inherited the ship, and his business, from his father and who possibly inherited it from his father before him. The computer will also reveal that it is an older model Class J cargo ship meant to be operated by a single pilot, with minimal passenger berths but a large cargo hold. At the current distance, the Tyche is unable to the Cherryh for life forms or other details. They can discern, however, that the ship's beacon and visual appearance do conform to the registry information on file with the Coalition.



Cherryh states with an urgency bordering on panic that he is currently being attacked by Rigellian merchant pirates, who are after his cargo. He is headed to Bascom with incredibly valuable luxury goods. In his attempt to try to outrun them while keeping his shields up, his engines have begun to overheat. If he keeps pushing, his ship will explode. Without assistance, he will be forced to shut down his engines, leaving him wide open for a Rigellian boarding party to steal his cargo. He seems more concerned about losing his goods than the possibility of losing his life to brutal pirates.

The crew can decide what course of action to take. As they reach long range a Good +3 scanner result will be able to tell that there are 4 life forms aboard. With a Great +4 result, the fold can be engaged to transport the Buell's life forms aboard. With a Superb +5 result, the fold will also be able to bring the cargo aboard the Tyche as well, to the fold mechanism in the cargo bay. These actions become incrementally easier as the Tyche gets closer, but also increases the risk that the Buell will either blow up or be boarded.

If the crew decided to wait, they will have to engage the merchant pirate ships in combat. There are three of them, firing dazzlers at the Buell trying to take its shields down. When the Tyche appears, their captain (who will not identify himself) will claim that the good aboard the Buell were stolen from them and they are merely trying to recover them from this thief. If the Tyche fired upon them, or threatens to fire upon the, they will fire one volley of torpedoes at the starship then turn tail and run.

If the Tyche got close enough to engage with the pirates, the Buell's engines begin to overload. The crew will need to make a choice whether to rescue the people on the merchant ship by folding them over and letting the pirates escape, or chasing the pirates but leaving the merchant ship to blow up and kill the people aboard.

Hopefully, they choose to save lives. Folding the Buell's compliment aboard, the crew will meet Cherryh, accompanied by three glamorously attired women.

Once Cherryh and his women are aboard, the scene and the act come to an end.

Issues

- Fight the pirates or save the civilians

Zones and Aspects

- **The bridge of Starship Tyche:** *en route to Bascom when a distress call is received*
- **H.M.S. Buell:** *merchant ship under attack by Rigellian pirates*
- **Rigellian Merchant Pirates:** *three against one*
- **The transporter room of the Starship Tyche:** *meet Cherryh and the women*
- **Crew member subplot:** *driven by a trouble aspect*

Stress and Consequences

At the end of this act players can clear all stress their characters may have taken. If any characters have taken mild consequences those can be cleared as well, provided the characters have had the opportunity to rest and receive necessary medical assistance.





Act 2: Bascom Mining Colony

Cherryh introduces himself formally: "Roger Chesterfield Cherryh, at your service." He will express tremendous and enthusiastic gratitude for saving him, shaking everyone's hand enthusiastically. He will ask if they were able to save his cargo. If the answer is yes, he will hug the highest-ranking officer present and kiss him or her on both cheeks, saying "thank you, thank you" and promising gifts for them later. If the answer is no, his mood will turn dark and he will mutter about finding a way to recoup his losses later.

He will then proceed to cheerfully introduce the women. They let Cherryh do all of the talking, and smile at any character that seems to express appreciation or interest in them. Cherryh explains that the colony is growing very rapidly, and making a lot of money. Even the lowliest miner stands to become quite wealthy. These shrewd women see opportunity, and have come with the honorable intent of finding husbands.

If any of the women are asked about this, one of them (the first one asked) will tell a story about European immigrants to the United States in the early 20th century. Those first people worked hard, and they may have been simply laborers, tailors, butchers, tradesmen. But the son of the tailor grew up to own a department store, and his son grew up to be a doctor. The son of the butcher grew up to own a supermarket, and his son became a lawyer. They're not there just to find rich men; they may well be founding this colony's dynasties.

During the conversation the ship will continue on to Bascom, and arrive just as talk is winding down. Members of the Tyche's crew, as well as the people from the late H.M.S. Buell, will fold down to the planet. The crew needs to negotiate a supply of tunguskium from the mining colony. To conserve energy, everyone can fold down together. Cherryh will arrange to have his cargo (if any) folded down later, after he's settled on a price.

The characters arrive on the surface; most of the mine is underground, as is the bulk of the colony. The planet is windy and dusty, but it has atmosphere and the temperature is right. It is scheduled to be terraformed, as this mining operation has the capacity to continue on for decades, if not centuries. It will be a permanent colony someday, not entirely dependent upon mining. It's not much now, but it's easy to see the vision that the women have.

The women each have one medium-sized suitcase, with a small gravitational unit that allows it to levitate just off the ground making it easier to pull along. If anyone offers to help them with their luggage, they will decline; they need to get used to doing a bit more heavy lifting if they're going to live in a mining colony, after all.

One man will come out of a nearby building that looks like a concrete bunker. He introduces himself as Peter Sheppard, the general manager of the Bascom Consolidated Mining Company. Their parent company is an old one, and still has its headquarters on Earth. This is the most productive colony the corporation owns, and they have turned a profit for 17 straight months and have exceeded quota for the past 5 months. Sheppard is quite proud of this. Cherryh is impressed as well, but not as much as the women seem to be.

Sheppard leads them into the bunker, which houses a large freight elevator. It looks like a larger version of the lifts about the Tyche, clean and modern and not at all industrial-looking. Sheppard grasps a control rod on the wall and twists, and they begin their descent. Part of the way down, the elevator abruptly stops. All characters should make a check to not fall down – *forcefully* if they're already holding onto something or want to stay standing by sheer strength, *sneakily* if they want to rely on reflexes. Treat it as a defense roll, and the gamemaster should make an unmodified attack roll. If the character takes damage, they fall (and take damage). If they don't take damage, they stay standing.

The lights flicker, but stay on. They are too deep underground to contact the ship, and communications within the elevator are out. Sheppard apologizes, visibly embarrasses, and says they'll need to get out, see where they are, and take a different route. As soon as he says that, there is banging on the door by someone or something that wants to get in. Upon opening the doors, the character closest is attacked by a feral-looking man. He's got crazy eyes, is filthy and wearing torn coveralls, and has a long beard and matted hair. He looks as if he's been down for a while. He wants to bite the person he's attacking, on whatever area of exposed flesh he can get to – an arm, a face, a neck.

The attacker is on Joy (see *Equipment*, below) and will ignore stress and consequences. He will fight until he is either dead or has been restrained somehow. When the attacker has been defeated, the scene and the act end.

Issues

- Cherryh's mood and intentions depend on whether his other cargo was saved.
- Fold down to the planet and meet the general manager.
- Attacked by a psychotic miner.
- Other issues suggested by player character Trouble aspects.

Zones and Aspects

- **The surface of Bascom:** *attacked by an native life form*
- **The elevator shaft:** *stuck below and attacked by a psychotic miner*
- **Subplot location:** *character trouble issue*

Stress and Consequences

At the end of this act players can clear all stress their characters may have taken. If any characters have taken mild consequences those can be cleared as well, provided the characters have had the opportunity to rest and receive necessary medical assistance.



Act 3: Trapped!

If a crew member has a medical telemeter and wants to use it to examine the crazed miner, they can make a Clever approach check; an Average (+1) result will reveal that the man's vital signs are consistent with someone whose blood stream is pumped full of amphetamines. A Fair (+2) result will also confirm that the man has had a psychotic break, probably as a result of prolonged drug use. More information, such as what specific drug it might be, cannot be confirmed without doing some blood work, either in the colony's infirmary or back aboard the Tyche.

A character with an appropriate background, or a telemeter with history or mining colony information on it (the Tyche and her data banks cannot be reached, remember), can make a Clever check to discover connections between mining colonies and drug use. An Average (+1) check will reveal that miners often use drugs and alcohol recreationally, to alleviate boredom and to self-medicate for aches and pains. A Fair (+2) result will reveal that methamphetamines are particularly popular because they allow miners to remain alert for long shifts. A Good (+3) result will reveal that a current popular drug goes by the common name of "Joy", and a colony operated by one of Bascom's rival companies on another planet was shut down because of it. Joy is derived from a plant that is actively traded by Rigellian merchant pirates, and is illegal in the Coalition. It is an effective stimulant with no significant short-term side effects, but prolonged exposure to the drug over several months will invariably lead to a psychotic break.

Sheppard categorically denies that there is any drug use on his planet, and has no idea who the crazed miner is or what he's doing down here. He is upset that there are apparently squatters in closed tunnels, not paying rent and using up oxygen and other limited supplies.

If anyone wants to get into the women's luggage to look for useful supplies, the women will naturally object. Cherryh will object, on the grounds that the women have brought so little with them, and they're entitled to the sanctity of their few personal possessions. Sheppard will object on reasons of chivalry, sure that the women have nothing but girly things of little use in surviving in the tunnels.

If anyone does get into the suitcases, they will find drugs and drug paraphernalia in all three bags. The women will immediately turn on Cherryh, and state that he made them carry it for them. They will say he planned to sell the drugs to the miners, and that was a condition for bringing them to the planet. If any crew member wants to make an opposed roll against the women's Sneaky approach – with a +2 bonus to them because they're backing each other up – to see if they're lying, a successful roll will leave that character with the impression that they are, but no proof of it. Cherryh, of course, will deny it, but it's always difficult to tell if he's telling the truth or is a very accomplished liar; he is a merchant prince, after all.

The old mine tunnels are in ill repair and on the verge of collapse, and in some places are already partially collapsed. The characters will need to climb over piles of rubble and squeeze through some tight spaces. This is a challenge. Each character will need to make 3 overcome rolls using their Careful approach; the gamemaster makes unmodified rolls for the tunnel. If the player succeeds, he or she gets through unscathed. If the gamemaster succeeds the character takes damage based on the number of shifts, and the gamemaster can describe falling debris, beams shifting and landing on the character, or rocks sliding underfoot along with any consequences.

When the characters have made the overcome rolls, they will see some dim lights around another elevator. Near the elevator, looking as if they are waiting for its arrival, and more crazed miners. There is one miner for each player character. As soon as they detect the group, they will charge and attack.

Issues

- Get past other crazed miners
- Get through the mines without being crushed by falling debris
- Other issues suggested by player character Trouble aspects.

Zones and Aspects

- **Through the empty mine shafts:** *danger of collapse*
- **The old cargo elevator:** *surrounded by more crazed miners*
- **Character personal location:** *trouble aspect*

Stress and Consequences

At the end of this act players can clear all stress their characters may have taken. If any characters have taken mild consequences those can be cleared as well, provided the characters have had the opportunity to rest and receive necessary medical assistance.



Act 4: A Joy Forever

The crew gets off the elevator in another section of abandoned corridor, with pipes running along the walls. There is a green metal door, fused shut, which can be opened by winning an opposed Forceful roll; the characters can keep trying until they get it. This takes them into a domed greenhouse.

Sheppard explains that it is used to generate additional fresh oxygen underground, as well as grow some of the station's food supply. It's also conveniently close to Sheppard's office. He goes to the nearest wall comm and calls for some of his men to meet them and secure the door to the unused corridor, just in case there are more crazies out there. Sheppard also suggests everyone stay put; a medical team will be along to help with the wounded.

If anyone with an appropriate ability pokes around, on a Good (+3) success they will find the plants needed to manufacture Joy in the greenhouse, hiding in among similar-looking plants.

About the time anyone realizes that Sheppard is hiding something, his men will arrive. There will be one for each player character, armed with what appear to be dazzler rifles modified for using in cutting through rock. The crew and Cherryh will be stripped of dazzlers and comm units; the women will walk over and stand next to Sheppard.

Sheppard leads them to his office, just off the greenhouse. He opens a locked and pulls out packages of drugs. He explains that yes, he's running the drugs and yes, that's how he's exceeding his quotas and

the Bascom company is making its money. He brought the women in not just for the colony, but because of their expertise. He's hoping they can create a version of the drug that won't end in a total psychotic break. If they can do so, they'll all be incredibly rich.

Cherryh is as shocked as anyone else. He was used, and has nothing to do with any of this. He's innocent.

Sheppard says they'll be put into "quarantine" with the rest of the crazies – right back into the corridor they entered the greenhouse from. His men will seal the door behind them, and reinforce all of the other entrances to those shafts. He asks one of the women to hand one of the crew members a container of drugs, to give them a fighting chance. She slips a communicator in, unseen by Sheppard. If they stay in the corridors the crazies will get them. If they reach the surface the windstorms will strip the flesh from their bones in the night. He'll contact the Tyche and tell them the crew and Cherryh died in the collapse, crushed and unable to be recovered.

At this point the crew can improvise. They can try to fight Sheppard and his men here. They can go into the tunnels and try to find a way into the mining colony, which will require overcome rolls to get doors open and a fight with Sheppard's men. Or they can wander the tunnels looking for a way to the surface and call the Tyche.

Issues

- Sheppard turns on Cherryh and the crew members
- Sheppard's men pursue the crew and Cherryh
- Get through quarantined areas of the station to the surface
- Other issues suggested by player character Trouble aspects.

Zones and Aspects

- **The Greenhouse:** *providing oxygen and so much more*
- **Cherryh's office:** *there's a drug laboratory next door*
- **Quarantine section:** *more psychotic miners on the loose*
- **Get to the surface and contact the Tyche:** *comm unit in drug package*
- **Character personal location:** *trouble aspect*

Epilogue

If the characters get back to the Tyche safely, they can regroup and send an armed security force down to arrest Sheppard, his enforcers, and the women. Knowing he's defeated, Sheppard will surrender without a fight. The Tyche will transport them all to the Elizabeth Fry Correctional Facility on Newgate, the prison planet.

A new general manager will be sent by the Bascom Consolidated Mining Company headquarters, along with a Coalition medical team to help the colony get back on the right track.

Cherryh is placed in temporary command of the facility by the Bascom corporate board after an emergency meeting. He is a merchant prince, after all. The Tyche will leave a small force of security officers with him until his relief arrives.

Stress and Consequences

At the end of this act players can clear all stress their characters may have taken. If any characters have taken mild consequences those can be cleared as well, provided the characters have had the opportunity to rest and receive necessary medical assistance.

Because this episode was designed to be played out in a single game session, moderate consequences can be cleared. Unless the gamemaster has other plans, it is assumed that the characters will have the opportunity to rest and receive necessary medical assistance prior to the start of the next episode.

If a character has a severe consequence, the player can choose to resolve it using the end-of-scenario milestone (see below).

Milestones

The end of the scenario represents a significant milestone. In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, player characters also gain both of the following rewards. If a character has a severe consequence that's been around for at least two sessions, it can be cleared now. The player can also raise the bonus of one of the character's approaches by one.

Factions

There are two new factions introduced in this episode, the Rigellian Merchant Pirates and the Bascom Consolidated Mining Company.

Rigellians

The Regellians are humanoids from Beta Orionis-III, the third planet around the star better known as "Rigel." They are nearly identical to Earth humans except for their skin color, which ranges from pale blue to turquoise to forest green. The Rigellian government, if it can be called that, is a capitalist oligarchy; the wealthiest 1% rule. Social status is based entirely upon wealth.



Because of their focus on wealth, the Rigellians have very few health and safety regulations, and deal in things expressly banned in the Coalition, including weapons of mass destruction, harmful drugs, stolen cultural artifacts, and even slaves. While they do very little business within the Coalition, they do a brisk trade along its edges.

They also have agreements with the T'Leng Empire, who consider them too useful to conquer, and among the Fringe Worlds.

Because I am Rigellian, I gain a +1 when I go boldly into unknown situations or do something no other human has ever attempted before.

Faction Aspects

Philosophy or Goal: "All I want in life is an unfair advantage."

Scope: Galactic commerce, excluding the Coalition

Control: Home planet and colonies

Influence: Galactic

Military: None, but merchant ships are heavily armed

Credits: One of the largest economies in the galaxy

Trouble: Major philosophical disagreements with the Coalition

Bascom Consolidated Mining Company

Named for geologist Florence Bascom, the first woman to be appointed to the United States Geological Survey in 1896, the Bascom Consolidated Mining Company is a corporation created specifically to explore and exploit the mineral rights of the planets and asteroids in the system formerly known as the Oton System. It has been renamed the Bascom System, and its primary base of operations is the mining colony on the second planet, known as Bascon-2.

Faction Aspects

Philosophy or Goal: Worker Solidarity

Scope: Bascom System

Control: Bascom system

Influence: galactic Tunguskium market

Credits: Ample to do the job

Trouble: Rampant corruption and drug use

Supporting Characters

There are five named supporting characters in this episode: *Roger Chesterfield Cherryh*, the merchant trader; *Gemma Germain*, *Wendy Ocean*, and *Tara Chen*, the women; and *Peter Sheppard*, the mining colony's general manager. In addition, there are three types of extras: Rigellian pirates, drug-crazed miners, and regular miners.

Roger Chesterfield Cherryh

Cherryh is practically larger than life. A very tall man with a loud, booming voice, he behaves as if he's a ham actor in a melodrama, using florid language and broad gestures. He willingly plays the role of the buffoon so that people underestimate him, allowing people to think he's being taken advantage of while he's getting exactly what he wants. He dresses in bright colors and expensive fabrics, both to reinforce the garish persona and display that he does in fact have access to ore wealth than taste.

A fifth-generation merchant prince, he has access to far more resources than he lets on. He prefers people to think he's one man with one ship, living hand-to-mouth and counting on the next deal to survive. This is because he craves a life of adventure and excitement; running the family business would mean sitting behind a boring desk in a boring office every boring day.

Aspects

High Concept: *Merchant trader (Earth human, Ireland)*

Trouble: *Never pass up a great deal*

Other Aspects: *that perfect balance of greed and cowardice*

Approaches

Careful: Average (+1)

Clever: Fair (+2)

Flashy: Good (+3)

Forceful: Fair (+2)

Quick: Mediocre (+0)

Sneaky: Average (+1)

Stunts

Slick but likeable: Because I am slick but likeable, I gain a +2 when I flashily close the deal with you.

You forget how large I am: Because I you forget how large I am, I gain a +2 when I forcefully attack in hand-to-hand combat.

Smarter than I let on: Because I am smarter than I let on, I gain a +2 when I cleverly devise plans to turn things to my advantage.

Stress



Refresh: 3

Consequences:

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Gemma Germaine



Gemma Germaine began her career as a forensic chemist, examining the adverse effects that alien substances had on the physiology of various Coalition species. This skill led to her being hired by merchant traders as a "quality control" consultant, insuring that food, drink, and medical substances developed by one humanoid species could be safely consumed by other species.

Over time, her abilities and connections led her down darker, and more financially lucrative, paths. Rather than insuring substances were safe, she began to help merchant traders insure profits by identifying substances that were addictive. This began with food additives, most of which were legal, and expanded to include intoxicants and illegal drugs.

Germaine eventually got tired of working for other people, and decided that she wanted to go into business for herself. She sees the Bascom colony as a wide-open opportunity for her to establish a power base. She feels she can lead and control the other women, as well as manipulate Sheppard to make things go her way.

Aspects

High Concept: *Organic chemist (Earth human, France)*

Trouble: *clandestine chemistry*

Other Aspects: *colonial ambitions*

Approaches

Careful: Fair (+2)

Clever: Good (+3)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Mediocre (+0)

Quick: Average (+1)

Sneaky: Average (+1)

Stunts

Cunning manipulator: Because I am a cunning manipulator, I gain a +2 when I flashily convince people to do what I want them to do.

Exacting analyst: Because I am an exacting analyst, I gain a +2 when I carefully use the scientific method to locate results.

Toxicologist: Because I am a toxicologist, I gain a +2 when I cleverly craft addictive or deadly substances.

Stress

○○○

Refresh: 3

Consequences:

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Wendy Ocean

Unlike Germaine, Ocean's ambitions aren't tied to Bascom and certainly aren't as nefarious. While she's well aware that what they're planning to work on is a dangerous, illegal drug, she sees the drive to make Joy into a less dangerous yet still beneficial substances as a good thing. If it can be re-engineered to enhance performance without the harmful side effects, well, this is the goal of medicine, isn't it?

Her primary focus, however, is in advancing the ability to grow a wider variety of plants underground. Breakthroughs in this field will reap many benefits for un-terraformed colonies throughout the Coalition, as well as aboard space stations and starships. Clean oxygen, fresh food, and medicinal plants will all result from her research, so the ends justify the means.

Bascom colony is a chance to accomplish some goals and make a lot of money that she can later apply to other research. She only plans to stay for a year or two, no more than three, then get out and more someplace where she can do more legitimate research.



Aspects

High Concept: *Xenobotanist (Earth human, Sweden)*

Trouble: *my intended ends certainly justify these admittedly shady means*

Other Aspects: *that delicate balance of idealism and naiveté*

Approaches

Careful: Good (+3)

Clever: Fair (+2)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Average (+1)

Quick: Average (+1)

Sneaky: Mediocre (+0)

Stunts

Resourceful: Because I am resourceful, I gain a +2 when I cleverly make use of the tools and materials at hand to solve problems.

Studious: Because I am studious, I gain a +2 when I carefully note important details for later use.

Young and gorgeous: Because I am young and gorgeous, I gain a +2 when I flashily distract people from my illegal activities

Stress



Refresh: 3

Consequences:

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Tara Chen



From an early age Tara Chen was fascinated by human behavior. Her mother was a behavioral psychologist employed by a casino cartel in Las Vegas, Nevada, whose work focused on finding ways to get people to spend more money. Her work, while unethical by Coalition standards, was groundbreaking. It was only after her mother was thrown in jail, when Tara was 7 years old, that she learned about the devastating effects of manipulating people for corporate or personal gain.

Tara believes that her work on Bascom will be good. She's there to find ways to get miners off drugs without losing productivity. She thinks she's there to help develop drug therapies to wean miners off of Joy, and get them to deal with issues like boredom and chronic pain in positive, constructive ways. She's fully aware that Gemma is manipulative and has darker motives. She doesn't know that Sheppard is dealing the drugs, and thinks he is simply keeping the colony's drug problems secret to avoid public relations problems while he seeks a solution.

Aspects

High Concept: *Social psychologist (Earth human, Nevada)*

Trouble: *good intentions blind her to the whole truth*

Other Aspects: *seeks to redeem her mother by redeeming her field*

Approaches

Careful: Average (+1)

Clever: Good (+3)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Average (+1)

Quick: Mediocre (+0)

Sneaky: Fair (+2)

Stunts

Aware of My Looks: Because I am aware of my looks, I gain a +2 when I flashily use them to my advantage

Know Your Type: Because I know your type, I gain a +2 when I sneakily identify your troubles and use them to manipulate you

See What You Did There: Because I see what you did there, I gain a +2 when I carefully observe the use of body language, tone of voice and word choice to influence people.

Stress



Refresh: 3

Consequences:

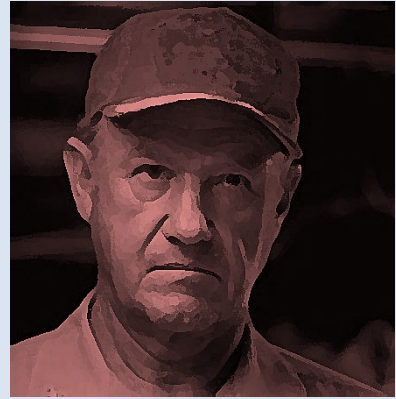
Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Peter Sheppard

Sheppard's family have been miners for hundreds of years, digging everything from coal to limestone. Like many miners throughout history, he grew up poor and pulled himself up from nothing. To rise to a management position to the general manager of an entire mining planet is an accomplishment he is incredibly proud of.



Like many men with ambitions throughout history, he has let his quest for more power eclipse his own wisdom and common sense. He wants Bascom's mines to be the most productive and profitable at any cost, because the colony's glory is his glory. That's why he's been organizing the drug trade. The men work harder, and can take on longer shifts. They also give most of their money directly back to him, insuring that they'll need to keep pushing harder and using the drugs.

When the psychotic breaks began to occur recently, he realized that his plan was not sustainable in the long run. He's put effort into covering it up, which hasn't really been that difficult because drug addicts rely on him for their next fix, and because they're all effectively stranded underground on an isolated planet. The women are his best hope to not only sustain his operation, but take it to the next level.

Aspects

High Concept: *General Manager, Bascom-2 Mining Colony (Earth human, South Carolina)*

Trouble: *The reward for meeting the quota is a higher quota*

Other Aspects: *all that matters is the bottom line*

Approaches

Careful: Fair (+2)

Clever: Average (+1)

Flashy: Average (+1)

Forceful: Fair (+2)

Quick: Mediocre (+0)

Sneaky: Good (+3)

Stunts

Abusive authority: Because I am abusive authority, I gain a +2 when I forcefully impose my will on other people.

Racketeer: Because I am a racketeer, I gain a +2 when I carefully lay the groundwork for long cons, secret operations, and profitable business measures.

Whitewash artist: Because I am a whitewash artist, I gain a +2 when I sneakily cover up evidence of illegal activity and wrongdoing.

Stress



Refresh: 3

Consequences:

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Miners

There are approximately 1,200 miners in the Bascom colony, which includes 900 men and 200 women. 90% are from Earth and Earth colonies, including refugees from Fringe Worlds, while 10% are other Coalition species. Over 70% are addicted to Joy, but 100% are fearful of speaking out about the drug abuse even if they have moral or ethical objections to it; it's simply a fact of life in the mining colony.

Very few of the miners have chosen this as a long-term career choice. Most had few other skills or prospects, and saw this as an opportunity to make a lot of money in a relatively short period of time, after which they would have a bankroll to get them started in something else. A select few are in management in supervision, and these people are loyal to Sheppard; they're paid well, have power and authority, and don't need to do back-breaking work.



Miners are expressed as extras; give them a +2 to rolls relevant to their job, a -2 for things that seem out of character or not in line with their areas or expertise, and no bonuses or penalties for everything else.

Addicted Miners

Miners on Joy get an additional +2 for any action that uses a *forceful* or *quick* approach; that means that anything related to their job using those approaches gains a +4 total. Any task that requires them to be *careful* or *clever* suffers a -2 penalty due to the dysphoria associated with the drug. They get the aspects of *addicted* and *dysphoria*, which can be compelled by players; as gamemaster, you can simply roleplay addicted miners based on those traits rather than compelling them.

Psychotic Miners

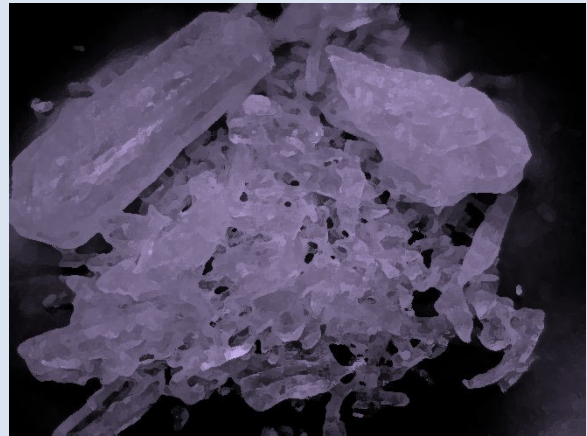
Psychotic miners are essentially in a constant state of murderous rage. Give them a +4 for all *forceful* or *quick* rolls, and a -4 for anything requiring a *careful* or *clever* approach. To easily simulate the effect of the drug, clear stress at the end of every turn rather than the every scene. Keep track of consequences for descriptive purposes, but ignore the effects; a psychotic miner with a broken arm will continue pummeling a player character with that arm. The object is to make the psychotic miners terrifying and difficult to take out.

Equipment

There is one new item classified as "equipment" in this episode, the drug known as "Joy."

Joy

"Joy" is a synthetic methamphetamine, and is both a powerful stimulant to the central nervous system and a deceptive neurotoxin. In low doses, joy can cause an elevated mood and increase alertness, concentration, and energy in fatigued individuals. This is why it is used both recreationally and as a performance enhancer by the miners. At higher doses, it can induce psychosis and cerebral hemorrhaging. Joy accrues in the body's tissues over time, so continued use of the drug as even low doses will eventually build up to a point where the damaging side effects become inevitable.



The drug is also highly addictive, and withdrawal symptoms can begin as early as a few hours after the first dose wears off. These symptoms include *anxiety, dysphoria, extreme fatigue, increased appetite, lack of motivation, sleeplessness, lucid dreams*, and of course a *craving for more drugs*.

Joy in Game Terms

The primary effect of Joy is that it allows users to ignore the effects of stress and consequences. A first-time user who has not built up a concentration of the drug can spend a fate point to invoke the drug and ignore all stress and any mild consequences. A regular user can invoke to ignore stress up to moderate consequences. A user currently experiencing a psychotic break can invoke the drug to ignore even severe consequences. There are some limitations to this, of course; a character with broken arm might still be able to wield a spanner as a weapon, but a character with a broken leg might not be able to walk.

An invocation can also be used to gain a +2 bonus on physical tasks the use the *forceful* or *quick* approach. This type of use is available to everyone from first-time users to full-blow addicts in the throes of a psychotic break. The bonus lasts for an entire scene. At the end of the scene, the character takes a point of fatigue.

Invocation of the drug lasts for an entire scene. After that, the character can re-invoke at the cost of a fate point. When the character runs out of fate points, the effects of all injuries come crashing down, up to and including death.

The negative effects of the drug can be compelled in order to influence the character's behavior. The types of behaviors depend upon the level of use and addiction. A first-time user might become forgetful or experience *dysphoria* (a type of mild confusion) and suffer a -2 penalty to actions that require being *careful* or *clever*. An addict might become *irrational, confrontational, or belligerent*, again suffering a -2 penalty to actions that require being *careful* or *clever* due to decreased cognitive function.

The effects of compelling the drug last for an entire scene. After that, they can be re-compelled at the cost of a fate point.

Withdrawal

All characters that stop using Joy will go into withdrawal. This is an opposed roll; the character's *forceful* aspect bonus can be added and compared to the total rolled by the gamemaster for the drug. The gamemaster can add a +1 bonus for each consecutive day the character has taken the drug, up to a maximum of +6. The character begins taking stress and consequences, the highest of which will always be a *craving for more drugs*. For example, if the character takes a mild and moderate consequence from withdrawal, the moderate consequence will be the craving; if the character takes a severe, moderate, and mild, the craving will be severe. Other consequences include *anxiety, dysphoria, extreme fatigue, increased appetite, lack of motivation, sleeplessness, lucid dreams*, and anything else the gamemaster feels are appropriate behaviors for the character to exhibit.

Every day that the character goes without drugs or treatment, a new roll is made an additional stress and consequences can be added. A character that is taken out by withdrawal symptoms doesn't die; they lapse into a semi-comatose state where they suffer uncontrollable shakes and wander in and out of consciousness. Because they are unable to care for themselves, they will begin suffering the effects of dehydration after 3 to 4 days, and also begin suffering myocardial and organ damage from starvation after 14 days.

Overdose

A character can overdose on Joy if they take more than one normal does. This is an opposed roll, with the character adding the *forceful* approach bonus and the gamemaster adding the total number of doses (including the first one, even though there is no chance of misadventure on a single dosage). The character takes stress and consequences as normal, but the highest consequences will be a *psychotic break*. For example, if the character takes a mild and moderate consequence from overdose, the moderate consequence will be the break; if the character takes a severe, moderate, and mild, the break will be severe. The player can still invoke the drug in order to ignore the effects of stress and consequences, and the *psychotic break* can certainly be compelled.

Treatment

There is a simple treatment for the drug, which can be administered by hypospray. As long as the treatment is administered and continues, the character will stop taking consequences from withdrawal and can "heal" existing consequences at the normal rate. What treatment cannot cure, however, is a psychological addiction the character has developed for the drug. This would be an addiction expressed as a trouble aspect, rather than a consequence.

Joy Effects on Supporting Characters

The gamemaster can ignore much of the bookkeeping detailed above for supporting characters. Addicted miners have psychotic breaks when it's dramatically appropriate in the story, rather than requiring rolls. A supporting character in the throes of a break simply ignores consequences without worrying about the fate point economy. Patients receiving treatment get better on schedule without the need for die rolls, especially if they're being treated by a player character.

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The Tyche and a mysterious T'Leng ship play a game of cat-and-mouse along the No Man's Land between the Coalition and the Empire.

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A scientist doing research into artificial intelligence on an isolated planet has his own plans for the Starship Tyche and her crew.

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Let Virtue Be As Wax

While investigating a seemingly dead planet, members of the Tyche's crew become infected with a disease that causes rapid aging.

The Serpent's Egg

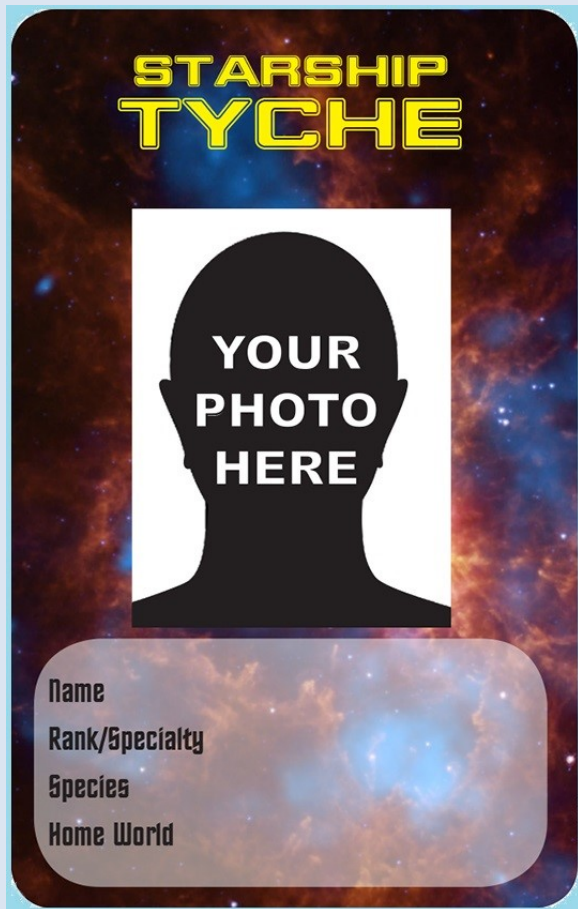
A member of the Tyche's crew believes the head of a traveling theater company to be a fugitive wanted for mass murder.

The Starless Midnight

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