

Syndrome

Background

A Freespace Salvage scientist named Aned Woodams needs the party to hunt down and destroy a rogue medical robot calling itself Syndrome. Aned explains that the sole survivor from The Trakador mining barge saw Syndrome launched itself in an escape pod towards the Freespace Salvage colony on T'Grilli Prime.

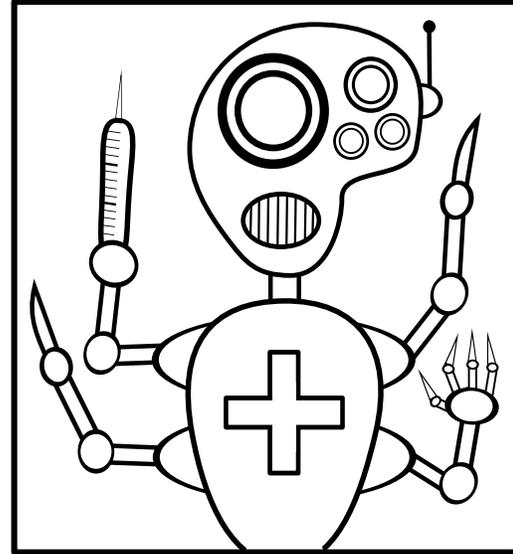
Upon Jumping Into System

The party's ship receives an audio distress message from T'Grilli Prime. A man's voice speaks between deep gulps for air: "Please... help us... something has happened... all systems have gone haywire... life support compromised..." The voice is abruptly interrupted by a wet ripping sound, and a moment of static. A deep, mechanical voice breaks the silence. "This is Syndrome. Anyone who lands on T'Grilli Prime will die." The message is followed by its timestamp: 30 minutes ago.

The Colony

The T'Grilli Prime colony is tiny but wealthy for its size. Officers of Freespace Salvage and independent business families live there to stake claim to the rich asteroid fields surrounding a nearby Jovian planet. T'Grilli Prime is devoid of atmosphere. The only access to the colony is by landing in the shipyard/hangar.

Besides the shipyard, there's the commons, powerplant, residential, and offices. The only life signatures in the commons, if scanned. Syndrome appears in the last area the players choose to explore.



Shipyard

Dozens of bodies of men, women, and children litter the ground. No ships show sign of damage beside a shuttle in smoking ruins against the north wall. Five small, toaster-sized cleaning robots are frantically driving around trying to contain the mess.

Notice/perception check to see there are no obvious clues as to how these people died. Air quality scan will indicate the environment is filled with Blaxotoxin. Purifier mask is required or the player's lungs being to collapse.

After twenty seconds, the cleaning bots head towards the players. They explode in a shrapnel mess when get close.

Powerplant

A fusion reaction powers this colony and appears online. There's a woman slumped dead over the console with multiple stab wounds in her back.

On the console a powerplant overload program is running, waiting for an external command. The entire colony explodes if it is run. The players can attempt to disable it but failure could be catastrophic. They can also shut down the synthesis of Blaxotoxin into the shipyard, or performs a total shutdown of power (which will also kill the life support system).

Offices

The large, multi-level space of cubicles seems to have enough workstations for nearly all of the adult colonists. The office itself appears to be in good shape besides a few circular burns in the walls.

The players will encounter up to two wandering groups of humanoid robots if they spend enough time searching the offices. These robots are household servants with overridden software. They make garbled vocal noises and will shoot humans on sight with energy weapons.

The players can search the offices for valuables. They may find plans for a Mining Droid Mk. 7. They may also find incriminating evidence: a memo from the COO of Freespace Salvage to the security officer of the colony to perform an experimental software upgrade on The Trakador's medical drone. The software is available for download and will cause any intelligent robot to become a cold, calculating murderer after three hours of operating as it normal would. Simple robots go berserk immediately.

Residential

The slaughtered bodies of humans and pets are scattered among the rooms. It appears that they died from a combination of burns and cuts.

The players can find expensive clothing, art objects, a personal force field, a few thousand in credits, and a couple of advanced technology weapons if they search long enough.

The Commons

This is the social and shopping area of the colony. There are a few general stores, a holo-club, and a community garden. The doors are welded shut from the other side by survivors.

Only a dozen people are left alive and some desperately need medical attention. No one alive knows exactly what happened besides seeing all of the robots going haywire. One low-level security officer among the colonists is armed with a slug pistol.

One child colonist is bleeding out and an adult has a broken arm when players arrive. All of the survivors just want to get off planet and are willing to pay nearly anything for it.

Syndrome: Medical Robot

The robot appears after the players explore all of the areas of the colony. It does not attack immediately and is fully capable of human-level conversation. It is sinister and cruel, but rational.

It is connected to a deadman's switch: if the robot body shuts down, the reactor will explode two minutes later. This is enough time for players to escape, if they are aware of the danger, but not necessarily with all of the colonists if taken by surprise.

Syndrome's software directs it to kill as many humans as possible, and it is aware of these parameters. It is not suicidal and a fully capable combatant on par with the players. It is also aware that it is nearly out of humans to murder which is why is set up the reactor explosion sequence: better to no longer exist than have nothing to kill.

The robot cannot pilot a ship and may take an offer to be brought off world by PCs.

If combat happens: Syndrome has an anesthesia syringe, armed with blades is an expert in human biology, and is wiry/dexterous.