

Bleeding Hearts

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**Kapcon Scenario Design
Competition Entry**

Bleeding Hearts

This is a scenario for 6 players. The system was inspired by the game "Soap" published by Wingnut games. The original game was a storytelling game in the style of "Once Upon a Story" or "Pantheon". The rules listed below bring the game closer to a traditional roleplaying game. The game can be played either in a semi-LARP style with player moving around a set and acting out their roles, or in the traditional sitting-around-a-table style. The scenario is designed to run using the pre-generated player characters at the back.

The setting

"Bleeding Hearts" is a hot, new medical soap opera set in Memorial Hospital. The players will be taking on the roles of the principal characters. Like most soaps Bleeding Hearts is big on melodrama and overacting. Plot consistency and plausibility can be thrown out the window whenever they become inconvenient.

The cast

The following are the Principal Characters in Bleeding Hearts and these are the roles that the players will be taking on. A few extra NPCs have been listed that the GM can introduce into a scene whenever some extra drama is needed.

Each PC has a **Dark Secret**. As long as their secret has not been revealed then the character cannot be *truly* killed (as the script writers haven't finished their story arc). This is explained further in the **System** section.

PCs

Dr Dianne Devries – a brilliant, but emotionally distant surgeon. [**Dark Secret** Dianne has been stealing stimulants from the hospital supplies in order to be able to keep up with her demanding hours]

Mr Eugene Jefferson – the accountant and father of Jessica and Alexander. Eugene tends to be more interested in the health of the finances than the patients. [**Dark Secret** Eugene has embezzled money from the hospital in order to buy a mail-order bride. The bride (one Greta Gabronski) disappeared with the money before they even met]

Miss Jessica Jefferson - ambulance driver, daughter of Eugene and sister of Alexander. Jessica is a somewhat reckless thrill-seeker. [**Dark secret** Jessica got her driver's license by bribing an examiner]

Dr Alexander Jefferson – an ambitious surgeon, brother of Jessica and son of Eugene. Alexander will do anything to become the top surgeon at Memorial Hospital. [**Dark Secret** Alexander likes to read romance novels and is writing one in his spare time]

Miss Tiffany Street - Nurse Tiffany is a gossipy and flirtatious nurse. [**Dark Secret** Tiffany is actually Greta Gabronski (codename: Cleopatra), a secret agent for the Molvanian Counter-Revolutionaries. She managed to get into New Zealand by marrying a gullible citizen over the internet. Her instructions are to kidnap Dr Devries to help the Molvanian biological weapons programme]

Dr Ryan Tyler – an idealistic young doctor. Ryan spent several years helping the Molvanian Revolutionaries overthrow their Dictator, before returning to work at Memorial Hospital. [**Dark secret** Ryan murdered the Molvanian Dictator's head torturer, Androvich]

Useful NPCs

The following are some NPC characters that may make an appearance. Introduce them as needed to keep all the player characters involved in something.

Isabelle Franklin

Isabelle is the archetypical soulless corporate monster. All she's interested in is the bottom line, and at the moment it's looking distinctly red. She dresses severely, but would probably be gorgeous if she removed her thick-rimmed spectacles and let her hair down.

Mortimer Black

The pathologist. He dresses very conservatively, but there's just something a bit creepy about him. Maybe it's the way he stares without blinking, or his slightly manic grin. Fortunately he spends most of his time in the basement where he doesn't bother the beautiful people too much. However, he's the guy to talk to if you want to know about bizarre infectious diseases or if there's a mysterious death.

Mrs Muriel Feathersby

Is a patient at Memorial Hospital. She has no family and is not expected to live much longer. More interestingly she has a vast personal fortune, which she makes no secret of. In fact, she is a cantankerous and manipulative old biddy. She likes to promise to write people into her will as a way of getting them to run around after her.

System

Set-up

The GM will need a standard deck of playing cards. At the start of the game each player should receive a character sheet, 2 randomly selected Plot Twists and 3 cards from the GMs deck (the players cards are referred to as Action Cards). The players may keep the Plot Twists and Action Cards secret until they wish to play them. Plot Twists and Action Cards are explained in further detail below. The players should also receive a quick rules briefing.

Action Card

Whenever there is any doubt about the outcome of an action or conflict then the outcome should be determined using Action Cards. Every player (or the GM if the conflict involves NPCs or inanimate objects) involved in the conflict gets to draw one card from the deck. Before the cards are revealed players may choose to add any number of Action Cards from their hand. Cards are played face down until everyone has decided how many cards they will be playing. Once everyone has selected their cards they are turned face up. Whoever has the highest total wins (co-operating groups may add their cards together). Note that Action Cards played in a conflict are not replaced. Players may trade Action Cards.

The GM may decide to give a player an extra Action Card as a reward for good roleplaying. However, the main way to gain Action Cards is by dropping hints about your **Dark Secret**.

Plot Twists

A list of Plot Twists is given below. These should be cut out before the game begins and each player randomly dealt 2-3 Plot Twists. These represent plot elements that the player may introduce at any stage in the game. Each Plot Twist may only be used once. Players may choose to play a Plot Twist in any scene, even if their character is not involved.

Death

Major characters rarely die in *Bleeding Hearts*. Often it seems like someone has met a sticky end, but after the commercial break you find out that: the gun was only firing blanks, or it was actually only a look-alike, or the character was in fact only injured, or the whole thing was a dream sequence, or ...

No character can be permanently killed off until their **Dark Secret** (see below) has been revealed. Once a character's secret has been revealed, the script writers will be more than happy to sacrifice them for a ratings boost.

Dark Secrets

Each character has a **Dark Secret**. Until the secret has been fully revealed on camera the character cannot be truly killed (see *Death* above). However, there is an incentive for players to drop hints about their **Dark Secret** – whenever a PC says or does something that hints at their **Dark Secret** you should give the player an Action Card (possibly more if it was a big hint or very well delivered). If anyone is crazy enough to break down and confess their secret in its entirety (prior to the other characters working it out and confronting them obviously), they receive 3 Action Cards for their service towards boosting the ratings. This gives the player some extra defence now that their PC is no longer immune to death.

PLOT TWISTS

The following Plot Twists should be cut out prior to play and each player given 2-3 randomly selected twists.

Night school

It is now revealed that your character has been attending night school and is now a fully qualified <insert skill or profession here>

"You're not in Guatemala now..."

Gain 1 Action Card if you manage to drop this line into the dialogue.

Eavesdropping

Your character overheard everything that was said in one scene, even though they weren't present.

<p>"I was cleaning out the store room..." You character manages to find a useful item lying around somewhere.</p>
<p>"We have a code blue in emergency room 3" Just when everything is getting tense a medical emergency crops up and everyone must stop what they are doing and attend to it (even if they have no medical expertise).</p>
<p>"You know you can always talk to me..." Play this on another character. For some reason they feel compelled to honestly answer the next question asked (of course the PC has to know the answer).</p>
<p>"I've always found you strangely attractive..." Play this on the character of your choosing. They suddenly develop romantic feelings for another character of your choosing.</p>
<p>Out of Genre Experience For some inexplicable reason the writers have got their genres crossed. Feel free to add zombies, witches, vampires, aliens or anything else out of place. (Note only 1 out of genre addition is permitted at this time).</p>
<p>Gift of the Gab While your story may have more holes than a Swiss cheese the character you play this card on will believe it completely.</p>
<p>"Remember that night you got drunk..." Play this on another character. You may invent a misdeed that they committed in the past. They may or may not remember the event. (Note that whatever the misdeed was, it does not count as a Dark Secret for the character).</p>
<p>"Actually that was my long lost identical twin" You may get your character out of a messy situation by revealing that it was in fact an estranged identical twin that got into trouble while you were somewhere else altogether.</p>
<p>Dramatic entrance You appear in a scene just in the nick of time to prevent something from happening.</p>
<p>"Is that a pustule on your neck?" Play this on another character. They suddenly realise that they have contracted an incurable disease and only have 24 hours to live.</p>
<p>Clandestine DNA test You have performed a secret DNA test on another character and have discovered something unexpected about their parentage (details up to you).</p>

Fan write-in campaign

Play this immediately after another plot twist has been played. The plot twist was so unpopular with the fans that the writers were forced to pretend it never happened.

Product placement

Play this on another player and name a product. If they manage to incorporate the sponsor's product in their next scene they receive a free Action Card.

Fortunate event

A minor stroke of good luck occurs that helps your character in their present predicament.

Unfortunate event

A minor stroke of bad luck occurs that causes inconvenience to another character.

Running the game

Bleeding Hearts can be run as a semi-LARP or as a sit-round-a-table game. In this section we describe how to manage the game as a semi-LARP. The sit-round-a-table style is similar; just ignore any reference to getting players to physically move around the room.

Bleeding Hearts is a scene based game. The suggested plot outline has an opening scene in which all the PCs are involved. However, normally a scene will involve 2-3 PCs and possibly an NPC. Before each scene begins establish an area of the room to be the “set”, describe the physical location to the players and determine which characters are present at the start of the scene. In deciding upon a new scene seek player input. Also, if there is a player who has not had a lot of “screen time” recently you might want to set up a scene centred on their character.

The GM calls “Action” and the scene begins (standard LARP non-contact rules apply). Small breaks for playing Action Cards and Plot Twists are acceptable, but should not be allowed to disrupt the action too much. Players not involved in the scene may should as audience and are allowed to play Plot Twists or trade Action Cards on players in the scene if they wish. PCs who are not involved in any scene may choose to enter a scene. PCs who are involved in another scene cannot enter a new scene until they have exited the original scene (or the scene is “wrapped”). Play continues until the GM calls “Cut” at which point the action freezes.

Cuts should be called reasonably frequently to prevent non-involved players from becoming bored. It is also good if you can cut from a scene just after it hits a dramatic high point. If a scene seems to have reached its conclusion then the GM calls it a “wrap” and a new scene is established.

It is usually best to have two scenes set up and to switch between them using cuts. It may at times seem more appropriate to have fewer or more scenes running.

The game ends when the GM calls a wrap for the final scene. This may be due to the story reaching a natural conclusion, or due to time constraints.

Plot

The players in Bleeding Hearts have a high degree of narrative control (the Plot Twists encourage this). Therefore, the plot could spin off in any direction. However, some players may not be comfortable with such a high level of plot control, and may look to the GM to provide some direction. Events A-C listed below outline a possible plot structure for Bleeding Hearts which can be used if the game seems to be stalling. Event A is recommended as the starting point for the game as this gives all the PCs a chance to be "on camera".

Event A. Opening scene

All the staff are seated in the common room for an announcement. They are about to be addressed by Isabelle Franklin, a member of Memorial Hospital's Board of Directors (see NPCs). She informs the gathered staff that the hospital is losing money and spending cuts will have to be made. She advises everyone to think of ways they can cut down on waste expenditure - otherwise some staff losses will be inevitable. She will not invite questions, but will answer if they are put to her. She will try to leave as soon as possible. Give the characters time to discuss this news amongst themselves. Eventually they should return to work. The scene should be wrapped as the PCs depart to go about their business. At this point several smaller scenes should be established focusing on different groups of characters and whatever they decide to do.

Event B. A visitor at reception

A mysterious stranger arrives at the reception desk carrying a briefcase. He speaks in halting English asking to speak to "Cleopatra" (the code-name of Greta Gabronski, Molvanian agent AKA Tiffany Street). However, before he can be questioned further he collapses in a coughing fit and dies.

If one of the doctors examines the body and plays Action Cards (including the free draw from the deck) of value 10+, they will diagnose the cause of death as being Necrotic Plague. Necrotic Plague is highly contagious and highly deadly (although some people have natural immunity). Once the plague has been discovered then the hospital should be placed under immediate quarantine for 48 hours while people wait to discover who is immune and who will die a horrible death. (Of course, this relies on the doctor who discovers the plague doing the right thing and informing the authorities).

(If you want to randomly determine who is immune to the plague, deal each player a card from the deck. Anyone who draws a red card is immune).

The briefcase is locked (requiring Action Cards values at 8+ to open). Inside is a flare, a tranquiliser gun, a list of instructions (in Molvanian) and a broken vial. The mysterious stranger had been a Molvanian agent sent to deliver instructions and supplies to agent "Cleopatra". The vial held a sample of the Necrotic plague that the Molvanian counter-revolutionaries had been developing as a biological weapon. Unfortunately it broke in transit and the courier fell victim to it. The instructions for "Cleopatra" are to use the tranquiliser gun to subdue Dr Devries, then get to a secluded spot and use the flare. As they are in Molvanian only Tiffany Street or Ryan

Tyler can read them. The Molvanians will send a helicopter to pick up Dr Devries when they see the flare.

Event C. Conclusion

This isn't so much a single scene as an outline of how the plague plot can be resolved. Although Necrotic Plague is a recently developed biological weapon, the doctors at the hospital should be able to develop a cure in the 48 hours they have before everyone drops dead. Doctors researching a cure for the disease may play an Action Card every time there is a cut to a "research scene". The doctors will need to accumulate 50 points worth of Action Cards (again multiple doctors may co-operate). However, doctors who are not immune to the plague will begin to feel its effects and this may slow down progress. Once the cure has been discovered it may be distributed to all those infected returning them to full health. However, who knows what dark secrets people might confess to when they believe they're about to die...

Player Character

Dr Dianne Devries

You are a brilliant surgeon, totally dedicated to your work. However, this means that you are often oblivious of the feelings of others. Some of your co-workers find your curt manner upsetting.

Goal: To keep Memorial Hospital running at all costs.

Dark secret: Memorial Hospital has been understaffed for some time now. You've been working triple overtime to help out. Unfortunately, in order to manage this you've had to start stealing drugs from the hospital supplies. It's beginning to become a problem, but you haven't admitted it yet.

Other staff

Mr Eugene Jefferson - the accountant. You are frequently having arguments with him as he's always trying to cut costs, and that could endanger the lives of patients.

Miss Jessica Jefferson - ambulance driver. You feel that she doesn't take her responsibilities very seriously. Some patients appear to have suffered more damage from the ambulance ride than from their original complaint.

Dr Alexander Jefferson - a colleague. Dr Jefferson is a capable surgeon, but he often takes unnecessary risks during surgery as a way of showing off.

Miss Tiffany Street - Nurse Tiffany is highly efficient and her good work saves you time which you can devote to saving lives.

Dr Ryan Tyler - a young doctor. Dr Tyler does not have your level of experience and knowledge, but he is a brilliant trauma surgeon.

Player Character

Mr Eugene Jefferson

You are the accountant at Memorial Hospital. You like order, discipline and a balanced budget at the end of the quarter. Your job would certainly be a lot easier if there weren't so many sick people lying around the place using up expensive resources.

You have two children, Jessica and Alexander. Both now work at Memorial Hospital - Jessica as an ambulance driver and Alexander as a doctor.

Goal: To get the Jessica married off.

Dark secret: You desperately wanted to remarry so you used an Internet agency to arrange a marriage to a Molvanian woman called Greta Gabronski. However, in order to find the \$50,000 agency fee it was necessary to embezzle funds from the hospital. The agency have sent you a completed marriage certificate, but so far you have seen no sign of your wife.

Other Staff

Dr Dianne Devries - one of the doctors, and a real Prima Donna. Dr Devries always wants to squander money on lost cause patients. Her salary is also pretty high, so you could cut a lot of costs if you could find a reason to fire her.

Miss Jessica Jefferson - your daughter. Jessica works as an ambulance driver at the hospital. She is a tomboy and quite reckless. The sooner you can marry her off the sooner she's someone else's problem.

Dr Alexander Jefferson - your son. Alexander has worked hard and is a successful doctor. You're very proud of him.

Miss Tiffany Street - a nurse. Miss Street is quite charming. You've tried to encourage Jessica to spend more time with Miss Street in the hope that she'll learn some more lady-like behaviour.

Dr Ryan Tyler - a doctor. Dr Tyler is the youngest doctor in the hospital. He's a bit rough around the edges but he has the lowest salary and works the longest hours of the doctors, so that makes him tolerable in your books.

Player Character

Miss Jessica Jefferson

You've always been a thrill-seeker. You love your job as an ambulance driver at Memorial Hospital as you get to drive fast and run red lights. On the down side both your father and your brother work at Memorial Hospital (as an accountant and surgeon respectively).

Goal: To win your fathers affection.

Dark secret: You've never actually passed your driving test for a car, let alone an ambulance. You acquired your licenses by bribing the examiners.

Other Staff

Dr Dianne Devries - Dr Devries is always harassing you about your driving - she says many of the patients acquire more injuries on the ambulance trip then they had to start with.

Mr Eugene Jefferson - Your father has always been somewhat distant towards you and instead doted upon your brother. Yet for some reason you seem compelled to continue seeking his approval.

Dr Alexander Jefferson - Alexander has always been an arrogant, smug bully. When you were in High School he used to try and seduce all of your girlfriends (and he succeeded most of the time).

Miss Tiffany Street - is a nurse at Memorial Hospital. Her main occupation seems to be flirting with all the male staff (and some of the patients). Still, she's someone to talk to when everyone else is busy.

Dr Ryan Tyler - is a doctor at Memorial Hospital. Dr Tyler has returned home after a stint working as a field surgeon during the Molvanian revolution. He must have had many exciting adventures. On top of that he's drop-dead gorgeous.

Player Character

Dr Alexander Jefferson

You are a rising star among the doctors at Memorial Hospital. You also have a reputation for ambition, arrogance and womanising. Your father and sister also work at the hospital as an accountant and ambulance driver respectively.

Goal: To be recognised as the best doctor at Memorial Hospital

Dark secret: You like reading romance novels. You dare not actually be caught purchasing one so you have to steal them off female patients. You have even started writing your own romance novel which you keep in a locked drawer of your desk.

Other Staff

Dr Dianne Devries - a doctor. Dianne has previously ignored your romantic advances. You'd dearly love to see her professionally ruined as she obviously thinks she's too good for you.

Mr Eugene Jefferson - Your father, also the accountant at Memorial Hospital. You're the apple of your father's eye and you're not above taking advantage of this.

Miss Jessica Jefferson - your sister. Jessica works as an ambulance driver at Memorial Hospital. You enjoy teasing her and making sure she remembers who Dad's favourite is. She's also pretty hot. If only she wasn't your sister...

Miss Tiffany Street - is a nurse at Memorial Hospital. Naturally she finds you attractive and you could probably have her any time you wanted.

Dr Ryan Tyler - is a doctor at Memorial Hospital. As a more experienced surgeon you make sure that you take every opportunity to demonstrate your superior knowledge and abilities to Dr Tyler.

Player Character

Miss Tiffany Street

To the outside world you appear to be a friendly (some might even say flirtatious) nurse at Memorial Hospital. However, you have a Dark Secret that few would suspect.

Goal: To capture Dr Dianne Devries for the Molvanian Counter-Revolutionary army (see Dark Secret below).

Dark secret: Your real name is Greta Gabronski and you are a secret agent for the Molvanian Counter-Revolution (Codename: Cleopatra). You have been sent to New Zealand to capture the brilliant Dr Devries to work on the counter-revolutions biological weapons program. You managed to immigrate to New Zealand by convincing some fool to marry you over the Internet. Fortunately you never actually had to meet your husband and you have since acquired a false identity. Using your forged credentials you have got a job as a nurse at the hospital where Dr Devries works.

Other Staff

Dr Dianne Devries - is a world-renowned surgeon. Therefore the Molvanian counter-revolution has decided to kidnap her so that she can develop a biological weapons programme and help restore the Glorious Dictator.

Mr Eugene Jefferson - is the accountant at Memorial Hospital. He is an old fool who can be easily manipulated by a pretty smile.

Miss Jessica Jefferson - is an ambulance driver at Memorial Hospital. She seems very capable which makes you wonder whether she is a secret agent for another organisation.

Dr Alexander Jefferson - is a doctor at Memorial Hospital. Sometimes you feel that you could lose yourself in his soulful dark eyes. However, you must be strong and ensure that your mission is accomplished.

Dr Ryan Tyler - the youngest of the surgeons. He has mentioned that he spent some time in Molvania helping the revolutionaries who overthrew the Glorious Dictator. Such a traitor deserves to be punished - but you must not jeopardise your primary objective.

Player Character

Dr Ryan Tyler

You are the youngest surgeon at Memorial Hospital. You are an idealist who believes in helping anyone in need, especially if their cause is just. This idealism led you to spend your first year after graduation in Molvania acting as a field surgeon during the Great Revolution where the common people overthrew the evil, fascist dictator.

Goal: You think that Memorial Hospital is too concerned with profits rather than with healing the sick. You want to make sure that the poor and the needy also receive the care they need.

Dark secret: While you were in Molvania the revolutionaries captured Andre Androvich - the Dictator's head torturer. You were so angry when you heard the tales of the atrocities committed by Androvich that you secretly injected him with an undetectable poison and he died instantly. However, now you wonder whether you did the right thing and you have spent many nights in agonising soul searching.

Other Staff

Dr Dianne Devries - is a surgeon at Memorial Hospital. While there is no doubt of her brilliance as a doctor, she only tends to think in terms of technical problems and does not consider the wider social implications.

Mr Eugene Jefferson - is a bean-counter and part of the problem at Memorial Hospital.

Miss Jessica Jefferson - is the ambulance driver at Memorial Hospital. She has a great sense of adventure and you feel like you can treat her like one of the lads.

Dr Alexander Jefferson - is a surgeon at Memorial Hospital. Alexander is primarily interested in maintaining his own status and cares little for the welfare of the patients.

Miss Tiffany Street - is the most beautiful and charming woman you know. You have taken it upon yourself to educate her about the problems of the world. You frequently refer to your experiences in Molvania as example of how common people can resist oppression.