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From Phundahl at their western extremity, east to Toonol, the Great Toonolian Marshes stretch across the dying planet for eighteen hundred earth miles like some unclean, venomous, Gargantuan reptile – an oozy marshland through which wind narrow watercourses connecting occasional bodies of open water, little lakes, the largest of which covers but a few acres. This monotony of marsh and jungle and water is occasionally broken by rocky islands, themselves usually clothed in jungle verdure, the skeletal remains of an ancient mountain range.

Little is known of the Great Toonolian Marshes in other portions of Barsoom, for this inhospitable region is peopled by fierce beasts and terrifying reptiles; by remnants of savage aboriginal tribes long isolated, and is guarded at either extremity by the unfriendly kingdoms of Phundahl and Toonol which discourage intercourse with other nations and are constantly warring upon one another.

Upon an island near Toonol, Ras Thavas, The Master Mind of Mars, had labored in his laboratory for nearly a thousand years until Vobis Kan, Jeddak of Toonol, turned against him and drove him from his island home and later repulsed a force of Phundahlian warriors led by Gor Hajus, the Assassin of Toonol, which had sought to recapture the island and restore Ras Thavas to his laboratory upon his promise to devote his skill and learning to the amelioration of human suffering rather than to prostitute them to the foul purposes of greed and sin.

Following the defeat of his little army, Ras Thavas had disappeared and been all but forgotten as are the dead, among which he was numbered by those who had known him; but there were some who could never forget him. There was Valla Dia, Princess of Duhor, whose brain he had transferred to the head of the hideous old Xaxa, Jeddara of Phundahl, that Xaxa might acquire the young and beautiful body of Valla Dia. There was Vad Varo, her husband, one time assistant to Ras Thavas, who had restored her brain to her own body – Vad Varo, who had been born Ulysses Paxton in the United States of America and presumably died in a shell hole in France; and there was John Carter, Prince of Helium, Warlord of Mars, whose imagination had been intrigued by the tales Vad Varo had told him of the marvelous skill of a world's greatest scientist and surgeon.

John Carter had not forgotten Ras Thavas, and when an emergency arose in which the skill of this greatest of surgeons was the sole remaining hope, he determined to seek him out and find him if he still lived. Dejah Thoris, his princess, had suffered an appalling injury in a collision between two swift airships; and had lain unconscious for many weeks, her back broken and twisted, until the greatest surgeons of all Helium had at last given up all hope. Their skill had been only sufficient to keep her alive; it could not mend her.

But how to find Ras Thavas?

—*Synthetic Men of Mars*



# THE LAST ERA

*"But my memories of that great tragedy are not all sad. There was high adventure, there was noble fighting; and in the end there was—but perhaps you would like to hear about it."*

– John Carter, *Swords of Mars*

The Jeddak of Jeddaks era is the longest of the time periods covered in the *John Carter of Mars*, both in terms of the years covered, and definitely in terms of the number of books written by Edgar Rice Burroughs that fall within the era. The period begins at the end of *Warlord of Mars*, when an alliance of red men, green Martians, and First Born declared John Carter the Warlord of all Barsoom, and continues throughout the remaining novels. These books contain not only additional adventures for Carter himself, but also stories of his children and grandchildren, and a number of new characters, both from Barsoom and Earth! As the default “modern day” of the *John Carter of Mars*, it is a period of new heroes and exotic threats from far-flung corners of the Red Planet—a time of great adventure and change, perfect as the setting for your own campaign.

## THEMES IN THIS BOOK

By the time of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, John Carter has established a home for himself in Helium, and is one of the most famous and respected warriors on all of Barsoom. Unlike the earlier eras, the Jeddak of Jeddaks time period is not about finding a home or establishing peace and security. Instead, there is a theme of defending Martian society from threats to the peace that Helium and its allies have already established. These threats may be from criminals and internal villains like the Assassins' Guild, madmen like Phor Tak or Hin Abtol, or even otherworldly invaders like the Morgors.

The stability of red Martian civilization makes

it a secure base for the second theme of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era—exploration and discovery. During this period, remote and deserted regions of Mars are explored, lost cities discovered, and ancient secrets unearthed. Adventurers find themselves in Bantoom, home of the unnerving Kaldanes, explore the Toonolian Marshes, and journey to the Martian moon Thuria.

This is also a time of technological advancement and scientific discovery, when new inventions flourish on Barsoom. In the prior eras, Martian technology had not significantly advanced in hundreds of years. However, as if reminded of their own ingenuity by the changes wrought by John Carter and his son, Carthoris, red Martians swiftly developed wonders like invisible ships, thinking machines, and synthetic men.

These changes go along with the third theme of this era—the arrival of new heroes, inspired by those who came before them. Carter and Dejah Thoris' children and grandchildren come into their own during this era, as do the children of their friends and allies, such as Djor Kantos. Other heroes, such as Vor Daj and Ulysses Paxton, are not directly connected to John Carter or the previous generation, but are familiar with the stories of the Warlord and attempt to follow in his footsteps.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

This book contains information for narrators wishing to run games set during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. The whole book is a resource on the Mars of

the later novels. It includes descriptions of the key events of the time, backgrounds and game statistics for important heroes and antagonists from the books, as well as descriptions of key locations from this period. While narrators setting their campaign in the Jeddak of Jeddaks period will find the entire book useful, Chapter 1, with its description of the events in the books from this era, and Chapter 5, with themes, advice, and plot ideas, are likely to be particularly useful.

There are plenty of resources for narrators setting games in other eras or their own alternate version of Mars as well. Due to the long life of Martians, important characters from the Jeddak of Jeddaks era can show up in campaigns set in earlier time periods, and advances in science and technology can happen at any time, particularly if you have players who are interested in creating their own inventions in the setting.

Players who want additional character options will find useful information in this book as well. The rules on inventions give scientist characters more options for creating wondrous new inventions, and there are playable rules for the new (or very old) races that appear during the Jeddak of Jeddak era, such as the Kaldanes. We've also included some additional talents for characters who, like Carthoris or Tara of Helium, are children of both Mars and Earth, or who have parents who belong to more than one of the races of Barsoom, allowing you to create characters from two worlds, either figuratively or literally.



## WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

### CHAPTER 1: TALES OF THE ERA

The first chapter gives an overview of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. It includes a discussion of the overall situation on Barsoom and the status quo for the major Martian civilizations that were introduced in the earlier eras of the books, as well as the current status of John Carter and his friends and enemies. The chapter talks about the main themes of discovery of hidden secrets and new technology, and provides information on the important events of the era. It discusses the state of Mars at the end of the series (including the cliff-hanger that ends the last novel) and contains advice on continuing your own story beyond Burroughs' own tales. A narrator's analysis of the later novels with an eye towards mining useful ideas from the books rounds out the chapter.

### CHAPTER 2: PEOPLES OF THE ERA

This chapter contains information on creating characters for the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. It has advice on using the themes and ideas from the Jeddak of Jeddaks era as a springboard for creating characters from this time period. It also includes new options for characters, particularly rules for many of the rare and unusual new races that appear in the later books, alongside new talents and rules for mixed-race characters.

### CHAPTER 3: CHAMPIONS OF THE ERA

Backgrounds and game statistics for important characters from the novels that appear during this era, and updates to characters to reflect this era. Depending on the campaign, these characters can be allies, enemies, rivals, or even potential alternate player characters. There are some examples of characters in very unusual circumstances, such as Hovan Du and Vor Daj, who have both had their brains transplanted into other bodies. These can give narrators ideas for what might happen if something similar occurs in their campaign.

### CHAPTER 4: MYSTERIES OF BARSOOM

This chapter focuses on the new technology found or invented during this era, as well as new powers for both player and narrator characters.

### CHAPTER 5: NARRATING THE ERA

Advice on running a game set in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. This includes how to deal with the themes and tone of the era, as well as ideas for continuing stories past the end of the novels. Adventure seeds you can use in your campaign, and random tables of events that can spark ideas for your own plots, finish out the chapter.

### CHAPTER 6: MAD SCIENCE AND INVENTIONS

Contains information on the current state of Barsoomian science and rules for inventing new technology. It also includes information on using renown to gain accolades related to inventions and scientific discoveries.

## WHAT THIS BOOK IS AND IS NOT

This book is one of three books, each focusing on one of the eras of play discussed in *John Carter of Mars*. This book focuses on the Jeddak of Jeddak eras and is not intended to cover every theme explored in the Barsoom stories, nor to support every character concept or option available in the game. Instead, we'll focus on the specific themes, cultures, races, and concepts that fit this time period and are described here in the introduction.

While earlier eras focus on different themes, you may still find many of the ideas in this book to be useful for campaigns set before John Carter becomes Warlord of Mars. Similarly, some of the ideas in the Dotar Sojat Era and the Prince of Helium Era Supplemental Rulebooks may be useful to a campaign set during the Jeddak of Jeddaks period. However, the books are all independent of each other, and you can use any one of them without the others.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO USE THIS BOOK

So what do you need to have to use this book? You need a copy of the *John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom* core rulebook, which contains all of the basic rules to the game, such as character creation and conflicts, as well as the majority of information on the setting. Other than that, you do not need any other supplements or books from the *John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom* range to use this book.

## ALSO IN THIS BOOK

In the later books of the series, John Carter's adventures take him off the surface of Barsoom — first to the nearby moon of Thuria in *Swords of Mars*, and then, more tellingly, to the planet Jupiter in the novella *The Skeleton Men of Jupiter*.

This last story sets up the Morgors, or Skeleton Men, as a dire threat to Barsoom, intent on scouting Mars for an invasion. Famously, this story ends with John Carter having escaped from his Morgor captors, but does not reunite him with Dejah Thoris, nor does it return him to Mars or halt the Morgor plans.

This book has a discussion of this story, and rules for creating Morgor and Sava-tor characters from Jupiter. You can use this information as a springboard for your own campaign, taking adventures beyond the surface of Barsoom out into the solar system





# TALES OF THE ERA

*'O Tario, most glorious Jeddak,' replied Jav, 'these be strangers who came with the hordes of Torquas to our gates, saying that they were prisoners of the green men. They tell strange tales of cities far beyond Lothar.'*

*- Jav, Thuvia, Maid of Mars*

The Jeddak of Jeddaks era is devoted to a period twenty years after John Carter's arrival on Mars, when he ascends to the influential position of Jeddak of Jeddaks, or Warlord of Barsoom. Following his marriage to Dejah Thoris, Carter was titled Prince of Helium and given rank within the nation's military forces. Being named Warlord, however, bestowed on him command over an exceptionally large, allied military. This alliance is centered on the nation of Helium, including the cities of Lesser Helium and Zodanga — the latter of which has remained a protectorate of Helium since the events of the first novel. Kulan Tith, Jeddak of Kaol, and Thuvan Dihl, Jeddak of Ptarth, have also pledged the support of their nation's armies and navies. In addition to the armed forces of the great red Martian cities, the alliance includes other races of the Red Planet. Tars Tarkas, Jeddak of the Tharks, has also pledged support to his longtime friend, bringing with him the ferocious thopter-riding hordes of Thark. The former pirate Xodar, now ruling as Jeddak of the First Born nation of Omean far to the south, and Talu, Jeddak of the Okarian city of Kadabra, have also joined with the Earthborn hero. This combined force gives the Jeddak of Jeddaks command of a truly massive and diverse army — drawn from every corner of dying Mars, and supported by the largest and most powerful fleet of Barsoomian airships ever assembled.

During this time, John Carter and Dejah Thoris have been blessed with two children, cut

from the same cloth as their mother and father. Carthoris, their eldest, has inherited his father's earthly strength and agility. While John Carter remained trapped on Earth, Dejah Thoris and Carter's close friends raised the boy to be a perfect example of red Martian nobility. Carthoris has become an accomplished swordsman and well known for his honesty, bravery, and boldness. While it may take five years for an egg to incubate and hatch, after that time the newborn Martian grows and matures much faster than a human of Earth and reaches maturity in another five short years. It should be remembered that Martian years are slightly less than twice the length of an Earth year, making the time between the laying of an egg to maturity about 19 Earth years.

The couple's daughter, Tara, is the image of her mother just as Carthoris is the image of his father. Beautiful beyond measure, the girl is the envy of the Helium royal court and yet she is willful, demanding, and determined to mold the world to her own view. While not quite a grown woman, Tara is already capable of ensuring her own safety and possesses nearly endless emotional reserves. Unlike her mother, however, Tara has a predilection for allowing her temper or frustration to get the better of her good judgement and speaking before thinking. While lacking the warrior training that her brother received, Tara does have at least a portion of her brother and father's Earthborn strength and agil-

ity. These abilities, combined with her keen intellect, beauty, and charm, mean danger to anyone who would threaten her.

In the years following the formation of the alliance under the Warlord, an uneasy peace set in. Border skirmishes with neighboring cities and raids by the fearsome green Martian nomads remained a fixture of life on Mars, but they became much less frequent and intense. It was a prosperous time, when young men and young women began to cast glances at each other, while their parents began the tedious task of negotiating proper marriages. One such woman was the lovely Thuvia of Ptarth. Having crossed Barsoom from north to south pole, Thuvia retired to her father's palace, and during the next several years forged a friendship with young Carthoris, Prince of Helium.

## THUVIA, MAID OF MARS

While Thuvia is said to be one of the world's great beauties, having her hand in marriage would be a great political triumph. Three potential suitors gather in Ptarth: Prince Carthoris of Helium, Prince Astok of Dusat, and Kulan Tith the Jeddak of Kaol. At the behest of her father, Thuvan Dihl, Thuvia decides to marry the Jeddak of Kaol and the two younger suitors are distraught by the news. After being bested and humiliated by Carthoris, who returns to Helium, Astok plots to possess Thuvia and to undermine the new military alliance forged



by John Carter. Thuvia is kidnapped and evidence is left to implicate the Prince of Helium. Pledging to clear his name, Carthoris attempts to return to Ptarth using a new airship control system of his own design. Unfortunately, Astok has planned for this and sabotages Carthoris' airship.

While awaiting Carthoris' arrival, Thuvia's captors are attacked by a warrior from the green Martian horde of Torquas, and the princess of Ptarth is stolen away. Carthoris, having made some minor repairs to his ship, gives chase, but is eventually forced to follow on foot to the far side of the Torquas Mountains, a region that previously remained unexplored. The two are reunited during a battle between the Torquas and the pale-skinned peoples of Lothar, an ancient and previously unknown city. The entire populace, small as it is, possesses the ability to create illusions so real they affect the world around them, including other people. These abilities are used to create defenders for their city, and some Lotharians are capable of sustaining themselves entirely on this power, without the need of food or drink. The absence of women in Lothar makes Thuvia the subject of great interest. During their escape from the city, Carthoris and Thuvia both fall victim to mental manipulation and are separated from each other without realizing the other is gone.

Discovering that Thuvia has been recaptured by the agents of Dusat after she crossed the mountains, Carthoris and Kar Komak — who was created by Lotharian mental power but is as real as any other Martian — disguise themselves as panthan mercenaries and gain employment in the Dusat military. Dusat has convinced the cities of Ptarth and Kaol to wage war on Helium in retribution for Thuvia's kidnapping. The only way to save these cities from a bloody war is to return Thuvia and make the truth known. The two warriors eventually make their way to Thuvia's prison and escape using a stolen airship. While speeding their way back to Ptarth, they happen upon a crashed Kaol airship under attack from green Martians. As they work to

save the crew, they discover it is commanded by Kulan Tith himself. Seeing the love and devotion shared between Carthoris and Thuvia, Kulan Tith releases Thuvia from her obligation to him so she may follow her heart. The war is averted and the alliance between Helium, Ptarth, and Kaol emerges stronger than before.

## CHESSMEN OF MARS

Several years after the treachery of Dusat, the Warlord hosts a state banquet in his palace and introduces his daughter Tara to Gahan, the jeddak of the fabulously wealthy city of Gathol. Gahan is so taken with Tara's beauty that he falls hopelessly in love with her, a common occurrence on Barsoom. When he openly confesses his feelings for her, an insult in red Martian culture as he has yet to prove himself worthy of her, she storms off. The next day, Helium is devastated by an enormous storm, and in the chaos it is discovered that Tara is missing. Gahan deduces that Tara had taken flight in her personal flier, and the Jeddak commands his personal airship to brave the storm in an attempt to search for and rescue her. Their ships are no match for the fury of the storm and eventually both Gahan and Tara are lost and believed dead.

The Princess of Helium survives the storm and is carried far from home. She eventually discovers a cultivated valley and decides to land and moor her damaged ship. Evading hungry banths, Tara is captured by the people farming this land. Initially she believes them to be like herself, save for their disturbing, oversized heads. To her horror, she learns that her captors' powerfully-built bodies, called Rykors, lack a head or brain and are incapable of thought, while the heads are propelled by small spiderlike legs when not connected to the bodies, and call themselves the Kaldane. These creatures live in a massive underground tunnel complex and seek an existence of pure logic and mental contemplation. The farm provides food for the Rykors, and the Kaldane eat the flesh of their mounts.

Tara's captor, Ghek, brings her to his king,

Luud — the progenitor of all the Kaldanes in this colony. Luud desires to eat Tara but feels she is too skinny, and commands Ghek to fatten her up. Tara soon realizes that Ghek is not totally devoid of emotion and begins to emotionally manipulate him to try to seek escape. She is able to convince Ghek to move her out of the tunnels and into the buildings serving the farms, and she makes an unsuccessful escape attempt. This results in both of them being sentenced to death. Their executions are interrupted by Gahan. After discovering Tara's flier and braving the caves to rescue her, the Jeddak of Gathol is reunited with the woman he loves. Remembering Tara's declaration of hatred for him, Gahan assumes the identity of a lowly panthan named Turan in hopes that the Heliumite princess will not recognize him. Tara, Gahan — as Turan — and Ghek face Luud, who rides a massive Rykor and uses his hypnotic gaze to unsuccessfully defend himself. The trio then boards Tara's flier and the damaged craft limps away.

They then come across the red Martian city of Manator and seek refuge inside, only to be captured and enslaved. The Jeddak of Manator, O-Tar, decides to make Tara his jeddara, and when she refuses he confines her in a tower, to be the prize for the winner of a gladiatorial version of Jetan, Martian chess. Gahan uses his mastery of the sword and his wits to continuously elude capture, seeking to free and escape with Tara. After discovering that many of the city's slaves are from his own people, Gahan enters the games under an assumed name and defeats his opponent. He then begins a slave uprising in the city, which is supported by O-Tar's rivals and John Carter himself. Having been humiliated at every turn, the Jeddak of Manator is forced to commit suicide to regain his place among the honored dead. Gahan's true identity is revealed to Tara and they are married. O-Tar's widely beloved, and previously enslaved, son A-Kor succeeds him as Jeddak and joins John Carter's alliance of nations, as does Gathol.



## OF MANATOR AND GATHOL

While not directly stated, it can be assumed that after the events of *The Chessmen of Mars*, the city of Manator — as well as its sister cities in the region — have joined the larger global community created by John Carter's efforts.

Prior to Gahan's arrival in Manator, the Gatholians had been plagued by years of unexplained disappearances, and were unaware that their citizens were being captured and sold into slavery by the Manatorians. This slave trade had been a major economic industry for the government and people of Manator for generations, but following A-Kor's ascension to the throne, slavery in the region is outlawed. Even if A-Kor had not abolished the practice, however, it stands to reason that having uncovered the source of these disappearances, the Gatholians would retaliate if it were to continue.

Further, there is no evidence that the

Manatorians were capable of, or even aware of, the higher levels of technology used by the red Martians — as there are no fliers seen in the city and no landing or docking areas. The same could be assumed of long-range communication and navigation.

These changes are likely to have significant social and cultural impacts on the people of Manator and its neighboring cities, as well as working to define A-Kor's reign as jeddak. The denouncement of slaving and the loss of the slave trade will likely result in resentment among the population. With any luck, the introduction of trade via airship will provide sufficient economic opportunities within Manator to make up the difference. If not, civil and political unrest could threaten A-Kor's time as ruler. After all, they did just overthrow one jeddak... what's to stop them from doing it again?

## THE MASTER MIND OF MARS

Almost fifteen years after John Carter's arrival on Mars, another human finds himself flung to the strange world. Ulysses Paxton assumes the role as the main protagonist for *The Master Mind of Mars*, and is brought to the Red Planet after being mortally wounded during World War I, using the description of how John Carter projected himself to Mars as a guide. Paxton finds himself in a strange compound and is almost immediately involved in physical combat to save someone's life. He discovers that the man he saved, a red Martian, is a renowned physician who has developed an unbelievable technique to transplant the brain of one person into the body of another — effectively discovering a form of immortality. Paxton is given the name Vad Varo by the physician and chosen to be his protector and student. The physician, Ras Thavas, has become exceedingly wealthy and powerful because of this invention, but has also gained many enemies.





One of Vad Varo's first tasks is to tend to several "patients." Thavas performs his operation to give the rich and powerful new, attractive bodies taken from — often — unwilling slaves. One of the victims is a woman named Valla Dia, the daughter of the Jeddak of Duhor. Varo falls in love with the woman despite her condition and swears to see her restored to her body. Unfortunately, her body has been given to the Jeddara of nearby Phundahl, Xaxa.

To achieve his goal, Varo realizes, he must continue to work for Thavas and learn his secrets. The physician is also in need of a new body, as he has lived for over a thousand years, but trusts no one except Varo — who he deems a neutral party since he is a stranger to Barsoom. Initially, Varo secrets food to Dia, but eventually Thavas becomes suspicious and begins spying on the Earthman, and Varo is forced to place her in suspended animation.

After spending many months under Thavas' instruction, Varo is tasked with transferring the physician's mind into a new body. At a critical point in the process, Varo demands that Thavas assist him in restoring Valla to her body or he will leave the operation incomplete. Having little choice, Thavas agrees. Realizing that he has made an enemy of the physician, Varo plots to escape and bring Valla's body back. He enlists the help of several individuals: Dar Tarus, the man he fought when he first arrived, Gor Hajus, the famed expert assassin of Toonol, and Hovan Du, the victim of one of Thavas' experiments — who had half of his mind placed in the body of a great white ape. The four escape by flier to Toonol and then by equilibriumators (single-person flying machines, similar to a jetpack) to the palace of Mu Tel, a friend of Gor Hajus and the nephew of Vobis Kan, the Jeddak of Toonol. After a battle in the air with a patrol boat from Toonol, they make for the city of Phundahl.

Dar Tarus, having lived in Phundahl, leads the group. First he stops to pray and give offerings within the temple of Tur, the god worshiped by the people of Phundahl. Then they go to Xaxa's palace and are captured — Xaxa had been warned by Thavas. The group successfully fights its way through the guards, thanks largely to Hovan Du in his ape body. They take shelter in a statue of Tur after capturing Sag Or, the man in

Dar Tarus' original body. When Xaxa returns, Varo speaks through the statues and sends away Xaxa's allies, who believe they are hearing the voice of their god. Varo and company capture Xaxa and escape back toward Thavas' island compound.

To gain entrance there, Hovan Du enlists the aid of the roving bands of white apes that live in the marshes around the island. These apes are seen to be social creatures with a level of development and intelligence not previously noted on Barsoom. Inside Thavas' compound, Dar Tarus and Valla Dia are returned to their bodies. Fighting off warriors from Toonol, they return Xaxa to Phundahl. Using the statue of Tur once more, Varo decrees to the people of Phundahl that Dar Tarus and Valla Dia are to have their own bodies back, allowing his comrades to safely stop pretending to be Sag Or and Xaxa, and that it is Tur's will that Dar Tarus be made jeddak.

Thavas agrees to turn his intellect to the betterment of society in exchange for their help in removing the Toonol army that has overrun his island. Finally, John Carter arrives to negotiate peace between Helium and Phundahl. During these negotiations, John Carter and Ulysses Paxton meet and Dar Tarus is reunited with the woman he loves, Kara Vasa, who had traveled with Carter from Helium. Vad Varo and Valla Dia return to Duhor and are married, making him a jed.

This adventure provides several interesting developments for Barsoom. The arrival of Ulysses Paxton makes it clear that John Carter is not unique and it is therefore possible other people of Earth can travel to the Red Planet. The effect of Thavas' techniques of medicine — advanced by even our modern standards — cannot be overstated. The switching of bodies, restoration of dying tissue, organ transplants, and suspension of life could effectively prevent the death of an individual indefinitely (as we will see later). The intelligence and social interactions of the white apes also suggests that they are not the mindless monsters previously encountered throughout Barsoom and opens the possibility of establishing some form of peace, as was done with the green Martians of Thark. This also marks the second instance where the great John Carter enters the story follow-

ing its climax, as if intended to remind the reader that he is still active on Barsoom. Though Phundahl makes peace with Helium, it is not specifically stated whether they ally themselves with the Warlord.

## A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS

*A Fighting Man of Mars* continues with the precedent set by the previous books, and introduces a new protagonist, Tan Hadron. As a padwar in the forces of Helium, Hadron is clearly a competent individual and is under the eventual command of the great John Carter. While descending from the nobility of Gathol — the home of Gahan and Tara, the daughter of John Carter and Dejah Thoris — Tan Hadron is not a wealthy or influential man, but has fallen in love with the daughter of a high-ranking military commander, Tor Hatan. In keeping with the customs of Helium, Sanoma — the woman Hadron desires — rejects his declarations of love; her father has received a representative of the Jeddak of Jahar, Tul Axtar, for her hand. When Sanoma is abducted by an unknown and powerful enemy, Hadron is accused of the act by a senior officer, and is eventually exonerated by the testimony of a slave. Tor Hatan promises to marry his daughter to the man responsible for her safe return.

As this new enemy possesses weapons capable of destroying an airship in a single shot, the Warlord dispatches Helium's navy to help search and gives Hadron permission to investigate and attempt rescue. Hadron suspects Tul Axtar is responsible for the attack and begins his investigation by questioning the slave who testified using information obtained from the Temple of Knowledge (the Helium equivalent of an archive or library). When the slave confirms his suspicions, Hadron sends word to John Carter and sets out in pursuit.

His travels bring him to the city of Torquas, where he meets Tavia, a former slave of Tul Axtar from the city of Tjanath. They recover her flier, painted a strange blue, and make for her home. When they arrive they are mistaken as Jaharians



and imprisoned. There Hadron meets the Jaharian Nur An and learns that Tul Axtar has amassed an army of millions and a fleet with these new weapons so he can conquer all of Barsoom. After escaping certain death, they eventually come to an ancient city, inhabited by the scientist Phor Tak. He arms them with his new weapons, and Hadron sets out to save both Tavia and Sanoma.

He is again captured in Tjanath, but escapes after making an invisibility cloak using a vial Phor provided. Tavia is rescued and they make for Jahar. Capturing Tul Axtar and freeing Sanoma, the group flees aboard their flier when they are betrayed. Tavia and Hadron are marooned in the barren land of U-Gor. After having to constantly fight off attacking cannibals, they stumble onto their ship and find the blue-painted Jahar navy battling against the navy of Helium. Using the weapons provided by Phor, Hadron quickly turns the tide of battle and Tul Axtar flees to Jahar.

Sent to Jahar to negotiate their surrender, Hadron tracks down Tul Axtar and Sanoma, but Axtar flees once again, taking Tavia and their invisible ship. Sanoma, taken with Hadron's bravery, declares her love — but Hadron realizes he has fallen in love with Tavia. Their search brings them back to Phor Tak, who is killed, and Tul Axtar escapes once again. Hadron boards the flier, kills Tul Axtar and releases Tavia, and destroys all of the scientist's weapons.

These events represent the first time since its formation that John Carter's alliance of nations faces an enemy that possesses the power to destroy it. The development of such advanced weaponry and the amassment of such a large army is representative of both the experiences of World War I and the horrors yet to be experienced in World War II. Strangely, Burroughs accurately describes the physical form of early rockets developed by Nazi Germany, nearly fifteen years before their invention. The fate of the captured Jahar airships is not directly given at the end of the adventure, so it remains to be seen if and how these weapons could ultimately impact the balance of power of Barsoom.

## MORALITY OF BARSOOM

While the people of Mars know nothing of theft and hold honor and honesty as a virtue, kidnapping, espionage and assassination are not only common but an accepted part of life. It has become so ingrained in Barsoomian society that the homes of wealthy and powerful individuals are built upon pillars that raise the domicile into the air at night, to prevent unwanted guests from entering.

As has been seen previously, prolific assassins are often considered local heroes and gain as much fame and respect as honorable warriors and virtuous swordsmen. This represents an interesting duality within the Barsoomian culture, and one that could form the foundation of an entire campaign for player characters.

## SWORDS OF MARS

John Carter returns as the main protagonist in *The Swords of Mars*. The Warlord has traveled to the Helium protectorate of Zodanga to infiltrate and put an end to the assassins' guild based there. He assumes the identity of Vandor, a panthan mercenary, and insinuates himself into the service of noted inventor Fal Sivas — who has been targeted by the assassin leader Ur Jan on behalf of a rival scientist, Gar Nal.

Through his investigations Carter learns that, while Fal Sivas is an intelligent and learned man, he prefers to steal the inventions of others, kill their creator, and claim them as his own. This vile man is currently working on two interesting devices: a "mechanical brain" — which seems to be the Barsoomian equivalent of an artificially intelligent computer system — and an interplanetary spaceship. Fal Sivas has been perfecting the mechanical brain by connecting it to the brains of slaves, a process that destroys their minds. Carter's investigations identify a majority of the ranking assassins in the guild, and over the next several nights he confronts and kills

several of them. During this time, both Carter and Fal Sivas continue work on the spaceship and, to his surprise, John Carter discovers that he is able to mentally control the vessel, just as Fal Sivas does.

While work on the ship continues, Carter explores Fal Sivas' workshop and encounters mindless servants performing menial tasks, likely victims of experiments involving the mechanical brain. The inventor's plan is to use the ship to travel to Mars' moon, Thuria, and plunder the great riches there to build an unstoppable mechanical army controlled by his thoughts. Despite his efforts to conceal his identity, the assassins discover that the Warlord is in Zodanga and plot to kidnap Dejah Thoris as leverage. When he discovers this plan, John Carter races back to Helium in warning but arrives too late. He is joined by Jat Or, a padwar in Helium's forces. Searching for his wife, Carter makes his way to Gar Nal's hangar only to discover that the spaceship that was being built there was responsible for Dejah Thoris' abduction and has fled to Thuria.

John Carter leads a small team to Thuria to rescue the Princess of Helium. There they encounter a castle inhabited by a race of people called Tarids, with the ability to become psychically invisible, along with a species of intelligent cat-like creatures, the Masenas. After several failed rescue attempts which result in capture and escape, the group returns to Mars along with a Tarid woman who had been held captive. The Tarid woman, Ozara, is returned to her father, the Jeddak of Domnia; Carter and Dejah Thoris are reunited; Gar Nal is slain; and Ur Jan swears allegiance to the Warlord, giving him control of the assassins' guild.

This adventure introduces a staple of science-fiction, space travel. While the story is restricted to Mars' smallest moon, there is nothing to indicate that the ships used could not travel farther out. It is also confirmed, though suspected for some time, that Thuria is inhabited. This story also brings the powerful assassins' guild under the control of John Carter, though his personality and history suggests that he is unlikely to use it against his foes and instead will simply regulate its activities.



## THE SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS

Sometime later, Dejah Thoris is severely injured when two airships collide, and her husband sets out to locate the famed physician Ras Thavas to treat her injuries. Carter's plan is to visit Ulysses Paxton, still using the identity of Vad Varo in the city of Duhor, but his navigational system malfunctions and the flier drifts off course. As he is now closer to Phundahl, Carter decides to go and speak with Dar Tarus, who has ruled as jeddak since the events of *The Master Mind of Mars*. As the city remains outside of the Warlord's alliance of nations, Carter and the Heliumetic warrior Vor Daj enter the city as panthans to avoid detection.

As they approach on foot, they are overtaken by deformed men riding strange beasts and after an altercation discover their attackers cannot be slain. Taken captive, they are brought into the Toonolian Marshes to the island of Morbus. On the island, they discover a city of creatures created by Ras Thavas' experiments that call themselves Hormads. From the other prisoners they learn that the Hormads have abducted Ras Thavas and are forcing him to produce thousands upon thousands of these creatures with the intent to conquer Barsoom. To avoid death, Carter and his allies agree to train the creatures to fight.

One of the captives present is Janai, a maid from the city of Amhor — and in Barsoomian fashion, Vor Daj has fallen in love with her. Vor Daj conceives of a plan to locate Janai and assist the Warlord. He convinces Ras Thavas to transfer his mind into the body of one of the Hormads and seeks service as a bodyguard to one of the seven Hormad jeds ruling the island of Morbus. His plan succeeds, and when the various jeds turn on each other in a bid for power, Vor Daj is instrumental in helping the Hormad he guards to become jeddak. After the ensuing chaos, John Carter and Ras Thavas disappear with Vor Daj's body, but they are eventually located using clues they left behind. Unfortunately, one of the vats used to create the Hormads has birthed a monstrous blob that continues to grow and threaten life on the island.

After escaping into the marshes, Vor Daj, Janai, and several others are captured by Jal Had and brought to Amhor, and Vor Daj is confined in the city's fabled zoo. The captives in the zoo escape when upheaval grips the royal palace, and they are able to free Janai and flee aboard a flyer. During the altercation, Jal Had is killed. Pursued by the Amhor navy, they are saved when they happen upon a Heliumetic fleet led by the Warlord. The fleet destroys the growing mass, which now covers the entire island, and Vor Daj is restored to his body.

## LLANA OF GATHOL

The next adventure, *Llana of Gathol*, sees John Carter traveling Mars and happening upon a white-skinned Martian besieged by a horde of green Martians. Carter saves the man, but is captured and taken to the city of Horz. Cast into the pits, Carter kills an ancient man who has held thousands of people in a state of suspended animation through the use of his strange mental powers. As the victims of the ancient mentalist awaken, Carter discovers his granddaughter Llana — the child of Gahan and Tara. Llana explains that she was abducted from Gathol by a red Martian named Hin Abtol, who has styled himself as Jeddak of Jeddaks in the North and claims to have conquered the Okarian city of Kadabra. He aims to conquer all of Barsoom.

The Warlord and his allies from Horz set out to return Llana to her family and stop the would-be conqueror. They travel on foot toward Gathol, only to be captured by First Born pirates and taken to the city of Kamtol. Sold into slavery and threatened with death by a strange machine that can kill at any distance, Carter is forced to fight in gladiatorial games for the amusement of his captors. Using the arrival of emissaries from the First Born of the south pole as a distraction, Carter destroys the deadly machine and rescues his allies.

Arriving in Gathol, the Warlord and company are mistaken for First Born pirates, and find the city under siege by Hin Abtol's fleet. When Llana is captured and sent back to Panar, Hin Abtol's capital, Carter disguises himself as a red Martian and gains service in Hin

Abtol's forces. Seizing a flier, he disables a number of airships berthed on the ground and sets after his granddaughter. It is discovered that Hin Abtol has been capturing people for years and holding them in suspended animation, awaiting the time to invade. After entering Panar, Carter gains access to the royal palace and rescues Llana. While traveling to Helium to bring forces to relieve the besieged city of Gathol, Carter and company are captured by invisible men and taken to their city of Invak. Carter learns that the twin cities of Invak and Onvak have been engaged in an ineffective war, as both sides employ a pill that grants their warriors invisibility, but renders them unable to see their enemies or allies. Escaping to Helium, Carter leads the navy back to Gathol, captures Hin Abtol, and frees all of the frozen slaves.

Though Gathol is freed, the final fate of Hin Abtol is left open, as is the fate of the city. Given Abtol's cowardice and penchant for boasting, it is unlikely that the great city of Kadabra fell to the red Martian forces.

## THE SKELETON MEN OF JUPITER

In the final *John Carter* adventure, he and Dejah Thoris are captured by strange men that resemble human skeletons and transferred to distant Jupiter, known to the Barsoomians as Sasoom and to the Morgors (the native race) as Eurobus. A race obsessed with war, the Morgors plan to attack and conquer Barsoom, with great Helium their first target.

Arriving on Jupiter, Carter discovers that under the cloud cover, the inhabitable world is heated by many thousands of volcanoes and covered in thick jungles. When Carter refuses to provide military information to aid the Morgors, Dejah Thoris is brought to Jupiter as leverage against him. While freeing his wife, Carter is captured once again and in captivity, trains the blue skinned Savator slaves to fight with swords. When pitted against Morgor cadets, the group kills the skeletal men and escapes. The story ends with Carter arriving at the unconquered Savator city of Zanol in search of his beloved Dejah Thoris.



## CONTINUED ADVENTURES ON DYING BARSOOM

As the adventures of John Carter and Dejah Thoris come to a close, these two prominent figures have been stranded on the distant world of Sasoom (Jupiter) and the skeletal Morgors are on the verge of launching an invasion of the Red Planet. Helium remains one of the greatest cities on Mars and sits as the centerpiece to a vast alliance of nations brought together by the fabled Warlord. Still, there are numerous forces at work both within the alliance and beyond which could threaten the prosperity of the Red Planet.



Numerous red Martian nations have shown themselves to be opportunistic and expansionist. Unrest remains in the city of Amhor after the death of its jed Jal Had. Toonol remains under the control of the despised Vobis Kan. Pankor is leaderless after the disappearance of Hin Abtol. Dutar remains firmly under the control of the pragmatic Jeddak Nutus, having been implicated in the abduction of Thuvia, Princess of Ptarth. With the Warlord missing, these nations could once again rise to pose a dangerous threat to the people of Barsoom. Many in Zodanga still remember the embarrassment they suffered at the hand of John Carter and his allies, and plots to throw off Helium's control continue to fester within the city.

Dozens of other threats have also developed in the intervening years. While Xodar remained a friend and ally of the Warlord, many of his people have founded cities and colonies beyond their subterranean kingdom, and most bear no love for the red Martians. Descendants of the Orovars can still be found in isolated, forbidden cities scattered across the planet, and the people there possess strange and powerful mental abilities. The great white apes have proven to be far more intelligent than anyone realized, and rumors circulate of the beasts gathering in greater numbers.

Space travel has become a possibility with the development of new technologies, and artificial brains or thinking machines have begun to appear. New and deadly weapons have also been developed, capable of destroying entire fleets or hunting down targets on their own. This is the dangerous and wondrous world Barsoom has become since John Carter was named Jeddak of Jeddaks.

Narrators wishing to set their adventures during this period have a vast wealth of material to inspire them. There are more stories set during this period than the others combined, and each introduces new interesting races, technologies, and antagonists into the already violent and deadly world of Mars. This period spans nearly forty earth years (or roughly twenty Martian

years), and protagonists who were yet to be born at its beginning have now become renowned heroes and gained great fame or notoriety.

The first thing to decide when putting an adventure or campaign together during this period is to consider when it will take place. While initially it may seem logical to set it after John Carter and Dejah Thoris have vanished, narrators should keep in mind that throughout the Jeddak of Jeddaks Era, new protagonists appear at almost every new adventure and demonstrate how these new characters can interact with and become heroic figures in their own right. Gahan of Gathol, Vad Varo, Dar Tarus, Gor Hajus, Tan Hadron, Jat Or, Vor Daj, and Pan Dan Chee are all characters introduced during this period, and all become the heroes of their adventures. In many of the early tales the great protagonists of the series are entirely absent, and narrators should feel no obligation to introduce them during their campaigns.

When developing stories and adventures on Barsoom after the time of the novels, there are a few plot points that narrators wishing to craft a "Barsoomian" style game should pay special attention to and find ways of incorporating into their stories.

### HEROES FOR A HEROIC AGE

The exploits and adventures of a single man have brought unprecedented change to a world that has been locked in a repetitive existence for untold centuries. False divine figures have been cast down, empires destroyed, hated enemies turned to trusted allies — and yet, a new era of cooperation and friendship has emerged instead of bloody war and anarchy. Then at a time when he may be needed most, this legendary and beloved hero vanished. Strange and vicious enemies lurk beyond the cold vastness of space, casting their hungry and malice-filled gaze upon Barsoom. Who will unite the people of dying Mars against this new threat? Who will craft strange inventions and arcane sciences which may bring new prosperity or untold horrors to the Red





Planet? Secret societies and dangerous foes have emerged, and who will stop their deadly schemes? This is the time the Jeddak of Jeddaks Era is intended to explore.

When creating the heroes for this period, remember that the main protagonists of the Barsoomian stories are almost always paragons of their society. They are honorable, noble, dedicated, and faithful. They may be forced to lie or deceive but they never do so for personal gain. They fight and kill, but only when their opponent gives them no other choice, and many feel deep regret when forced to do so. If given the opportunity, they will spare foes who demonstrate their own nobility or honor, and often this results in the formation of friendships and alliances. These characters are also the pinnacle of their chosen profession, be it master duelists, expert fliers, peerless assassins, and so on. In rare circumstances these characters may be flawed, or coerced into acting against the greater good, but usually find redemption during the climax of the story. Characters with this concept should be given opportunity to renounce their previous transgressions and find redemption in the eyes of their fellows.

### VILLAINS ARE VILLAINOUS

The main antagonists of your stories are often the polar opposites of your heroes. These characters represent the worst of society and have risen to power through duplicity, threat or murder. They are most often driven by a desire for conquest and yet are often cowardly when faced alone. Occasionally they have gained or maintained power through the use of some strange or powerful device or ability that, once countered, leaves them vulnerable. These villains are often driven by a desire to be aligned with powerful individuals, usually through marriage, or they possess a place or object that puts them in a position of power. They are motivated by greed or lust instead of love or devotion.

### ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS DANGEROUS

As John Carter's adventures progress, he encounters increasingly more advanced forms of technology or science, usually used for some nefarious purpose. Narrators are encouraged to use these as a way to provide their antagonists with some form of edge over the player characters. Not only does this make enemies more dangerous, and therefore more rewarding to thwart, but it also makes them vulnerable to clever heroes who devise ways to steal, destroy, or neutralize this advantage. Narrators are also cautioned to prevent such items from remaining "in play" for too long as they can quickly unbalance a game. In the novels it is rare for these devices to remain in the story any longer than the arc they are introduced in.

### BARBARIC NOBILITY AND NOBLE BARBARISM

One of the things that appears in a large number of Burroughs' works, the Barsoom stories included, is the concept of the noble barbarian. Most of the societies of Mars would not meet a modern definition for cultural civility. These are groups of people that largely refrain from scientific discovery or exploration, engage in nearly constant war, and culturally accept if not openly approve of murder.

And yet, these are people who are prone to acts of selfless heroism, are usually honest to a fault, demand that everyone be treated with dignity and respect (including in most cases prisoners and slaves), and reward those who serve and protect the innocent. While these two sets of behaviors may often seem incompatible, this dichotomy is what helps to make Barsoom so interesting and understandable, while remaining alien and wondrous.

When introducing a new culture or city in your stories, try to keep these concepts in mind. As new groups and societies were introduced through the later novels, it was common for them to represent some facet of the already-established cultural norm taken to some new or extreme level. Doing the same will help to make your unique adaptation feel like it easily fits into what's already been presented on Barsoom.



## ANALYSIS OF THE ERA'S STORIES

As the adventures of John Carter, his family and friends will likely be the primary basis you will use when developing your campaigns and adventures set on the wondrous world of Barsoom, it's important to understand the events transpiring in the novels and how they relate to the game and its themes, moods, and mechanics. Here you will find useful information for how the framework of the *John Carter of Mars* game and its various rules could be applied to the events of the novels.



## THUVIA, MAID OF MARS

The first story set during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era is *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*. This story follows the adventures of Carthoris, son of John Carter and Dejah Thoris, and his love interest, Thuvia of Ptarth. This is also the first story that shifts the primary focus from John Carter, who now occupies a place of vast political influence. *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* further begins the showcasing of strange powers and abilities that are more in keeping with traditional ideas of science fiction, while continuing the established concepts of individual heroism, romanticism, and political intrigue.

*While much of the John Carter stories involve swinging swords and heroically saving the protagonist's love interest, there are often not-so-subtle political machinations at work in the background. While the most memorable antagonists are likely to be the ones with the coolest abilities in combat, the most effective enemies are the ones players don't see coming. Player characters, their allies, and their rivals are all capable of engaging in these sorts of activities.*

*Representing political intrigues can be challenging for any narrator. In **John Carter of Mars**, they are often best represented with an attribute challenge, perhaps using **Cunning + Passion** (see **John Carter of Mars** page 51 for details on attribute challenges). The difficulty should be appropriate to the overall guile and resiliency of those needing to be manipulated; political moves against basic minions are a (D1) test, while major antagonists who are politically savvy themselves will raise this to (D3) or (D4). The threshold should be based on how much the character (player or not) is attempting to accomplish. Minor changes or gains should be around threshold 5, and include gaining beneficial terms in political negotiations or being granted access to some small portion of a nation's resources, while sweeping political endeavors can be 15 or higher and represent grand schemes to overthrow established leadership or entice another country to enter a war with a group that may not represent a threat.*

*For this kind of political maneuver it's important that the characters play out the lead-up to what each test on the challenge represents. They cannot just declare that they want to try to take over as jed of a city; they must do the work in-game to reach that level, making tests as part of the challenge to overcome or outmaneuver those who might get in their way. Challenges used for political intrigues can last for an extended period of time, rather than needing to be completed in a single scene, and narrators are encouraged to use the success at cost rule. In this case, keeping a note of the Momentum earned for the challenge is important, as it may span several sessions before a group achieves their goal.*

## THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

Kidnapped by a spurned suitor, Thuvia is eventually captured by a vicious horde of green Martians and taken beyond the Torquas Mountains. Carthoris unwittingly stumbles across her abductors and gives chase. This leads the pair to the lost city of Lothar and its inhabitants, who possess incredible mental abilities. While minor forms of telepathy have been introduced previously, this is the first encounter with people capable of directly altering their environment using the power of their mind. This takes the form of mental suggestions so strong that they manifest living warriors whose weapons can kill. Further, the Lotharians are obsessed with the nature of physical existence. Their ability to create both animate and inanimate objects that are, effectively, just as real as anything else helps to support their belief that reality is nothing more than the sum of our perceptions.

*As a recurring plot point in the Barsoomian adventures, the "Damsel in Distress" can become an overused and repetitive hook. This is an especially effective method of getting the adventure going early on, when players are still figuring out their characters — or toward the end of the campaign when players have become invested in those characters and their relationships.*



While this hook is used heavily in the novels, narrators are strongly encouraged not to do so in their adventures. A good recommendation is to use it once out of every three to five adventure arcs, and try to avoid using the same character's romantic interest more than twice during a campaign. There are usually three to six players in a gaming group and each of their characters should have friends, family, and loved ones they care about that can be whisked away.

What's important about this hook is that something the hero cares about has been taken away or placed in danger. This kind of motivation can be extended to almost anything that the players or their characters are invested in, such as a home city, a family relic, a hard-earned reputation, and so on. By doing so, narrators can continue to utilize a very "Barsoomian" adventure hook without resorting to whisking away yet another female character.

## NASCENT MENTAL POWERS

While on the verge of extinction, the Lotharians have managed to survive and sustain themselves using their powers. What's more, their society is divided into two camps of belief. For centuries they have debated the true nature of existence, with one group able to sustain themselves entirely on the power of their mind, while the other continues to conjure food and drink. But as this food and drink is nothing more than a figment of their mind, the truth of the matter is that both groups are surviving on the power of their mental abilities, and the disagreement is effectively nothing more than semantics. To the Lotharians, however, this has become the sole focus of their society and all other pursuits have been abandoned.

The introduction of this kind of ability can have significant consequences when playing through adventures in Barsoom. Narrators are advised to use caution before introducing such awesome powers into their game. Given that the Lotharians are capable of creating objects (or people) that continue to exist without their direct concentration, this kind of ability could be used to overcome any kind of conflict or problem. Taking this to its logical conclusion, the Lotharians could — if they were so inclined

— use this power to provide an endless supply of air and water, returning Barsoom to a lush and vibrant world. It is only their obsessive devotion to the exploration of the fundamental nature of reality that keeps them from becoming the most powerful and influential force on the planet.

*Despite the best efforts to make abilities, items, and activities fairly well-balanced, there are always situations where something new provides a much greater advantage than was originally intended.*

*There are several effective ways of dealing with this, so long as the narrator remembers that the relationship between narrator and player should not be a confrontational one. As the narrator, your job is to work cooperatively with the players to craft a story that is engaging and enjoyable. And while this often results in tests and attacks made in opposition to the players, it's solely to provide the challenges that their characters heroically overcome.*

*The easiest way to handle a situation where a player character's abilities or equipment make an encounter trivial is to "up the ante." Players with particularly powerful abilities that tend to result in sudden victory should find themselves the target of increasingly meaner, more aggressive, and more competent adversaries and challenging situations. Doing this allows them to use these abilities in new and interesting ways and earn rewards for their creativity.*

## THE FRAGILE ALLIANCE

*Thuvia, Maid of Mars* also sets political intrigue and clandestine activities, such as sabotage and espionage, as major plot elements. While this is not the first time this has occurred in the Barsoom stories, its importance should not be overlooked as it highlights the delicateness with which the alliance John Carter has created can be undermined. It should also be noted that this issue serves to emphasize John Carter's political skill and maturity, as well as the influence he has gained since his arrival. Understanding that both Ptarth and Kaol had no choice but to mobilize forces, Carter manages to minimize hostilities by refusing to allow Helium to mobilize its own defense forces.

## OPTIONAL RULE: DECEPTION AS A WEAPON

One of the most potent weapons in an enemy's hands is information. If your antagonists have more information than your players, they are better able to engage the characters on terms that benefit them or suit their way of fighting.

An effective way of introducing this to the game is to grant the antagonists the ability to use deception to inflict stress. This is usually Confusion stress, though Fear may also be appropriate, depending on the test in question. As an example, rather than simply having the opponents make opposed tests to remain undetected, instead frame these as conflict actions that "attack" the player characters' ability to find or detect them. As the player characters are likely to use Reason to "defend" against this deception, success on the test can then inflict Confusion stress.

This kind of encounter provides an explanation for reactions commonly seen in films. The hero sneaks through the enemy's position, who in turn become increasingly suspicious, confused, and afraid. They suddenly react to the smallest noise — rushing toward it with weapons drawn or firing blindly into the darkness. Eventually, this group of minions can even be defeated entirely without the protagonist ever directly engaging with them.

Using this variant rule suddenly makes these kinds of activities much more suspenseful while demonstrating that characters without "traditional" fighting skills can still make use of the combat mechanics to overwhelm and defeat their opponents. When employed by the villains, this can keep the excitement and suspense going in a game and add to the overall drive to find and eliminate the threat.



## THE CHESSMEN OF MARS

*The Chessmen of Mars* once again follows the adventures of one of John Carter's children. This story is centered on the Warlord's daughter, Tara of Helium. Taken with thoughts of excitement and adventure, Tara is said to be a capable airship pilot and is known for breaking with the cultural traditions and expectations of her people. She has been educated in a high society setting, but she is also spirited, determined, and also somewhat naïve.

While this story once again repeats the cultural dynamics shared between potential romantic partners, this is more than simply reusing the plot elements established in the earlier novels. Like John Carter before him, Gahan of Gathol is immediately taken with a beautiful woman and declares as much — and like John Carter, Gahan suffers a similar fate. This is important, because it establishes that, while the Martians place particular importance on one's prowess in battle and the strength of their word, more refined social graces — particularly those centered on interacting with the opposite sex — are overlooked, and that this ineptitude is not something limited to John Carter. Shocked by the openness and presumption of the declaration, Tara rejects the jeddak. Unlike her mother, who always acted with a regal restraint, Tara loses her composure, loudly announcing to Gahan of her unending hatred for him, and then storms out of the party.

*While the Barsoomian stories are full of examples of heroic protagonists fumbling around when introduced to a particularly beautiful woman — and as comedic as this example may be — the idea of fumbling through a social interaction can be applied to nearly any social or political first encounter.*

*It is totally appropriate to call for an **Empathy + Passion or Cunning + Empathy** test the first time a character is introduced to someone important or powerful (not just when being introduced to a potential love interest).*

*Admiration and “hero worship” are just as likely a source for this kind of struggle as affection or desire. Characters who have devoted their entire focus to conflict and combat should lack the appropriate tact and social acumen to succeed, and face stiff difficulties, if they can pass the test at all.*

*This is an excellent use of the voluntary failure rule from the core rulebook (page 51). By intentionally botching this introduction, the player earns some Luck and then is forced to interact with this individual over multiple encounters to repair the damage they did to any possible relationship which may develop thereafter. Failing the test without this could result in the introduction of various complications later in the story which hamper the protagonist's efforts.*

## SUPERSTITION AND MYTH

*The Chessmen of Mars* has all of the themes common to the stories that precede it — including the introduction of a new culture and species, the Kaldane, entirely focused on extreme intellectualism — but also emphasizes the role of superstition and the value of an individual within a culture.

This represents the first introduction of a truly “alien” species on Barsoom. The conversations and interactions shared between Tara and the Kaldanes, in particular with Ghek and Luud, help to demonstrate the difficulties in meaningful interaction between two extremely different cultures. The Kaldanes are openly dismissive of Tara, seeing her as nothing more than a potentially interesting meal, while Tara struggles with overcoming the physical revulsion the Kaldanes invoke in her along with trying to understand a group that is entirely different than her own. Narrators should take interest in this interaction when seeking to introduce other “non-human” species during their stories. The other denizens of Mars, even the vicious green Martian hordes, at least share some commonalities that ease interactions between groups. This provides a common framework for social exchanges

and, should it come to it, rules of engagement during battle.

But dealing with an entirely “alien” group is much more challenging. This often provides the opportunity to take a specific aspect of the player characters' culture or beliefs in a new direction. In the case of the Kaldanes, this is higher reason and logic — but such a lens could be applied to other aspects of life on Barsoom. What's important is that it is done in a respectful and understandable way.

The Manatorians, like all red Martians, practice ancestor worship, but the culture preserves the bodies of previous generations and displays them publicly, something not seen in other red Martian cities. As a relatively isolated people, the Manatorians are also given to believe in strange superstitions including the presence of vengeful ghosts, witches, and evil omens, and lack the more scientific or artistic focuses of other red Martians. This belief is used against them several times during the story and is indirectly responsible for the death of their jeddak, O-Tar, when he succumbs to his fear and loses consciousness.

Much like the Kaldanes, the Manatorians provide an example of a particular aspect of Barsoomian culture taken to an extreme. When they discuss their superstitions within earshot of Gahan, the Gatholian doesn't seem confused or surprised — suggesting that there are similar stories in Gathol (and logically other red Martian cities), but they are simply dismissed as fancy. This can be a powerful narrative tool. Superstitious characters are likely to be openly accepting of explanations or events in keeping with their cultural identity, while unsuperstitious characters are likely to openly dismiss explanations or events that appear too fantastic. In either case, it can make characters susceptible to deception or misjudgment during a crucial encounter. Uncovering the truth behind events that appear to fit within the framework of a local superstition can be the focus of a challenging and rewarding adventure arc, especially when these events have caused difficulty and grief for the local community.



There are numerous ways of defeating an opponent and they don't all involve a sharp, pointed object. O-Tar is obviously an exceptionally skilled swordsman and has the support of his entire army if need be. Attacking him directly is likely to result in defeat and imprisonment if not death by execution. During the course of the adventure, however, the protagonists learn that the Manatorians hold several superstitions and beliefs that govern how their culture operates. This provides the opportunity to effectively engage O-Tar without exposing the heroes to unnecessary danger.

For players to effectively use superstition or myths to their advantage, they must first understand the superstition and, if inventing one, any truth behind it. In this case, the Manatorians believe that vengeful spirits not only exist, but can harm the living. While discovering the actual existence of such spirits could prove difficult (if not impossible), the fact that O-Tar and his lieutenants believe that the bedchamber of a long-dead jeddak is haunted allows Gahan to investigate and use it to his advantage. By using the superstition against those who believe it, Gahan manages to achieve something that would otherwise be impossible.

In game terms, this is a perfect opportunity for a series of attribute tests, or an attribute challenge, with the characters' **Cunning** taking center stage throughout the tests. Discovering (or inventing) the details of the superstition should be done first and will likely involve tests using **Cunning + Empathy**. Once the characters have a good understanding of the superstition, they must create the scene for the encounter, which will likely be **Cunning + Reason** (though **Daring** or **Might** may come into play if speed or strength are a part of the legend). If the characters are inventing a new myth, they will need to spread it for it to be believed. Finally, the characters must engage in deception to give it credibility. Again, this is likely to involve **Cunning** combined with whatever is most appropriate based on the details of the superstition, but by default **Cunning + Passion** are used to deceive the target in question.

## JETAN

An interesting plot device in this story is the adoption of Jetan, or Martian chess, as part of the legal proceedings as well as for entertainment within Manator. In this regard, Jetan becomes a complex form of trial by combat. Further, Jetan is treated almost as a professional sport within the greater Manator area. Some of these Jetan teams are composed of nothing but slaves and criminals, condemned to be butchered by their more skilled opponents, while others are the equivalent of professional sport teams that represent cities or regional areas around Manator.

One of the lasting and endearing things to come from the Barsoomian novels is the Martian version of chess. The Chessmen of Mars has a complete description of all the pieces, moves, and rules to allow the reader to play the game using a standard chessboard.

When sitting around the gaming table, breaking out the chessboard could be potentially fun, but generally speaking, chess is not a spectator sport. Resolving Jetan games within the context of the rules should be done using an opposed **Cunning + Reason** (D1) test, if this is a simple game played between two friendly characters. If the stakes are higher, it is recommended that this become an attribute challenge for both players, made using **Cunning + Reason** (D1). The threshold for each player is 10 and the first one to achieve it wins.



## THE MASTER MIND OF MARS

Advanced scientific development continues to be a major plot point in the following story, *The Master Mind of Mars*. This time, however, its focus is on the medical sciences and their potential misuses in the absence of a strong ethical code. Ras Thavas is likely the most intelligent character encountered thus far in the Barsoom stories, and his techniques are incredible — even by today's standards. While blood transfusions and organ transplants may be commonplace today, at the time this novel was published the medical sciences were undergoing a renaissance unseen since the end of the Middle Ages. The concepts presented by Burroughs were theoretical at best, but many believed them possible. While providing interesting trappings to the setting, these techniques become a major plot point within the adventure and are the focus of the characters' long-term goals. Players and narrators should see *Chapter 6: Mad Science and Inventions* for rules and ideas relating to scientific advancements and new technologies.

Playing a character that has been the victim/recipient of a brain transference represents a unique roleplaying opportunity. It also, unfortunately, represents a way to circumvent the normal rules for attribute progression using xp expenditures.

While the rules for this situation are provided in this book, narrators should ensure that players understand that it will not provide them with a way to grossly circumvent the advancement system. A good suggestion is to total the **Daring**, **Cunning**, and **Might** scores of their previous and new bodies. If there is a difference between the two, adjust one of their attributes by 1 point at the start of each scene until the two totals match.



This also provides an evolutionary leap in disguise and deception. Previously we have seen characters masquerade as someone else, using traditional disguise techniques to hide their identity. We have even witnessed Gahan of Gathol pretend to be the mighty O-Tar, Jeddak of Manator, by donning his clothes. But to actually take a person's body and all their physical characteristics allows for unprecedented acts of espionage and potential assassinations. Further, this kind of medical technique essentially provides an individual a form of immortality, which is how it is presented within the story. In game terms, not only does this allow for a character to avoid death from old age or disease, but it could also work to explain someone with exceptional physical and mental attributes.

One of the more interesting developments in the story is the presentation of the great white apes inhabiting the marshes of Toonol, which is also the first standing body of surface water we have seen since the river Iss. While retaining their primitive nature, the white apes of Toonol appear to be socially active and capable of higher levels of mental comprehension than previously shown. It is not known if this is something unique to the apes of the marshes or if their entire species is capable of such feats. This provides for numerous storytelling opportunities. Perhaps the powerfully-built apes decide they want to move out of their ruins and seize a city; or imagine the social encounter when a white ape suddenly demands to know why the players are trespassing in their lands. Because the novels provide so little information regarding how these particular apes developed this way, it becomes completely up to the narrator to decide how this will impact their games.



## A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS

*A Fighting Man of Mars* introduces the concept of advanced weaponry that was beginning to appear in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and can be viewed as a commentary on the dangers of technological advancement. With a new protagonist in the form of Tan Hadron, this story is an excellent resource for narrators looking to provide their players with the ability to involve themselves in the fate of nations without worrying about being overshadowed by the series' main characters. During their trek through the barren lands of U-Gor, Tavia demonstrates that she is every bit as competent a warrior as our hero.

*Given that most of the John Carter novels were written almost a century ago, the cultural expectations of men and women have changed significantly since the time of their first publication. Not only should women be treated as genuine equals, but women are prevalent in almost every walk of life and profession, including warriors and soldiers. While we do get to see a brief glimpse of this in later Barsoom novels, equality can come sooner in your campaign. After all, it would be inappropriate to expect that all female characters in your game are waiting to be rescued.*

*The easiest way to alleviate this situation is to simply change the target. Rescuing a beloved nephew, brother, or the jeddak's son and heir, is just as compelling and important to the story. While the subject of same sex relationships is never addressed in any Barsoom story, it is that very fact that allows for its existence, if that's something your group is interested in pursuing. What's important is ensuring that the motivations and objectives set out for your players align with their interests and the desires of their characters. Everything else is a matter of description and pronouns.*

## NEGOTIATING RELEASE

Throughout this story, powerful technology also plays a major role. Though its inventor is killed at the end of the novel, and his cache of weapons destroyed, there are numerous airships in Tul Axtar's fleet that survive the final battle above Jahar and could potentially remain a threat. While clever players may wish to obtain such dangerous equipment, narrators should be especially cautious in allowing it. Tan Hadron becomes nearly unstoppable while in possession of the invisibility cloak and when he loses this to his enemy, Tul Axtar uses it to escape numerous times. If a player or group does manage to acquire some kind of unique item like this, it could quickly unbalance the game.

Like many heroes in Barsoom, Hadron is no stranger to a prison cell, and is captured several times during the course of his journey. Escaping or surviving these stints of imprisonment becomes a recurring plot point during his story. In this regard, Hadron is in good company, as John Carter, Carthoris, Gahan of Gathol, and Vad Varo are all held captive during some part of their adventures. In each case, however, the protagonist is able to escape using their wits, skill at arms, and a bit of luck — and player characters should be no different. Narrators are encouraged to take these examples to heart when crafting adventure ideas. Being held captive is an excellent opportunity for characters whose abilities lie beyond combat to come to the forefront and shine.

*Throughout almost every Barsoomian adventure, at one point or another, the protagonists will end up in jail. This happens numerous times, even to the great John Carter... and occasionally multiple times in a single story!*

*With this in mind, your players should plan on their characters being captured and held by a superior force at least once every few adventures. This is simply the natural state of life on Barsoom. Like anything else, however, repetition breeds contempt. While players should expect to be captured on a regular basis, escaping from the captivity becomes the focal point of that portion of the story.*



*Keep things interesting and fast-paced, and alternate the means of escape between adventures. Perhaps in one story their burly swordsman may find the bars too strong for him, but the spy is able to pick the lock and help the group sneak away. Alternatively, the group's charming and well-spoken socialite gives a passionate plea to a sympathetic guard or servant and secures their release. A calculating scientist may reason that a particular portion of the architecture is weak and employ a lever to work the door free. This not only keeps a reusable adventure idea fresh, but allows for different characters to shine.*

## SWORDS OF MARS

With the introduction of space travel and advanced computers in *Swords of Mars*, we get our first look at some traditional science fiction plot devices. Adding space travel to the setting provides a host of possibilities for adventurous characters and narrators looking to expand their games beyond the surface of Barsoom. While the Tarids seem restricted to their castle on Thuria, the Masenas have claimed the forests beyond and their hostility makes them natural adversaries. The story also shows us the effects of experimentation with thinking machines on unwilling subjects, rendering them mindless automatons.

*Advanced technology is both a ubiquitous feature of Barsoom and yet almost completely unheard of. When a character attempts to work on a piece of technology they have never encountered before, it should be done at extreme difficulty—if success is possible at all.*

*If the adventure depends on this activity, it is important to provide the characters with a reasonable explanation to allow them to do so. In one example, when John Carter is required to assist Fal Sivas in modifying and tuning a space craft, Carter takes an opportunity during some downtime to read through a text on advanced mechanics. This provides ample justification later in the story for him to modify and repair technology he's never seen before. Chapter 6: Mad Science and Inventions offers new optional rules for characters to create inventions and make discoveries.*

The adventure to Thuria also introduces a strange concept called the compensatory adjustment of masses, an interesting idea that causes individuals to resize themselves to the planetary body they are visiting. In the adventure, John Carter and his team are significantly reduced in size so that they are proportionally equivalent in size to the much smaller moon of Thuria, which is described as being only seven miles across.

The Tarids are given powerful mental abilities to render themselves invisible to the Barsoomians, though this power is eventually overcome by John Carter and his team. This is the second time we are introduced to peoples with advanced forms of mental abilities, the first being the Lotharians from *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*. As John Carter is able to counter this ability, it stands to reason that eventually Barsoomians could develop this power as well.

## SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS

*Synthetic Men of Mars* returns to the Toonolian Marshes and the results of Ras Thavas' experimentation. Here Thavas has created warped and monstrous attempts to birth the perfect being, and his experiments have seized control. As an effective sequel to *The Master Mind of Mars*, the plot devices introduced in that adventure return, including advanced medical treatments and brain transfers. Eventually the creatures are overrun when one of Thavas' experiments creates an unkillable "blob," and they escape into the marshes. This also marks the first true appearance of the forces of Amhor, which had been referenced in the preceding adventure in the region but not shown. Following the events of *Synthetic Men of Mars* it can be assumed that the city fell under the control of Dur Ajmad, relative of the late Jeddara of Amhor Vanuma, after Jal Had is killed.

*At its core, Synthetic Men of Mars is a tale of science gone wrong. Thavas' creations have seized control of one of his islands, turned on him, and now hold him hostage and force him to make more monsters. This is a common plot used in science fiction works, especially when a new technological breakthrough is on the horizon.*

*Within the lands of Barsoom, there is no place better to set such a story than in the general vicinity of Toonol. As discussed elsewhere, Toonol is one of the few places on Mars that is still devoted to technological advancement. Unfortunately, much like the Barsoomian way, the scientists of Toonol have taken this to an extreme. While Ras Thavas is particularly famous for it, the inventors and craftsmen of Toonol are known for pushing the boundaries of what is possible and have earned notoriety for doing so without consideration for the potential impacts these advances may cause.*

*The later portions of this book provide rules for developing and presenting new technologies, and in these sections we encourage narrators to consider why such things are created and what impact they have on the setting. Crafting a "gone wrong" story simply takes this mental exercise to its next phase by asking the question, "What could be the worst thing to come from this device?", and then making this a critical and recurring plot point, especially if it's created by a player character or the group's personal adversary.*

One of the interesting plot points in the novel is the resilience shown by the Hormads, which can only be destroyed by fire. At several points during the adventure, Hormad characters continue engaging in dialogue after being beheaded. We also are introduced to a new species within the marshes, a sedentary kangaroo-like race called the Goolians. Believing themselves to be the most advanced culture on Barsoom, they are shown to be both primitive and cowardly.



## LLANA OF GATHOL

*Llana of Gathol*, presented as four related short stories, pits John Carter against the expansionistic leader of the north pole nation of Panar, Hin Abtol. Claiming to have conquered Okar, Hin Abtol has spent years capturing and enslaving others to use in his army. Thousands of slaves are kept frozen beyond the walls of the capital city of Pankor, to be thawed and used as needed. Initially taken prisoner in the lost city of Horz, Carter encounters an ancient mentalist who keeps warriors frozen in a state of suspended animation. Resisting his power, Carter kills him, awaking the sleeping warriors and his granddaughter Llana. After escaping, they are forced to trek on foot back to Gathol and are taken prisoner once again, this time by a colony of Black Martians in the city of Kamtol under the tyrannical rule of Dexus. The people of Kamtol have been enthralled to Dexus under threat of death by a strange machine that records the victim's nervous system and can then kill over extreme distances. After fighting in gladiatorial games, Carter destroys the machine and they escape.

*Llana of Gathol is an excellent example of switching from a serial (or continuous) story to an episodic one. While the four short stories are related to each other and feature the same characters, they are distinct adventures with beginning, middle, and end.*

*When putting a recurring game together, one of the first questions a narrator must tackle is whether they will be running a long adventure arc covering many sessions or a series of smaller single-session stories which may or may not be interconnected. There are distinct advantages to both styles of game.*

*While long-running arcs (or serials) can provide for significant character development and the satisfaction of seeing a story that has been developing for months come to its climax, they require a much greater amount of time and work invested to make them successful. They also suffer when players are unable to attend a game — either because that character was integral to the storytelling for that night, or because the player misses out on important plot reveals that happened during that session.*

*Episodic adventures, on the other hand, are often best used for groups of players that have other responsibilities that may prevent them from attending regularly. While yes, they may miss out on an evening's adventure, the fact that this is a self-contained story means it has little impact on the character's overall place in an ongoing story.*

## FIGHTING AN UNSEEN FOE

Once they reach Gathol, they find it is under siege by Hin Abtol's forces. Carter convinces a military officer to give him command of a flier, which he must repair to good working order. He assembles a crew drawn from numerous friendly cities, including Hastor and Helium. Among the officers is Tan Hadron, the hero who saved the Helium fleet from destruction by disintegration beams. Carter then attacks the grounded fleet and leads his new crew north to rescue Llana from Pankor. Upon entering the city, the Warlord is able to save his granddaughter after entering the palace and besting Hin Abtol's strongest man. After becoming imprisoned by the invisible men of Invak and subsequently escaping, Carter joins the Helium forces to lift the siege of Gathol.

*While several sections of **John Carter of Mars** reference methods of invisibility, actual mechanics for fighting an invisible foe are not explicitly presented. As this is fighting an opponent you can't see, the rules for fighting in total darkness effectively cover the same situation.*

*As described in the **John Carter of Mars** core rulebook, fighting in total darkness increases the difficulty of a test by 3 steps. So, if your opponent is invisible, the difficulty of a Conflict action to attack them becomes D4!*





## SKELETON MEN OF JUPITER

The adventures of John Carter end with the Warlord and his beloved kidnapped by the skeletal Morgors of Jupiter. The Morgors have been planning for some time to attack and conquer Barsoom and have made the great city of Helium, central to the Warlord's alliance of nations, their first target. Carter is betrayed and brought to the distant world for information on the Helium military, but he refuses to cooperate.

*In reality, learning a new language and being able to quickly understand and speak it requires years of study and practice. But in the action-packed pulp adventures of Barsoom, that would just be boring.*

*Therefore, this is best represented by an attribute challenge using **Empathy + Reason**. The Difficulty of this Challenge depends on how foreign the language is. If it's similar to a language you already speak, this could be Average (D1). Truly arcane or alien languages should be Daunting (D3). The Threshold of this Challenge is 8.*

*Unlike normal attribute challenges, where characters would continue to roll immediately, narrators should only call for a continued roll for this test when the character is once again engaged in conversation using the language or overhears an extended dialogue.*

### ADVENTURING AMONG THE STARS

Eventually, Dejah Thoris is brought to Jupiter to force John Carter to provide the information the Morgors desire. Befriending the other race on Jupiter, the blue-skinned Savators, Carter leads a slave revolt that allows him and the Savators to escape into the volcanic jungles. Eluding the Morgors, he takes refuge in one of the invisible cities of the Savators and eventually takes a one-man flier to the hidden Savator haven of Zanol.

This leaves the people of Barsoom in a precarious position. The alliance of nations was largely held together by a mutual respect shared between John Carter and his many friends and allies. While one

would hope it would survive his disappearance, narrators wishing to shake things up a bit may choose to have the alliances collapse. The Jeddaks of Mars are, after all, proud and warlike. It only took a minimal amount of evidence to pit two of the red Martian cities against Helium in previous novels. Peace is not the normal state of affairs on the Red Planet. Narrators wishing to set their games following the events of *Skeleton Men of Mars* must reach a decision on this topic early during story development, as it will play a pivotal role in ongoing events.

Given their history, however, it seems much more likely that John Carter will return from the outer planets, with his beloved wife at his side, to rally the people of Barsoom and prepare them for the coming invasion.

*While spacecraft were introduced in *Swords of Mars*, they were narratively used as a method of changing scene locations, similar to the way that airships and fliers are often used. The introduction of the Morgors, however, suddenly makes the development and use of spacecraft much more important.*

*In nearly all science fiction media, when a spacefaring species invades the home of a non-spacefaring species, the results are not pleasant for the defenders. To have any chance of success against such an aggressor, the Barsoomians will need to significantly expand their fleet of space vessels, along with training crews to fly them. Such activities could form the basis of an entire string of adventures set in near orbit of Mars.*

*These could include the design, construction, and testing of a new generation of spacecraft, further encounters with the Tarids of Thuria, and conflicts between different red Martian cities trying to seize control of the space immediately around Mars. Rescue missions (though realistically impossible) are also common plots used during the early days of spaceflight and can make for dramatic and suspenseful adventures, especially if a good friend or loved one is involved. When even air and water are scarce resources for the people of a planet, obtaining the necessary materials in large enough quantities to support a space program could be the basis of an entire campaign.*

The Morgors will also need to be addressed during early story development. The final *John Carter* novel makes it clear that these strange beings are intent on invading Barsoom and that they have the strength and technology to succeed. How this plays out is something the narrator and players will need to decide based on the style of game they want to play.

For more heroic adventures, the Morgors may find themselves facing opponents they had greatly underestimated. Barsoomians are, after all, a people largely driven by the activities of war. For any invasion to be successful, ground troops will have to be deployed to take and hold strategic targets planetside, and it is here that the people of dying Mars may discover their advantage. Urban assaults and running air battles could come to dominate the streets below and the skies above the great cities of Mars. Iconic heroes might engage in desperate duels with Morgor generals while armies of soldiers and panthans fight against the Morgor infantry.

More gritty games may see the people of Barsoom overwhelmed by the Morgor forces and driven into hiding within lost cities. In this situation, it's likely that at least some former allies have been forced to accept Morgor rule, and may even be actively supporting the enemy in the hope of preferential treatment. Helium has likely been destroyed, along with any other city that has openly defied the invaders.

Or maybe the Morgors never made it to Barsoom at all. Perhaps the disappearance of the Warlord and Princess of Helium was never explained and life continued on Barsoom, much as it had before, unaware of the danger that lurked out within the clouds of Jupiter. The absence of the Morgors would most likely be explained by the intervention of John Carter and Dejah Thoris, leading the Savators against the skeletal men. The defeat of these dread foes may have destroyed their ships, preventing the two Barsoomians from returning to Mars, and they were forced to live out the rest of their lives far away from their friends and family. The void left by the pair's unsolved disappearance, and the subsequent attempts to fill that void, would certainly make for an interesting addition to the Barsoomian tales.



# PEOPLES OF THE ERA

*There were banths, calots, darseens, orluks, siths, soraks, ulsios and many other beasts, insects and men, including even a kaldane, one of the strange spider-men of Bantoom. But when they turned me into my cage, I immediately became the prize specimen of the exhibition.*

*– Vor Daj, Synthetic Men of Mars*

## PLAYING DURING THE ERA

The Jeddak of Jeddaks period is a time of relative peace and prosperity for Mars. John Carter is now Warlord, and the alliances he forged have made the city of Helium one of the most powerful kingdoms on the planet. Helium and its allies, such as Kaol, Ptarth, and the Thark horde of the green Martians, reap the main benefits of this peace, and have become very wealthy and secure. This prosperity extends beyond them to many other lands of Barsoom, however. Longtime rivals, such as Dusar and Ptarth, spend many years at peace, and there are few long wars between the red Martian cities during this time. In general, the status quo on Mars in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era is one of stability and happiness that most characters, particularly those from the red kingdoms, would strive to defend. When determining the goals and motivations for a new player character from this era, it can be useful to consider how they think about this status quo.

That is not to say that this is a period without conflict! Complete peace is something that is beyond most of the peoples of Mars, a concept they would find alien. Old conflicts and rivalries still simmer, and the general raiding of other cities for goods and slaves is not uncommon. The skirmishes between the Tharks and their enemies the Warhoons continue as well, and the other green Martian tribes are a threat to any who dare enter the dry sea beds of Barsoom. The power of Helium and its allies dissuades enemies from attacking them directly, however. This means that direct violence is mostly between the smaller

cities of Mars or conducted by renegades and raiders — either truly independent groups, or groups that the red Martian cities can deny a connection to. Outright war becomes more difficult to pursue, intrigue and sabotage become the tools of choice for many who would rather not face John Carter and the armies of Helium in battle. Despite this, there is plenty of room for soldiers, naval officers, and other such characters in a Jeddak of Jeddaks era game, these kinds of characters can thrive in the atmosphere of intrigue, perhaps working as spies, duelists, assassins or panthans, leaving plenty of work for them to do in this era.

On Mars, peace is dissatisfying for some. In Thuvia, Maid of Mars, Burroughs refers to the “stagnant, emasculating peace” that rules in Helium. Unwilling to sit back and reap the rewards of prosperity, many on Barsoom seek out adventure. This leads to greater exploration of the far-flung corners of the Red Planet, which is another major theme of this era. The uncovering of new wonders and threats from the wastes and hidden corners of Mars is a recurring idea throughout the adventures of John Carter, and it is very common in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era for heroes to stumble across a new threat hidden in the little-visited regions of Barsoom. Characters who seek out their own new adventures, such as explorers, are very well suited to this time period.

This emphasis on exploration, and the discoveries from both this era and the previous eras, also make this the most diverse time period for Martian stories, in terms of the races available when making a character. The red Martians and green Martians are, of course, the most common travelers to be

encountered, but Okar and First Born are being found more commonly throughout Mars, an additional adventurer from Earth finds himself on Barsoom, and even some of the Holy Therns are leaving their old ways and taking up a road to adventure. And that is without getting into the options listed later in this chapter — Kaldanes, Goolians, and even the Skeleton Men of Jupiter appear during this period, giving players a wide variety of options when creating their characters. Narrators and players should work together to establish what races they want to have available for player characters, but even the strangest races of Barsoom (and beyond) can find acceptance within the red kingdoms during this period.

This peaceful period among the cities of Mars also leads to a time of scientific and technological advancement. These advances provide both new opportunities and new threats for characters. Many adventures during this time period deal with new scientific dangers, such as the Hormads or the terrible weapons invented by Phor Tak. During this period there are several antagonists who could be termed “mad scientists”, whose inventions must be dealt with before they unleash doom on Mars. There are also beneficial advances in science in Helium and other cities, such as Carthoris’ new compass, or discussions of traditional Martian science, such as the unique Martian ways of preserving their dead. The discovery of the Gridley Wave allows for communication beyond Mars itself, and Martian science has long had the ability to observe Earth from afar. Player characters with concepts related to Martian science are very appropriate for the Jeddak of Jeddaks



era — scientist-adventurers, heroes with a connection to a Martian “mad scientist” (such as Ulysses Paxton’s connection to Ras Thavas), or simply characters who wish to invent new and useful devices are all likely to be found during this era.

In addition to new technologies, there is also the discovery of new psychic abilities during this era. The mind control available to some of the Kaldanes, or the illusion abilities of the inhabitants of Lothar, are powers that those people have developed over a long period of time, but it is easily conceivable that characters could learn those powers or develop new powers that have never before been seen on Mars.

During this period, new heroes rise to combat new threats. While John Carter and Dejah Thoris are certainly involved in many adventures during this time period, many new characters have their own adventures as well. The Jeddak of Jeddaks era is a time for generational stories, with many characters appearing who have ties to the previous stories, such as Carter’s children, Carthoris and Tara of Helium; his granddaughter, Llana of Gathol; or Djor Kantos, son of Kantos Kan. Tying your character to one of these established characters is a good way to evoke the sense of the torch passing to a new generation, which is another theme of this era.

The Jeddak of Jeddaks era is a wide one with many opportunities for adventure. It is a hopeful time for Mars, a time of prosperity, advancement, and growth. A time when a new generation set out to find their own path and their own adventures, when heroes defend their homes from intrigues and from threats hidden in the lost corners of Mars, and when explorers set out to map out the farthest reaches of Barsoom.

## NEWLY DISCOVERED RACES

In the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, a number of new races are discovered or contact the more common races of Mars for the first time. These new races are often isolated in one remote region of Barsoom, like Bantoom, the valley home of the Kaldanes, or Gooli on Ompt, the “city” of the Kangaroo Men in the Toonolian Marshes. Some races are even from beyond Barsoom itself!

In either case, these races are often very rare, and would certainly be cause for notice and even shock among the society at large of Barsoom, even during this period where the races of red Martians, green Martians, Okar, First Born, and white Martians are coming into greater contact.

However, Martian society is one in which your actions determine your worth more far more than your origins or appearance. There is no reason that a player character from one of these rare societies cannot come to be an accepted and honored part of Martian society, like Ghek the Kaldane. Individuals from these groups could even be an option for an unusual character in a game set in an earlier era, in much the same way that John Carter was unique as an Earthling on Mars during the Dotar Sojat and Prince of Helium eras.

In the end, how these races are handled is up to the players and narrator for each individual game. While many of these races are useful and appropriate options for players in a Jeddak of Jeddaks era game, particularly one that continues beyond the time of the stories in the books, some narrators may prefer to keep these unusual races rare and mysterious, and keep the focus on Martian societies that are described in the John Carter of Mars core rulebook. As always, it is best for the players and narrator to work together to determine which options they want available, and to determine what works for their game.





## KALDANES

One of the most unusual races on Barsoom, Kaldanes are from a region called Bantoom, distant from the red cities of Mars. When first encountered, most Kaldanes appear to have the body of a strong and perfectly proportioned red Martian, but with a grotesque, overly large head that is bluish-gray in color, with large lidless eyes, slit-like nostrils, and a round mouth ringed with teeth. Most of the other races of Barsoom find their appearance disturbing, and would find the truth even more disturbing. Kaldanes are actually non-humanoid in form, consisting only of a disturbing head upon six spidery legs. Kaldanes also have two chelae, like a crab or scorpion's pincers. The red Martian bodies are Rykors, beasts of burden that the Kaldanes ride for many tasks. When not controlled by a Kaldane, Rykors are headless and witless, able to do nothing beyond groping blindly for food.

Kaldanes live in the valley of Bantoom, in a series of towers and the tunnels underneath. Each tower and tunnel complex is an independent city, ruled by a king Kaldane. These kings are larger than normal Kaldanes, and are hermaphroditic, laying the eggs from which all the Kaldanes of that city are born. These family-lines are the primary society of the Kaldanes.

Kaldanes have developed the transmission of instincts and sensory experience to a level of racial memory, and while Kaldanes do have a sense of individuality, they can remember what previous Kaldanes experienced. This leads to a sense that all Kaldanes are the same, and that they share opinions on everything. This belief is so strong that any Kaldane that differs in their tastes, or that acts in an unusual way, is considered defective, and to be destroyed. Even when a king Kaldane dies, he is replaced by a new king with the same name and memories and treated as if he was the same being.

Kaldanes focus on development of the brain and have no regard for emotion and sentiment, believing themselves to be above such things.

Player character Kaldanes are likely those who have a more nuanced outlook than Kaldane society at large. While likely still emotionless and extremely logical by the standards of most Martians, these Kaldanes most likely have more respect for a balance between purely mental and physical pursuits, and a greater sense of individuality than most Kaldanes. These beliefs are likely to get player characters labeled as defective, which may well explain why they can be found outside Bantoom, away from the isolationist Kaldane society, which would destroy them for their differences.

### ATTRIBUTE BONUSES

Subtract -1 from Empathy and Passion. Add +2 to Reason, and +1 each to two of the following: Cunning, Daring, or Might.

### RACIAL TALENT

#### MEMORIES OF THE PAST (GRADE 2)

*All Kaldanes have developed the instincts of their forebears into something nearing the level of racial memory. You are particularly skilled at remembering and gleaning useful information from the lives of your ancestors.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When you encounter something for the first time.
- ✦ **Effect:** If you can come up with a plausible way that an ancestor could have encountered this thing (likely from before the Kaldanes isolated themselves in Bantoom), you may ask the narrator one question about the item, creature, or phenomenon. When acting on this information, you gain an additional d20 to tests.

### WHAT YOU KNOW

- ✦ You speak Common Barsoomian.
- ✦ You read the Kaldane script.
- ✦ You know your local culture and politics.
- ✦ You know what past members of your family line experienced.

### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

- ✦ You don't know the culture or customs of the other races of Barsoom.
- ✦ You don't know how to relate to others emotionally.
- ✦ You don't know how to relate to other races as equals.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✦ You know the basics of personal combat.
- ✦ You can command others, particularly those subordinate to you and "dumb beasts."
- ✦ You can quickly learn new technologies and sciences.
- ✦ You can disturb, surprise, and confuse other races with your ability to separate from your Rykor.
- ✦ You can ignore the effects of poison gas or lack of oxygen, as you do not need to breathe.

### RYKORS

The rules for Kaldanes here assume that they spend most of their time in control of their Rykor bodies. This allows them to most easily interact with the other races of Barsoom on an equal footing. However, there may be times when a Kaldane character wishes to detach from a Rykor and move independently. While detached from their Rykor, a Kaldane has the following penalties and abilities.

- ✦ Subtract -2 from the Kaldane's Might.
- ✦ The Kaldane can squeeze into small passageways and tunnels, such as Ulsio burrows, and can move about anywhere that something about the size of a head could fit.



## MORGORS

The Morgors, or skeleton men of Jupiter, are a strange and deadly race from beyond the atmosphere of Barsoom. Originally from Jupiter, the Morgors' bodies are exceptionally thin, with almost no apparent fat or muscle. This leaves their ivory white skin clinging to their sturdy skeletons, giving them the appearance of desiccated corpses. This parchment-like skin is thin enough that, when a Morgor stands in front of a bright light, its internal organs can be seen dimly through it. The Morgors have no lips and their eyes disappear into the deep cavities into which they are set as if they were just shadows, making a Morgor's head resemble a lifeless skull. If it were not for their motion, a Morgor's resemblance to a skeleton would be almost perfect.

Almost nothing is known on Barsoom of the Morgors' history. Though not the only race on Eurobus (the Morgor's name for the planet Jupiter), they have enslaved the others, and turned their gaze to new worlds to conquer.

Morgor society is entirely focused on warfare and conquest. Most education that young Morgors receive is directed toward war, with the remainder being only what is required to keep their empire running. Morgors see no value in art or literature and have no true concept of beauty. What little clothing they wear is plain and their only ornaments are a medal with their name and rank. Their cities are uniform, with dull, block-like buildings and regular, monotonous streets. Everything they use is purely functional.

Morgors also disdain most science, except that which is useful for war. They wield weapons very similar to those of Mars and have their own form of airships. These ships are their most unique technological achievement. The Morgor ships are capable of interplanetary travel at remarkable speeds and can be rendered invisible to the eye using a unique form of sand that can bend light around the ship.

The Morgors are not noble warriors, however. Their society cares only about conquest and

control, and they have no qualms about using any means necessary in order to ensure their victory.

Player character Morgors are likely to be rebels, outcasts, or criminals in Morgor society. This is not without precedent — the Morgor Vorion was sentenced to die by his own people, and aided John Carter and his allies in escaping if they would take him with them. If any Morgor developed a sense of beauty or became sympathetic to those the Morgors consider lesser beings, they could easily end up as an outcast from Morgor society.

### ATTRIBUTE BONUSES

Add +2 to either Cunning or Might and add +1 to the other. Add +1 to either Daring or Reason.

### WHAT YOU KNOW

- \* You can speak the common language of Jupiter.
- \* You can read Morgor hieroglyphs.
- \* You know the ranks, customs, and culture of the Morgor empire.
- \* You know the basics of Morgor science and technology.
- \* You know military strategy and tactics of the Morgors, and of the remaining holdouts of Savators that have not been conquered.

### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

- \* The customs, language, or races of Barsoom.
- \* How to easily relate to others as an equal.
- \* How to recognize common standards of art or beauty.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- \* You know how to fight with swords, pistols, explosives, and other Morgor weapons.
- \* You can operate as part of a military unit and follow and give orders.
- \* You know how to fly Morgor ships and operate the invisibility technology built into them.





## SAVATORS

The Savators are downtrodden people, nearly all controlled by the Morgors. Native to the planet Jupiter (which they call Eurobus), most of the Savator nations have been vassal states of the Morgor empire for generations, giving food or manufactured items as goods, and their people as slaves.

The Savators are, in form, much like humans or the majority of the Martian races. The main difference is their skin color which is a light blue, with dark hair. Like red Martians, they are generally athletic, of a height with most humans, and have little or no body hair or beards.

Unlike the Morgors, Savators have a great appreciation for family, beauty, and science. The conquered Savator nations are forced to do the majority of the work that keeps the empire running, building the weapons and ships of the Morgors, and even developing new technology. With almost the entire planet under Morgor control, most of the Savators are resigned to the current system, and simply try to survive. The Savators are, by nature, not an aggressive people, though they will go to great lengths to defend their homes. In the end, however, the might of the Morgor armies overwhelmed them.

Yet, there are some Savator communities that have not yet succumbed. The nation of Zanor is an island of enormous mountains and great forests, which hinder the Morgors from using their airships to attack the nation. The home of John Carter's ally Han Du is another such community. There the people have used the prismatic sand with invisibility properties to disguise their homes, so that the Morgors cannot find the community at all.

Savators understand as much or more of the technology of Jupiter as the Morgors, and are capable of piloting the in-atmosphere ships, though the Morgors try to keep knowledge about the operation of interplanetary craft from

them. Savators learn how to fight as a matter of survival, and some are considered to be among the best swordsmen of the three worlds that John Carter has visited.

### ATTRIBUTE BONUSES

Add +2 to Empathy or Reason. Add +1 each to any two other attributes.

### WHAT YOU KNOW

- ✦ You can speak and read the common language of Jupiter.
- ✦ You know the ranks, customs, and culture of the Morgor empire.
- ✦ You know the basics of Jupiter's science and technology.
- ✦ You know of your own community and its neighbors.
- ✦ You know the animals, plants, and dangers of Jupiter's wilds.

### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

- ✦ The customs, language, or races of Barsoom.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✦ You know the basics of self-defense, including fighting with swords and knives.
- ✦ You know how to fly airships under most conditions.
- ✦ You know how to appear docile and avoid notice by Morgor soldiers and slavers.





## MASENAS

The Masenas are not a race of Barsoom, but come instead from Thuria, the closer moon of Mars. Though they are not the dominant species of Thuria, they do utterly control the forests in which they live, and the people of Thuria fear to enter their forests at night. The Masenas themselves make their homes in the treetops, building entire elevated towns, with ropes and platforms that allow for travel between the trees without setting foot on the ground. Even when hunting away from their town, Masenas will create a nest in a treetop so that they can rest in safety, away from the beasts of the forest floor.

To most other races, Masenas are extremely strange and ugly creatures. They have one eye in the center of their forehead, with a cat-like pupil, and a stiff mane of yellowish hair running down the center of their skull. The most distinguishing feature of their faces, however, is that they have two mouths.

The lower mouth has no lips, and is full of strong, sharp teeth that are permanently bared in a disturbing, skull-like grin. The upper mouth is narrower, round, and has protruding lips that are somewhat sphincter-like. This upper mouth is used for drinking water and other liquids — including blood. The lower mouth is used to bite and disable the Masena's prey (and enemies), as well as tear and chew solid food.

In body, Masenas are shaped much like humans or Martians, with a few distinct differences. An arboreal race, the Masenas have long fingers and toes, with prehensile thumbs on both hands and feet. The skin of Masenas is perhaps their most interesting trait, for it has a chameleon-like ability to change color to match the Masena's surroundings.

A Masena is cat-like in more ways than just their eye. They are strong and agile, with a lean musculature that allows them to move swiftly and surely. Their language and vocalizations are

also very catlike. They make purring noises to represent friendship and comfort, and mewing sounds for queries and other speech. Their battle cry is a loud, coughing roar. Masenas are predators and meat-eaters, and enjoy playing with their prey before killing it. They eat their meat raw, drinking the blood of their kill through their smaller, upper mouth. Watching a Masena eat is not pleasant. Masenas do not eat other Masenas, but have been known to eat other intelligent races.

Masenas do not fight with weapons, but are deadly unarmed fighters, with their sharp teeth and strong limbs. While fairly common on Thuria, a Masena on Barsoom would be considered quite unusual.

### ATTRIBUTE BONUSES

Subtract -1 from Reason. Add +2 to Daring and +1 to Might. Add +1 each to two of the following: Cunning, Empathy, or Passion.

### RACIAL TALENT

#### MIGHTY PREDATOR (GRADE 2)

*You do not know the ways of the sword or the knife, and you do not need them. Your own speed, might, and strong, sharp teeth are more than enough.*

✳ **Circumstance:** When fighting unarmed.

✳ **Effect:** You may always use Daring when making attack tests. When unarmed, your attacks have the Sharp quality.

You have no core equipment to start, and only 6 renown. This may be used to purchase a title within your culture or an ally from outside the Masena. It is unlikely you begin with a title outside your people, but that is up to individual groups to decide.

### WHAT YOU KNOW

- ✳ You can speak the language of the Masena and the common language of Thuria.
- ✳ You have general knowledge of your neighbors on Thuria.
- ✳ You know the forests and wilds in which your people live and hunt, including the traits of dangerous predators and beasts.

### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

- ✳ The customs, language, or races of Barsoom.
- ✳ How to fight with weapons.
- ✳ How to operate or repair an airship.
- ✳ The value of gems or precious metals, as they are very common (though still considered beautiful) on Thuria.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✳ Climb with great skill and speed.
- ✳ Hunt and ambush prey.
- ✳ Fight armed only with your hands and strong teeth.



## RENOWN AND OTHER WORLDS

Several of the new races here are alien to Barsoom. Others, like the Kaldanes and Goolians, are only found in isolated places on the Red Planet. While player heroes from these races still receive 10 renown at creation, it is worth noting that renown purchases from these races' native cultures may be of limited utility in some campaigns. For example, if a player hero Savator comes to Barsoom as a refugee and never returns to Jupiter, is the character able to use their titles or allies there? They aren't really appropriate as renown rewards — they are simply colorful character background that almost never comes up.

Players wishing to play alien races in campaigns that will never or only rarely interact with their own kind should discuss this issue with their narrator and work out an appropriate alternative to spending valuable renown for a grand title or potent ally that never surfaces in play. Here are some possible solutions.

- \* Refugees and exiles from alien cultures may start with 0 starting renown and gain Talents or other benefits much as Earthborn heroes do.
- \* Some or all renown may be banked at creation and used to quickly acquire accolades that will be useful in play.
- \* Accolades from alien cultures may be allowed, but their cost is greatly reduced to reflect how rarely they come into play.

Multiple solutions may be applied. For example, renown may be banked but costs to purchase alien titles and allies may also be reduced.

## PLAYING OTHER RACES OF THURIA

In addition to Masenas, there are other intelligent races on Thuria as well. The Tarids, Domnians, and other peoples of Barsoom's nearer moon appear to be very much like the people of Barsoom itself, though they lack some of the technology and knowledge taken for granted on Mars.

Thurians are very pale of skin, with blue hair, and tend to dress in harnesses covered in precious metals and jewels, for such are very common on Thuria. Culturally, they seem both similar to, and diverse as, the red Martian cultures, with their own religions, kingdoms, and rivalries.

If someone wishes to play a Thurian in a game, the easiest way is to have them use the attribute bonuses for red Martians. Thurians know the cultures, language, and politics of the kingdoms of Thuria, not Barsoom. They also have no knowledge of how to operate or repair airships.





## GOOLIANS (KANGAROO MEN)

The Kangaroo Men of the Toonolian Marshes are a rare people, numbering no more than several hundred, and are generally insignificant in the politics of Barsoom. They live in their “city” of Gooli on the island of Ompt — a village of thatched huts, though the Goolians claim it is the largest and most perfect city in the world.

This boastfulness and lack of perspective is the key trait of Goolian society. They consistently brag of their skill, importance, bravery, and riches, though they are all but unknown outside their own village. There is some indication that they are more aware of this than they appear — at least one Goolian has admitted that they know that the treasure hoard of the jeddak (a collection of brightly colored shells) is of no value to others, but they choose to assign it value so they can have a treasure that others will not steal. However, they often seem convinced of their own bravery and prowess, despite evidence to the contrary.

Physically, the Kangaroo Men are similar to red Martians from the waist up. From the waist down, however, they have powerful legs which give them impressive leaping abilities, and long tails which they use for balance. They are both oviparous (like all Martian races) and marsupials, with the hatched young remaining in a pouch on the Goolian females until they reach maturity.

The Goolians are ruled by Anatok, the Jeddak of Gooli, considered by them to be the greatest strategist in the world. This strategy seems mostly to consist of not attacking unless they outnumber the foe ten-to-one or more, and running from battle at the first sign of trouble.

Nothing is known about the origins or history of the Goolians, and they themselves seem unconcerned with such questions. Their tendencies toward cowardliness and boastfulness are almost certainly societal, and there is some evidence that, when shown proof of the value of bravery, they will demonstrate some measure themselves.

Any Goolian player characters should have either rejected many of the traits of Goolian society, or swiftly learn better from the other characters, if they don't want to be an annoyance to the other players.

### ATTRIBUTE BONUSES

Add +2 to one of the following attributes: Daring, Empathy, Passion, or Reason. Add +1 to any two others.

### RACIAL TALENT

#### NATURAL JUMPER (GRADE 2)

*Your powerful legs allow you to easily clear gaps and barriers that would stymie others.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When jumping over obstacles to cover ground.
- ✦ **Effect:** When confronted by an obstacle that can be traversed by jumping, reduce the difficulty of that obstacle by 1. In addition, when making a movement action during an action scene, reduce the Momentum cost to move an additional range by 1.

In addition, Goolian characters gain 6 renown to start with, as they are little known in Barsoom as a whole and have left their own society behind. This can be used to purchase an ally that the player character has met since they left Gooli, or perhaps someone that connects to the reason they left their home. It is unlikely that a Goolian would start with a title in any of the civilizations that make up the rest of Barsoom, though this, of course, is up to your own individual group. Goolians select equipment and core equipment as normal.

### WHAT YOU KNOW

- ✦ You can speak and read common Barsoomian.
- ✦ You know the dangers and beasts of the Toonolian Marshes.
- ✦ You know all the people of Gooli, and can likely name and describe them all.

### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

- ✦ The customs of people in distant places on Barsoom.
- ✦ How to use a pistol or rifle.
- ✦ How to operate or repair an airship.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✦ You know the basics of self-defense, including fighting with swords, knives, and spears.
- ✦ Hunt and forage for yourself.
- ✦ Cover ground quickly with massive leaps.
- ✦ Boast in grandiose fashion.





## NEW TALENTS AND ACCOLADES

This section presents various accolades and talents in two categories. The first are talents appropriate to Kaldane, Morgor, Savator, and Goolian characters. The second are talents and accolades appropriate to any character and following the era's primary themes: legacy and advancement. These elements are designed to be ready to pick up and use for both player heroes and narrator characters.



## KALDANE TALENTS

### COLD TASKMASTER (GRADE 2)

*You are a logical and exacting leader, always directing those under your command in an efficient manner.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When assisting, or leading an assisted test.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Reason when rolling to assist on a test. When leading an assisted test, any complications rolled cannot represent lost time or delays — you always maintain a flawless schedule.

### UNNERVING (GRADE 2)

*Your ability to separate from your Rykor, your emotionless manner, and unusual features all serve to disturb those with whom you interact.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** In non-physical conflicts.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may deal an additional 2 ☐ fear stress whenever you successfully attempt to frighten or unnerve an enemy.

### ONE BRAIN, MANY BODIES (GRADE 4)

*Your Rykor is not yourself, but simply a convenient vessel and beast of burden that you control. When injured, you can abandon one Rykor for another, leaving behind the pain and injury for a fresh body.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When you have suffered stress to your Injury stress track or wound afflictions and have a fresh Rykor available.
- ✱ **Effect:** Spend a Conflict action to remove all stress and one wound affliction from your Injury stress track. You may also spend 2 Momentum to remove an additional Wound affliction or 4 Momentum to remove two additional afflictions. You must have an uninjured, unmounted Rykor within Immediate range to use this talent.

## KALDANE ACCOLADES

The follow accolade can be taken by Kaldane characters.

### ESTEEMED LINEAGE

- ✱ **Cost:** 2
- ✱ **Effect:** Kaldanes possess a shared memory with their ancestors, allowing them to access the memories and experiences of their family lines. However, not all lineages are created equal. A Kaldane with this accolade has a particularly respected lineage that other Kaldanes admire and even envy. This status doesn't convey particular duties or authority as normal titles do, but it makes it easier to earn the attention and respect of other Kaldanes, especially when invoking the memories and experiences of their ancestors. When appropriate, difficulties to impress or convince other Kaldanes are reduced by 1, in addition to the roleplaying benefits of being a member of an esteemed lineage.

## KALDANE FLAWS

The following flaw is particularly suitable for Kaldanes, but could be taken by other characters.

### MANIPULATIVE

You are used to getting your way by convincing and controlling others. Whether by psychic domination, pulling rank, or some other methods, you can't resist opportunities to manipulate others into serving your whims and goals. If you must avoid this temptation and let those you could manipulate decide for themselves, you lose 2 Momentum.



## MORGOR TALENTS

### TOUGH AS BONE (GRADE 3)

*Your strong bones and relative lack of soft tissue make you much tougher than your skeletal appearance would suggest.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When suffering Injury stress from an attack.
- ✱ **Effect:** You ignore the first point of Injury stress you receive from each attack while fighting. If a foe strikes you with a successful unarmed attack, they suffer 1 point of Injury stress in return.

### FRIGHTENING FOE (GRADE 2)

*You take advantage of the effect your unnerving appearance has on the other races while fighting, especially up close.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking at Immediate range.
- ✱ **Effect:** Any attacks made against a defender in Immediate range have the Fearsome quality. The defender must be able to see you for this talent to work.

### POSITION OF STRENGTH (GRADE 2)

*You are used to always being the one in control of the situation and are adept at using a commanding position to get answers.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When demanding information from others.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may demand that a minion-class character who is present answer any one simple and relatively straightforward question. You also gain a d20 when seeking to interrogate or otherwise force information from a target.

## MORGOR ACCOLADES

### MORGOR TITLES

- ✱ **Cost:** Varies
- ✱ **Effect:** Morgors, being from Jupiter, do not share the same titles as Barsoom. For example, they have an emperor, not a jeddak. While

Burroughs never details the Morgor titles beyond their emperor, they are known to be an extremely warlike and violent race focused on conquest. Thus *John Carter of Mars* presents these speculative and militaristic titles.

COST	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
40	Emperor/ Empress	Ruler of the Morgors. Only one Morgor holds this title.
15	Lord Commander	High-ranking commander in charge of fleets and armies.
10	Imperial Heir	Relative or chosen successor of the existing emperor.
8	Commander	In charge of ship or large military force.
3	Sergeant	Commands a squad or assigned an important duty.
1	Champion	Rank-and-file fighting Morgor, though one respected for their skill.

Narrators wishing to craft their own Morgor titles are welcome to do so, though most should logically coincide with the structure presented here.

## MORGOR FLAWS

### ELITIST

You are sure your people are beyond other races, both in your science and civilization. You possess little patience for those who cannot or will not learn your superior ways or who defy your obvious natural superiority. When you adopt another's ways or let someone under your control or command follow their own customs and methods instead of your people's, you lose 3 Momentum.

## SAVATOR TALENTS

### LOW PROFILE (GRADE 3)

*You know how to blend in with the crowd and avoid notice — something of a survival trait for your people.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When trying to blend in and not be noticed.
- ✱ **Effect:** You gain an additional 2d20 on tests to look like you belong and avoid notice. If you succeed, anyone watching will not remember that they saw someone pass. Note that this assumes you are blending in with people that look at least a little like you, or while wearing an adequate disguise. A Savator will have hard time blending in among green Martians, for example.

### UNDERESTIMATED WARRIOR (GRADE 2)

*Morgors, or anyone else, who mistake you for a meek slave or unthreatening foe swiftly regret it.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** Facing a dismissive enemy.
- ✱ **Effect:** When in a physical conflict with a character who believes you to be incompetent, lesser, or untrained, you gain an extra d20 for tests. In addition, if you generate Momentum on a roll, gain an additional Momentum. This bonus lasts for the remainder of the conflict. After which, hopefully, the enemy will have learned their lesson.

### MAINTAIN MORALE (GRADE 2)

*Your position living under Morgor rule has forced you to find ways to avoid giving in to despair. This attitude can keep up the spirits of your allies as well.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When allies suffer Fear or Confusion stress.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may use a conflict action to remove a single Madness or Trauma affliction from an ally. No test is required, but you may make a test to remove additional afflictions as normal.



## SAVATOR ACCOLADES

### SUBORDINATE (TITLE)

- \* **Cost:** 1 less than the normal cost for a title.
- \* **Effect:** Many Savator serve the Morgors. Those of great loyalty and skill may earn rank and title, but they will always be seen as inferior to the Morgor, meaning they must step carefully when using their authority and power. A Savator can purchase a title in Morgor culture for 1 fewer renown than it would normally cost. This operates generally as a normal title of that rank, but Savators who disobey their Morgor superiors or even clash with those of equal or lesser rank may find themselves targeted for disciplinary action, demotion, and other punishments.

## SAVATOR FLAWS

### CONDITIONED

Your people have been subjugated and controlled by the Morgors for so long that you have a hard time standing against them, even if you personally despise their tyrannical ways. Once per session, the narrator can have a Morgor give you a command. This command will not be life-threatening but it can be dangerous and is likely harmful to yourself, your allies, innocents, or some other honorable or heroic person or group. If you defy the order you must pay 5 Momentum, taking any excess you cannot pay as Confusion stress.

## MASENA TALENTS

### BORN CLIMBER (GRADE 3)

*You come from an arboreal race, and you can climb almost as swiftly as you can run, moving up obstacles that would completely stymie lesser climbers.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When climbing.
- \* **Effect:** When confronted with an obstacle that may be climbed over or around, you may climb Average (D1) obstacles without making a test. When rolling to traverse more difficult obstacles, reduce difficulties by 1.

### SKIN LIKE A DARSEEN (GRADE 1)

*Your skin takes on color to match your surroundings. You have learned to use this protective coloration to help you hide more easily, particularly in the dense forests of Thuria.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When trying to hide.
- \* **Effect:** When you make a test to hide (whether in fear or in ambush), you reduce the difficulty of that test by 1.

### AMBUSH PREDATOR (GRADE 3)

*Your people have an instinct for stalking their prey, one which also works to your advantage when ambushing enemies.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When ambushing an enemy.
- \* **Effect:** When preparing an ambush, you will never be detected by a minion. When making a test to ambush a foe, increase any Momentum gained by 1.

### LAND ON YOUR FEET (GRADE 4)

*You have an innate sense of balance, and a grace and quickness that allow you to avoid harm when that balance fails you.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When trying to keep your balance or avoid falling.
- \* **Effect:** You always roll an extra 2d20 when attempting to keep your balance or avoid falling. If you do fall, you reduce the amount of stress you take from the fall by 2.

## MASENA ACCOLADES

### MASENA TITLES

*As a predatory, isolated society, Masena lack the traditional titles of Martian society. Masena characters can gain renown and accolades outside their communities on their adventures, but within their cultures in the forests of Thuria titles are tied to their position within their troop.*

The Masena ranks are speculative and will not be found in canonical Barsoom. Masena are described as living in troops as a reference to modern arboreal and mountain-dwelling primates such as chimpanzees and gorillas.

COST	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
10	Chieftain/ Chieftess	Head of a troop. Often the best hunter and warrior.
5	Troop Elder	Respected member of the troop. Leads raids and other endeavors.
2	Hunter	Recognized as a skilled hunter and warrior among the troop.

## MASENA FLAWS

### SAVAGE

You are a predator and hunter at heart. You may visit more civilized areas and cultures, but you will never truly feel at home there. You must spend time in the wilds hunting, exploring, or otherwise acting among nature once per session. If you do not, you lose 5 Momentum. If you cannot afford to pay, the excess is taken as Confusion stress.

This flaw is intended for Masena, but any "wild man" or "raised by animals" character might develop a similar flaw.

## GOOLIAN TALENTS

### ESCAPE AND EVASION (GRADE 3)

*Your people tend to run and hide when faced with bad odds — or even odds. While you are braver than most other Goolians, you still are very practiced at getting away from difficult situations.*

- \* **Circumstances:** When attempt to elude pursuit or capture.
- \* **Effect:** When you make any test to run, hide, or elude anyone chasing you or attempting to capture you, gain an additional 2d20 on your roll.

### MASTERFUL BOAST (GRADE 3)

*Your people are known for making the most grandiose of boasts, and have turned boasting into an art form. You are particularly skilled at this, impressing or intimidating people with tales of your prowess.*



- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attempting to impress or intimidate someone by boasting.
- ✱ **Effect:** When boasting, gain an additional d20 for rolls to impress or intimidate others. When inflicting Confusion or Fear stress as part of a boast, deal an additional 2.

## GOOLIAN ACCOLADES

### GRAND BOAST

- ✱ **Cost:** 1
- ✱ **Effect:** Goolians often exaggerate their conquests, victories, and struggles. Boasting and taking credit for others' work is much easier than doing it yourself. Because of their love of boasting and undeserved credit, the Goolians tend to accept and respect boasts that even if not always true, are at least worthy of praise and admiration. This accolade represents a character who has claimed some great victory or boast that wins them admiration and praise among their people. It need not be true, and in fact it probably isn't. As long as the boast is not directly countered, other Goolians treat the character as a respected figure to be admired, emulated, and even feared. This accolade carries no title, but many Goolian leaders claim at least one grand boast pertaining to some exaggerated victory or imagined conquest.

## GOOLIAN FLAWS

### BRAGGART

Your people are not known for their bravery. In fact, claiming undeserved credit for heroics is a time-honored tactic among your culture. Whenever you pass up the chance to take more than your fair share of credit for a heroic action or accomplishment, lose 2 Momentum. Note that you are only penalized for actions you were somehow involved in, even if that involvement was minimal. Thus you are penalized for not making grand claims about a fight where you spent most of the time hiding, but not an adventure on the other side of the world you were nowhere near.

## GOOLIANS, BOASTS, AND COMEDY

Goolian characters can be, simply put, really annoying. They take credit for things they don't do, they aren't particularly honorable or likable, and are otherwise off-putting. Chief among the elements that make Goolians difficult and unlikely as characters, especially player heroes, is their boasting.

Players and their heroes work hard at their victories in most cases. They fight hard, sacrifice, and put in serious time to become grand heroes who succeed at great things on their adventures. This makes the Goolian tendency to come in and claim credit for everything excessively off-putting. This is fine for Goolian antagonists who the heroes may already dislike for various reasons, but it can be a problem for Goolian heroes. A hero who constantly annoys and upsets their fellow heroes isn't very much fun to be around, no matter how faithful their actions are to their culture's customs and common behaviors.

However, there's one relatively reliable fix for this. Comedy.

Goolian characters who exaggerate and boast

in amusing ways that clearly signal they are not to be taken completely seriously — except perhaps by other Goolians and the extremely naïve — can be fun to have around. Especially if players and narrators come up with entertaining ways to spin events when a Goolian character starts taking credit. That Goolian who bumped into John Carter once, causing them both to take a spill to the floor? He can talk of how he toppled the great Warlord. The Goolian who got shot trying to steal from a fallen foe? She can tell the tale of how she saw the villain still lived and threw herself in the path of an attack meant for another. If a boast is absurd, carries a sliver of truth, but the difference between the claim and reality is funny? Most other characters will tolerate or even enjoy the interaction.

This approach can be very effective, especially if not overused. A heroic Goolian in particular might tend towards boasting and exaggeration, but they won't truly undermine a friend's accomplishments. Instead they will just inflate their contributions in funny ways.





## MIXED-HERITAGE CHARACTERS

As described in the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook, most of the races of Barsoom are perfectly capable of interbreeding — that is, in fact, where the red Martians came from. This becomes more common in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, when John Carter's adventures have brought the long-separated races into more frequent contact.

Basic rules for creating player characters of mixed heritage are described on page 18 of the *John Carter* core rulebook. In addition to those rules, the following talents can be selected from a character's four starting ranks of talents. This will give the character a little additional flavor that matches their mixed heritage.



### EARTHBORN AND RED MARTIAN

#### INTO THE UNKNOWN (GRADE 1)

*It is the most adventurous of Jasoomians that find their way to the Red Planet. Combined with your red Martian heritage (themselves a daring people), you find yourself drawn to seek out new adventures.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When avoiding dangers in a new location.
- \* **Effect:** When making a new discovery or exploring a place unknown to your people, any Momentum you gain on tests to avoid dangers is increased by 1.

### EARTHBORN AND OKAR

#### EYE FOR THE DETAILS (GRADE 1)

*The Okar are generally considered perceptive and quick of wit, and Earthborn are remarkably fast at learning Martian language and culture. Together, these traits allow you to catch at a glance details that others might miss.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When studying a new place or phenomenon.
- \* **Effect:** When you spend a few moments studying a new place, phenomenon, artifact, or similar (such as first encountering a new written language, a new technological device, etc.) you may ask the narrator one question about it that must be answered truthfully. You can only use this talent once per scene (though you may spend Momentum as normal to get more questions).

### EARTHBORN AND FIRST BORN

#### PHYSICALLY IMPOSING (GRADE 1)

*You have both the impressive might of your Earthborn ancestors, and the striking physique common to your First Born kin.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When trying to impress others through a feat or strength of physicality.
- \* **Effect:** When attempting to impress, awe, or intimidate someone with a feat of strength, grace, or other physical endeavor, you gain an additional d20.

### EARTHBORN AND WHITE MARTIAN

#### PSYCHICALLY RESISTANT (GRADE 1)

*All Jasoomians have some innate resistance to mind reading, but you combine that with the predilection for psychic abilities shared by the oldest of the Martian races.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When targeted by a psychic power or talent.
- \* **Effect:** When someone attempts to read, control, or affect your mind against your will, you roll an additional d20 in your attempts to resist it.

### RED MARTIAN AND OKAR

#### EASY TO OPEN UP TO (GRADE 1)

*Your appearance and mannerisms help you fit in anywhere, and help you to make people comfortable with you wherever you go.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When fitting in.
- \* **Effect:** When trying to put others at ease or make them trust you, roll an additional d20.

### RED MARTIAN AND FIRST BORN

#### MASTER OF THE AIR (GRADE 1)

*Airships are of vital importance to the cultures of both your parents, and raised among the ubiquitous airships of Mars, you have developed a knack for piloting.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When piloting airships and other flying craft.
- \* **Effect:** Reduce all environment-based difficulties while piloting by 1.



## COLORATION AND HERITAGE

Given the dramatic skin tones of the Martian people, some readers may be naturally curious how combining various individual genetics and appearance manifests in offspring. In the case of John Carter and his children, we have a clear example — the children tend to inherit some of Carter's earthly might, have some of his coloration and features, but mostly appear as red Martians.

For other combinations of heritage, there are some hints as well. The Okar, white Martians, and Firstborn all interbred to create the red Martians. However, it was centuries of interbreeding between all three groups that caused this, not a single pairing. So it is likely that a modern Okar and First Born pairing wouldn't produce a red Martian, but instead a dark-golden-skinned child which combines traits from both parents. The child of a white Martian and an Okar might be pale yellow skinned and possibly hairless, or

perhaps lacking the ability to grow facial hair if male. Red Martian pairings would likely result in children that look mostly like red Martians, but have darker, more golden, or paler skin based on the heritage of the other parent.

Earthborn heritage is more complex. Earthborn generally lack the extreme skin coloration and common genetic traits of the Martian people, but possess a larger variety of noticeable but less dramatic traits to pass on. An Earthborn person of African heritage is not "black" the way the black-skinned First Born are, but their child with a red Martian may be somewhat darker skinned than John Carter's offspring. Despite historical slurs, an Asian Earthborn's skin does not resemble the canary-yellow of the Okar. However, a child who is part Asian and part Martian might inherit some facial features or other genetic traits from their Earthborn parent.

Fortunately, for the most part these differences are cosmetic and would be treated as such across Barsoom. If an Earthborn Latino's children with a red Martian noble look slightly different than Carthoris or Tara? It is recognized as evidence of how different parents produce different-looking children and that's that. Barsoomian society seems to lack the attitudes of some other places toward skin color and mixed-heritage offspring, especially when their parents are already accepted in a nation or region. They certainly don't care about Earthborn prejudices regarding ethnicity.

In the end, narrators and players describing mixed heritage characters are encouraged to be entertaining and sensible, not offensive or crude. Racism and illogical prejudices based around mixed heritage characters may surface in the occasional villain, but it is decidedly unheroic behavior and should generally be avoided.

### RED MARTIAN AND WHITE MARTIAN

#### LINES OF INFLUENCE (GRADE 1)

*As a scion of the most numerous race on Barsoom and the greatest manipulators on the planet, you have a natural instinct for the webs of influence and politics that can be found in any group.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When observing a social or political group.
- \* **Effect:** When you observe a jeddak's court, a secret society, or any social group, you may ask the narrator one question relating to the lines of influence and power in the group (such as "who has the most influence on the jeddak" or "who is looking for allies"). You may use this talent once per scene.

### WHITE MARTIAN AND OKAR

#### QUICK WITTED (GRADE 1)

*Both white Martians and yellow Martians are known for being cunning and clever — you exemplify this side of both of your parents and can always think on your feet.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When surprised or suddenly confronted with new information.
- \* **Effect:** Whenever you are surprised, whether through failing a test to avoid an ambush, the narrator spending Threat, or another reason, you immediately gain 1 Momentum.

### WHITE MARTIAN AND FIRST BORN

#### PARAGON (GRADE 1)

*Both the First Born and the white Martians are convinced of their own superiority to the other Martian races. It is no surprise then that you have a supreme*

*amount of confidence in your own abilities as a leader — a confidence that is often a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When leading or commanding others.
- \* **Effect:** When making tests to lead or command others, if you gain any Momentum, increase the amount of Momentum you receive by 1.

### OKAR AND FIRST BORN

#### MASTER OF INTRIGUE (GRADE 1)

*Learning about intrigue and secrets is a matter of survival in the courts of both the Okar and the First Born, and you were an excellent student. You can always spot a deception.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When trying to tell if someone is lying.
- \* **Effect:** You gain an additional d20 when trying to discern whether someone is telling you the truth.



# CHAMPIONS OF THE ERA

*"No, it was night before last," he said. "It must have been some fight," he added. "I was not there, but the whole castle has been talking about it ever since. Those who fought against you say you are the greatest swordsman that ever lived. . .*

*– Unnamed warrior, Swords of Mars*

While the first three books in the *John Carter* series focus entirely on Carter himself as the protagonist, the later books have a number of new heroes that become the focus of their own stories. In addition, there are many new enemies, influential allies, and rivals that appear in these stories, any of which could play a role in your own campaign.

Like the characters presented in the core book, the characters in this chapter do not have

core equipment, accolades, or other mechanics that are only used for player characters. A player wishing to make one of these characters their own can do so by adding these, along with a flaw. The character will likely also need additional talents to match those of other player characters.

A few of these characters are particularly unusual, such as Vor Daj and Hovan Du, who are presented during the period where they had the bodies of a Hormad and a white ape. These can

give narrators some ideas for how to handle any similar situations that may arise for player characters in their own games.

In addition to the new characters, we've included some additional talents for characters from previous eras of the setting, specifically John Carter, Dejah Thoris, Carthoris of Helium, and Tars Tarkas. These additional talents represent some of the ways the characters changed and grew in the later novels in the *John Carter* series.





## NEW NARRATOR CHARACTERS

These characters are generally presented at the height of their adventures during the era, though in a few cases they are presented where they are at the end of their story, if they are in a position where it is likely they could interact with player characters. Any character presented here can be customized for your campaign by adding or removing talents, or even adjusting their attributes, if you feel that this will make them a better fit for your campaign or provide a more appropriate challenge for player characters.

### HORTAN GUR

#### JEDDAK OF TORQUAS

*Here seemed to be the principal force of the attacking horde. Here a great platform had been erected whereon Carthoris could see squatting a huge green warrior, surrounded by others of his kind.*

*This, then, must be the notorious Hortan Gur, Jeddak of Torquas, the fierce old ogre of the south-western hemisphere...*

#### ATTRIBUTES

DARING 7	CUNNING 6	EMPATHY 3
MIGHT 8	PASSION 4	REASON 4



## TALENTS

### MIGHTY WARLORD OF THE TORQUAS (GRADE 4)

*Your personal might cows other green Martians and convinces them to sacrifice themselves in your service.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When leading green Martians in battle.
- \* **Effect:** You may always use Might to command or intimidate the green Martians you are leading and when attacking in melee when fighting against or leading green Martians in battle. You may also sacrifice a bodyguard or warrior loyal to you within Near range to avoid taking an affliction. The sacrificed warrior takes the affliction instead, or blacks out and is dispatched if a minion.

### FOCUSED LEADER (GRADE 2)

*You do not let fear or confusion dissuade you from your goal.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When you suffer Madness or Trauma affliction.
- \* **Effect:** Ignore the effects of one Madness or Trauma affliction for the scene.

### FOUR-ARMED FOR WAR (GRADE 1)

*Your warlike, combative culture and four arms give you an edge in combat, allowing you to attack with multiple weapons or steady your rifle with ease.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attacking with melee weapons or using a rifle.
- \* **Effect:** When you generate Momentum while attacking with a melee weapon or rifle, gain an extra Momentum.

## BACKGROUND

The vast, empty sea beds of Barsoom are the home of the green Martian tribes, longtime enemies of the red Martian kingdoms. The Torquas, one of these hordes of green warriors, control a smaller territory than the great hordes of the Tharks and Warhoons, but notoriously no red Martian has explored the heart of their territory and escaped alive. This fierce reputation of the Torquas horde comes from two sources: their exceptional skill with the heavy guns they use to fight off red Martian airships, and the might of Hortan Gur, Jeddak of the Torquas.

Hortan Gur is large, even for a green Martian, and a mighty warrior. He is possessed of a full measure of the savagery required to rule a tribe of this brutal race, and has the cruel temper that would be expected of a green Martian jeddak. However, he does not let his anger or savagery rule him. He keeps control of his warriors with both strength and cunning, and, even in battle, he maintains a balance between viciousness and strategy.

Hortan Gur has long enjoyed the riches of Torquas, an ancient city that was considered a beacon of culture and sophistication before the drying of the Martian seas. However, Hortan Gur was not one to be satisfied with what he already possessed. Within the mountains in Torquas territory is a lush valley containing the lost white Martian city of Lothar. Hortan Gur believed he would be the one to finally conquer this city, leading his horde to assault Lothar. However, he did not understand the nature of his enemy, and the horde was put to rout by the deadly bowmen conjured by the Lotharians' illusions. Many of his best warriors were killed by the strange bowmen, and by the vicious banths that the Lotharians unleashed on the green horde.

Forced to return to Torquas in defeat, Hortan Gur's position as jeddak has become precarious. With his jeds looking for a weakness that they can use to take his position, he may be forced into more desperate measures to maintain his control of Torquas.





## VAS KOR

### SPY AND SABOTEUR OF DUSAR

*And then the noble spoke, and like a flash it all came back to Carthoris — the forward servant upon the landing-stage at Ptarth that time that he had been explaining the intricacies of his new compass to Thuvan Dihn; the lone slave that had guarded his own hangar that night he had left upon his ill-fated journey for Ptarth — the journey that had brought him so mysteriously to far Aaanthor.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### FITTING IN (GRADE 2)

*You are adept at convincing others to consider you one of their own. With the proper harness or disguise, you can enter a city or even a palace without seeming out of place.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When convincing others you belong.
- ✱ **Effect:** Add a bonus d20 on tests to convince others you belong in a place or group. With an appropriate disguise, you may pose as a member of any race or culture with the same basic language and physical form without fear of casual discovery.

##### SABOTEUR (GRADE 4)

*You can quickly learn just enough about technology to know how break it.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When damaging a device or disrupting technology so that it works against its user.
- ✱ **Effect:** Add a bonus d20 to all tests to sabotage, trap, or destroy inventions or technology. Your sabotage will not be obvious to casual inspection; it requires a thorough examination to discover. Any stress resulting directly from your sabotage is increased by

2 🎲

#### BACKGROUND

*It is arguably Vas Kor's skill and cleverness that is key to the success of the schemes of his master, Astok of Dusar. A nobleman in service to the Prince of Dusar, Vas Kor posed as a slave in Ptarth, learning the details of Carthoris of Helium's wondrous controlling destination compass. He sabotaged the device, sending Carthoris wildly off course, which threw more suspicion on the Prince of Helium.*

*Vas Kor is ambitious, scheming, cold, and cruel, willing to commit vile acts to advance his own state and those of his patron. He agreed to murder Thuvia of Ptarth for Astok, showing little compunction as long as he is properly rewarded for the crime.*



# ASTOK

## VILE PRINCE OF DUSAR

*His compunctions cooled as the self-satisfaction of a near revenge crowded out the finer instincts that had for a moment asserted themselves — the good that he had inherited from the slave woman was once again submerged in the bad blood that had come down to him from his royal sire; as, in the end, it always was.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### CUNNING LIES AND SCHEMES (GRADE 3)

*It's not that you never behave dishonorably — it's that you are clever enough to make sure there is always someone else to take the blame.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When disguising your actions or throwing blame on another.
- ✦ **Effect:** When hiding your own guilt or framing someone else, you use Cunning for any action related to this deception. You increase the difficulty to see through your lies and schemes by 1.

#### TREACHEROUS (GRADE 2)

*Your loyalties remain only while someone is useful to you.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When betraying another.
- ✦ **Effect:** If you betray or abandon another, you may use Cunning for any action directly related to this betrayal, such as escaping a scene to leave someone to die. Any Momentum generated by such successful actions is increased by 1.

### BACKGROUND

Prince of the small red Martian city of Dusar, Astok is a far cry from the noble jeddaks of cities like Ptarth or Helium. The inhabitants of Dusar are often considered scheming and untrustworthy by the people of the other red kingdoms, and Prince Astok exemplifies these traits. He is the son of a slave woman and Nutus, the cruel Jeddak of Dusar, and he fears his father's wrath more than anything else on the face of Barsoom — a fear which can drive him to even more vile acts than he would think to commit on his own.

When Thuvia of Ptarth refused him, Astok had her kidnapped. In a cunning move, he arranged for Prince Carthoris to be framed for the crime. His plans worked almost too well, leading to a war with the cities of Dusar, Ptarth, and Kaol against Helium. When Astok attempted to kill Thuvia to cover up his involvement, she was rescued just in time by Carthoris, leaving Astok to face the consequences of his crime.



## TARIO

### JEDDAK OF LOTHAR

"You are a lie!" he shrieked. "You are both lies, and you dare to come before Tario, last and mightiest of the jeddaks of Barsoom, and assert your reality."

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### UNMATCHED ILLUSIONIST (GRADE 10)

*Your mastery of illusions is such that you can create entire groups of living creatures so accurately others cannot tell the difference between them and real beings. They can interact with others and even kill.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** Making illusory creatures.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can create creatures that function as real. Though illusory, these creatures function exactly like a real creature. You can maintain up to 6 illusory creatures at a time, and these illusions function as minions. When in a conflict, creating or replenishing illusions that have been defeated requires a Conflict action. If someone has reason to believe that the creatures are illusory (they know of your ability, or they saw the illusion appear from empty air) they can always justify using Reason as part of their defense.

##### SINGULAR ILLUSIONIST (GRADE 9)

*You have focused your illusory powers for so long that you are able to create illusions that are more real and more persistent than even the greatest creations of other illusionists. Perhaps one day you will be able to create an illusion so real that it lives on even after you stop maintaining it.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** Making a single illusory creature.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can create creatures that function as real. Though illusory, these creatures function exactly like a real creature. You can maintain a single creature that functions as a monster with a menace of 1. When in a conflict, creating this illusion requires a Conflict action, and if someone has reason to believe that the creature is illusory they can always justify using Reason as part of their defense.

##### YOU WANT WHAT I WANT (GRADE 2)

*You can assault a target's mind, breaking their will. Though you cannot completely control their actions, you can alter their goals, making them believe their desires or feelings are what you have implanted in them.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When making eye contact.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can make a Conflict action using **Daring + Reason** that deals 1 ☐ of Confusion damage. Effects rolled on this attack inflict 1 additional Confusion stress. If your attack creates an affliction, you can then attempt a **Cunning + Reason** test to implant a suggestion in the target, relating to how they feel about a specific thing or person, or what they want in a situation. The target will believe the suggestion is their own will, but you cannot control how they act in response to their new goal or belief.

#### BACKGROUND

Tario would be considered mad by most of the peoples of Barsoom — if not for the remarkable abilities that he possesses. Tario is the jeddak of the lost city of Lothar, and, like all Lotharians, he has developed psychic abilities that can conjure mental illusions, including warriors with the ability to kill. He can also

partially control the minds and emotions of others.

Cruel, capricious, and vain, Tario rules the few remaining Lotharians as a tyrant and absolute ruler. When Carthoris and Thuvia of Ptarh are brought into the city and into his presence, he attempts to kill Carthoris and control Thuvia. With the help of an ally among the Lotharians, they both escape from the city.

#### ILLUSIONS AS A PLOT DEVICE

In the book *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*, the abilities of the illusionists, particularly the abilities of Tario and the other Lotharians, went beyond the abilities listed here. They were able to generate companies of troops, almost entire armies, by themselves, and Tario did in fact create an illusory soldier, Kar Komak, who eventually gained independent life and was even able to create illusions himself.

In terms of creating large numbers of illusory minions, the rules here are created with a view toward being potent and threatening, but not overwhelming to player characters opposing Tario. If it makes sense for more minions to enter the scene, you can always use the rules for spending Threat to bring in reinforcements listed on page 146 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook.

As for creating an illusory character that is a full narrator character villain or ally, that is entirely dependent on your own game. You can add one just like you would any new narrator character; it just happens that this character has a rather unique origin.



## DJOR KANTOS

### HEROIC SON OF THE GREAT CAPTAIN

*They liked to be together, for they liked the same things and the same people and the same books and their dancing was a joy, not only to themselves but to those who watched them. She could not imagine wanting to marry anyone other than Djor Kantos.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### CHARMING COURTIER (GRADE 1)

✱ **Circumstances:** When interacting formally with a noble of a red Martian city.

✱ **Effect:** You can reroll the result of a failed Passion-based attempt to charm a noble.

##### SWIFT REFLEXES (GRADE 2)

*You have learned swift sword-play and honed your combat reflexes at your father's side.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When Counters striking.

✱ **Effect:** You may Counters strike for 2 Momentum instead of the usual 3. If your Counters strike is successful, you deal an additional 1 of damage.

#### BACKGROUND

Son of the heroic Kantos Kan, Djor Kantos has established himself as a valiant officer and fighting-man in his own right. Like his father, Djor Kantos is a charming, clever, and bold leader of the soldiers of Helium. He was part of the Heliumite naval operation to rescue Dejah Thoris from the First Born, and his friendship with Carthoris, as well as his father's friendship with John Carter, meant that he was always very close to the Warlord's family.

This connection was only strengthened by the wish, expressed by both John Carter and Kantos Kan, that Djor Kantos marry Tara of Helium, Carter's daughter. Both Djor Kantos and Tara of Helium accepted this without complaint, as they were good friends who enjoyed their time together. Both mistook this friendship for love, until each chanced to fall in love with another.

When Tara of Helium went missing, Djor Kantos was among the first to search for her. But as time passed, and Tara was given up for dead, Djor Kantos fell in love with Olivia Marthis, and the two were married. When Tara of Helium was found, she was thrilled, both that her friend had found love, and that she was free to marry Gahan of Gathol.

## VALLA DIA

### KINDLY PRINCESS OF DUHOR

*... there had been revealed to me little by little the wondrous beauties of her soul, until at last I no longer saw the hideous, disfigured face of Xaxa when I looked upon her, but the eyes of my heart penetrated deeper to the loveliness that lay within that sweet mind.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### WHERE THERE IS LIFE, THERE IS HOPE (GRADE 4)

*You never let yourself fall into despair, for you know you have survived terrible ordeals, and that life is sweet.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When you suffer a Madness or Trauma affliction.

✱ **Effect:** As a Conflict action, you may automatically remove one Madness or Trauma affliction from yourself. You may only do this once per scene.

##### PRINCESS OF MARS (GRADE 2)

*As a woman of a noble house of Barsoom, you are swift to rebuke or strike those that would dare assault you.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When physically attacked by a red Martian.

✱ **Effect:** When attacked by a red Martian, you may Counters strike for 2 Momentum instead of the usual 3. If your Counters strike is a non-physical attack, you roll an additional d20 and deal an additional 2 of Fear or Confusion damage.

#### BACKGROUND

A kind-hearted and beautiful princess, Valla Dia has suffered more than her fair share of hardship. Born the Princess of Duhor, her beauty caught the eye of the cruel Jal Had of Amhor. He attacked her city while it was undefended, with the intention of abducting her. Unwilling to suffer Jal Had's attentions, Valla Dia disguised her face and pretended to be a slave girl in the palace, hoping to be overlooked. She was eventually sold to Ras Thavas, who kept her in stasis until, eventually, he sold her body to Xaxa, Jeddara of Phundahl, switching the brains of the two women.

This then would have been the cruel end of Valla Dia, if she had not caught the heart of Ulysses Paxton of Earth. Initially intrigued by her beauty, her gentle spirit caused him to fall in love with her. This set him on a path that resulted in Valla Dia's restoration to both her own body, and to her rightful place as Princess of Duhor.



## GHEK

### RENEGADE KALDANE

"Always have I been taught differently," replied Ghek; "but since I have known this woman and you, of another race, I have come to believe that there may be other standards fully as high and desirable as those of the kaldanes. At least I have had a glimpse of the thing you call happiness and I realize that it may be good even though I have no means of expressing it."

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### MEMORIES OF THE PAST (GRADE 2)

All Kaldanes have developed the instincts of their forebears into something nearing the level of racial memory. You are particularly skilled at remembering and gleanng useful information from the lives of your ancestors.

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When you encounter something for the first time.
- ✦ **Effect:** If you can come up with a plausible way that an ancestor could have encountered this thing (as long as it is not a completely new phenomenon), you may ask the narrator one question about the item, creature, or phenomenon. When acting on this information, you gain an additional d20 to tests.

##### UNNERVING (GRADE 2)

Your ability to separate from your Rykor, your emotionless manner, and unusual features all serve to disturb those with whom you interact.

- ✦ **Circumstance:** In non-physical conflicts.
- ✦ **Effect:** You may deal an additional 2 Fear stress whenever you successfully attempt to frighten or unnerve an enemy.

#### BACKGROUND

Like all Kaldanes, Ghek is logical and rational, almost to a fault. While coldly logical by the standards of most of the races of Mars, he is something of a heretic among his own people. This rebellion began when he captured Tara of Helium and found that her singing filled him with pleasant feelings that he had not before experienced. When the other Kaldanes discovered his emotional response to music, they declared him tainted and defective, and sentenced him to death.

Along with Gahan of Gathol, Ghek freed Tara from the clutches of Luud, and the three escaped Bantoom together. The Kaldane aided the two in Manator, using his unique abilities to move around the hidden passageways of the jeddak's palace. Ghek eventually returned to Helium, finding a place for himself among the red Martians.



# LUUD

## KALDANE KING

*You would pit your feeble intellect against mine! Even now you are planning to slay me. If you are thwarted in that you expect to slay yourself. You will learn the power of mind over matter. I am the mind. You are the matter.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### MEMORIES OF THE PAST (GRADE 2)

*All Kaldanes have developed the instincts of their forebears into something nearing the level of racial memory. You are particularly skilled at remembering and gleaning useful information from the lives of your ancestors.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When you encounter something for the first time.
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#### UNNERVING (GRADE 2)

*Your ability to separate from your Rykor, your emotionless manner, and unusual features all serve to disturb those with whom you interact.*

- \* **Circumstance:** In non-physical conflicts.
- \* **Effect:** You may deal an additional 2 ☐ Fear stress whenever you successfully attempt to frighten or unnerve an enemy.

#### MIND CONTROL (GRADE 3)

*You can assault a target's mind, breaking their will and eventually taking control of their actions. This requires eye contact to initiate.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When making eye contact.
- \* **Effect:** You can make a Conflict action using **Daring + Reason** that deals 1 ☐ of Confusion stress. Effects rolled on this attack inflict 1 additional Confusion stress. If your Mind Control attack creates an affliction in the target, you can then attempt a **Cunning + Reason** test to take control of the target's actions. Once in control, you may command the character to act as you see fit. If the character wishes to oppose the controller's commands, they can take 1 ☐ Confusion stress and make another test.

### BACKGROUND

A king Kaldane, Luud is larger than other Kaldanes, and his mental abilities are even more powerful. He is utterly devoted to the Kaldane ideal of developing into beings of pure mind, and considers all beings other than Kaldanes to be lesser creatures — and all Kaldanes to be lesser compared to himself and the other “king” Kaldanes. The king Kaldanes have powerful abilities to control the bodies of those who look into their eyes, and are the source for their line of Kaldanes, each giving birth to the other Kaldanes in their own “family.”

Tara of Helium is captured by the Kaldane Ghek while in the valley of Bantoom, and is brought before Luud as the first red Martian they have seen in many generations. Seeing her as little more than the mindless and headless Rykors that the Kaldanes use for their bodies, Luud intends to use her either as a food source or as breeding stock for stronger and healthier Rykors. Turhan the panthan rescues Tara from Luud, killing the Kaldane in the process — though he is certain to be replaced by another, identical Kaldane that will also be called Luud, as is the Kaldane way.



## XAXA

### TYRANT JEDDARA OF PHUNDAHL

*She taxes them until they can scarce stagger beneath their burden, she misrules them, exploits them, betrays them, and they fall down and worship at her feet.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### HIGH PRIESTESS OF TUR (GRADE 4)

*You are the living interpreter of the will of Tur, and no one can gainsay you when you speak for the god.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When dealing with followers of the god Tur, or those who were raised in the city of Phundahl.

✱ **Effect:** In interactions with the followers of the religion of the god Tur, or those who grew up in Phundahl (and were raised in this faith), you gain a bonus 2d20 to all rolls to intimidate, coerce, or deceive them. You also inflict an additional 2 ☐ of stress in non-physical conflicts with them.

##### FEARED TYRANT (GRADE 2)

*Those who do not follow your commands suffer a terrible fate! Your people know to fear your disapproval.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When commanding your people.

✱ **Effect:** Characters under your command must obey your every order or suffer 2 ☐ Fear damage. This damage can be resisted with a Challenging (D2) **Passion + Reason** test, with Momentum reducing damage by 1 ☐ per point spent.

#### WHATEVER IT TAKES (GRADE 2)

*You have no intention of falling prey to age, death, or defeat. You will do whatever it takes to avoid your fate.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When facing defeat or death.

✱ **Effect:** Once per session, when facing defeat or death, you gain 3 Momentum. You must spend the Momentum to help avoid your fate: you cannot save it for later.

#### BACKGROUND

*Xaxa is the cruel, vain, and petty ruler of the red Martian city of Phundahl. One of the rare ruling jeddars on Barsoom, she maintains her power through fear — and through manipulation of Phundahl's blind faith in the god Tur.*

*Xaxa has ruled Phundahl for an incredibly long time, and she intends to rule longer still. Having aged into a withered and ugly crone, Xaxa could no longer stand to live within her own body, and sought out the brilliant scientist Ras Thavas, who could transfer her brain to a new body. She picked the body of the young and beautiful Valla Dia, and has returned to Phundahl, intending to rule for another lifetime — or more, if she can continue to pay Ras Thavas for new bodies.*



## JAL HAD

### PRINCE OF AMHOR

*Jal Had would unquestionably punish him for deserting his post; and Jal Had's punishments were quite often fatal.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### **DISHONORABLE MEANS (GRADE 2)**

*You have no compunctions about using any weapon you have at hand, caring nothing about honor.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking in a dishonorable fashion.

✱ **Effect:** You may always use Reason when attacking dishonorably, such as using poison or when using a pistol against a foe wielding a sword. You also add an additional d20 to such attacks.

##### **PARANOIA (GRADE 2)**

*You know that everyone could be out to get you, and are always on your guard.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When ambushed.

✱ **Effect:** When someone attempts to ambush you, increase the difficulty of their test by 1.

#### BACKGROUND

The prince of the small city of Amhor, in the vicinity of the Toonolian Marshes, Jal Had has a dire reputation for his treatment of women. He often kidnaps women and forces them to marry him, but he swiftly tires of each new woman. Once he has lost interest, they rarely last long.

The other thing Jal Had is known for is his zoo, which contains fabulous beasts from all across Barsoom, such as white apes, banths, and the great apt of the Okar kingdoms. The zoo also includes specimens of intelligent species, such as a green Martian, a Kaldane, and a captured red Martian soldier from the city of Hastor. When Vor Daj was captured and brought to Amhor in the body of a Hormad, he too was displayed within the zoo.

Jal Had's downfall came when his first wife, the daughter of a noble house in his city, was poisoned. Suspecting him of the murder, his people revolted. In the confusion, Vor Daj managed to escape with several others. Vor Daj and his companions killed Jal Had while rescuing Vor Daj's love, Janai.





## DAR TARUS

### JEDDAK OF PHUNDAHL

*But the fact remained that the body and face of Dar Tarus were beautiful indeed, though there was a hint of steel in the eyes and the set of the jaw that betokened fighting blood.*

#### ATTRIBUTES

<b>DARING</b> 5	<b>CUNNING</b> 6	<b>EMPATHY</b> 4
<b>MIGHT</b> 4	<b>PASSION</b> 7	<b>REASON</b> 7

#### TALENTS

##### LOYAL ALLY (GRADE 3)

*You never abandon those you care for, and fight to the bitter end in their defense.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When fighting to defend or rescue a loved one.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Passion as part of tests when fighting for a loved one. You also gain an additional d20, and may Counter-strike for 2 Momentum instead of 3, when fighting to defend your loved ones.

##### TUR HAS SPOKEN (GRADE 3)

*You know the secrets of the “god” Tur, and can use his name to command his followers.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When dealing with followers of the god Tur, or those who were raised in the city of Phundahl.
- ✱ **Effect:** In interactions with the followers of the religion of the god Tur, or those who grew up in Phundahl (and were raised in this faith), you gain a bonus d20 to all rolls to command, convince, or deceive them. When you inflict Confusion or Fear stress on a follower of Tur, you inflict an additional 2 ☐.

#### BACKGROUND

Jeddak of Phundahl after the overthrow of Xaxa, Dar Tarus reached this lofty status by a very long route. Dar Tarus was originally a noble in the service of Xaxa, serving in the jeddara's guard. During this time he fell in love with the beautiful Kara Vasa, a noblewoman of Phundahl, and she, in return, loved him.

However, Dar Tarus was not the only one who desired Kara Vasa. Sag Or, a favorite of the jeddara, also had his eye on her. Though she spurned his advances, he would not accept her rejection. Together, Sag Or and Xaxa arranged to have Dar Tarus murdered, and his body sold to Ras Thavas. Sag Or then bought the body from Ras Thavas, having his brain transferred into the handsome soldier's body, intending to use Dar Tarus' handsome features to win over the woman he desired. However, before he could use his stolen form to woo Kara Vasa, she disappeared, fleeing the city of Phundahl.

Dar Tarus, now in a different body, was revived by Ras Thavas as a servant, and attempted to kill the scientist for what he had done. This killing was prevented by Ulysses Paxton, in the Jasoomian's first moments on Mars. However, Paxton revived Dar Tarus, recruiting him to join the effort to reclaim the body of Valla Dia from Xaxa.

This journey led to the overthrow of Xaxa, and Valla Dia and Dar Tarus regaining their own bodies. Dar Tarus became Jeddak of Phundahl, with the aid of Paxton, who discovered that an idol to the Phundahl god Tur was hollow. Sitting in the idol, Paxton was able to make declarations in the god's name, using this to influence the people of Phundahl — who needed little excuse to overthrow the cruel jeddara.

Now the high priest of Tur and Jeddak of Phundahl, Dar Tarus makes a striking figure. He is a handsome man, clad in finery, and is a much respected leader in his city. Concerned for the welfare of his people and proving to be a much more reasonable ruler than his predecessors, Dar Tarus is leading his people into a more prosperous time.



## GOR HAJUS

### FAMED ASSASSIN OF TOONOL

*His killings were always the results of fair fights in which the victim had every opportunity to defend himself and slay his attacker; and he was famous for his loyalty to his friends.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### TERRIFYING SWORDSMAN (GRADE 4)

*Your skill and aggression with a blade allow you to easily carve a swath through foes, dropping them or sending them fleeing.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attacking with a sword.
- \* **Effect:** You gain an additional d20 when attacking with a sword, and your sword gains the Fearsome quality. You automatically defeat 2 minions as part of your action — your choice whether they are cut down, surrender, or flee.

##### SWIFT DUELIST (GRADE 2)

*Your quick reflexes and knowledge of defense make attacks against you almost more dangerous for your foes than for you!*

- \* **Circumstance:** When wielding a sword and defending against a physical attack.
- \* **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 to defense tests while using a sword. Additionally, you can make a Counterstrike for 2 Momentum instead of the usual cost of 3.

##### MY REPUTATION PRECEDES ME (GRADE 1)

*Your reputation both as a skilled assassin and an honorable warrior give you an advantage when negotiating with others.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When interacting with those who know your reputation.
- \* **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 on attempts to intimidate or coerce those who know of your reputation, such as convincing them to surrender.

#### BACKGROUND

The foremost assassin in Toonol, Gor Hajus is not only famed for his skill with a sword, but for the honorable way in which he pursues his profession. Secure in his abilities as a swordsman, Gor Hajus openly challenges those he has been hired to kill, defeating them in a fair duel. He has never accepted a contract on a woman, nor on a good man that he did not feel deserved death.

This discretion in his choice of targets made Gor Hajus something of a folk hero among the people of Toonol, but it also made him powerful enemies. When he refused a contract from the Jeddak of Toonol, he was arrested and executed, and his body sold to Ras Thavas. He was revived by Vad Varo (Ulysses Paxton), and became one of his staunchest allies in Paxton's quest to recover the body of Valla Dia.



## HOVAN DU

### APE-MAN MAD SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

*It was really only when feeding or fighting that the simian half of Hovan Du's brain appeared to exercise any considerable influence upon him....*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### MIGHTY BEAST (GRADE 3)

*Your sheer size and strength overwhelm your foes.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking in melee.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Might to make melee attacks, and your melee attacks deal an additional 2 of damage.

##### MISTAKEN FOR A BEAST (GRADE 2)

*Your brutish shape makes everyone underestimate you, allowing you to surprise them with your intelligence and quick wits.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When deceiving someone who thinks you are just a white ape.
- ✱ **Effect:** When attempting to deceive or trick someone who thinks you are merely an animal (such as attempting to masquerade as a trained animal or operate a sophisticated item without being noticed) you gain a bonus d20, and you gain 1 bonus Momentum if successful on your test.

##### EMISSARY TO THE APES (GRADE 3)

*White apes attack most Martians on sight, but are more intelligent than they are often given credit for. You are able to converse and negotiate with them as an equal.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When encountering the white apes of Barsoom.
- ✱ **Effect:** White apes do not attack you unless they are first attacked or otherwise aggravated. You may communicate with white apes in their own limited language. This is usually at least a Challenging (D2) test, due to the need to translate your thoughts into a communication that both sides can understand.

#### BACKGROUND

Hovan Du is a nearly unique creature upon the face of Barsoom, a red Martian who has had his brain switched with that of a great white ape. This operation was conducted by mad genius Ras Thavas as an experiment, to see what the effect would be. Now the ape controls Hovan Du's body, and Hovan Du controls the massive form of the ape.

Originally from the city of Ptarth, it is unclear how Hovan Du came to be in Ras Thavas' power, though it is likely that he was captured in conflict or sold as a slave. After his mind was transplanted into the ape body, he was revived by Ulysses Paxton of Jasoom, and adventured with him in restoring the bodies of Hovan Du and numerous other victims of Ras Thavas' science.



## TUL AXTAR

### COWARDLY TYRANT OF JAHAR

*"Jahar must be, indeed, an unhappy country," I said, "ruled over, as she is, by such a man as Tul Axtar."*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### SLIP AWAY AGAIN (GRADE 5)

*You somehow always manage to get away before a fight truly turns deadly. Your foes will have to work hard to corner you and finally defeat you.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When you suffer an affliction.

✱ **Effect:** When you suffer an affliction, you may spend 3 Momentum. You still suffer the affliction, but immediately escape the scene in some way — by sacrificing a follower, convincing another narrator character to betray their allies, finding an appropriate hiding place, or some other method. If you cannot spend this Momentum, you are finally put in a situation you cannot escape from.

#### BACKGROUND

The megalomaniacal Jeddak of Jahar, Tul Axtar is a vile creature by all standards of Martian society. He treats his people as little more than slaves or fodder for war, and he regularly takes any woman who catches his eye into his massive harem. He is vain and convinced that he could rule over all of Barsoom, with plans to embark upon a massive conquest of Helium. He is dishonorable, for he intends to win that war with vastly superior weapons that his enemies could never expect, rather than facing them on the field of battle. And he is cowardly, for despite all the advantages he creates, he fears to begin the conflict, terrified of the possibility that he might lose.

As part of this plan, Tul Axtar has begun a breeding program, creating a truly massive army of young men in his territories. His overtaxed fields cannot produce enough food, leaving his people starving and even resorting to cannibalism, with no possible outlet but the war he intends to start. Still he delays, directing his scientists to develop weapons that Helium cannot withstand. His first actual act of war is the abduction of Sanoma Tora of Helium, an act that brings him into conflict with Tan Hadron of Hastor — something he will come to deeply regret.



## TAN HADRON OF HASTOR

### FIGHTING MAN OF HELIUM

*Fortunately I am a strong man — none other could have survived that ordeal — yet how utterly helpless I was.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### MIGHTY CLIMBER (GRADE 2)

*Your great strength aids your climbing and saves you where someone weaker would fall.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When climbing.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Might when making a test to climb. You can reroll any single d20 when making a climbing test.

##### MIGHTY SWORDSMAN (GRADE 2)

*Your skill with blades makes you a dangerous opponent.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking with a sword.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Might when attacking with a sword. Also, you gain an additional d20 when attacking with a sword.

##### STUBBORN CHAMPION (GRADE 3)

*While you have breath, no one will prevent you from defending those you love.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When wounded while defending or attempting to rescue a loved one.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can ignore the effects of one affliction for the rest of the scene. Also, for the rest of the scene, you gain an additional d20 to defense tests.

#### BACKGROUND

A padwar in the armies of Helium, Tan Hadron was a skilled but undistinguished soldier, and could have remained so, if not for Sonoma Tora. She was the daughter of his commanding officer, and Tan Hadron loved Sonoma Tora, though he knew she was uninterested in marrying him, as his station was not high enough for her ambition.

When Sonoma Tora was kidnapped by agents of Tul Axtar of Jahar, however, Tan Hadron immediately sprang into action. He set out for Jahar, rescuing the escaped slave Tavia along the way. While working to rescue Sonoma Tora, Tan Hadron saves the Helium navy from unique weapons wielded by Jahar, topples Tul Axtar, and then destroys the inventions which Phor Tak intends to use to conquer Barsoom! Having fallen in love with Tavia during their adventures, the two return to Helium together, where they have John Carter's gratitude, and are sure to have more adventures.



## TAVIA

### ESCAPED SLAVE AND ADVENTURER

*They all liked me, the slaves and the warriors and the chiefs, and because I was always boyish it amused them to train me in the use of arms and even to navigate the smaller fliers.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### DEADLY FENCER (GRADE 2)

*You have spent what spare time you have in training with the sword; your swift blade always finds vital targets.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When attacking with a sword.
- ✦ **Effect:** When fighting with a sword, you deal an additional 1 damage. When gaining Momentum from a sword attack, you gain an additional Momentum.

##### ABLE COMPANION (GRADE 1)

*You instinctively know how best to assist your allies, aiding them in their endeavors.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When acting to support an ally.
- ✦ **Effect:** Once per scene, you may make a Challenging (D2) **Cunning + Empathy** test. If successful, you may give a friend or ally a Momentum. You may give additional Momentum earned in this test as well.

##### AIRSHIP TRAINING (GRADE 3)

*You learned to fly in secret and are a skilled airship pilot.*

- ✦ **Circumstance:** When piloting an airship.
- ✦ **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 and reduce the difficulty to avoid airborne obstacles and dangers by 1.

#### BACKGROUND

Stolen as a child from the city of Tjanath, Tavia was raised as a slave in the city of Jahar. She was often overlooked, and it amused some of the soldiers to train her in airship piloting and fighting. As an adult, she stole an airship and fled the city, but returned with Tan Hadron of Hastor.

Though they were often separated during their adventures (such as when Tavia was imprisoned by the current leader of Tjanath), they were always reunited. Together, they defeated and killed Tul Axtar, saving Helium from his plots. The two returned to Helium to be married, discovering that Tavia's father was among the soldiers of Helium's navy, and had been a jed in Tjanath before he was displaced.

Tavia is a brave adventurer and fierce defender of her allies, but is also very kind and perceptive. Now that she knows of her heritage, it is possible that she may attempt to reclaim Tjanath for her family — and with Tan Hadron at her side, who knows what she might accomplish.



## RAPAS THE ULSIO

### ZODANGAN INFORMANT AND ASSASSIN

*There was a furtiveness about the man that, in connection with his evil face, assured me that he was of the criminal class....*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### NOSE FOR NEWS (GRADE 2)

*You have many contacts among the criminal underworld, and always seem to have the right information at the right time.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When interacting with Zodangan criminals or those interested in the intrigues of that city.
- ✱ **Effect:** When you talk to someone connected to or interested in the Zodangan underworld, you always have one piece of information useful to them. You receive a bonus d20 on rolls to negotiate with or placate Zodangan criminals and interested parties, and may reroll one die on any of these tests — this is often used to convince them that you are still useful and they should not kill you!

##### GONE TO GROUND (GRADE 5)

*You have a knack for scurrying away from trouble the moment that you are no longer being watched.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When not being directly observed.
- ✱ **Effect:** Spend 3 Momentum, and you may escape the current scene, by slipping away, finding a secret passage, or some other quick and furtive means. If you cannot pay the Momentum, or are being constantly watched, you cannot escape your fate.

#### BACKGROUND

Rapas the Ulsio (named for the Martian rat) is an informant, scoundrel, and self-proclaimed assassin from Zodanga. Though he claims to be an expert swordsman, his main talents seem to be finding out just enough information to be useful to those more powerful, and also somehow slipping away before anyone manages to kill him.

Rapas was in service to scientist Fal Sivas, and became embroiled in the intrigues between that scientist, John Carter, and the assassins' guild of Zodanga. He attempted to sell "Vandor" (actually Carter in disguise) to Ur Jan of the assassins' guild. After a few attempts to play both sides of the conflict, he betrayed Fal Sivas to Carter, and scuttled off to continue his trade among the intrigues of Zodanga.



## FAL SIVAS

### CRUEL GENIUS, INVENTOR OF THE MECHANICAL BRAIN

*Somehow he reminded me of a great cat watching its prey, always ready to spring.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### CRUELY INQUISITIVE (GRADE 4)

*You have many ways of getting information. Those who will not give you what you ask for know that they may end up in one of your cruel experiments.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When interrogating someone.

✱ **Effect:** When you are trying to gain information from someone, you can always use Reason to spot lies. Anyone who withholds information from you suffers 2 Fear damage. This damage can be resisted with a Daunting (D2) **Passion + Reason** test.

##### MASTER OF THE MECHANICAL BRAIN (GRADE 6)

*You are the inventor of the mechanical brain, which can direct a flying ship by your thoughts alone!*

✱ **Circumstance:** When controlling a ship fitted with the mechanical brain.

✱ **Effect:** Take an extra Conflict action that you can use to direct a ship fitted with the mechanical brain. While controlling a ship using the mechanical brain, you gain an additional d20. By spending 1 Momentum, you can send your thoughts via the mechanical brain and give instructions to the ship, no matter the distance.

#### BACKGROUND

A brilliant inventor, Fal Sivas is also paranoid, cowardly, and cruel. An unusually old Martian (one who never made the journey to the River Iss), Fal Sivas claims to be driven by cold logic, much like the mechanical brain on which he has labored for so long. However, this claim is false, as he often falls into passionate rants and paranoid ravings. He also seems to revel in cruelty, often picking beautiful women as subjects for his painful brain experiments.

When John Carter came to Zodanga to destroy the assassins' guild, he came into the service of Fal Sivas under a false name. The assassins' guild was working with Gar Nal, Fal Sivas' greatest rival, and Carter was able to leverage his association with Fal Sivas for a time. Eventually, Carter stole the great interplanetary ship that Fal Sivas had created, using it to travel to the moon of Thuria to rescue his princess, Dejah Thoris. Fal Sivas brought his ship back to Mars with a mental command, and allied with Gar Nal, both now fearing the Warlord of Mars more than they hate each other. John Carter still found them, rescuing Dejah Thoris and capturing Fal Sivas.





## RAS THAVAS

### MASTER MIND OF MARS

*Upon an island near Toonol, Ras Thavas, The Master Mind of Mars, had labored in his laboratory for nearly a thousand years...*

#### ATTRIBUTES

<b>DARING</b> 7	<b>CUNNING</b> 4	<b>EMPATHY</b> 4
<b>MIGHT</b> 2	<b>PASSION</b> 6	<b>REASON</b> 10

#### TALENTS

##### EMOTIONLESS (GRADE 1)

*You have devoted yourself to pure reason, and have little time for the fears or concerns of those who wallow in sentimentality.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When in non-physical conflicts.

✱ **Effect:** You may always use Reason to defend yourself in non-physical conflicts.

##### MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (GRADE 8)

*Your knowledge of medicine and life allow you to do the impossible. If you can get to them quickly enough, you can save even someone who lesser minds would call dead and beyond saving!*

✱ **Circumstance:** When someone in your scene dies.

✱ **Effect:** You can still treat a character who has suffered the maximum number of Injury afflictions possible. As long as you are in the scene when they suffer their fifth injury affliction (or afflictions equal to their menace rating, in the case of monsters), you may take a Conflict action to make a **Daring + Reason** (D3) test to heal that final affliction, keeping the character alive, but unconscious. Once

the final affliction has been removed, the character may be treated as normal to recover further afflictions, but no matter the results, the character will remain unconscious until the end of the scene.

##### MASTER SURGEON (GRADE 5)

*To one such as you, common injuries are but child's play to treat. Even the most terrible injuries can be healed under your care.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When healing another's affliction.

✱ **Effect:** You may use a Conflict action to automatically remove 1 affliction from any character you treat, no roll required. You may, as part of the action, make a test to heal additional afflictions. If you do this, you may reroll 2d20 as part of the test.



## BACKGROUND

Ras Thavas is quite possibly the most brilliant scientist on all Barsoom. He has devoted his entire life to biological sciences and performed feats beyond the imaginings of most scientists or physicians. Though extremely old, Ras Thavas appears much younger than he is, having had his brain transferred to a younger body — just one of the amazing techniques that he has pioneered!

Ras Thavas lived for many years on an island within the Toonolian Marshes, conducting his research into the mysteries of life and death. He perfected his ability to put bodies into stasis and to transfer a brain from one body to another, and he was experimenting with putting the brains of Martians into the bodies of animals when Ulysses Paxton of Jasoom arrived. Ras Thavas considered Paxton a perfect assistant for him: smart, capable, and wholly dependent on Ras Thavas, with no loyalties or ties to pull him away.

However, Paxton was a less ideal assistant than Thavas thought, and his attempts to recover the body of Valla Dia (sold to be the new body of the Jeddara of Phundahl) led to Ras Thavas being driven from his island fortress.

After this, Ras Thavas settled in the abandoned city of Morbus, attempting to perfect his techniques for creating life. However, this also backfired on him, as the nearly invincible Hormads that he created rose up and imprisoned him, using him to create armies of their kind for their eventual bid to take over all of Barsoom. Ras Thavas was freed from the Hormads by the arrival of John Carter and Vor Daj, who took him back to Helium to heal Dejah Thoris.

## GAR NAL

### INVENTOR OF THE INTERPLANETARY SHIP

*...there was nothing peculiarly distinctive about his features, except his eyes. I did not like them; they were crafty, deceitful, and cruel.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### CAREFULLY REASONED PLOTS (GRADE 2)

*You are always thinking several steps ahead, and your deceptions always have a tinge of logic to them.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attempting to deceive or trick someone.
- \* **Effect:** You may always use Reason when lying to or tricking someone. In addition, you may reroll a single d20 when making a test to deceive.

#### MECHANICAL GENIUS (GRADE 2)

*Your aptitude for engines and mechanical devices knows no limit.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When designing or creating mechanical devices.
- \* **Effect:** You gain an additional 2d20 on all rolls to invent or create new mechanical devices.

### OPPORTUNISTIC BETRAYER (GRADE 3)

*Only fools stick to their word no matter the circumstance! You are always on the lookout for the most advantageous moment to turn on someone.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When betraying another.
- \* **Effect:** If you betray or abandon someone, you gain an additional 1d20 for tests directly related to that betrayal, such as blaming them for your actions, ambushing, or fleeing the scene. Any Momentum generated by such actions is increased by 2.

### BACKGROUND

An inventor from the city of Zodanga, Gar Nal is the primary rival of the inventor Fal Sivas. While he seems more reasonable on the surface than his rival, he is conniving and traitorous, willing to abandon his allies and break his word the moment he sees an advantage in it.

Gar Nal and Fal Sivas had long stolen plans and inventions from each other, each creating near identical airships capable of traveling the void of space. Gar Nal allied himself with the assassins' guild, hiring the guild master Ur Jan to kill Fal Sivas. However, when John Carter came to Zodanga, they instead conspired to kidnap Dejah Thoris and take her to the moon of Thuria. There, along with Carter and his allies, they are captured by the invisible Tarids, and are forced to work together to escape. Gar Nal seizes the opportunity to take Dejah Thoris for himself, leaving the others behind and returning to Zodanga. When John Carter and his allies eventually make their own escape from the moon and return to Mars, Ur Jan slays Gar Nal for his betrayal.





## UR JAN

### HEAD OF THE ASSASSINS' GUILD

*"I am an assassin, am I not?" demanded Ur Jan. "Do you think that an assassin will let a dangerous enemy live?"*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### DEADLY LUNGE (GRADE 3)

*You are an athletic swordsman, capable of making a sudden, ground-covering attack to dismay your foes.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attacking with a melee weapon.
- \* **Effect:** When making an attack test with a melee weapon, you treat Near range as being the same as Immediate range and may attack with no additional difficulty. Also, you deal an additional 1 damage when attacking.

##### VENGEFUL (GRADE 4)

*They say revenge is a dish best served cold, but you don't agree. Your revenge is always swift and full of hot anger.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When fighting someone who has betrayed or abandoned you.
- \* **Effect:** When fighting someone who has betrayed you, gain an additional d20 on both attack and defense tests. You also deal an additional 2 of damage on a successful attack.

#### BACKGROUND

The head of the assassins' guild in Zodanga, Ur Jan is the undisputed leader of that crowd of ruthless killers. With a strong claim to being the deadliest man in all of Zodanga, Ur Jan ruled his guild with a strong fist, until he caught the attention of the Warlord of Mars.

When John Carter came to Zodanga with the intention of rooting out the assassins' guild, he and Ur Jan both become embroiled in the rivalry between Fal Sivas and Gar Nal. Ur Jan and Gar Nal kidnapped Dejah Thoris, John Carter's wife, and spirited her away on Gar Nal's interplanetary ship to the moon Thuria.

On Thuria, Ur Jan, Gar Nal, and John Carter were all captured by the Tarids, and agreed to work together to escape. In the process of their escape, they were all betrayed by Gar Nal. Stung by the betrayal and impressed by Carter's valor, Ur Jan swore himself into the earthman's service.



# UMKA

## MASENA HUNTER

*The shape of his skull was similar to that of a human being, but his features were most inhuman.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### SKIN LIKE A DARSEEN (GRADE 1)

*Your skin takes on color to match your surroundings. This protective coloration helps you hide more easily, particularly in the dense forests of Thuria.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When trying to hide.
- ✱ **Effect:** When you make a test to hide (whether in fear or in ambush), you reduce the difficulty of that test by 1.

#### MIGHTY PREDATOR (GRADE 3)

*You do not know the ways of the sword or the knife, and you do not need them. Your own speed, might, and strong, sharp teeth are more than enough.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When fighting unarmed.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use **Daring + Might** when making attack tests. Even when unarmed, your attacks have the Sharp quality.

#### IMAGINATIVE RESISTANCE (GRADE 1)

*Though you do not have the mental powers of many of the red Martians, your ability to clearly visualize what you imagine provides a strong defense against many strange skills.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When defending against mental or psychic powers.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may roll **Cunning** as part of any defense against mental talents, such as mind control or invisibility.

### BACKGROUND

A Masena from the nearer Martian moon Thuria, Umka is patient and good-humored even in adversity. While captured by the Tarids of Thuria, he taught himself the means to see through their powers of invisibility, and remained calm and even cheerful in the face of his approaching death.

Perhaps it was the circumstances, but Umka was very friendly when he and John Carter met in captivity and was loyal and very willing to help in the Warlord's plans for escape. Umka was last seen among his people in the forests surrounding the Tarid fortress, where he convinced them to spare John Carter's life when they would have eaten the Warlord. He escorted Carter and his companion beyond their borders, and then returned to his people.



## VOR DAJ

### HORMAD WITH THE BRAIN OF A MAN

*I hadn't anticipated just how horrible it would be to be a hormad with a hideous face and malformed body.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### THE STRONGEST MAN IN MORBUS (GRADE 4)

*Your Hormad body is massively strong, aiding you in performing impressive feats.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking or intimidating someone.

✱ **Effect:** You may always use Might as part of attack tests to cause Injury or Fear damage. If you succeed, deal an additional 2 on such tests.

##### LONG REACH (GRADE 2)

*Due to your strange Hormad physiology, your sword arm is much longer than normal, allowing you to threaten enemies at a much greater distance than normal.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking with a melee weapon.

✱ **Effect:** You may attack with melee weapons at Near range without additional difficulty.

#### DISTURBING MUTATIONS

Hormads gain the Fearsome quality on all attacks.

#### RESISTANT BEYOND BELIEF

Hormads can, when they suffer an affliction, roll a single combat die. If the result is an effect, the affliction is ignored.

These stats for Vor Daj represent him when his brain has been transplanted into the body of a Hormad. His talents and attributes are likely to be quite different while in his own body.

#### BACKGROUND

A padwar in the navy of Helium, Vor Daj is a loyal and brave soldier, if sometimes a bit rash. He accompanied John Carter in search of Ras Thavas, when the Master Mind's aid was needed to heal a badly wounded Dejah Thoris.

Vor Daj was captured in the city of Morbus, along with Carter, Ras Thavas, and the beautiful Janai. In a bid to rescue Janai, he had his brain transplanted into the body of a Hormad by Ras Thavas. In this form, he managed to liberate Janai from Morbus, and braved the Toonolian Swamps. During their time in the swamps, he discovered the strange Kangaroo Men, but they were eventually found and captured by ships from Amhor. Vor Daj was imprisoned in the prince's zoo. Escaping, he helped destroy the prince and freed Janai. Eventually he was returned to his original body, and he and Janai returned to Helium to wed.



# ANATOK

## JEDDAK OF GOOLI

*They had long, powerful legs, the knees of which were always flexed except immediately after the take-off of one of their prodigious leaps, and they had long, powerful tails; otherwise, they seemed quite human in conformation.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### NATURAL JUMPER (GRADE 2)

*Your powerful legs allow you to easily clear gaps and barriers that would stymie others.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When jumping over obstacles to cover ground.
- \* **Effect:** When confronted with an obstacle that can be traversed by jumping, reduce the difficulty of that obstacle by 1. In addition, when making a movement action during an action scene, reduce the Momentum cost to move an additional range by 1.

#### ESCAPE AND EVASION (GRADE 2)

*Your people tend to run and hide when faced with bad odds — or even odds. While you are braver than most other Goolians, you still are very practiced at getting away from difficult situations.*

- \* **Circumstances:** When attempting to elude pursuit or capture.
- \* **Effect:** When you make any test to run, hide, or elude anyone chasing you or attempting to capture you, gain an additional 2d20 on your roll.

### BACKGROUND

The Jeddak of Gooli (declared by its inhabitants to be the greatest city on Barsoom), Anatok is something of a humorous figure. His followers are convinced of his great strategic skills and brilliance as a leader, but his default strategy is to run from fights. The “city” Gooli is little more than a village of grass huts.

When Vor Daj was fleeing Morbus with Janai, they stumbled upon the Goolians, and were taken as their captives. However, Vor Daj swiftly realized that they were boastful and generally cowardly, and, after defending them from attacks by savages in the swamps, convinced them to help him build a boat to escape the swamps.





## BANDOLIAN

### EMPEROR OF THE MORGORS

*The fellow differed in appearance not at all from other Morgors. He wore no ornaments. His harness and weapons were quite plain but evidently serviceable.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### INVISIBLE AGENTS (GRADE 8)

*You have the agents of the Morgor empire at your disposal, in vast numbers with invisible ships. No one is completely beyond your reach.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When you send your followers on a mission affecting a narrator character.
- \* **Effect:** When you task your followers to have a narrator character kidnapped or assassinated, spend 2 Momentum. If a player character does not intervene, your followers will succeed, no matter how protected the narrator character usually is. If a player character does directly intervene to stop the attempt, your agents still gain an additional Momentum on any successful roll to advance this mission.

##### MY WORD IS LAW (GRADE 8)

*Your people follow your orders slavishly, almost religiously. Your decisions are the final statement on any matter in the empire.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When commanding your people.
- \* **Effect:** Anyone under your command (including pretty much all Morgors and Savators) must obey your orders or suffer 2 Fear damage. This damage can be resisted with a successful Challenging (D2) **Daring + Passion** test with Momentum reducing the damage by 1 per point spent. If someone does disobey or betray you, you gain an additional 2d20 to all tests relating to discovering or punishing them for their disloyalty.

##### FRIGHTENING FOE (GRADE 2)

*You take advantage of the effect your unnerving appearance has on the other races while fighting.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attacking a non-Morgor foe in Melee.
- \* **Effect:** Melee attacks have the Fearsome quality.



## BACKGROUND

Bandolian is the emperor of all the Morgors, the undisputed ruler of all of Jupiter. Though there are a few small Savator kingdoms and communities that are not in Morgor control, they acknowledge that they have no real chance of defeating the Morgors. With all of Jupiter conquered, Bandolian has set his sights on a new prize: Mars.

Bandolian is brutal, tyrannical, and cruel. He does not ask things, he demands them. His every word is a command, and his every wish is law to his people. The Morgors will not go against his wishes, no matter their own desires. Like all Morgors, Bandolian relishes conquest for its own sake, with no real care for the luxuries or comforts it brings.

His anger and cruelty should not be taken as a sign that Bandolian is a simple brute, however. The Morgor emperor is extremely cunning, and a patient strategist. He has been planning his invasion of Barsoom for years, sending agents to scout the planet and capturing those Martians that he believes may be useful to him.

On the advice of Multis Par, a captured noble of Zor, Bandolian had his agents kidnap John Carter, bringing him to Jupiter to extract the secrets of Helium's defense. Carter denied the emperor, even when Bandolian captured and threatened the Warlord's wife, Dejah Thoris. Carter freed Dejah Thoris, along with several other prisoners, and then later escaped Bandolian's clutches himself, heading across the surface of Jupiter to rejoin his princess. The Morgors remain a threat, however, with Bandolian still preparing his invasion of Barsoom.

## MULTIS PAR

### TRAITOR TO BARSOOM

*He was of a kind with his father, Zu Tith — arrogant, cruel, tyrannical by nature.*

### ATTRIBUTES



### TALENTS

#### FIND THE RIGHT PRESSURE (GRADE 4)

*You can always find the right leverage to use to make others do what you want — even if that means threatening innocents.*

- ✳ **Circumstance:** When attempting to interrogate or force compliance from someone.
- ✳ **Effect:** Use a conflict action to make a **Cunning + Empathy** non-physical attack roll. If successful, instead of inflicting damage, you may ask the narrator what threat would have the best chance of convincing the target to do what you wish. When acting on this information, you gain an additional 2d20 to any rolls.

### ALWAYS OF USE (GRADE 5)

*When you are at another's mercy, you know how to convince them that you are better kept alive rather than killed.*

- ✳ **Circumstance:** When captured or at the mercy of a villain.
- ✳ **Effect:** When you are captured, at the mercy of a villain, or left to die, spend 3 Momentum. You survive the current predicament by convincing your captors that you are useful and can aid them.

### BACKGROUND

Multis Par was a jed in the city of Zor before its conquest by Helium. A cruel and arrogant tyrant, he attempted to instigate a rebellion against Heliumite rule, but when this failed, he disappeared.

This disappearance turned out to be even worse for Barsoom. Multis Par had been captured by spies of the Morgors, the skeleton men of Jupiter. While in their power he gave them every bit of information he could, and suggested others who they could kidnap for information, doing his best to make himself useful to his captors. He gained some small amount of stature as one of the Morgors' more useful prisoners. It was on his suggestion that they captured the Warlord of Mars to gain knowledge of Helium's defenses. When Carter would not give them the information, it was Multis Par that suggested they kidnap Dejah Thoris to put pressure on him — an act which earned him the Warlord's eternal enmity.



## PHO LAR

### SAVATOR REBEL

*He appeared a man of considerable muscular development; and his reception of me, a newcomer among them, testified to the fact that he was a bully.*

#### ATTRIBUTES



#### TALENTS

##### MASTER SWORDSMAN OF THREE WORLDS (GRADE 6)

*You are truly stupendous with a blade, able to cross swords evenly with anyone you meet, whether from Earth, Mars, or Jupiter. Your swift blade and merciless attack quickly defeat lesser opponents.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking with a sword.
- ✱ **Effect:** You receive an additional Conflict action that must be used for an attack with your sword. You roll an additional 2d20 on all attacks with a sword, and also receive an additional 2 Momentum on a successful attack.

##### FLAWLESS DEFENSE (GRADE 4)

*You have a tireless defense, able to hold off even the greatest sword fighters for a great deal of time, turning aside blows that would skewer lesser swordsmen.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When defending with a blade.
- ✱ **Effect:** Increase the difficulty of any attack on you by 1. You also gain an additional 2d20 when defending and reduce any Injury damage you receive from such attacks by 1.

##### TOP MAN (GRADE 2)

*You usually think you should be in charge, and use your great strength to make sure that is the case.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When issuing orders or commanding a small group.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may use Might to command and control small groups, and you also gain an additional d20 on such tests.

#### BACKGROUND

John Carter originally thought that Pho Lar, a Savator that he met in the prisons of Bandolian, was a coward and a bully. Pho Lar had set himself up as the self-described “top man” of a group of about twenty prisoners, all of them sentenced to die at the hands of forty Morgor warriors as part of a graduation ceremony. The Savator attempted to assert his authority over Carter as well, but swiftly discovered that the Warlord of Mars was not easily cowed.

The two became allies, and when Carter suggested training all of the prisoners and working together to defeat their Morgor opponents, Pho Lar proved to be a swordsman far beyond expectations — one that John Carter called “one of the greatest swordsmen I have ever faced.”



## UPDATES TO EXISTING CHARACTERS

The adventures of many of the major characters from the Dotar Sojat and Prince of Helium eras continue throughout the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. This section updates some of those characters by providing new talents representing their abilities in this later period.



### JOHN CARTER

As he becomes Warlord of Mars, John Carter finds himself in the position of leading troops more and more often, refining his skills as a commander. Because of his courage and honesty, his men love him and will fight to the bitter end for him. In addition, Carter spends more time passing on his exemplary swordsmanship, and many of those who accompany him on his later adventures have been his students.

#### TALENTS

##### WARLORD OF MARS (GRADE 6)

*Your valor and renown are without peer, and you have led more warriors into battle than many generals. Your reputation and bravery shore up the morale of your troops, making them fearless.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When leading warriors into battle.
- \* **Effect:** You may reroll one d20 on tests relating to leading from the front or commanding warriors in battle. Troops you lead may ignore the first 2 points of damage to their Fear track taken during battle. After that, they take damage normally.

##### SWORDMASTER OF TWO WORLDS (GRADE 5)

*You not only are among the best swordsmen, but have trained others, passing on your skills to your allies.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When fighting with a sword.
- \* **Effect:** When making a test to attack or defend while wielding a sword, you roll an additional d20. You may also reroll a single d20 on any attack or defense. You may spend 1 Momentum to grant this reroll effect to any nearby ally you can clearly see and communicate with.

### DEJAH THORIS

Already an accomplished diplomat and scientist when she met her husband, Dejah Thoris does not change a great deal during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. However, her adventures have tempered her already strong will into something unbreakable, and her ability to inspire and reassure others continues.

#### TALENTS

##### WILL OF STEEL (GRADE 4)

*Many have tried to threaten you, but they find you all but fearless. You will never betray your convictions or your people.*

- \* **Circumstance:** Resisting coercion, threats, or mind control.
- \* **Effect:** When making a test to resist coercion, threats, or mind control, roll an additional 2d20. Reduce the first Confusion or Fear stress you receive from threats in a scene by 2.

##### TAKE HEART (GRADE 4)

*Your serene demeanor in the face of adversity and inspiring words calm the fears of your allies.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When helping others overcome fear.
- \* **Effect:** You may take a Conflict action to heal an ally of one Madness or Trauma affliction. In addition, they are healed of 2 Fear or Confusion stress. No test is necessary for this.

### TARS TARKAS

Much of Tars Tarkas' time is spent with the realities of leading his people. As a legendary leader for the Tharks, Tars leads his people with strength, and is rewarded with their loyalty. As a champion for the alliance with Helium and John Carter, Tars Tarkas becomes one of the most recognizable green Martians to the rest of Barsoom, often interacting with the leaders of the red Martians and other groups.



**TALENTS****CHAMPION OF THE ALLIANCE (GRADE 4)**

*You have long been a friend to the red Martians, and a clear example of the advantages of the alliance between Helium and the Tharks.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When interacting with Martians other than green Martians.
- ✱ **Effect:** When you interact with Okar, First Born, or red or white Martians, you gain an additional 2d20 on any tests to convince or befriend them. You also reduce by 1 any difficulties related to their prejudices or concerns about green Martians.

**LEADS WITH STRENGTH (GRADE 5)**

*Your strength and resolve have made you a legendary leader among the Tharks and other green Martians. They will defend you to the death.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When leading green Martians.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Might and Daring in tests involving leading or directing green Martian characters. You gain a bonus d20 on such tests, including any challenges to your leadership. When leading green Martians in combat, one of your troops within Near range can take an affliction meant for you.

**CARTHORIS OF HELIUM**

After escaping the Holy Therns with this father and returning to Helium, Carthoris spends some time working with his ideas for airship design, becoming an accomplished engineer as well as an adventurer. His marriage to Thuvia of Ptarth focuses his mind on family, and woe to any who attempts to harm his love or his family!

**TALENTS****CUNNING ENGINEER (GRADE 2)**

*You are quick-witted and imaginative, able to come up with applications for technology that others do not think of.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When inventing or attempting to solve a technological challenge.

- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Cunning on invention and technology tests. You gain an additional d20 to such tests.

**FOR LOVE AND HONOR (GRADE 4)**

*Your family is of prime importance to you, and you will go to the ends of the earth to defend them.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When defending family or a loved one.
- ✱ **Effect:** When you take an action in defense of a loved one or family member, you may reroll any failed die in the test, keeping the better result. You may only do this once per test. In addition, you gain 2 Momentum on any such test.

**KANTOS KAN**

Kantos is now a veteran hero, known for his own adventures and heroism as well as his friendship with John Carter and Dejah Thoris. He gains the following talent.

**TALENTS****HERO OF HELIUM (GRADE 3)**

*You are a celebrated hero of Helium, companion to great leaders and defender of its people.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When acting heroically.
- ✱ **Effect:** Once per scene you may take an additional Conflict action during your turn. You must use this for some suitably heroic act, though this may include providing assistance to a friend or ally instead of acting directly. If this action benefits Helium, its leaders, or its people, you may always use Daring on your additional action.

Kantos' Daring also increases by one to 7 during this era.

**XODAR**

Now a great leader of the First Born, Xodar serves not only as a strong ally for John Carter, but a good example of how earlier rivals grow into important figures as the eras advance. The following Talent replaces Xodar's Battle-Tested Leader talent from the core book.

**TALENTS****BATTLE-BORN JEDDAK (GRADE 4)**

*You fought to protect and lead your people, rising to rule them as jeddak. You rule well, using blade, intellect, and charisma to maintain order.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When leading First Born or allies.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may always use Daring to command, coerce, or intimidate your First Born subjects and other subordinates. Should any subject or subordinate betray you, you gain a bonus d20 on all actions to discover, defeat, and punish them for their disloyalty. You may also use a Spoken action to command a subordinate or ally to perform an action. If they obey and succeed, you gain 1 Momentum.



# MYSTERIES OF BARSOOM

*The moons of Mars have always intrigued me; and tonight, as I gazed upon them, I felt the lure of the mystery that surrounds them.*

– John Carter, *Swords of Mars*

Barsoom is home to the truly unique, bizarre and incredible. Throughout the adventures of John Carter, the famed Warlord of Barsoom, as well as his friends and family, ancient places of wonder and danger were discovered. Even the space above Mars was shown to be full of adversaries and exotic creatures.

Within this chapter you will find all manner of interesting objects, weapons, devices, locations, and abilities. Whenever possible, these have been drawn directly from the Barsoomian adventures that so expertly depict the vivid world of dying Mars. But to keep things interesting and exotic even for avid fans and readers of Edgar Rice Burroughs, we have included entirely new sources of wonder and excitement that are based in the myths and legends of Barsoom or are natural extensions of concepts already presented within the novels.

Narrators, as always, have final say with regard to what is introduced into their games. If something doesn't feel right for your campaign or adventure, feel free to change or discard it. This is the story you and your players are crafting for common enjoyment.

## INVENTIONS AS CORE EQUIPMENT

Many of the devices and weapons described here are rare, experimental, or speculative. This means they fail to be commonplace enough to realistically be core equipment for a character without good reason. A scientist hero might be able to easily replace his tools and instruments, but they cannot just go pick up another thinking machine or energy lance.

But what if they could? Narrators should note that the invention rules, presented later in this book, introduce scientific achievements and deeds. Usually making and implementing a device of notable function and important use is sufficient for an achievement or deed; however, if a character wishes and can justify it through play, they may rediscover a lost technology or create a new one and make it easy to produce and use. Such an achievement would change

the face of Barsoom, and it would definitely place the otherwise rare and irreplaceable device within the realm of core equipment.

Should this happen with a piece of technology, narrators should assign an xp cost to the item based on its general function. The invention rules later in this book provide advice on how to assign grades to an invention's functions and game effects—a useful tool for narrators faced with such challenges.

A device is usually suitable for core equipment when its scope is Kingdom or greater. Less than that and it's hard to justify replacing one's equipment easily and quickly. This also represents the balance of advanced technology—if you want to have access to it almost anywhere, it's hard to keep it out of the hands of lots of people.





## STRANGE TECHNOLOGY

### OBJECTS OF INVISIBILITY

One of the greatest and most strategically important discoveries has been the advent of paints and materials that render an object, or person, entirely invisible. As the Jeddak of Jeddaks era unfolds, the types of devices or materials that provide invisibility begin to increase and they start to see wider use. One of the most important developments has been the introduction of invisibility paint. The exact chemical formula of this substance is unknown, and its original creator was unfortunately killed during the brief hostilities between Helium and Jahar. With the bulk of the chemical substance destroyed, there was fear that this innovation would simply pass into the annals of history as an interesting but ultimately fruitless endeavor. To the surprise of Helium's military leadership, however, vials and containers of this miraculous paint continue to surface from time to time. The origins of these treasures remain somewhat of a mystery, as the ruins of Jhama were extensively searched once the Jaharian forces were defeated.

The substance resembles a fine clear liquid when wet, though it is so pure and clear that containers of the substance are often mistakenly thought of as empty. Only when picking up the container and shaking it does it become obvious that there is liquid inside. Care must be taken when handling the paint as it dries extremely quickly and must be applied swiftly to ensure that it fully covers its surface. It can be applied to fabrics as readily as it can to metal or wood. In theory, it could also be used to cover the body of a subject, but given its rarity, this has not been attempted. Once applied and dry, the object it covers becomes completely invisible. As an interesting side effect, the paint blocks all light from the opposing side. Therefore, if a sheet, as an example, were soaked in the substance and then worn, the sheet and anything under it would become invisible, but a person inside would be effectively blind as well.

The first use of this material in a strategic setting was during the campaign to curb Jahar's increased aggression against the nation of Helium. A small military flier was coated in the material to allow it to venture into Jaharian airspace and avoid detection. To solve the blindness effect, a periscope was installed

and its sight was the only thing not covered with the paint. The ship — the Jhama, which was named after the ancient city where it was built — survived the conflict, but its whereabouts remain a mystery.

The second instance of this kind of material being discovered was on distant Sasoom (Jupiter). The Savators, a race mostly enslaved by the terrifying Morgors, developed a solution that suspends metallic flakes and crystalline shards and when exposed to a magnetic field of a particular intensity, renders the material and anything it covers invisible. Unlike the paint developed on Barsoom, this substance does not appear to prevent those inside its effect from being able to see. The Savators have used this material to keep their cities hidden from the vile Morgors. As it has been applied to their walls and homes, it stands to reason that it could also be applied to other surfaces, such as the skin of an airship.

### INVISIBILITY IN GAMEPLAY

As discussed in the John Carter of Mars core rulebook, attacking others while invisible is considered Dishonorable. Given the extreme rarity of the Jhama Invisibility Paint, it is not generally available for purchase and cannot be acquired as core equipment. The Savator Invisibility Material is only known among that secretive race of Sasoom. Given the aggression of the Morgors, however, it is likely that the Savators will see the people of Barsoom as allies in arms and could be persuaded to supply it, if contact could be established. The use of Jhama invisibility paint provides a 2d20 bonus to tests to remain undetected, but it also renders the user effectively blind, unless steps have been taken to circumvent this. Providing a means to see reduces the d20 bonus to a single d20. Retaining full invisibility but operating blind increases the difficulty of any test by 3.

### NEW WEAPONRY

While the sword and the radium rifle have long been the most widely used and trusted arms of Barsoom, there are individuals who will always seek new and more effective ways to wage war on their neighbors. Mars is, after all, a planet populated by warriors. The efforts of John Carter created the largest, most diverse,



and most powerful military force Barsoom has seen since the oceans ran dry. With their enemies unable to stand against this mighty host, it should come as no surprise that there would be those individuals whose desperation and ambition would drive them to seek ways to overcome the current state of affairs. To that end, the Jeddak of Jeddaks era saw some of the greatest leaps forward in the technologies of war since the invention of the airship.

### DISINTEGRATION RAYS

One of the truly terrifying weapons deployed by the navy of Jahar, the disintegration rays fired by their primary guns obliterated even the mightiest of Helium's warships. These weapons were developed by the crazed inventor Phor Tak while he was held in service to the ruthless and power-hungry Jeddak of Jahar, Tul Axtar. A coward by nature, Tul Axtar desired a weapon that would give his ships the ability to destroy any enemy vessel placed against him. Eventually Phor Tak escaped to Jhama and equipped Helium's ships with similar weaponry that allowed them to turn the tide of battle to Helium's favor, and the vile Tul Axtar was slain. Fearing the power of these new weapons, which could vaporize metal, wood, and flesh, Phor Tak's weapon caches were destroyed to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands.

But the victorious fleet of Helium returned

home with dozens of captured Jaharian ships, allowing the scientists and scholars of that great city to study them. These weapons employ an ingenious method for attacking their opponents. Instead of firing a projectile, as is the case with all radium weapons, they instead produce an oscillating focused beam of the mysterious ninth ray. While the scientists of Helium are still dumbfounded as to how Phor Tak managed to produce this, they have all agreed about its effects. As the ninth ray is well known to be essential to all life and matter on Barsoom, exposing a material to the exact opposite ninth ray frequency results in it breaking down into dust. Currently, there are only three known versions of these weapons, one for each of three common materials found on warships: wood, metal, and human flesh. Inspection of the weapons found aboard the Jaharian ships revealed that they were a composite weapon that contained two barrels, one for the metal ray and one for the wood. Therefore, regardless of where it struck on a warship, its destructive effects would be certain.

The Jaharian ships mounted the flesh-disintegrating ray guns as well, but they were much smaller and appear to have been designed as defensive weapons to prevent boarders from reaching the ship. As such there is thankfully no current example of this design large enough to attack more than a single target.

Interestingly, a defense was also developed against these weapons, in the form of a special paint. The exact principle behind why this paint prevented the disintegrating effect of these weapons is a mystery still. Efforts to reproduce the paint have failed entirely, and since Phor Tak was killed and his laboratory and weapon cache were destroyed, there is currently no way to reproduce it. The paint is a ghastly shade of blue that strains the eyes to look upon and appears to be equally effective in countering the metal and wood rays. It does not, however, appear to at all interrupt the flesh disintegration ray. This is not an immediate concern, as that ray does not appear to be capable of penetrating even the thinnest of armoring or paneling. Only exposed flesh seems to be at risk and thus discovering and developing a counter to this weapon has yet to become a priority.

What remains of these weapons are solely in the hands of the Helium military, and they are under close guard to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Requests from Helium's allies of Kaol and Ptarth for access to these weapons has been, so far, politely refused, though occasionally emissaries from Helium's closest allies are given tours of the secret weapon armory where they are being stored and studied. Following the capture of Jahar, all of the Jaharian ships with this devastating weaponry were scuttled and then destroyed with incendiary charges on the order of the Warlord





himself. When questioned as to why such weapons should be destroyed, he is reported to have said that he had seen the results of the industry of war and preferred the honorable Barsoomian alternative.

Disintegration weapons are extremely difficult to acquire, if available at all. They are outlawed anywhere the Warlord holds sway, and those nations not within the alliance have passed similar laws, if only to ensure that the weapons will fall into their hands. Should a character happen upon one of these weapons, its use is currently considered a dishonorable act and will likely result in the character being actively hunted by agents of numerous nations. They are never available as core equipment and cannot be purchased with experience. The only way to acquire one would be to do so during the course of an adventure, thus ensuring they remain solely the property of the narrator.

### DISINTEGRATION WEAPONS IN GAMES

For game purposes, only the Flesh Disintegration Rifles are listed here. Metal and wood ray guns are incapable of harming a living being and are not detailed, though their effects as anti-ship weapons are described in the airship rules under Jahar airships in the Dotar Sojat Era Supplemental Rulebook. These weapons are most effective at Away distances and suffer +1 difficulty for Far and Close ranges and +2 difficulty for Immediate range. They gain the Quiet Quality found in the core rulebook and inflict 2 ☐ damage. They also gain the Gruesome Damage Quality and are considered Dishonorable.

#### GRUESOME DAMAGE

Weapons with this quality result in horrific damage to their target. For each Effect rolled, the target suffers 1 damage to EACH of their stress trackers. When attacking with this weapon, you may spend 3 Momentum to cause the weapon to inflict an affliction for each Effect rolled instead.

## RADIUM WEAPON DEVELOPMENTS

Radium weaponry has existed in its current form for millennia. But as the technology of Helium progressed and a new propulsion system was developed that allowed for larger and faster ships, inventors turned their minds toward improving this already fearsome technology. As many learned scholars of Barsoom already possessed the ability to monitor and study the peoples of Jasoom (Earth), events on that world helped shape the first stage of development for weaponry in this new era.

Rapid fire radium guns had long since been a standard armament of military airships. Their design, however, was somewhat limited. To achieve the desired qualities, radium gunsmiths added an autoloading mechanism that replaced the manual reload process after each shot; these guns more than doubled the rate of fire over traditional manual breach rifles. But this was still deemed too slow when attempting to halt a charging horde of green Martians, or a swarm of single-man light airships. Thus, adopting a design from their interplanetary neighbors, the rotary repeating radium gun was invented. This design mounted eight rapid firing radium guns on a circular carriage that was powered by a small radium motor. After firing, the first gun or "barrel" would then rotate out of firing position so that the next could fire whilst the first began reloading. This process continued until the gun was fully reloaded and ready, then it would complete its revolution and swing back into place. This system allowed for a three-man gunnery team to now be capable of operating the same amount of armament that once required as many as fifteen.

Following the radium repeater was the first in a series of weapons called radium rockets. These weapons essentially combined a small one-man flier with the incendiary bombs already carried aboard larger airships. A small, light-weight airframe is loaded with explosive incendiary charges and the nose of the ship is given a thick radium

coating and then painted with a protective covering. A swift motor is added and the entire craft is given sufficient buoyance to keep it aloft. The intent was to provide a warship with the destructive capability of its bomb bay without having to completely overtake and then raise above its target. In the past, such attacks were impossible against a smaller ship, as it was far faster and more maneuverable, and the attempt often exposed the attacking craft to boarding actions.

The first generation of these self-propelled devices were as large as scout fliers, and due to the increased weight of the incendiaries, much slower and therefore more easily shot down. Designs quickly began to reduce the size of the rockets, such that now they are little larger than the average red Martian. The radium coating on the rocket's nose was added to ensure that when it struck its target the device would detonate as desired. Current generations have added a launching system to provide the rockets with extra speed. They are loaded into special tubes, lined with eighth-ray-powered impellers. These hurl the rocket away from the firing ship and toward its target at speeds surpassing what it could achieve using its own engine.

The size of traditional radium guns aboard ships has increased as well, though not nearly to the proportions of the great gun emplacements found on Earthly seagoing ships. These main guns have a barrel opening of about the size of a person's head and fire an incendiary housed in a metal sleeve or shell, which in turn is given a radium coating and then a protective one. When these devastating projectiles strike an enemy ship, the radium detonates as one would expect, shattering the thin metal sleeve. This creates shards of metal that sweep across the decks of enemy ships. To ensure maximum destructive capability, the incendiary charge is ignited by the radium blast so that the shrapnel sweeping across the enemy's deck also sets everything it touches on fire. While exceedingly effective, these weapons have only been mounted on a handful of ships in the Heliumite, and the honor of their use is hotly debated.



## ADVANCED RADIUM WEAPONS IN PLAY

Large-scale radium weapons using this advanced technology inflict an additional 2 of damage. If using the airship rules from the Dotar Sojat Era Supplemental Rulebook this includes airship weapons equipped with such technology.

### ENERGY LANCES

Several highly advanced cultures have developed ways of harnessing the ninth ray that are currently unknown to modern Barsoomian science. These can be found in the most isolated of places, the most ancient of ruins, or in the hands of invaders from beyond the lands of Barsoom. These weapons fire no projectile and do not appear to use ammunition in any way at all.

Sometimes known as energy lances, such weapons fire a concentrated beam of light that causes intense pain and damage as if the target had been exposed to the flames of the hottest furnace. Metal and flesh melts, wood and leather burst into flames, and nothing remains but a blackened and smoking ruin. Thankfully, these weapons are most commonly found in the myths and legends of isolated cultures, and a significant portion of the educated scholars of the red nations believe them to be nothing more than fanciful tales. Still, this has not stopped truly driven and determined scientists from attempting to discover if there is any truth to the ancient tales of warriors wielding the power of lightning.

These devices are unheard of in most areas of Barsoom. Obtaining such a weapon would be the result of some adventurous activity, such as delving into the pits of an ancient lost city or encountering an advanced culture and managing to defeat them or, more likely, outwit them. These weapons make almost no noise, but do release visible flashes of energy when fired.

### ENERGY LANCES IN GAMES

Energy lances operate at the same ranges as traditional radium weapons. They gain the Fearsome and Quiet qualities and inflict 4 in damage. They are never available as core equipment and have no associated xp cost.

## ARCANE ITEMS OF POWER

Buried in the lost cities of Barsoom are trinkets and objects whose purpose and construction have been lost to the ages. These devices are usually unique to their location and not found anywhere else. Some of them may be truly one of a kind and their use a mystery even to the people who currently own them. All are ornate and beautiful, the work of artisans from an age long forgotten.

### SCINTILLATING PRISMS

Though the origin of these strange objects predates any current civilization or culture on Barsoom, most of these gemstones came into the possession of the Holy Therns and were integrated into their head-dresses or decorative leather harnesses to symbolize their station and office. The crystals were roughly the size of a man's hand, and when struck by light created a display of color so beautiful it could leave a hardened fighting man with tears of joy in his eyes. But even the Holy Therns, with their ancient wisdom, could not fathom the true purpose and creation of these beautiful objects. The therns did not realize that these powerful gems were mined deep within the moon Thuria by the enigmatic Tarids and were used by their children to hone their natural mental powers. How these relics came to be found on the surface of Barsoom remains a mystery.

When worn by those with powerful mental abilities, the true nature of these gemstones becomes apparent. While the gems can create fractal light beams displaying the unspeakably beautiful eighth and ninth rays, their true purpose is to enhance the powers of the mind and make the use of these abilities far easier and more powerful.

Currently, these gemstones can be found most commonly in the ruins near the Valley Dor that were once home to the Holy Therns. Accessing these ruins, however, is an ordeal most Barsoomians are unlikely to survive. In the absence of the therns, hordes of great white apes, banths, and plant men have assumed ownership of the ruins.

Beyond the Valley Dor, these strange crystals can sometimes be found hidden in the depths of the lost

cities of Barsoom or in the hands of wealthy and powerful collectors. Due to their ability to enhance the powers of the mentally gifted, they have also become increasingly desired by those with adept mental or psychic powers, and such individuals pay well.

### PRISMS IN GAMEPLAY

These crystals are most often worn so that they touch bare skin. This is required for them to provide their function to those with mental powers. Anyone with such abilities immediately generates one bonus Momentum on any successful test to use their mental powers. Multiple crystals do not provide added benefit. Because of the rarity of these objects, they are not core equipment and cannot be purchased with xp.

### MASS MANIPULATION BELTS

One of the stranger physical laws encountered by Barsoomian scientists is the physical effect called compensatory adjustment of masses, which results in an object resizing itself to correspond properly to its surroundings. This effect was encountered by the great Warlord of Barsoom, John Carter, when he and a small team ventured to the moon of Thuria and shrank to match the relative size of the much smaller moon. This theory was well known to Barsoomian scientists long before the arrival of the Warlord.

Experimentation with Barsoom's mysterious ninth ray has produced a collection of devices commonly called mass manipulation belts, which allow the wearer to increase or decrease the size of their body. Keeping a subject within the belt's field and then altering its intensity results in the wearer either growing or shrinking in size. Unfortunately, the complex machinery required to control this field means that the change in size is preset. Further, the magnitude of this change is restricted due to the belt's interaction with natural ambient rays on Barsoom. It is because of this that the resulting effect is limited to either doubling the wearer's size, or reducing it in half. Their physical properties and characteristics however, are proportional to their new size. Those that grow find themselves much stronger but slower than before and vice versa.



## MASS MANIPULATION BELTS IN GAMES

While its name may suggest that the device is worn around the waist, it actually can be fitted anywhere on a person's harness. A button on the front of the buckle activates and deactivates the device. Once active, the effect is instantaneous and the wearer immediately adopts their new size.

In game terms, activating this device is a Free action, and as the change is instant this can be done in conjunction with other actions as normal. The effect produces the following changes in the character: growth temporarily increases a character's Might by 2 but decreases their Daring by 2; shrinking reverses this effect, so the character gains 2 Daring but loses 2 Might. They also reduce or increase difficulties for tests made easier or more challenging by their altered mass. These devices are rare, but not unheard of. They are not core equipment and cost 50xp to acquire.

## ADVANCED APPLICATIONS

### SPACECRAFT

During the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, rival Zodangan inventors created the first known Barsoomian vessels capable of flight into space. They were used to travel to the small Martian moon of Thuria before eventually returning to the dying world and then disappearing. While this has raised serious concerns for the leaders of the red Martian nations, so far no new trouble has come of these experimental ships. As word has spread, however, other scientists and inventors have begun following in these two visionaries' footsteps and begun their own efforts in developing ships that can survive beyond the atmosphere of Mars.

Most of these designs have borrowed liberally from the submersibles found in the Omean Sea, and scholars and inventors pay handsomely to be escorted to the First Born city to examine these ancient machines. Of particular interest is their ability to continue to produce a breathable atmosphere while under water, something that so far has only been performed within the great and mysterious atmosphere plant operated by the nation of Helium. Given its central necessity to all

life on Barsoom, access to and study of this critical machine is strictly forbidden.

Still, this has not stopped noted inventors from attempting various theories and experiments to produce a functional spacecraft. Many have attempted to adapt existing aircraft, to disastrous results. The construction of a craft must be sturdy enough to handle the great speeds that must be reached to exit the gravity of Mars, and yet light enough to do so with the engines available. In addition to these requirements the craft must be fully enclosed to protect those inside from the dangerous nature of space beyond the atmosphere of Barsoom.

### SPACECRAFT IN GAMES

Barsoomian space vessels can take nearly any shape or design that meet the criteria required to provide safety to those within while allowing the ship to fly. In game terms this is simply a matter of description and has no immediate impact on the rules. Each of these vessels is a unique example of the mind of its creator and should be representative of their particular point of view. They could be beautifully sleek or viciously angled, armed with powerful weapons or completely lacking such implements of war.

With regard to the rules for fliers and airships from the core rulebook, spacecraft are considered to have a new purpose: Experimental. Such vessels are so swift that they automatically gain 3 Momentum when attempting to escape or catch non-Experimental craft. Narrators and players using the airship rules from the Dotar Sojat Era Supplemental Rulebook may create spacecraft using those rules — space movement and combat are discussed there as well. These craft may also have the Experimental purpose, giving them 3 Momentum for tests to escape or catch non-spacecraft.

## THINKING MACHINES

Another recent development is the use of artificial devices for computational or control purposes. The first known device of this type was the mechanical brain developed by the ambitious Zodangan scientist Fal Sivas. His device was a metal sphere roughly the size of a man's head. To program and perfect this

device, he gruesomely experimented on unwilling captives, cutting open their skulls and connecting the device to their brains. Such barbarity is rare on even the warlike world of Barsoom and would surely bring dishonor to someone twisted enough to repeat it.

This has not, however, prevented others from attempting similar, if not as detestable, attempts to reproduce this device. Without harnessing the power of a living brain, development of a functional thinking machine is slow work and it must be done with extreme care to prevent damaging or destroying what efforts have already been achieved.

These devices provide numerous benefits once completed. They can be used to pilot aircraft with much greater precision than the Carthoris directional control compass that has become common on the aircraft of Helium. When properly programmed, usually though trial and error, these devices can not only pilot a ship to its destination, but can also avoid obstacles and enemies. Thinking machines have also been theorized to provide potential advances in mathematics and engineering, allowing complex calculations to be performed with a speed and accuracy unheard of by modern scholars.

An artificial brain or thinking machine is the Barsoomian term used for what we might consider early computers. These are purpose-built devices that are designed to perform a particular function but little else. Currently there are no known operational thinking machines except for the one created by Fal Sivas, and it is missing with its inventor.

### THINKING MACHINES IN GAMEPLAY

In game terms, a thinking machine provides a bonus d20 to a specific test determined when it was created. This could be almost anything, from solving difficult scientific theories to predicting the weather. More advanced versions of this device can also function as a limited minion, performing basic tests within a limited scope of function (such as piloting a flier or producing swords at a forge) and are considered to have 6s in all of their attributes. These devices represent a lifetime of work, study, and experimentation and are therefore not available as core equipment or purchasable with xp.



## NEW TALENTS AND POWERS

Described below are new abilities and mysterious powers that can be encountered while exploring and adventuring on dying Mars. Some are drawn directly from those described within the *John Carter* novels, while others are either based on legends and myths or are plausible within the wilds of Barsoom.



## MIND READING

The following talents fall under the Mind Reading power found in the core rulebook.

### TALENTS

#### MENTAL PROBE (GRADE 5)

*Examples of lesser forms of telepathy are fairly common throughout the Barsoomian stories. Most Barsoomians appear to be capable of some form of telepathic or empathic ability, especially when dealing with commonly domesticated beasts, such as thoats or calots. Exceptional individuals and some secretive races, however, have displayed the ability to peer into the thoughts of higher life forms and gain information from them, even if those individuals would prefer that information to remain hidden.*

*Mental probing requires intense concentration and the ability to see and focus on the target and make eye contact. Unlike Mind Control techniques, this power does not grant the user the ability to control the thoughts or actions of their target. Use of this power can be extremely unpleasant for its target, especially if they attempt to resist. Particularly sadistic practitioners have even turned the use of this ability into a form of mental torture.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When making eye contact.

✱ **Effect:** During any verbal exchange or interrogation where you can make unbroken eye contact with your target, the first use of the Obtain Information Momentum spend has its cost reduced to 0 as you wrench information directly from their mind. You may also inflict Fear or Confusion using this ability, making a Reason + Cunning attack against any target you have eye contact with and dealing 2 of Fearsome or Psychic damage—selected when you make the attack.

#### UNSEEN SPEAKER (GRADE 2)

*A more refined and advanced form of Mind Reading, this ability is exceedingly rare among red Martians but is becoming more prevalent amongst those who are regularly exposed to the mysterious powers of the Barsoomian ninth ray. This power allows the user to broadcast their thoughts to other individuals so that*

*they can “hear” them without the user speaking. This can be of great tactical value during confrontations, ensuring that unseen individuals remain hidden. In its most basic form, this power can only be used at the same distances that one could normally speak at, but with greater effort this can be done to be “heard” over great distances.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When trying to communicate.

✱ **Effect:** Your thoughts are projected into the mind of another person you can see, allowing you to communicate clearly with them through Spoken actions without interruption or environmental disruption as long as you are both conscious. This can only be done at the same distances normally allowed for communication, but requires no test. You may spend 2 Momentum to increase the distance that you can be heard by 1 step, but if you cannot see your target you can only speak to someone you know well, such as a spouse, child, or good friend.

## MIND CONTROL

The following talents fall under the Mind Control power found in the core rulebook.

### TALENTS

#### MENTAL HIBERNATION (GRADE 6)

*Demonstrated by an ancient being in the depths under the dead city of Horz, this power allows the user to render its victims unconscious but unharmed. Those affected by this power are placed into a deep and dreamless sleep and are unable to be awoken until the practitioner of this ability is disabled, or after a full Barsoomian day has passed. This state resembles death, and without close examination onlookers may believe the target has perished. In the case of the city of Horz, the victims are placed within a kind of chest or coffin that keeps them trapped in this dreamless sleep indefinitely.*

✱ **Circumstance:** When you mentally subdue someone.

✱ **Effect:** You may attempt to force a target within Near range to black out and enter a deep sleep,



resembling death. This requires an opposed **Empathy + Reason** (D1) test. Once in such a state they will remain that way for a full day, until you black out or voluntarily release them. If you are successful, the target immediately suffers 1 Madness affliction and you may continue to use the power on your turn as a Free action until the target succeeds at the opposed test or blacks out. For 3 points of Momentum you can cause an additional Madness affliction to the target on each roll. Targets who black out in this fashion recover as noted above, regaining all but 1 Madness affliction as they awaken relatively unharmed but temporarily weakened and disoriented. Once a target successfully resists this power, it cannot be used on them for a full day.

Advanced versions of this already potent power may exist. Mental Hibernation that causes additional Confusion affliction upon success costs 3 Grades per additional affliction.

## ILLUSION GENERATION

The following talents fall under the Illusion Generation power found in the core rulebook.

### TALENTS

#### EVERLASTING ILLUSION (GRADE 9)

*You can breathe life into your illusions so that they become permanent beings, capable of taking action without your continued effort.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When you wish to make an illusion permanent.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may attempt an **Empathy + Passion** (D5) test to make a previously created illusion permanent. The illusion is now, for all purposes, a living creature, and will continue to exist without you focusing on keeping it active. Your illusion remains fiercely loyal to you and will obey all commands you give it. However, it is a separate individual with its own desires and aspirations. These characters can also be purchased as an ally and will faithfully serve

you to the best of their ability. Such allies cost the same renown as normal allies, but they rarely have additional resources — they are exceptional individuals of unusual origin but few connections to the world.

## MERCURIAL MIND

Some individuals are either naturally resistant or have trained and disciplined their minds and thus have an immunity to mental attacks and psychic powers. Where such powers are commonplace, this ability becomes far more prevalent, but among the peoples of dying Mars, it remains somewhat rare. People with this power are often referred to as having a “blank” or “slippery” mind by those who would use their mental powers on them.

### TALENTS

#### MERCURIAL MIND (GRADE 3)

- ✱ **Circumstance:** Anytime you are the target of a mental or psychic power.
- ✱ **Effect:** You gain a bonus d20 to any test to resist or overcome a mental power or attack. Further, if you are defending during an opposed test required for such a power, you reduce your difficulty by 1, to a minimum of 0. This includes things like Mind Control, Mind Reading, and Mental Hibernation. If you are successful in your defense against the mental power, you may spend 3 Momentum to become immune to the power for the remainder of the current encounter or scene. This power provides no additional defense or benefit against powers that do not directly target you, such as Illusion Generation, nor does it provide resistance against mental powers that result in a physical attack.

#### TACTICAL GENIUS (GRADE 6)

*While many warriors and strategists on Barsoom possess great skill and experience in battle, the character who has developed this ability is beyond all but the most experienced and intelligent commanders in history. Seeing ten or twenty possible moves ahead at all times, those who possess this*

*heightened sense for tactics and strategy are rarely taken off guard and always seem to have a way out of even the worst situations.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** At the end of your turn.
- ✱ **Effect:** Once per session you may spend 1 Luck point to replay an entire turn, adding a bonus d20 to every action you perform and gaining one additional action of any type (Conflict, Movement, Spoken, or Free). Unlike normal Luck expenditures, these bonus dice are not considered to have rolled a 1. You may change your actions when you replay the turn. In addition, you reduce the difficulty of actions devoted to planning and strategy by 1, including games such as jetan.

## PSYCHOKINESIS

There are individuals whose minds are so powerful they can manipulate and control material objects with their thoughts alone. This allows them to pick up and move small items with their minds, but this is only part of their power. Where a telekinetic may exert great force with their mind, the psychokinetic excels at manipulation of and fundamental changes to an object.

### TALENTS

#### BEND MATTER (GRADE 5)

You can manipulate matter by psychokinetically rearranging molecules. You can heat, cool, or make an object brittle or weak. With the highest levels of control, you can even alter an object's shape.

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When targeting an object.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can make a **Cunning + Reason** test to affect an object within Near range or closer. The difficulty is determined by what you wish to do to the object (see the difficulty table below). Narrators have final say on how big an area or item this power can affect. Changes to an object are permanent but subject to logical and environmental restrictions — heated or cooled items return to room temperature in time, a brittle item can be reforged or repaired, etc.



D	EFFECT
D(2)	Heat up or cool down object significantly. This does no direct damage, but may alter the object's function or affect how it interacts with its environment.
D(3)	Make an object brittle and easily breakable. This decreases difficulties to break, bend, or destroy the object by 1. Physical attacks on the object now do +1 to it.
D(3)	Increase the durability of an object. This increases difficulties to break, bend, or destroy the object by 1. The object ignores the first point of damage inflicted on it.
D(4)	Alter the shape but not material of an object — turning a wooden branch into a wooden spoon, making a shard of metal into a key, etc.

### HANDS OF AIR (GRADE 2)

*You can interact with objects at a distance as though you were there.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When interacting with an object using your mind.
- ✱ **Effect:** You can lift or interact with an object as though you were doing so with your hands. You may not lift any object which would require a Might test to move, nor can you attack with this talent. You may make any test you would normally be allowed to use the object, but doing so increases the difficulty by 1 step.

## ASSASSIN GUILD TRAINING

While petty crimes like theft are all but unknown within most societies on Barsoom, murder for hire is almost considered an artform and is widely practiced and accepted. Assassination guilds and freelance murderers can be found in almost every city on the Red Planet. Becoming a member of one of these guilds is considered an honorable profession and often the lifelong ambition of the would-be killer.

## TALENTS

### ASSASSIN'S STRIKE (GRADE 3)

*When you strike, you strike hard and fast. A quick kill is the goal of every assassin.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking your target with the intent to kill.
- ✱ **Effect:** The first attack you make against your chosen target is always the most deadly and powerful. Your first attack against a target in a conflict has a bonus d20 and inflicts +2 of damage. In addition, if the target is unaware of your presence you deal an additional +2. You cannot use this talent again against the same target until next session or a significant amount of in-game time has passed — a week or longer.

### DEDICATED TO THE CONTRACT (GRADE 3)

*Once you take a contract to eliminate someone, you become focused on their location and destruction to the exclusion of all else.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attacking or hunting a contract target.
- ✱ **Effect:** When targeting or attacking a target whom you are contracted to kill you gain an additional Momentum on all successful actions. You may also eliminate or bypass up to two minion-class characters protecting or guarding the target without need for additional actions — simply explain how you avoid or dispose of them. You may eliminate or bypass additional minions by spending 1 Momentum per additional minion.

### HIDDEN ARSENAL (GRADE 3)

*You are rarely truly unarmed.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When being searched for weapons.
- ✱ **Effect:** Even after being thoroughly searched you may choose to have concealed on or near your person a dagger or other small weapon and up to two small items such as lockpicks or a short length of rope. You may also have any core equipment hidden on or near your

person. If desired, once per adventure the narrator may rule you are searched thoroughly and have any secret weapons you are carrying discovered. However, they must pay you 3 Momentum when they do.

### MOVE UNHINDERED (GRADE 2)

*The guild has trained you to avoid obstructions and close the distance to your prey.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When moving in for the kill.
- ✱ **Effect:** You select a character who is monster-class or higher as a target. This can also include someone you have been contracted to assassinate. When closing in on your pre-determined target, as part of a Conflict action intended to attack your marked prey you may immediately move from Away to Immediate, as if you had already been in Near range. In addition, you ignore any obstacles, difficult terrain, or other impediments that would slow you or prevent you from closing this gap. This ability does not, however, allow you to pass through walls or locked doors. You must be able to see your target and be reasonably able to reach them for this talent to work.

### STALK UNSEEN (GRADE 2)

*You have been trained to avoid discovery while tailing your target.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When wishing to stay undetected while following your prey
- ✱ **Effect:** By using cover, shadows, and the crowd, you become difficult to spot while following a potential target. You increase the difficulties to detect you when you are shadowing, tailing, or spying on someone by 1. You may also spy on any minion-class character without any risk of detection, spending 1 additional Momentum per minion present to avoid detection.

In order for this ability to function properly, you must have some reasonable area to blend into or hide. If you are denied the ability to make an attribute test to avoid detection, you cannot use this talent.



## MYSTERIOUS PLACES

Barsoom is home to truly awe-inspiring and wondrous locations. From the moss-covered dead sea bottoms to the cloud-piercing peaks of its highest mountains, dying Mars has been called home by numerous cultures — many who have long since passed into the dust of ages. While these places have been abandoned by their original occupants, they have become home to a new generation of peoples struggling to survive on the dying world.

The information on these places is a mix of speculative and canonical. In some cases, such as with Exum, little is written in the official Barsoom stories. In other cases, such as with the Field of Jetan, much is known about the location's history and purpose. In either case, narrators should feel free to make whatever alterations necessary to fit these locations into their campaigns.



## DOMNIA AND THE MASENA JUNGLE

*I am a Domnian. My country, Domnia, lies far away across the mountains that lie beyond the forest that surrounds the castle of Ul Vas.*

On distant Thuria, life can still be found. Though far smaller than the planet that it orbits, Thuria is home to at least two groups of people: the fair-skinned Tarids with their stark blue hair and powerful telepathic abilities, and the fearsome cat-like Masena. The Tarids have long since constructed fortress cities where they spend much of their lives, while the Masena live in the forested jungles that cover the small moon and make travel between the Tarid realms difficult.

Domnia is one such fortified city, with high walls designed to keep the predatory beasts that lurk in the forests at bay. The city is home to a few thousand of the blue-haired humans, and unlike the cities of Barsoom, Domnia is almost completely enclosed. This gives it the appearance of a single massive castle. Courtyards and plazas remain open to the sky to provide the people living within the opportunity to walk in the open, if they so choose. The Tarids, however, are a people who have long learned that safety is more important than comfort. Being a secretive people, the Tarids have developed the ability to render themselves invisible to anyone unless they choose to be seen. Should anyone find the opportunity to visit Domnia or another Tarid city, it may initially appear to be abandoned.

The interior of the city resembles long passageways and chambers that branch off into individual homes. This architecture ensures that the Tarids remain safely protected from any vicious creature that may find its way past the outer walls. The humans of Thuria do not seem to have any desire to associate themselves with the people of Barsoom, and have extended the ability to remain unseen to their cities as well, though this is achieved not by mental powers but by mundane camouflage.

Beyond these enclosed cities is a vast and

deadly forest, populated by the Masena and a great many other predators. While the Masena will eat the flesh of anything they can kill, they exist in a precarious state in the wilds of Thuria. Forced to make their homes in the tall trees to avoid becoming a meal themselves, the Masena have developed a healthy fear of the creatures that stalk the forest floor. It is not only the beasts that can threaten an unwary Masena, for even the plant life in this place will attack if given the opportunity.

### DOMNIA AND THE MASENA JUNGLE IN GAMES

Thuria makes for an excellent exotic location for Barsoomian adventures. It is an alien land with unusual threats, but the people are similar enough to those of Barsoom to provide ample context and relatability. Nations such as Domnia are good enclaves for heroes to find allies and adventure, while the jungles are a great place to get into trouble.

### PLOT SEED

*The heroes meet Lozar, a pack leader of the Masena, while captive of a villain during an adventure. Lozar doesn't know how he got here, but he is desperate for allies and will help the heroes and serve them loyally as an ally for months if not years. Eventually, however, Lozar wishes to return home and asks his friends to help him. Can they figure out a way to bring their bestial friend home? Will they ever solve the mystery of how the Masena came to Barsoom?*



## THE FIELDS OF JETAN

*For a moment he fingered the chessmen idly. "We have a game on Mars similar to chess," he said, "very similar. And there is a race there that plays it grimly with men and naked swords. We call the game jetan. It is played on a board like yours, except that there are a hundred squares and we use twenty pieces on each side. I never see it played without thinking of Tara of Helium and what befell her among the chessmen of Barsoom. Would you like to hear her story?"*

Across all of Barsoom, jetan is played by the young and old alike. For the warlike Martian people, it is no surprise that a game simulating combat should be the one most commonly played. But while nearly every soldier within the many red Martian militaries possesses a small pocket jetan board, it is in the isolated city of Manator and its neighbors that jetan takes on an entirely new importance.

In these cities, jetan is not only played with carved pieces upon a table, but also with living men. Here it is a bloody spectator sport, a method of execution, and even a sort of duel to determine guilt or resolve disagreement. Two teams of twenty men assume the roles of the jetan pieces and must abide by the rules of their movement. It is when one piece attempts to take another that the crowds roar with excitement. Instead of simply removing the captured piece, the two warriors must battle, often to the death, and the winner controls the space.

The Fields of Jetan encompass a vast area, and contain multiple life-sized ten-by-ten square jetan boards. Around these "boards" stand row upon row of seats and benches so that as many people as possible can witness the moves and captures, be they to first blood or death. The main field is a vast coliseum with stands rising many stories tall providing grand views of the battles below. Wealthy or influential Manatorians enjoy the spectacle from lavishly adorned enclosed boxes that provide both privacy from the crowds and an unbroken view of the field.

### PLOT SEED

*After being accused of a terrible crime, the Jeddak has decreed that guilt or innocence must be established "upon the field." The accuser has been granted Black and assembled an experienced team of jetan players. The accused, being given Orange, must now assemble their team and win to escape an unjust fate.*

## THE WORKSHOPS OF TOONOL

*I know him well, as he served as my assistant in my laboratories in Toonol. In fact it was he whom I trained to such a degree of skill that he was able to transfer my old brain to this young body.*

While most cultures of Barsoom are content with utilizing technology and devices that have been preserved and passed down generation after generation, the city of Toonol is rife with experimentation. Though it resembles many other red Martian cities, Toonol is home to some of the most dedicated and curious — and often mad — scientists seeking to make their fortunes by impressing the dreaded Jeddak of Toonol with their inventions.

Here, scientific advancement is pursued with reckless abandon and there is nothing that is forbidden or taboo. The flesh of the living and the dead is seen as nothing more than raw material for the next discovery. Mechanical devices are built and tested with no care given to the destructive consequence that they may bring.

The buildings that house workshops come in all shapes and sizes. Some are tiny with shelves and benches piled high with all manner of materials, scrolls, and notebooks. Others are vast warehouses that are meticulously organized, cataloged, and indexed so that every item can be located quickly.

Regardless of where the workshops may be located or how large they may be, they all share at least one commonality: within are the successes and failures of their owners. It is from these laboratories that many of the horrors lurking within the nearby marshes were birthed, and it is here that many of these horrors will eventually return. A sizable portion of the Toonol military remains on constant patrol within the city in order to contain the loosed subject of some experiment or, just as often, extinguish the flames of an invention gone horribly wrong before they can spread.

### PLOT SEED

*A healthy but disoriented young man or woman is found by the heroes, wandering in a dangerous area near Toonol. They are strong, intelligent, and beautiful, but have bizarre marks and faint scars on parts of their body, suggesting they were the subjects of some terrible experiment. This person remembers little of their past, only flashes of bright lights, strange machines, and a sinister-looking old man who carries himself like a doctor or scientist. The old man is A-Tok, a red Martian scientist obsessed with artificially creating the perfect human. The disoriented person is his latest experiment, made from artificial tissue and organs harvested from numerous victims. A-Tok wants his creation back, and is willing to send his failed experiments — his own version of the Hormads — to retrieve them. Can the heroes save the escapee from A-Tok, and what will be her or his ultimate fate if they do?*



## CORPHAL'S CAVE

*"If one be a Corphal," he said, "then all of you be Corphals, and we know well from the things that this creature has done," he pointed at Ghek, "that he is a Corphal, for no mortal has such powers as he. And as you are all Corphals you must all die." He took another step downward, when Ghek spoke.*

There is a place, about halfway between Manator and Manataj, that people give a wide berth. Nestled in a low hill is a cave that extends far underground. For generations it has been said that a Corphal—a malevolent spirit—has made this dark place its home. Few people have ever dared to go there, and those who do die mysteriously within a year. While no one has ever actually seen the Corphal, everyone knows it's there.

The cave is the remains of an ancient spring that fed the local streams before they too went dry like the great oceans of Mars. The mouth of the cave has long since become overgrown with tendrils of moss that form great vines as thick as a man's arm. For several hundred paces around the cave, nothing but this thick vine-like moss grows and the locals have come to call it "Corphal's mane."

What lives within the cave is a mystery, though it is very clear that something does indeed live there. Every so often a traveler will lose their way or an adventurous youth will grow too curious, and well-armed search parties inevitably discover their half-eaten remains a short walk away from the cave. Whenever ill befalls the local townsfolk—it was clearly the work of the Corphal. Whenever livestock goes missing—it was taken by the Corphal. When sickness sweeps through the young and old or when food spoils "too soon" or when a thoat or calot pup is still-born—the Corphal has prowled nearby.

Inside the cave there are strange glyphs, primitive writings, and bizarre pictograms adorning the walls. Discarded clothing, worn tools, and even rusted weapons are cast about upon the floor. Moldy furs and rotten silks form a makeshift bed and in the center of the cave, before it descends into total darkness, there is a fire pit that smolders as if recently used.

### PLOT SEED

An outbreak of disease in communities near the cave has the paranoid blaming a Corphal. A local healer and his family stand accused of Corphalism; in truth the physician is merely trying to treat the plague. Can the heroes find a cure and keep the angry mob and anti-Corphal fanatics away from the physician and his family? Is there someone or something behind this terrible disease, and if so, why?

### CORPHAL'S CAVE IN GAMES

The belief in Corphals and their power is superstition and paranoia, but such things are dangerous when married to an angry mob or zealous leader. Player heroes and their allies who display unusual abilities or superhuman powers—such as Earthborn strength or advanced psychic abilities—risk being labelled as a Corphal. Corphalism is punishable by death in regions that believe in its power.

The secret of the cave is left open for narrators to determine. However, there should be a rational explanation, even if it is very unusual. Perhaps the Corphal is a hermit with psychic abilities, or a cabal of scientists conducting forbidden experiments. The cave itself may be a front, presented as dangerous and haunted to keep others away. In this case the cave might hide a secret facility, hidden city, or other wonder.



## AVIARIES OF MORBUS

*About twenty birds were winging toward us. That in itself was sufficiently astonishing, since they were easily identifiable as malagors, a species long presumed to be extinct; but to add to the incredibility of the sight that met our eyes, a warrior bestrode each of the giant birds.*

The island of Morbus sits within one of the last bodies of natural surface water left to dying Mars. Most of the island is occupied by an ancient city that the great Ras Thavas used as a laboratory for his more outlandish experiments. While the Hormads were the most notable of these creations, they are not necessarily the most dangerous. Located in the broken tops of the city's towers, great cages were built to house another of Thavas' creations: the malagors. When Morbus was abandoned once more, the malagors were left unattended and while they spread throughout the rest of the marshes and even beyond, the greatest concentration of them remains in the tall buildings and slender towers of the city where they were created.

Where once the beasts were kept relatively contained in a series of enclosed pens, the malagors have returned to their primal natures and nested throughout the city's upper floors. Given their immense size, they have created nests large enough to contain a small red Martian house, made from tree branches, vast amounts of reeds and grasses, and the fur, skin and other remains of whatever the flying terrors can snatch up while hunting.

These places emit a powerful odor which both announces their presence and warns any predator to be wary, and can be detected when downwind for great distances. The malagors have earned a reputation for being one of the deadliest creatures inhabiting the swamps and have been known to carry off not only a fully-grown green Martian, but a hulking thoat as well. Strangely, there are lingering tales of malagors carrying off individuals only for these lucky souls to stumble back to civilization some time later. Most recount being left in the tangled mess the creature nests in, but not eaten. Why a malagor would catch prey, carry it back to its lair, and then not consume it remains a mystery.

### PLOT SEED

*After a difficult and dangerous mission, a valued weapon or device has finally been obtained. This reward represents the hard work of several people and is of considerable value. Unfortunately, it also caught the interest of a malagor that was flying overhead and it is now tightly gripped in the creature's claws. It is clear the beast is returning to its lair, and with any luck this prized possession will be there too.*

## THE RUINS OF RAXAR

*He took me prisoner when he sacked Raxar on his way down from Panar to Gathol; I was serving there in the army of the jed.*

Sacked by the mad Jeddak of Panar, Hin Abtol, Raxar was a prosperous red Martian settlement built within a long dead ancient city. Abtol's men razed and blasted much of the city, using it as a test bed for his army of frozen soldiers. Now the only inhabitants of the city are a mix of deserters, abandoned soldiers, and survivors from Abtol's invasion.

Before its destruction, Raxar was a fairly typical small red kingdom. Proud, resourceful, and somewhat isolated, Raxar had few allies to leap to its defense when Hin Abtol and the forces of Panar attacked. They certainly weren't capable of repelling Panar's massive force of frozen troops — a vast army only unfrozen when they are needed for war. Overrun by superior numbers, Raxar's homes were broken and burned, their streets ran with the blood of the fallen, and whoever could not flee the city was left to suffer and die in its ruins.

Raxar's remaining population is currently organized into small gangs struggling to survive as their resources dwindle and wild beasts move in to take over. A strong leader might unite these disparate groups into a reborn Raxar. A tyrant or mad scientist might choose to use Raxar as a source for captives and test subjects. Other than forgotten pockets of refugees and survivors, and whatever salvage remains after Hin Abtol's sacking of the city, all that is left in Raxar is ulsios, corpses, and ruins.

### STORY SEED

*A scientist formerly of Raxar seeks the heroes' aid. Before the sacking of the city, they were working on a stasis module that would keep a mortally wounded or terminally ill patient in a death-like state until they could be saved. When the scientist's daughter was shot through the heart by Panar invaders, they managed to place her in the stasis module before they were forced to flee. The prototype module was left in the scientist's lab in Raxar, connected to an independent power generator. The scientist wants the heroes to bring back their daughter and the stasis generator. Can the heroes accomplish this heroic task? Is there a connection between the scientist's device and Hin Abtol's freezing process used on his armies?*



## EXUM

*Upon the occasion of which I am about to tell you I flew northwest from Helium, which lies 30 degrees south of the Equator which I crossed about sixteen hundred miles east of Exum, the Barsoomian Greenwich.*

Considered by many scholars to be the very cradle of modern Barsoomian civilization, the dead city of Exum is situated on the intersection of the prime meridian and the equator. Many charts, maps, and navigational aids have used the location of Exum as their reference point, and yet this wondrous place remains largely unexplored and rarely visited. From a distance, Exum appears identical to many other lost cities: its buildings remain standing, with gardens and boulevards slightly overgrown with red grasses and yellow moss, and tall towers still intact but abandoned. But as you venture closer to the walls of this once-great city, the power of this place can be felt thrumming in the air and pressing against ears and hearts, filling all who enter with a sense of both awe and dread.

Once the brave or foolish enter, however, the differences between this and other lost cities become sudden clear. The buildings and towers, though unoccupied by any human for long centuries, remain immaculately preserved and contain strange mechanical devices that have long ceased to function yet stubbornly defy explanation or investigation. Landing platforms and docking towers, common in modern Martian cities such as Helium, can also be found here — in a place abandoned thousands of years before the invention of airships. Upon investigation, these facilities

are of a unique design that could be used to service fliers, but were likely intended for some other kind of vessel.

Those learned scholars who are intimately familiar with the more advanced scientific theories will immediately identify that this place is a nexus of power, where the various Barsoomian rays are harnessed and amplified. Strangely, however, this does not entirely explain the odd occurrences that become increasingly evident the longer one spends within the city's walls. Objects seem to move of their own accord. Alleys and hallways seem to twist and reorient themselves with each corner turned. Voices of people who could not possibly be there can be heard coming from windows and doorways. Eventually, even the bravest souls must flee this place or face madness.

### PLOT SEED

***An expedition to Exum to uncover the lost journals of a great scientist from Barsoom's past has disappeared. Did the explorers succumb to the beasts that haunt the ruins or did they fall victim to the strange madness which infects those who stay too long in the shadows of Exum? Does something hide in or under the city? What would such hidden forces do to keep their secrets?***

### EXUM IN GAMES

One of Barsoom's "lost cities," Exum's status as a central navigation point on Barsoom ensures its importance. It is mentioned briefly in the Carter tales penned by Burroughs. While Exum's status as positioned exactly along Mars's equator does not make it inherently important, it is unlikely Burroughs placed a dead city there in such a prominent place and meant for it to just be an unremarkable old settlement. More likely he simply never penned the story that would reveal Exum's mysteries and significance to us. Thus here it is imagined to be a place of ancient learning and culture haunted by the past — something keeps this city empty and preys upon those who stay too long in the shadows of its great spires.

Exum is a strange place that slowly strips the sanity from anyone who enters. While within the city, the narrator may spend 2 Threat to create a nonphysical Challenging (D2) danger that inflicts 2 of damage with the Psychic quality to the Fear stress track.







## MORGOR VOLCANIC LAIRS AND THE HIDDEN CITY OF ZANOR

*There were still a few areas, small and considered of little value by the Morgors, which retained their liberty and their own governments. From such an area came Zan Dar — a remote island called Zanor.*

Sasoom, also called Eurobus by its native people and Jupiter by the people of Earth, is the largest planet in the solar system. Little is known about this world due to the constant and impenetrable storms that encircle the world. The planet, however, is a lush and vibrant place, heated and lit by the inexhaustible power of hundreds of active volcanoes. Vast oceans and endless jungles stretch far into the horizon, eternally lit by the warm glow of the molten lava within the towering mountains.

Here the deadly and monstrous Morgors plan and plot to conquer each planet in turn, setting their sights upon Barsoom as their first major target. While capable of erecting cities like any other intelligent people, the Morgors have instead carved their militarized cities from the dark volcanic bedrock. Chamber upon chamber extend ever deeper into Sasoom's surface, creating a network of chambers and tunnels that make the greatest of Barsoomian pits look like a root cellar by comparison.

Capitalizing on the endless power provided by volcanic activity, the Morgors use the volcanoes as immense hangars and allow their ships to replenish their energy reserves directly from the heat of the planet's core. To ensure easy access to their priceless spacecraft, the Morgors have largely dug their subterranean cities directly into the volcanoes themselves. Unfortunately, given the number of truly unstable volcanoes, there are also a significant number of staging and training areas located directly on Sasoom's surface. It is here, away from the sensitive and valuable armories and hangars, that the Morgors keep the captives taken during their pillaging and raiding. Having no interest in artistic endeavors, Morgor architecture is starkly plain and utilitarian — even more so than the spartan conditions that most red Martians enjoy.

To ensure they remain far beyond the reach and notice of the Morgors, the blue-skinned Sava-

tors have utilized that same fantastic material that renders the Morgors' spacecraft invisible. The Morgors have attempted for generations to finish capturing the Savator people and either forcing them to work for the Morgor war machine, or to be counted an enemy of the state and executed. It is currently unknown whether the Savators created this magnetic-crystalline material that can turn something completely invisible — or if they stole the technology from the Morgors. Regardless of how they came across it, this material has ensured that the few Savators that remain outside of Morgor custody should stay that way.

As the Savators have rendered their enclaves and cities invisible, discovering their exact nature is almost impossible. Even when dealing with potential allies, the Savators are loath to reveal too much for fear that this information will fall into the hands of their ancestral enemy. What is known is that the Savators build their cities near bodies of fresh water, much in the same way that Earthborn humans have done since the dawn of civilization on Earth. Their homes and various other buildings are kept intentionally short to prevent any accidental collisions from low altitude Morgor patrols.

The greatest of these cities is Zanor. Due to its remote location and the declining interest of the Morgors — as they have now begun the first stages of their conquest — Zanor is only partially obscured now, and should the Morgors suddenly decide to return their attention to stamping out the last bit of resistance on their home planet before directing their full efforts outward, the Savators living in Zanor would stand little chance.

Zanor sits at the edge of a vast ocean that extends over the horizon and takes hours to cross using a swift flier. The city possesses all the amenities and comforts that one might expect of a technological species (relatively speaking, of

course). Much like the people of Thuria, the Savators of Sasoom would prefer to avoid direct conflict, and this can be seen in the planning, layout, and architecture of their major cities.

### VOLCANIC LAIRS AND ZANOR IN GAMES

Volcanic lairs are a classic of pulp fiction. They are a mix of potential dangers and wonderfully exciting scenery. They are also the best chance for trapped Barsoomians to return home by stealing a docked ship capable of making the trip between worlds.

Cities like Zanor are vital locations for Barsoomians on Sasoom. They provide a place to gain information, supplies, and allies. However, their security comes from being secret and passed over as unimportant. This means that players heroes might need to make a compelling case why they, strangers and outsiders, can be trusted to leave Zanor and similar cities once they discover them.

### PLOT SEED

*After a night of revelry and celebration, the adventurous heroes awaken to find themselves restrained and secured to a long metal rail inside a metallic vessel. At first it appears to be the cabin of a flier, but they soon realize it's something much more advanced. Their captors appear to be Barsoomian, but after several hours, they are revealed to be grotesque Morgors. The group has been selected to provide a suitable challenge for a young warrior who is favored by Bandolian, the Emperor of the Morgors.*



# NARRATING THE ERA

*The spirit of adventure is so strong within me that I often yield to its demands in spite of the dictates of my better judgment.*

– John Carter, *Llana of Gathol*

The Jeddak of Jeddaks era marks a dramatic escalation in Barsoom's history, and as such is an incredible period for adventuring. Though John Carter himself recedes (somewhat) into the background and is concerned with the business of ruling Helium and seeing to its defense, the period bearing his title marks a renewed and politically dangerous time, with even more powerful and stranger enemies emerging from both remote and familiar places, as well as an ever-expanding cast of allies stepping into the limelight as heroes in their own rights.

What follows are some notes for narrators to help focus their Jeddak of Jeddaks era games on those aspects, to help set it apart from other *John Carter* eras.

## COMMON THEMES AND TONE

Described briefly in the John Carter of Mars core rulebook, in the period after Carter became the Jeddak of Jeddaks and Warlord of Barsoom, the nation of Helium and its allies entered a period of unparalleled prosperity and vitality, reversing the trajectory of thousands of years of stagnation and ultimate decline. Carter unified disparate Martian nations and convinced them that peace was in their best interests, giving Helium and its rivals a sense of relief, a release of tension that they had carried for generations upon generations. Once at peace, they could focus on social and technological development, improving the quality of life for their citizens versus the state of near-constant warfare they had endured for millennia.

## WHAT MAKES JEDDAK OF JEDDAKS TICK?

In this time, Barsoom becomes a much broader canvas for adventure. The roster of truly alien creatures expands dramatically to include the telepaths of Lothar, the parasitic Rykor riders known as the Kaldanes, synthetic Hormads, and the cannibals of U-Gor. The tableau of Barsoom grows even bigger, the map encompassing new cities and countries — including many seemingly lost in time. The introduction of interplanetary travel brings with it a gateway to other worlds such as the moon Thuria — inhabited by “invisible” Tarids and other species — Sasoom (Jupiter) and its invading, skeletal Morgors, and finally Earth itself. The rogue's gallery in this era grows with the introduction of fiends such as the “Mastermind of Mars” Ras Thavas, assassin-engineer Fal Sivas, the renegade Jeddak Hin Abtol, and others even more dangerous.

More than important any other feature of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, however, is the burgeoning sense of hope, that things might change for the better and that there is a future worth fighting for. No longer caught in the staid decline of their planet and their peoples, this invigorated spirit has lit a fire within hero and villain alike — some seek to safeguard the world against destruction while others look at the opportunity bred into this period of chaos. Thus, this period is the perfect crucible in which heroes may be forged.

## POLITICAL INFIGHTING

Despite this being the most peaceful of the three eras, the Jeddak of Jeddaks era is decidedly not a time of utter tranquility, with war banished forever from the surface of Barsoom. Instead, the primary difference is that nations brought to the brink of war are sometimes willing to step down, at least on the open battlefield. The jeddaks of other nations are increasingly willing to wait before committing their air armadas to battle, even when arrayed against one another above the planet's surface.

While many nations are caught in an apparent stranglehold of peace, the truth is in fact that this is a time of conspiracy, dramatic betrayals, and a constant struggle for supremacy through more subtle means. Even as nations and cities gain new allies, they also inherit those allies' enemies, and the political crises that follow.

Though leaders show tremendous strength and ability to rule their hordes and cities with a forceful, even hand, this provides all the more reason for enemies to test their hold, to strive against it and see how much strength new nations and allies really have. In some cases, politics draws a fine line between those who get their hands dirty and those who do the dirty work, but upon Barsoom such distinctions vanish. Any person — no matter what their social class or role — may be called upon to defend their beliefs with their utmost skill and strength, or they will perish.

While some enjoy the peace and all it brings, others do what they can to foster rebellion. Rather than treason, the red Martian views this as a natural response. No matter where they are from, they balk



at the very existence of a time of peace, even when it is prosperous, solely because such prolonged periods of inactivity and peace feel unnatural. And nature abhors the unnatural.

Political adventures can be challenging to heroes who aren't focused on social skills or communication, and their circumstances can place heroes in dangerous situations. A diplomatic mission might result in a crash in unfamiliar territory or infiltrating a nefarious organization. One faction might require another to demonstrate their supremacy through gladiatorial combat or some similar challenge. An assassination attempt can be made against anyone, no matter what their role.

### EVERYONE WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD

In the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, there's no shortage of would-be conquerors and tyrants with grand schemes to marshal immense armies, through an astonishing variety of means, with the single goal of ruling all Barsoom. Travel in any compass direction and eventually one will stumble across one of these regional warlords with dreams of grandeur, all too happy to reveal their plan of world domination, cooked up and nurtured over the course of years. This desperate gamble for supremacy rises to a near crescendo during this period, with even the most innocuous of adventures sending heroes into a collision with a would-be world conqueror.

Most of these gambits resemble one another in the basics. Usually the architects of these schemes view their primary obstacle to world domination as coming from Helium, so their goal is inevitably a first strike to neutralize that threat, often aiming at the royal family. Their strategy usually involves a vast and unnaturally created army or aerial navy, or both, often relying on unconventional technology, overwhelming numbers, or both. Sometimes there is an attempt to exploit some perceived weakness of Helium's navy and defenses, but often they depend on simply overwhelming the red Martians, despite their discipline and superior training. Few of these schemes, however, are solid enough to survive the intervention of stalwart heroes.

Despite this, for every frothing-at-the-mouth, gloating evil madman with a deformed army of monster-men striving to rule the whole of Barsoom, there are a dozen others who wish to climb the ladder of power. A noblewoman of Zor with a dedicated league of Amazonian assassins seeking revenge; an anarchist who wishes to bring true peace to Barsoom by destroying the means of making war; a super-weapon by which a demented scientist seeks to blackmail the entire world, threatening destruction to those who caused her some personal tragedy — all of these are appropriate as villains.

### STRANGE THREATS AND STRANGER ALLIES

Though native to the planet, a number of new races begin to appear in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, many of whom become allies of Carter and his friends and family. The telepathic Lotharians are discovered by Carthoris and Thuvia; Tara and Gathol encounter and befriend Ghek the Kaldane; Ulysses Paxton makes an ally of Hovan Du, the brain-transplanted white ape made by Ras Thavas; on the Barsoomian moon Thuria, Carter encounters the Tarids and befriends a cat-man named Umka; the Heliumite padwar Vor Daj is transplanted into the body of a Hormad for a time; and Carter makes a friend of his Savator cellmate Zan Dar while imprisoned on Sasoom. Even the kangaroo-like bumpkins of the swamp of Gooli are affable enough to Carter when he proves himself to them.

While Barsoom itself has danger and adventure aplenty, as Carter's exploits will attest, the newest horizon to open up in the era is the fact that Barsoom is but a single planet in a vaster universe. The other celestial bodies of the solar system are inhabited by beings as diverse and ambitious as any to be found on Barsoom, and it is inevitable that these planets contain beings who will mean harm to others in pursuit of glory and conquest.

Any of these celestial bodies might become significant during the Jeddak of Jeddaks period. Once thought unreachable, they are now all-too-possible destinations due to the introduction of spaceships in this era and Carter's own means of corporeal

transmission to and from Earth. For the first time we discover what life truly resides on Barsoom's planetary neighbors: the Tarids and Masenas, along with a rich collection of strange creatures and flora on the moon Thuria, and the Morgors and Savators locked in a warlike state on the planet Jupiter.

This plethora of alien species coming to the fore makes for exciting dramatic opportunities. Each has its own goals and cultural imperatives, as well as unusual customs and rites. Whether as allies or enemies, adventures among these varied folks emphasize the wide range of sentient species in the world. Representatives of these species might come as ambassadors or invaders, or simply encounters along the way, caught up in the same adventures as the heroes.

### WEIRD SCIENCE

The Jeddak of Jeddaks period is one where technology develops in leaps and bounds. Much like Earth's Industrial Revolution causes a fundamental shift in society and politics, Mars is subject to just such a push, with science surging forward, shaking off the lethargy of past eras. New and astonishing discoveries occur often, and even known technologies and engineering take massive steps forward in efficiency and overall capability.

Airships are made much faster and more efficient, and luxuries such as auto-piloting and collision detection are devised. Medical breakthroughs are made, ranging from brain transplants to the creation of new life. Invisibility technology is finally accomplished, and craft capable of journeying to other planets are developed in multiple places. It is as if a starting pistol were fired at the beginning of this era, and all avenues of science — engineering, physics, medicine, etc. — leap forward at once.

John Carter himself is a staunch supporter of science and technological development — a characteristic he and his son Carthoris share — but this is not always a popular stance. Having seen the instances where science ran amok and threatened the safety of many a city or even all Barsoom, some Martians become noticeably cooler toward new technological development, which frequently challenges the status quo and forces dramatic change.



## NARRATING THE JEDDAK OF JEDDAKS ERA

Other than the general ceasing of war on the grand and ongoing scale, there are many specific themes that define the Jeddak of Jeddaks period and can be utilized by the narrator to evoke that unique and dynamic era.

The era prior to Carter's arrival on Mars was a period of centuries of unceasing decline and pointless conflict. His arrival on Barsoom and early period of adventure ends with the Prince of Helium era, which is bookended at either side. By contrast, the Jeddak of Jeddaks era is open-ended and unresolved, even by Burroughs. Carter's own fate is unchronicled and uncertain, making this period perfect for a narrator wanting a fresh and uninhibited tableau to create adventures in.



## THE ROYAL FAMILY GROWS

This period sees the foundation of Carter's dynasty, with his two children becoming movers and shakers in the world of Barsoom, stepping out from the shadow of their famous parents. During the Prince of Helium era, Carthoris of Helium (page 211 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook) serves as more of a sidekick to his father. A capable swordsman and possessing many of his father's amazing physical gifts, he rises in importance during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. Many seek to test the mettle of Carter's heir apparent to prove their own worth, causing him no end of challenges. Outsiders often attempt to earn favor from the young half-human, which they might put to their own purposes.

Similarly, Carter's daughter Tara of Helium (*John Carter of Mars* core rulebook, page 219) is another vector that conspirators use to seek favor from the Carter household, when kidnapping will not serve their purposes. As an independent and headstrong princess, she is the very image of her mother, and does not countenance fools lightly. She also, unfortunately, does not always countenance the advice of her elders and parents either, and thus she, more than Carthoris, is potentially apt to find herself imperiled and in need of rescue or assistance. Many are the men who have laid their swords at her feet, so she does not find as much significance in the gesture as others might.

### ADVENTURES IN A TIME OF PEACE

Many are the adventures involving or revolving around the ever-growing royal family, from rescuing kidnapped brides or grooms, thwarting plots against Carter's line, and dealing with challenges to the throne. Adventurers might be a part of the court of Helium or associated with it. Carter and his immediate family are few, and many are the problems that beset Helium and its allies. One important plot thread might be that sometimes problems must be solved by someone other than the Jeddak and his offspring, which lets the adventurers shine.

### CHARACTERS AND THE ROYAL FAMILY

With the expansion of the royal family in this era, the players and narrators could decide to deviate from canon and have one or more of the player heroes become potential suitors to Carter's offspring. What if, rather than Gahan of Gathol (*John Carter of Mars*, page 218), it is one of the heroes who impresses Tara of Helium? If she is encountered before her marriage, she would be a worthy partner to any adventurer capable of keeping up with her. Similarly, Carthoris might meet and become smitten by one of the adventurers, pledging his blade to her. Later in the era, Llana comes of age and begins adventuring, her exploits taking her far and wide, putting her into the path of the adventurers.

The open-ended aspect of the period means that an adventurer can be part of that lineage themselves. An Earthborn hero related to Carter might follow their illustrious cousin to Barsoom, drawn there by the same mysterious force. Though Dejah Thoris has no known siblings, there is plenty of room for another of her own royal line to appear in the form of a player character.

### THEME AND TONE

Just as Earth's mythic King Arthur spent the latter days of his reign largely concerned with matters domestic while his knights adventured across the realm and sought the Holy Grail, John Carter is occupied in the day-to-day running of a nation, confining him largely to Helium and its vicinity. The Jeddak cannot simply launch himself alone in his flier in the dead of night to solve some new problem that emerges. Thus, his family's adventures become more significant, making it likely that they will interact with the adventurers as proxies, or be encountered away from Helium as its ambassadors. Carter's presence looms, but he is elsewhere, and it is his family that becomes an extension of his influence.





## NEW GENERATION OF HEROES

Beyond Carter's dynasty, the cast widens dramatically with the introduction of a far more diverse and widespread cast of heroes: the monstrous Ghek, fusion of Kaldane and Rykor (page 42); Djor Kantos, son of Kantos Kan and onetime suitor of Tara of Helium; the reformed assassin Gor Hajus (page 47); the revived warrior Dar Tarus (page 46); the lowly padwar Tan Hadron (page 50); Jat Or and Zanda, and even the Thurian cat-man Umka; the onetime Hormad Vor Daj (page 58); an Earthborn hero in the form of Ulysses Paxton (*John Carter of Mars*, page 220–221); and many, many others.

### ADVENTURES WITH THE NEW GENERATION OF HEROES

Adventures in this era largely revolve around this new generation of heroes and allies, coming from both established and newly discovered nations and peoples. The adventures possible on the world of Barsoom, as a result, grow much broader. Heroes seek to find a place in the world as they rise in the shadow of their predecessors such as Carter or Tars Tarkas.

### CHARACTERS IN A NEW GENERATION OF HEROES

This is a period where even the lowliest padwar can earn great renown, and characters who were once enemies or villains can redeem themselves. While the Dotar Sojat and Prince of Helium eras had mostly humanoid or green Martian characters taking the spotlight, this is really a period to stretch the limits of what a player can play. From the newly discovered races — Kaldanes and their Rykor hosts, the Morgors of Sasoom, Goolians, Savators, and Masenas — to minds transplanted into unexpected bodies, the opportunities for strange adventurer types is limitless. The legacy that these new emerging characters might take on, tear down or build have lasting impacts on Barsoom for generations.

### THEME AND TONE

As Barsoom is swept by a number of new cultures coming into the light, new and strange outside threats and discovery are the background for this era. The constant feel of change and the breaking of new ground should be felt by players and narrator characters alike during adventures. The feelings of familiarity with the old ways and traditions can be set alongside new cultures, societal outlooks and sweeping revolutions in technology and beliefs to create interesting and complex themes within *John Carter of Mars* campaigns.



## STRUGGLE OF PEACE

For a citizen of one of the civilized nations of Barsoom, this period of relative peace is a blessing of sorts. They no longer need fear (so much) that their life will be cut short as the result of some conflict they have little interest in, and can devote time to courtship, personal betterment, and service to their nation and their leaders.

On the other hand, there's the pervading sense that something is lacking. A grand force to test oneself against is no longer there, almost as if one were pushing against a great weight that suddenly slid away, causing a moment of dizzy readjustment. Even those who are not immediately involved with the military are somehow feeling the absence of conflict as a defining aspect of their lives. Heroes are often defined by their skill at arms and distinguish themselves through overcoming conflict. How do they rate themselves when there is nothing to strive against?

In the lassitude of peace, all those qualities which red Martians revere are at a pause. To the Barsoomian, war and conflict are inevitable tools of evolution and survival itself. Nature has little tolerance for waste, and on a planet with ever-scarcer resources, the necessity of distributing those resources to "worthy" recipients is pre-eminent. While the red Martian will wax eloquent about the virtues of armed combat and valorous action, the reality is that at a deep level they see such activities as necessary to ensure the survival of their race as well as that of the planet. The history of Mars is one of strife and heroic endeavor, not peaceful co-existence. There's a paradox there that narrators can and should use. The heroes strive for peace and must overcome conflict to achieve that state. Once there is peace, it must be stirred... usually with some form of conflict.

This stagnation of peace chafes those who still prefer the old ways of solving conflicts with

more conflict, and instills resentment and open revolt among many. Old rivals who have not been turned into allies continue to brood and plot, fearing that the new-found peace might rob them of their authority. Others find the peace allows for an easy rise to power through seemingly legitimate means and allows them to keep hold of power gained in this way so long as they are not suspected of treachery. These schemes are not confined solely to the power structures of the war-centric green Martian hordes; even those within the Okar and red cities' vaulted streets and halls dream of the time they can return to the Barsoomian ways of old, and make plans to see it happen.

### ADVENTURES USING THE STRUGGLE WITH PEACE

This is an excellent opportunity for narrators to showcase the darker side of such a militarily-enforced state of peace: it inevitably favors those who are in positions of superiority, and frequently can maintain an unfair social structure or state of affairs. The number of world-conquering schemes being planned or in action at any given time is dizzying, and thus it is not so incredible that those traveling far and wide under dramatic circumstances would encounter conspiracies, plots, and growing dangers — both natural and artificial.

### CHARACTERS IN THE STRUGGLE WITH PEACE

Heroes of any background can be caught up in world-conquering plots simply by virtue of being heroes. Placing themselves in areas of conflict will result in a collision with one of these would-be tyrants or those struggling to adapt to peace.

These sorts of plots are also a wonderful way to introduce unusual characters (player

characters and narrator characters alike) such as those found in the new player character races in *Chapter 2: Peoples of the Era*. These kinds of characters might come from nations where peace is an unaffordable luxury, or who threaten to disturb the comfortable political situations. The player heroes might need to deal with the internal struggle of enjoying peace and wishing to seek out glory and adventure for themselves.

### THEME AND TONE

It is wise to remember that while peace is good for diplomacy and political relations, a peace as a totality is antithetical to the very Martian spirit, as most Martians have grown accustomed to the near-constant state of warfare and conflict their planet has been ruled by since time out of mind. Violent conflict still continues at a personal level. Martians still wear war metal as a matter of course: to go forth unarmed would be unthinkable for the average Barsoomian, and duels are often fought for the most trivial of reasons, perhaps as an expression of self against the conformity of peace.

The true underlying tone is the balance between peace and stagnation, and this is a challenging theme to evoke regularly. Not every adventure the players embark upon should feel like it is going to end up in a desperate attempt to stave off a political coup or a villain who wishes to disrupt the peace. Narrators should focus on the feeling of balance, the frustration of a changing culture on Barsoom and how characters and whole nations deal with a peace that disrupts the status quo.



## WAR ON THE ASSASSINS

One of the great, but almost secret, actions of this era was Carter's war upon the many assassin guilds of Barsoom. Though much of his time was spent merely keeping the warlike nations of Mars away from one another's throats and transforming Helium's aerial navy into an unmatched fighting machine, one of his most ambitious and lofty goals during this period is his attempt at exterminating these nefarious organizations. However, they are an intrinsic part of red Martian society around which one adapts, rather than confronts. Thus, the assassin guilds are viewed by many as the ultimate equalizer, reaching those who cannot be reached, slaying even the most unbeatable of enemies.

When Carter embarks on this noble endeavor, the red Martians of Helium are reluctant to support him. Even Dejah Thoris, the most steadfastly loyal partner anyone could have, regards his crusade as folly and hopes he will abandon it before he becomes its target. The number of deaths from assassinations, however, continues to rise, sometimes reaching several in a single day. Carter's resolve to do something is hardened by this outrage.

Despite this lack of much support from his family and peers, Carter creates a league of super-assassins, recruiting from his loyal followers and those who support his views. Their course of action is to discover the true identities of assassins and murder them in return, marking them with an X cut over their hearts, often inflicted in a duel while the assassin yet lives and fights back.

In time, this strikes terror into the members of the assassin guilds, though they redouble their efforts at eliminating Carter himself, eventually suspecting that he is their secret nemesis. Many assassins die in such a public fashion, which reduces their numbers and serves to

dissuade many from joining the guild. This is more successful in Helium than in Zodanga, where the assassin guilds are too pernicious, too deeply embedded within the red Martian society there. Carter eventually abandons this crusade, as his primary focus shifts to other, grander concerns.

### ADVENTURES IN THE WAR AGAINST THE ASSASSINS

The narrator could integrate the heroes into Carter's war, perhaps having them join his secret organization of super-assassins or letting them form their own faction set against the murderers-for-hire, driven by their own unique motivations. The heroes might act clandestinely as sanctioned vigilantes or even as infiltrators, posing as assassins to join their guild and gathering valuable intelligence that can destroy the guilds forever.

### CHARACTERS IN THE WAR AGAINST THE ASSASSINS

Player heroes are likely to want to seek their own crusade, a cause that pits them against some societal evil, perhaps inspired by Carter's war against the assassins. There are several questionable status quos that they can choose from, such as the casual acceptance of slavery even by enlightened civilizations like Helium, or some other barbaric custom or organization that they find noxious or worth destroying. If an adventurer group contains an Earthborn hero, they might be brought around to such a cause, learning to adopt the Earthborn attitude towards something they can fight for together.

## THEME AND TONE

The war on the assassins' guild is an excellent example of how attitudes are changing toward what was once the status quo on Barsoom. The tearing down of previously accepted practices is something that has happened in all three eras, but with Jeddak of Jeddaks so open-ended, it's up to the narrator to decide how much of this change they want to present in their games.

This is a wonderful central focus for the theme and tone of a campaign and can serve excellently as an interesting means of differentiating the Barsoomian mindset from that of the Earthborn. The narrator might take care to occasionally emphasize an element of Barsoomian society that someone from Earth might find challenging or even repugnant, such as the acceptance of assassination, the institution of slavery, or the generally callous attitude towards death. The main difference is that whereas in previous eras there is a feeling of unspoken acceptance of these aspects of society, in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era there is the underlying notion that things can, and very often will, change.



## LOST CITIES AND ANCIENT RUINS

Barsoom is unimaginably old and, just as on Earth, there are a seemingly endless number of remnants of civilizations that rose, flourished, and then fell. As this happened, many of these nations withdrew from old allies and contracted their borders until they were nothing but single, isolated cities, remote from all neighbors and forgotten when those neighbors disappeared. Coastal cities became desert oases when the five great oceans—including Throxheus, the largest—disappeared from Barsoom. Its surface is thus host to countless ruined remains of ancient palaces, roads, storehouses, fortresses, and even sprawling cities. Some have been swept away entirely by geologic shifts, and others are buried or half-buried under a thick carpet of desolation and sand.

Others of these ancient cities are isolated, but intact, time capsules reaching from beyond the ages. In some cases, such as the literal capsules within the labyrinth beneath Horz, there are folk who have slept for thousands of years, awakened by Carter when he slew their captor, the thing once named Lum Tar O. The Horz-folk's time in the now, alas, was brief, as their bodies returned to the dust that they should have long since become.

Some of these lost cities are still vital and thriving, despite their strangeness. This is the case on Bantoom, where the Kaldanes view themselves as the ultimate pinnacle of evolution, working towards a future where nothing is left upon the surface and hoping evolution will eventually help their race shed its vestigial limbs and organs and be nothing but brain, freed from mortal distractions and able to think unceasingly. Adventurers visiting these kinds of strange cities or cultures might find their inhabitants initially “normal” despite their odd customs or physiology, but as time goes on they will find an increasing number of disquieting features, perhaps some utterly inexplicable.

### ADVENTURES IN THE RUINS

As heroes explore the ruins, it is possible they find telltale signs that point to the original inhabitants, such as unusual architectural features or perhaps even an utterly different form of city-building, like ruins that are entirely vertical upon cliff-walls or on huge central pillars, or upon the ceiling of a great underground cavern. Perhaps there are floating cities in the skies far above Barsoom, chameleon shielding keeping them from detection, and a wayward flier could inadvertently crash into one. Barsoom's underground is barely explored. Who knows what lies within the deep network of tunnels beneath the planet's surface?

Sometimes ancient mechanical guardians or defensive systems are still active within these ruins, supposedly protecting them against intruders but frequently malfunctioning and acting erratically. Other ruins bear witness to terrible calamities, destruction through warfare or even accidents. Radiation and toxins are commonplace, both sources of horrible mutations. Even worse are those ruins that are inhabited by mad scientists or alien engineers, seeking to utilize ancient technologies for new and terrible ends. In such a place, the adventurers might find a veritable doomsday army or a vast conspiracy to challenge the very throne of the world.

For these reasons and more, ancient ruins are viewed with superstition and dread by even the most civilized red Martians and avoided whenever possible. Naturally, the narrator's goal should be to introduce situations where adventurers have little choice but to visit these ancient ruined cities and uncover whatever mysteries they hold.

### CHARACTERS FROM THE RUINS

Ancient ruins also provide an interesting background for new adventurers, perhaps for newly-introduced players or replacing adventurers killed or lost. The “fish out of water” conceit is certainly no stranger to Barsoom, and it can readily be used here, perhaps with an adventurer from one of these remote places wrenched out of their comfortable past and set free in the world at large, a Barsoom unlike anything they have imagined.

### THEME AND TONE

Few sights evoke the immense passage of time and the desolation of Barsoom more specifically than do these forlorn ruins. Remnants of great harbors and ports sit amidst desolate plains of sand, with marooned ships forever adrift on seas of red. In this era, many of these newly discovered places may contain bastions of civilization that have been hidden for millennia, perhaps unaware of the current state of Barsoom, or contain strange creatures or technology once thought lost forever. Characters flying over the surface of Barsoom may see these ruins jutting from otherwise uninhabited landscapes and ask: “What is that place?”, only to be told, “A ruin of the ancients. We do not go there.”

Narrators also have the chance to present the feeling of millennia-old history on Barsoom. Strange ruins or civilizations that have survived from the ancient days long past keep the feeling of the planet's decline in the forefront of the players' minds. It may even become apparent that many a civilization has been through what Barsoom is going through now, a period of peace and revolution, and yet none of that prevented them from being wiped from Barsoom or descending back into chaos. This can spur interesting character choices and a theme of hope for a better future, or fear of failing as many civilizations did in ages past.



## THE MENACES AND MYSTERIES OF OTHER WORLDS

### RASOOM, THE FIRST PLANET

The extreme temperatures of Mercury, called Rasoom by the red Martians and described briefly on page 138 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook, mean that the life forms there must be extraordinarily resilient — and intelligent, as suggested by Ras Thavas. The people of Rasoom may also represent figures of mythic resonance to the Barsoomian people, like the Holy Therns once did. Perhaps they are the source of ancient myths or prophecies, or even the builders of ancient ruins upon the Barsoomian surface. It may be that the denizens of Rasoom once visited Barsoom and built an outpost (or many) there, places of mysterious and alien architecture and purpose, ready to be discovered by the adventurers.

A narrator wishing to use this planet in adventures could use an exploratory mission sent from Barsoom. The folk of Rasoom may return to Barsoom on an exploratory mission, or one of conquest. Perhaps they wish to set themselves up as god-emperors, or they are merely scientists. It may be that their own role in Barsoom's history is greater than imagined, and they might seek to reclaim the planet, having been its original masters. A voyage by the adventurers might require the invention of spacecraft, or seeking out those who have created such vessels. It might even demand synthetic bodies built to survive upon the surface of the planet. Obtaining these bodies might require delicate negotiations with the Hormads as well as the surgical expertise of the Master Mind of Mars himself, Ras Thavas, if Ulysses Paxton is unavailable.

### COSOOM, THE SECOND PLANET

Venus, called Cosoom, is an interesting proposition for the narrator wishing to take adventurers to another world, or bring the inhabitants of that world to Barsoom, whether as an expeditionary force bent on invasion, or as a scientific research group: peaceful explorers seeking to broaden their knowledge of the solar system they inhabit. Cosoom's thick atmospheric blanket shrouds it from long-range surveillance by even the most powerful of radio telescopes, and thus its inhabitants are only known through the sophisticated instruments created by Ras Thavas capable of reading their thought waves, however superficially.

In the case of depicting the inhabitants and environment of Rasoom, the narrator has an invaluable resource in the fiction of none other than Edgar Rice Burroughs himself. See the John Carter of... Venus? sidebar for more information on this opportunity. The Thorists of Amtor might bring the battle to Barsoom with an attempt at invasion, or the rogue scientists of Havatoo could seek allies among the League of Science in Helium.

Alternatively, the narrator can devise something altogether original for these beings and their world, drawing them out of whole cloth and surprising players who might have been expecting something they were familiar with through reading the Venus novels. Adventurers might thrill to be the first explorers upon Cosoom, embarking upon an interplanetary voyage in one of the new spacecraft developed during this period.



## JOHN CARTER OF... VENUS?

Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote four novels and one novelette set on Venus: *Pirates of Venus*, *Lost on Venus*, *Carson of Venus*, *Escape on Venus*, and *The Wizard of Venus*, describing the adventures of Carson Napier, an Earthman, upon that watery, jungle-covered planet called Amtor by its inhabitants. Seeking out Jason Gridley (inventor of the Gridley Wave), Carson intended to land upon Mars, but a miscalculation sends him to Venus instead, where he has a series of adventures in a style immediately reminiscent of Carter's adventures.

If desired, the world of Amtor can be easily depicted using the **John Carter** rules, allowing for characters to venture there, however far afield. Perhaps they find themselves kidnapped and brought to Amtor by the evil Thorists, scientific renegades of Havatoo, or the monstrous Cloud People. The opposite might also be true, with one of the many ambitious world-conquering species from Venus following suit as did the Morgors of Jupiter, attempting to expand their empire by conquering Barsoom. What can the adventurers do to stop such an overwhelming force?

Also, should the narrator wish to have the adventurers cross paths with another character similar to John Carter, the protagonist of the Venus novels is just such a hero—Carson Napier, adept at sword-fighting and princess-rescuing, though his deeds barely reach the heights of Carter's own achievements. Perhaps Carson is brought to Barsoom for some reason outside his control. How will the adventurers react?

Finally, should the question of the fictional reality of Cosoom/Venus/Amtor become confused, the narrator can either ignore Burroughs' connection to the novels or state that Burroughs merely promoted them as he did his Uncle Carter's memoirs. He was able to publicize such adventures previously, so his association with them is only natural.

## JASOOM, THE THIRD PLANET

Of the planet Jasoom, called Earth by its inhabitants, much can be said in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era as it becomes increasingly prominent and significant to the course of Martian history and society. While Carter claims to have no further interest in Earth, he continues to travel back and forth to his former home, suggesting otherwise. He has improved considerably upon his curious and formerly uncontrollable ability to project himself psychically. Beginning to perfect a method by which he can project willingly and later develops further expertise allowing him to send his corporeal form to Earth with the ability to exist in his "real" on Mars as well.

Carter's recurring visits and the popularization of his exploits in stories published by his nephew, Edgar Rice Burroughs, continue to engage the interest of Earth dwellers. The arrival of Ulysses Paxton upon Barsoom, and back to Earth, adds more to this fascination. The development and refinement of sophisticated imaging and audio devices capable of perceiving the very surface of Earth allows Barsoomians to pay increased attention to Jasoom. Finally, the emergence of direct communication through the Gridley Wave means that Mars and Earth become increasingly engaged with one another in a way that was previously impossible.

Back on Earth, humankind continues to struggle. From Carter's own Confederate War, the nations of Earth plunge into the Great War. This then tragically becomes the first World War when the second World War starts. This illustrates more than ever the variability between the two planets: despite the resurgence of invention brought about by Carter's arrival, Barsoom remains ultimately unchanged to a significant degree; while, for better or worse, Earth is swept by dramatic change with the political and social shifts caused by war and the Industrial Revolution.

The methods by which humans may explore and adventure upon Barsoom grow exponentially, and the narrator may wish to introduce new Earthborn narrator characters to surprise and delight the players, perhaps as valuable allies or,

more likely, hapless victims in need of rescue. For the player, this greatly increases the likelihood of having an Earthborn character, due to their increased appearance on Barsoom.

A radical adventure, involving considerable work by the narrator and unfortunately outside the scope of these rules, might involve a visit to Earth itself, allowing any Earthborn adventurers to walk upon their native soil and introduce their Martian allies to the strange world of Jasoom, whether projected into new bodies or visiting in the flesh itself.

## SASOOM, THE FIFTH PLANET

Earth is not the only planet to rise in prominence during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. Jupiter's inhabitants, the Morgors, dubbed the "skeleton men" of Sasoom, are an immensely warlike race to a degree astonishing even to those of Barsoom, eschewing all other aspects of culture and civilization in favor of warfare and conquering. Their every thought is devoted to combat and martial supremacy. All education is focused on the means of making war, and they have no art, literature, architectural beauty, or culture other than that concerning combat.

The other race known to exist on Sasoom is the Savators. They look similar to humans in their physiology, except for their blue skin, and this race has all but been enslaved by the Morgors. The small pockets that are left are hidden away in invisible strongholds, making use of the properties of the planet's sand to hide from their would-be captors.

Having exhausted their options on Sasoom, which they call Eurobus, and enslaving most of the Savator race, the Morgors have turned to Barsoom as a new battlefield to win. Their methodology is to capture Barsoomians and extort information from them, using captives and threats to win valuable intelligence, confirming their existing surveillance and spy operations.

Beyond just being a culture of warriors, the Morgors are also adept at social manipulation, being masters of individual and mass psychology, with which they wage war on emotional and mental fronts. With their invisible starships they plan a massive invasion of Barsoom—called Garobus in their



language — targeting Helium first and foremost to demonstrate their supremacy. Should this happen, the narrator is certain to involve the adventurers, whether as defenders of Barsoom on their native soil or, in reaction to the Sasoomian menace, sent from Barsoom to Sasoom to strike back at the Morgors or to broker some sort of peace with them.

## OTHER WORLDS AND MORE

The planets listed above are not the only celestial bodies to offer potential for adventure. The two Martian moons — Thuria and Cluros — are inhabited by intelligent species. Thuria is home to two civilizations. The first are the Tarids, a pale-skinned blue-haired people who worship the sun. The second are Masena, arboreal humanoid creatures who inhabit the moon's forests, whose unique physiology many find unappealing: a single eye in the center of the forehead and two sets of mouths, the lower set lacking lips, as well as upturned nostrils and a striking yellow mane running down the center of the head. The renegade scientist Fal Sivas claims that his spectroscope proves that Thuria is covered with mountains of gold and platinum, and "vast plains carpeted with precious stones." For this reason, an expedition there might be mounted by greedy nations, eager to claim its material wealth. The moon Cluros, on the other hand, is more mysterious, but according to some few scientists, it is also inhabited by humans, or beings much like them.

Master Mind Ras Thavas' theories are likely correct when it comes to intelligent alien life on other planets, and it is up to the narrator to determine the nature of these beings and their ultimate disposition, especially when relating to Barsoom. Just as Sasoom (Jupiter) proves itself to host a dangerous and implacable enemy to Barsoom and particularly the red Martians, these other planets represent opportunities for danger or even more unexpected turns. Perhaps they seek conquest, raiding for biological or mineral wealth, or something even more extreme, such as using a form of planetary engineering to attempt to turn Barsoom's environment into something they can survive comfortably in.

Of the other planets, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune,

and even diminutive Pluto, little is known, and it is not entirely clear whether the astronomers of Barsoom are aware of them. Should they be known to the scientists on Barsoom, they would likely be named in a similar fashion as the others (a name ending in -soom). These planets each have many moons of their own, and the belts of Saturn might be rich in strange races and exotic cultures, adapted to their unusual environment. Imagine a campaign where the adventurers set forth from Barsoom in a spaceship to explore the rest of the solar system, encountering creatures and civilizations stranger than anything imagined yet.

Not every potential location of civilization need be a known planet, either. The vast asteroid belt that encompasses the solar system may also be home to an extraplanetary civilization, perhaps dwelling entirely in ships. Many astronomers in Burroughs' era believed in a tenth planet located somewhere between Neptune and Pluto's orbits, which they dubbed Planet X. A race of beings striking forth from a planet within the solar system unknown to humankind and Barsoomian alike would be an extraordinary event indeed!

## USING ALIEN RACES

This is perhaps the most exotic of the periods to explore for the setting. The narrator should take care to emphasize how different many of these races truly are. While the humanoid species on Mars are often highly similar, though culturally different, it is with these strange new species that the alienness of Barsoom comes to the fore. Just as Carter was captive of the Tharks and had to learn to adapt to their ways, so too should the heroes spend time immersed in these alien cultures and civilizations. The narrator can emphasize the strangeness in all manner of ways: from their diets, their religious beliefs, architecture, and social units, all the way down to mundane details such as furniture and table manners.

## TO BE CONTINUED...

*Skeleton Men of Jupiter* is the final journey Carter described to Burroughs, and it is unknown how he rescued Dejah Thoris and returned to Barsoom from Sasoom, or if he ever did. There's no clear resolution to Carter's exploits on this planet, and no testimony about how he thwarted the Morgor fleet, a battle that would surely end in Helium's all-too-certain defeat. A campaign free from the confining strictures of canon might incorporate the Sasoomian invasion, or the events that likely transpired after.

Thus, further pages in the saga are blank, left for the narrator to fill. What if the Morgors are indeed successful in their invasion, and Mars must contend with the domination of these conquerors? Will the peoples of Barsoom band together against alien invaders or turn upon one another? Does John Carter ever return from Sasoom?

Perhaps, as mentioned above, Mars is victim to its own war of the worlds, with invisible Sasoomian marauders flying above the ruined landscape, and Barsoomian freedom fighters hiding beneath the planet's surface and in the ruins of their cities, plotting to one day rid the world of its invaders. Can they defeat the Morgors? Perhaps one of the ancient races rises to prominence once again, such as the First-born or Okars. How would the other nations of Barsoom react to being targeted by an alien invasion?

A campaign might be drawn using many of the elements from this chapter and even from other eras — the infighting between nations intensifies as some seek to appease the Morgors while others suffer and are made examples, their cities reduced to ruin. The super-science arms race intensifies as desperate means of countering invisibility are sought. Perhaps a reformed enemy, such as Ras Thavas, becomes the key to survival, or an obscure people like the Lotharians rise in importance. The therns might claim to know how to defeat the Morgors, but the cost for their aid is a return to their former status.

Once the menace from Sasoom is dealt with, however, there's no telling what happens next, which is wonderful for a narrator wanting to put their own stamp on the world and setting of Barsoom.



## A WRITING MAN OF MARS

Earth natives John Carter and Ulysses Paxton traverse the gulf of space, journeying from Earth to Barsoom through initially inexplicable means. Carter inadvertently is forced to return, but later masters the means of traveling to Barsoom (and staying) under his own will. Later, he masters the ability to physically manifest himself from Barsoom to Earth at a material level, rather than being projected while physically on Earth and creating a new body upon Barsoom.

Much of what we know about Carter and Barsoom comes from the publication of manuscripts describing his exploits on the Red Planet by his nephew, Edgar Rice Burroughs, later confirmed by the invention of the Gridley Wave. As more and more humans find means of breaching the barrier between worlds, and Carter himself expands his mastery of journeying between worlds, it is only natural that eventually Burroughs would visit Barsoom himself, or that Carter may want to bring his beloved nephew — likely as an old man — to the world. Depending on how he is brought to Mars, Burroughs might even live anew in a younger body — projected there or transplanted into a hale body through the work of Ras Thavas — and explore firsthand in the world he helped to popularize.

What sort of reaction would Burroughs have to the world of Mars? If he inhabits the body of a fit warrior, would he embrace martial chivalry and seek adventure across the surface of the Red Planet, or would he turn his attention towards science and technological innovation, bringing his considerable knowledge of Earth's technology to the task of improving the lives of Martians everywhere? Or, if traveling to Barsoom at the end of a long and distinguished career, perhaps he would regard it as a sort of posthumous reward for a life well lived, and retire from active life, perhaps to continue chronicling the exploits of others, a skill he is unmatched at.

An interesting adventure might concern

the arrival of a strange white-skinned man, perhaps a captive of another nation, who seems to know an inordinate amount of rather specific details about Carter, his family, and their allies. A desperate message reaches the Heliumite court, smuggled out of captivity, with a single phrase written in English and Earthly letters: "Uncle Jack — Come at once. Edgar." Unfortunately, Carter himself is nowhere to be found, perhaps drawn away to Jasoom itself, or on one of his lengthy forays into the wilderness of Barsoom, carried away by wanderlust and caught up in adventure.



## FURTHER ADVENTURES

As has been mentioned before, the Jeddak of Jeddaks period is rife with adventure, more so than perhaps any other, and the open-ended “conclusion” of the final *John Carter* story leaves narrators with considerable leeway to make Barsoom even more their own. No even hand of predestination guides the narrator’s choices, and even the most slavish devotees of canon cannot balk at any twists and turns the campaign follows in this period.

The following adventure summaries can be fleshed out by the narrator as desired or even run as-is, with any additional details improvised on the fly as required. Due to the tendency of adventurers to introduce complexity into any situation they are involved in, excessive over-preparation is even discouraged.



## STORM OF THE MILLENNIUM

*Never in the memory of man or the annals of recorded history had such a storm raged across the face of Barsoom.*

— *The Chessmen of Mars*

*A massive and unexpected atmospheric storm strikes huge areas of Barsoom, rocking all the red Martian cities and causing considerable damage to their navies. Airships caught between cities are lost, and all air travel is at a standstill. The cities themselves are damaged with falling debris, their communication lines down, and the enveloping sky keeps their great surveillance apparatus blind.*

*Meanwhile, the streets run rampant with fear and disorder. Criminal elements choose this moment to strike, and the authorities order martial law, causing additional tension amongst the proud and individualistic red Martians, who do not like their freedom restricted. Atmospheric and climatological monitors show unusual aberrations in the normally placid weather patterns immediately beforehand, pointing at an unnatural source, and communication lines with the atmosphere processing plant have been severed.*

*Ulara Daj, a prominent scientist within Helium’s city council, asks the adventurers to travel to the atmosphere processing plant on a ground vehicle and assess the state of the machine, to secure it and to determine whether anything is malfunctioning. If none of the heroes have scientific skill, she will accompany them herself.*

### CHARACTERS

- \* A Scientist with the League of Science is convinced that this is the result of some sinister plot.
- \* Working for a rival nation, a Spy has discovered how to remotely access and sabotage the atmosphere processing plant.
- \* A Criminal Mastermind uses the chaos to pull off a daring series of kidnappings.

### VARIATIONS

- \* The storm itself is the result of a coordinated attack by a rival of Helium (or the adventurers’ home city). Their warships are grounded and concealed nearby and will strike the moment the storm has passed, with Helium’s defenses in disarray.
- \* The atmosphere plant has been taken over by Zin Torh, a fanatical scientist with the best of intentions. He believes that the storm can begin a chain reaction that will restore Barsoom’s atmosphere and oceans eventually, pulling down moisture trapped in the upper layers of the atmosphere. Though his motives are altruistic, he is nonetheless certain that the atmospheric disturbances will rage on for years, inevitably causing global calamity and millions of casualties across all races of Barsoom. He views this as necessary for the survival of the planet.
- \* The storm is the first strike in climatic warfare, the precursor to an invasion by the inscrutable denizens of Cosoom (Venus). Their goal is to transform Barsoom’s air itself to make the planet a closer and more hospitable match to their home environment.
- \* The storm is utterly unnatural, and the criminal elements are taking full advantage of the situation. Upon examination of the atmosphere plant, the heroes will discover that a remote device is triggering the weather disturbances, leading to the underground labyrinth of Usar Kees, an infamous crime boss from a nearby city.



## OUT OF EARTH

*"I was almost surprised," he said. "Yet why should I be? I have crossed — there is no reason why others should not. And you have accomplished it! You must come to Helium with me and tell me all about it."*

— John Carter, *The Master Mind of Mars*

An increasing number of Earthborn humans are arriving on Barsoom, perhaps caught up in the wake of Carter's breakthroughs in spiritual and corporeal projection. They are arriving without rhyme or reason, some finding friendly reception among red Martians but others unfortunately falling into enemy hands and imprisoned. All exhibit some degree of Carter's physical gifts, and cause mayhem when they are mistreated.

Many of these hapless Earthborn know of Carter's exploits through the popularized fiction of Carter's "nephew," Edgar Rice Burroughs. Carter himself is concerned, unsure why so many of his fellow Earthborn are following in his wake, but he does not know how to intervene. Several of these wayward Earthborn have already been rounded up, and their reports about how they arrived on Barsoom are equally baffling. Pytus Phan, a scientist of Ptarth, claims to know what is causing the increase in Earthborn on Barsoom, but has gone into hiding for some unknown reason.

Meanwhile, a ransom message arrives from the jeddak of an Okar city. They claim to have a valuable prisoner — John Carter's nephew, Edgar Rice Burroughs himself. For their prize, they demand a trade: Carter, or one of his family. Unfortunately, the Jeddak of Jeddaks is nowhere to be found, perhaps even back on Earth!

### CHARACTERS

- \* A fugitive Scientist of Ptarth.
- \* A reckless and arrogant Jeddak of Okar.
- \* A famous American Pulp Writer, far from home.

### VARIATIONS

- \* An enterprising red Martian scientist has perfected a matter transference device, with the specific requirement that anyone transported from Jasoom be replaced by someone of roughly identical bodily configuration and identical physical mass from Barsoom, no matter where they are. Thus, for every appearance of an Earthborn there is an equally-baffling disappearance of a Barsoomian, though they are so widely spread that the link has not yet been discovered.
- \* Using a mechanism whose nature he did not reveal to Burroughs (or one which Burroughs did not publicize), Carter's ability to travel bodily from Mars to Earth has caused this mishap, and the device has caught Burroughs (and others) in its wake. Now Carter has returned to Earth to undo the results of his experimentation, and may be trapped, unable to return!
- \* One of the adventurers is sent to Earth and replaced simultaneously with an Earthborn character, a surprise to each. If desired, the player whose character has been sent to Earth can play this Earthborn, while the others seek to discover a means by which they can be restored to their original home world. This plot can work well in the case of an absent player, in which case the narrator can handle the Earthborn as a narrator character. What adventures will the transposed Barsoomian have while stranded on Earth?





## THE SAVAGE PROPHET

*“Should he die before the expiration of the thousand years from the birth of the thern whose immortality abides within him then the soul passes into a great white ape...”*

— Thuvia, *The Gods of Mars*

News reaches Helium that a group of therns in the Valley Dor are galvanized by the arrival of a new prophet in the unlikelyst of forms, that of one of the great white apes that inhabit the area. The ape, capable of speech, claims to house the reborn spirit of Thantus Mydak, one of the most renowned of their Holy therns of old, who died before living their allotted 1,000 years. As per the therns' spiritual beliefs, his soul passed into the body of a plant man and is now resident in the body of a great white ape. Their prophet's reappearance has rallied the therns, causing a resurgence in their religion after it was thoroughly discredited by Carter, their power broken. Now, this impossible creature is believed to be the vessel through which Issus herself speaks to the therns.

Strangely enough, the great white apes themselves are joining this crusade, crudely mimicking the rituals of the therns, and under the therns' guidance the apes wage surprisingly organized attacks against the Tharks, who have continued to domesticate them. Kom Laxa, leader of a trio of Thern representatives dispatched to Helium, claims that her people seek to rescue other reincarnated spirits of their order born into the bodies of these apes. The therns are merely enacting vengeance upon the green Martians for past mistreatment of the beasts.

The therns wish to negotiate with Helium for the recognition and restoration of their order and seek peaceful cooperation while they reclaim their captured holy ones from green Martian captivity. The Tharks, meanwhile, are outraged at the attacks on their people and wish to exterminate the therns once and for all. The adventurers are picked as part of a delegation sent to the Valley Dor to meet Thantus Mydak and bargain for peace with the therns.

### CHARACTERS

- ✧ A Thern Diplomat seeking peace.
- ✧ A talking Great White Ape with the soul of a Thern Priest.
- ✧ Ambassadors and Diplomats willing to dare the Valley Dor.

### VARIATIONS

- ✧ Ras Thavas, former Master Mind of Mars and now repentant refugee in Helium, performed many strange and terrible experiments in the name of science. His early experimentations involved the transplantation of brain material from human to white ape. The supposed “reborn” white ape is none other than one of Ras Thavas' experiments, its real identity that of a particularly devious red Martian criminal named Phul Thas, using the therns for its own purposes.
- ✧ Pol Pantok, a minor Thark chieftain, grieves for the loss of his mate to the great white ape uprising, and plots revenge. He has sworn that any who parley with this mysterious ape prophet or its servant therns is his enemy, and he seeks to undermine any negotiations, ambushing diplomatic missions and conducting lightning raids upon the therns and their ape allies.
- ✧ Qa Hathor, one of the two Thern priestesses accompanying Kom Laxa, is secretly troubled by the emergence of this “prophet” and does not trust it. She proves surprisingly sympathetic and interested in Heliumite life and culture, perhaps presenting herself as a potential (if unusual) romantic interest to a suitable adventurer. Near the end of the therns' stay in Helium, she sends word that she has learned a terrible secret about Thantus Mydak and will reveal it if her safety can be guaranteed. She disappears suddenly — or perhaps, more grimly, is murdered — before she can fully pass this information on, but a clue casts doubt on the ape's real identity and its true agenda.



## THE SEAS OF BARSOOM

*“Far beneath the surface is water that will flow for countless ages after the surface water is exhausted. We are preparing for the time we know must come — the time when the last vestige of the Barsoomian atmosphere is spent — when the waters and the food are gone.”*

— Ghek, *The Chessmen of Mars*

A diplomatic mission sent from Helium to Bantoom has failed to return and is believed missing. Led by Laris Fa, a red Martian explorer, the mission's purpose was to negotiate peaceful coexistence between the Kaldanes and their neighbors. One of the adventurers may be friends with Laris, or related to her, and fearful for her safety.

Fearing that an overwhelming response will end in the death of the captives at the hands of the Kaldanes, the adventurers are sent as a small, clandestine team to discover the fates of Laris and her team and free them, if they yet live. Accompanying them is Ghek, a Kaldane ally of Tara, sent to help guide the Heliumites through the strange world of the Kaldanes. Also along with the group, if no adventurer is suitably skilled, is a scientist named Soral Ban.

Once they arrive in Bantoom, the adventurers' investigations reveal that Laris and her diplomatic mission have disappeared, their property left alone in the building they were allowed to inhabit. Investigating their possessions shows an astonishing amount of scientific equipment, particularly devices for sensing geologic density and moisture underground. If confronted, Luud, the Kaldane leader, reveals that the Kaldanes are as suspicious of the newcomers as they are the diplomatic party, and that they had nothing to do with the disappearance.

Further discoveries will point at the diplomatic mission having disappeared while exploring the vast underground network of catacombs beneath Bantoom, some accessing great storehouses and vaults sealed with food and valuable supplies towards the inevitable death of the surface world. Yet they went deeper even than the Kaldanes, into tunnels far more ancient and unknown.

### CHARACTERS

- \* An idealistic red Martian Diplomat, missing and feared dead.
- \* Ghek, a Kaldane ally of Helium, risking all to return to his homeland.
- \* A red Martian Scientist eager to discover Bantoom's mysteries.

### VARIATIONS

- \* The diplomatic party ran into another species of creatures, an alien society driven deep underground and long forgotten by the Kaldanes, believing that the world's surface is uninhabitable. These beings have their own sophisticated culture and plan to retaliate against the Kaldanes, now that they know they can survive above-ground.
- \* Laris and her envoys discovered something that could change the course of Barsoomian history: the existence of a network of underground rivers in which course the long-vanished oceans of Barsoom. These subterranean waterways are home to an aquatic kingdom of amphibious humanoids capable of traveling undetected anywhere on the planet in these tunnels, and these beings have infiltrated many societies with their agents, spying on the surface world. They have captured the red Martian team to keep word of their existence from escaping.



## RANDOM ADVENTURE GENERATION

The plot of a *John Carter* adventure in the Jeddak of Jeddaks period is often a straightforward affair. Usually it can be boiled down into a few simple elements that can be combined and recombined into a near-infinite number of variations. The system below allows narrators to use a few simple dice rolls to generate a framework for an event suitable for adventure. This can then be adjusted, customized, or personalized as appropriate to the adventurers and the requirements of the campaign.

The following section describes creating events in a step-by-step system. These can be used to create adventures to which the narrator can add flourishes, picking desired results instead of rolling if desired. The narrator should devise any threads to connect the disparate elements or ignore and/or reroll any results that are inappropriate or duplicate previous results overmuch.

## DEFINING NARRATOR CHARACTERS

The following tables can be used to determine the species for narrator characters, whether they be allies, antagonists, mad scientists, ambassadors, rivals, or otherwise. Not all antagonists need be familiar races. Though the first inclination might be to make them of the same race as the heroes — likely red Martians — it can be far more engaging to emphasize how diverse Barsoom is and the increasingly varied types of beings encountered during this period.

Whenever a narrator character is needed, roll a d20 to determine their race, or pick a desired result. Feel free to reroll or pick again when the result is ill-suited for the intended role.

If desired, the narrator should randomly determine the gender of any narrator characters introduced here. Though many of Burroughs' would-be world-conquerors are male and his stories feature no shortage of damsels in distress, this does not need to be the case. A more egalitarian approach to filling these roles will provide excellent opportunities for roleplaying, such as when normally-chivalrous heroes find themselves unwilling to cross swords with one of "the fairer sex," or need to rescue a captured prince from captivity.

D20	RESULT
01–07	Red Martian
08–09	Green Martian
10–11	First Born
12	Orovar
13	Okar
14	Thern
15	Lotharian
16	Hormad
17	Kaldane and Rykor
18	Earthborn
19	Otherworldly, whether from one of Barsoom's moons or the planets Cosoom or Sasoom.
20	A new race not previously encountered. Use the rules for creating new creatures ( <i>John Carter of Mars</i> core rulebook, pages 183–184) using "Humanoid" as a base body type and making them medium-sized, if desired. Perhaps this new race represents some alternate evolutionary branch of another race, or they have some quality that is not immediately apparent, like a telepathic ability. Alternatively, the narrator character can be from an existing non-sentient species, made sentient through scientific augmentation.



The first step should be to decide whether there is a Framing Device, an introduction where the adventure is presented through the technique of a story being relayed to an uninvolved witness. Roll a £: if it indicates an effect, there's a **Framing Device**. If not, proceed directly to the **Opening Scene**.

## THE FRAMING DEVICE

An especially appropriate method of beginning an adventure is to start the session by describing one of the adventurers — the narrator should pick an appropriate one — arriving on Earth and relaying the story to an outsider, likely a relative of an Earthborn adventurer. Usually, these introductions follow the same pattern, with a native Earth-dweller experiencing one of the following.

- ✱ Carter arriving on Earth to tell Edgar Rice Burroughs (or another Earthborn narrator character) the story.
- ✱ A strange and scarcely-believable manuscript falls inexplicably into the hands of the Earth character, describing the exploits of the adventurer(s). Perhaps by the adventure's end the mysterious connection will become apparent.
- ✱ A mysterious stranger who turns out to be one of the adventurers, relaying the beginning of their story to an Earthly witness.
- ✱ A human contact established prior, receiving a transmission along the Gridley Wave by a designated adventurer.

Alternatively, this can be provided as a short narration along the above lines, setting the initial scene, and then gradually transitioning into the adventure itself, but generally it's best to involve the players (and their characters) as much as possible, even if it is only one or two of them.

At the end of the adventure, it's best to close with a return to the Framing Device, wrapping the narration up and setting the stage for future exploits and a potential return to Earth.

## OPENING SCENE

The **Opening Scene** is where the adventure truly begins, with all the adventurers assembled together in one location, usually in a state of grace — with nothing wrong or amiss in the world. The adventurers are fully healed from past endeavors, have all their equipment fully charged and are at their peak of health and morale, ready for adventure. Roll or pick a desired result.

### D20 OPENING SCENE

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 01-03 | A visit from a neighboring COURT or DIGNITARY requires social skills and delicate negotiation   |
| 04-06 | A famous ENEMY appears, demanding sanctuary, with information to trade about a greater menace to come. Roll on the <b>Antagonist</b> table (page 100) to determine their identity.  |
| 07-08 | An ALLY disappears while far away from the heroes' home, perhaps on a mission of peace or scientific exploration.   |
| 09-10 | The adventurers witness the debut of a SCIENTIFIC OR ENGINEERING BREAKTHROUGH. However, it has an unusual and unexpected side effect, with a calamity or crisis that must be averted.   |
| 11    | Word reaches the heroes' home city about MYSTERIOUS RAIDERS using some sort of technology beyond anything known upon Barsoom. Perhaps it operates on some as-of-yet-undiscovered scientific principle?  |
| 12    | A religious or civil CEREMONY of great import is interrupted by a sudden mysterious event, perhaps an eclipse or other portent that causes suspicion and fear.  |
| 13    | The heroes are on hand to witness the occurrence of some STRANGE PHENOMENON, such as the appearance of a new body in the heavens, gravity behaving strangely, the skies going dark, a freak weather pattern, or an unexplainable transmission or broadcast. |
| 14-15 | An unprovoked attack by MYSTERIOUS FORCES on an allied country provokes a request for assistance and aid. Who launched these hostilities against an ally?   |
| 16-17 | News arrives describing an ATROCITY inexplicably committed against an ally by another ally. Normally these two nations are at peace. What has happened?   |
| 18    | A MESSAGE OF DISTRESS reaches the capital city, but the one it is intended for is not available and cannot be found.  |
| 19    | Some BASIC REQUIREMENT has failed or run out. Perhaps the radium generators that power Helium have inexplicably stopped working, or the city's food creators have been contaminated in some mysterious fashion.   |
| 20    | In media res. Reroll and take note of result, but skip to initial challenge, and roleplay the <b>Opening Scene</b> after the initial challenge is resolved.   |



## INITIAL OBSTACLE

Now that the Opening Scene has introduced something to get everyone in the same place and hint at the threat to come, things are set into motion. An Initial Obstacle is introduced, some unassailable problem that must be addressed before the heroes can deal with the bigger picture. Roll or pick on the table below.

The **Initial Obstacle** is presented in two parts: *Problem* and *Obvious Solution*. These are obviously related, though going from the first state to the second is usually a lengthy journey and requires considerable effort to set right.

Generally, once the initial challenge is introduced, it guides the course of the rest of the adventure, giving a clear (if potentially unattainable) goal and obvious outcome. However, it is sometimes the case that the resolution is impossible and requires a readjustment in the usual state of affairs, or a new adventure to resolve.

D20	PROBLEM	OBVIOUS SOLUTION
01-04	A member of the royal family has MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED.	Their disappearance requires investigation. Then they must be rescued and returned home, and their apparent abductors (if any) dealt with.
05-08	An INSULT is taken by a visiting dignitary, bringing two nations to the brink of war.	Peace must be brokered between the two lands, or the source of the insult discovered and defused.
09-11	LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT occurs with a narrator character or an adventurer, but one is betrothed to another.	The love must be recognized (via marriage or engagement), or one of the two parties must learn to live in denial.
12-13	An ASSASSIN strikes a member of the royal household, whether a family member or highly ranked member of the court. They are not necessarily successful, and the heroes may be on hand to stop the attempted murder.	Revenge must be had. The assassin must be brought to justice, and the one who ordered the assassination must be revealed and similar justice meted out.
14-15	A member of the royal family has left the city on a personal errand, or departed under suspicious circumstances, and has not returned. They are feared MISSING.	The family member must be found and returned to their home. If they have been captured (highly likely) they must be rescued.

D20	PROBLEM	OBVIOUS SOLUTION
16-17	THEFT or SABOTAGE! Some item or component necessary to proceed has been taken or mysteriously disabled. Its absence can be noted immediately or after it is too late. Alternatively, the asset may merely have failed once it has already been put to the test.	The critical item must be restored in some fashion, whether by repairing it in facilities beyond those immediately available, or by seeking a replacement in a difficult-to-reach location.
18-19	BETRAYAL! Someone within the royal court has seemingly performed an act of treachery against their fellow citizens, causing death or considerable distress. The guilty party has escaped, apparently fleeing the consequences of their actions.	The betrayer must be found, confronted, and brought to justice. It may be that they are innocent (the narrator should decide or can roll 1d20, with a result of 1-10 equaling innocence and 11-20 indicating guilt), in which case the true traitor must be discovered and similarly dealt with.
20	Roll twice: reroll if this result is rolled again.	

## SETBACK

The **Setback** emerges to make life difficult for the adventurers, complicating matters in some fashion or otherwise obfuscating a clear choice of action. This emerges soon after the **Initial Obstacle** is introduced and plans to address it are set in motion. Roll or pick a desired result.

The narrator may choose to add multiple complications to an adventure — for example, the **Initial Obstacle** can have a complication, and later phases of the adventure can introduce new complications.

D20	SETBACK
01-04	A new VILLAIN is revealed: warlord of a strange and previously unknown race of people, with designs on ruling the world. Roll on the <b>Antagonist</b> table (page 100) to determine their identity.
05-08	The adventurers are suddenly IMPRISONED by their hosts — even in their home country — without explanation or, in the case of home, with an accusation of treason.



D20	SETBACK
09–11	A delicate balance of power means that the adventurers must <b>ACT CLANDESTINELY</b> , concealing their activities under the veil of secrecy.
12–13	The adventurers are shown that their home nation has a previously undiscovered <b>WEAKNESS</b> , some oversight or backdoor that makes it vulnerable to attack from outside. This secret is unknown to the leader of their home nation. It may be portable (secret plans) or it may be knowledge to be utilized by a diabolical enemy.
14–15	The adventurers are <b>ACCUSED AND BANISHED</b> for some crime. They are undoubtedly innocent: they have been framed, or it may be a case of mistaken identity or a terrible misunderstanding, or they may have agreed to a ruse in order to intervene without seeming to be agents of their leader.
16–17	A <b>POWERFUL DEVICE</b> is revealed, perhaps fruit of some new technology or biological experimentation, now in the hands of an enemy and capable of wreaking terrible destruction upon the whole of Barsoom.
18–19	Unnatural <b>OBSSESSION</b> . An inappropriate creature or member of another species develops an unwholesome or unusual attachment to one of the adventurers — whether devotion, courtly love, or suspiciously enthusiastic loyalty — and behaves in a fashion that endangers both. In the best of cases this results in a wonderful pet like Woola, but it could be a Kaldane or something even stranger.
20	Roll twice: reroll if this result is rolled again.

## LOCATION

The Location is the obvious destination after the introduction to the adventure, the place to which the clues from the **Initial Obstacle** point (or the first **Setback**, if desired). When consulting this table, roll a £. If the roll is an effect, roll on this table twice, or pick two desired results. The first result is the intended destination where the plot seems to be heading, while the second result is the location where fate deposits the adventurers through some mishap, whether sabotage, mechanical failure, misdirection, or other means outside their control.

D20	LOCATION
01–04	A city or outpost in a nearby <b>ALLIED NATION</b> .
05–08	A city or outpost in a nearby <b>ENEMY NATION</b> .
09–11	A remote <b>NEUTRAL NATION</b> , of which little is known, perhaps only in legend.
12	A <b>CONCEALED LOCATION</b> — a secret aspect or region of another locale — such as catacombs beneath the characters' home city, some dark and malicious underworld, hidden corridors and secret chambers in the castle, or some altogether concealed aspect of an area otherwise well-known to the adventurers. The narrator can pick or roll again (ignoring this result) to determine the main location if desired.
13	A remote <b>TOWER</b> of unimaginable height and construction is discovered or has appeared. How can the heroes gain access?
14	A <b>LOST VALLEY</b> or natural location, perhaps a cave complex, forest, marsh or swamp, etc., capable of supporting life and home to strange and wondrous — likely dangerous — creatures.
15	A <b>TIME-LOST CITY</b> that is discovered in a place where no city stood before, concealed for millennia through some arcane technology.
16	The <b>RUIN</b> of an ancient and abandoned city, seemingly empty but inhabited by green Martians, bandits, white apes, a lost race, or a diabolical mastermind laying low.
17	A <b>NEW CITY</b> has sprung up overnight, raised through some incredible force of engineering or built by a vast army of workers.
18–19	A <b>MOBILE BASE</b> , whether an immense airship, a nomadic caravan, a gigantic armored ground transport, or something more exotic, like a floating sky fortress.
20	<b>ANOTHER PLANET!</b> This could be one of the worlds discussed earlier in this chapter or one of Barsoom's two moons.



## ANTAGONIST

Here the primary villain or antagonist of the adventure is introduced, if one has not been identified previously. Roll or pick a result on the following table and determine how this foe might be involved in the **Opening Scene** or the **Initial Obstacle**. See the table on page 96 to determine the antagonist's race, if it is not immediately apparent.

### D20 ANTAGONIST

01-04	A <b>RENOWNED ENEMY</b> has returned, perhaps even from the dead. Pick from one of those listed in the <i>John Carter of Mars</i> core rulebook or other sourcebooks: Salensus Oll, Issus, Matai Shang, Ras Thavas, Zat Arras, Xaxa, Gar Nal, Fal Sivas, Pew Mogel, or another. Players should enjoy the opportunity to match their adventurers against this foe.
05-08	An <b>EVIL WARLORD</b> , intent on defeating the civilized nations and installing themselves as ruler over all Barsoom.
09-11	A <b>MAD SCIENTIST</b> . Once content to further the cause of science, they have been driven mad through desire for power, or out of grief or trauma. Now they plan revenge upon their former tormentors, and everyone else!
12-13	An <b>AMBITIOUS JEDDAK</b> , leader of one nation and hungry for more, ruthlessly willing to wage war against others to increase the extent of their empire.
14-15	A <b>RELIGIOUS ZEALOT</b> , filled with hatred for all who do not share their faith, seeking to create a world where their religion is the law of the land, and all must obey or perish.
16-17	From the ranks of one of the known or unknown races of Barsoom an <b>ALIEN DESPOT</b> has risen and seeks to change the world, shaping it to follow some mode of being that is unfamiliar to most.
18-19	A <b>TRUSTED ALLY</b> has turned on the adventurers. Pick someone from the <i>John Carter of Mars</i> core rulebook, such as Kantos Kan, Tars Tarkas, Dejah Thoris, Mors Kajak, Tardos Mors, Thuvan Dihn, Xodar, Kulan Tith, Gahan of Gathol, Ulysses Paxton, Carthoris, Tara, or even Carter himself! Perhaps they are being mind-controlled, impersonated by a shapeshifter, or are acting under duress. What has turned them against their friends?
20	<b>TEAM-UP!</b> Roll or pick twice: if this result is rolled again, roll an additional time for each 20 rolled. Roll a £ here: a 1 or 2 means that one is subservient to the other, a blank means that they are working together as equals, and an effect means that one controls the other through some means of coercion or control.

## DRAMATIC ESCALATION

In the **Dramatic Escalation**, some external force is causing things to heat up, increasing the stakes. All too often this is the revelation of a grander scheme at play, usually involving world conquest, but sometimes it can be something less complex or easier to resolve. It does not have to manifest at this point fully, but it should be hinted at here. Roll or pick from the table below.

### D20 ANTAGONIST

01-04	The <b>AERIAL ARMADA</b> of an enemy nation is sighted, en route to the adventurers' location. Is it in service to the antagonist, or does it serve its own purpose?
05-08	News from home is that <b>MYSTERIOUS MALFUNCTIONS</b> plague the generators (or life support) keeping the city's inhabitants safe and intact.
09-11	The antagonist reveals that they have access to a <b>MYSTERIOUS FORCE</b> capable of dramatically shifting the balance in any conflict in their favor — whether a strange energy shield, a means of invisibility, sonic attacks that incapacitate foes and cannot be defended against, or a means of crippling vehicles from afar, before combat can be joined.
12-13	The antagonist reveals an <b>UNNATURAL ARMY</b> of creatures like the synthetic Hormads or something even more grotesque, created for the purpose of world domination. Made through horrifying science, these beings strike loathing into their civilized enemies, and the means of producing them continues to pump them out. Alternatively, this can be something strange but not grotesque, such as illusory soldiers created through psychic energy, animated statues, or people pulled out of stasis to fight in wars not their own.
14-15	A horde of <b>SAVAGE CREATURES</b> gathered in numbers Barsoom has never seen — whether banths, great white apes, ultsios, zitidars, or some new creature — are massing and making their way to the adventurers' home nation. Alternatively, this can be a vast army of Warhoon: more civilized but equally dangerous.
16-17	A <b>COUP D'ÉTAT</b> has occurred in the adventurers' home city: its former leaders (and the adventurers' patrons) have been imprisoned or exiled. Roll or pick an Antagonist to determine who is behind this.
18-19	A <b>SUPER-WEAPON</b> capable of causing tremendous damage to all within the area, whether atmospheric, explosive, radioactive, etc., is revealed to be in the hands of the villain.
20	Roll twice: if this result is rolled again, roll an additional time for each 20 rolled.



## LATE SETBACK

Some additional setback has emerged, requiring additional effort to resolve before forward momentum can be re-established, or requiring some work-around to bypass. Roll again or pick from the **Setbacks** table (page 99) and apply the result.

## NEW LOCATION

This new location gains increased prominence and the adventurers are forced to either visit this place or contend with some element of danger from this locale. Roll again or pick from the **Location** chart (page 99) and ignore any result that has previously been rolled.

## RESOLUTION

The narrator should consider the Obvious Solution presented in the **Initial Obstacle** portion of the adventure (page 98), and roll or select an appropriate result, fusing these together into something that makes sense.

D20	RESOLUTION
01-04	JOHN CARTER (or an appropriately high-powered ally) arrives at the head of a fleet of airships, ready to settle any potential complication with Helium's superior firepower.
05-08	Another ALLY arrives in the nick of time, similarly backed with an immense military force.
09-11	DESPERATE NEGOTIATION and a plea for sanity reveals that the enemy is willing to pull back from the brink of all-out war. The result may be a tenuous stalemate or truce for the time being, but war is abated for now.
12-13	The emergence of a POWERFUL NEW FACTION, whether through accessing a long-forgotten resource (newly-discovered weapon stores or the rediscovery of ancient and proscribed technology) or the uprising of a previously-downtrodden caste or group. This changes everything and forces all the involved parties to reconsider their actions, or to step back and face this new challenge.
14-15	A STUNNING CHANGE OF HEART, where the enemy realizes their monstrous nature and pleads for redemption, loses something valuable to them and with it the will to fight, is inspired by the behavior of the heroes, or becomes wracked with pangs of conscience.
16-17	DESERTION from the enemy ranks, as above, where a highly-placed ally of the enemy (perhaps a lieutenant) betrays their leader and throws in with the heroes. They may reveal themselves to be an old friend or ally in disguise.
18-19	The antagonist or enemy suffers a sudden REVERSAL OF FORTUNE, with some coincidental or previously-hinted-of plot thread reaching its culmination, or even a freak accident involving unreliable technology.
20	CLIFFHANGER! The ending goes unresolved, and ends on a potentially dangerous plot thread, with the hint of great calamity to come! Roll on the <b>Cliffhanger!</b> sidebar (page 102) to determine its nature, if desired. Otherwise, roll again and ignore any result of 20.



## CLIFFHANGER

Not every adventure is resolved so easily, and as is all too often the case in Carter's own exploits, the end of one adventure can be a dramatic — or even catastrophic — new obstacle that suggests the next adventure and problem to be resolved. The narrator should consider the nature of the campaign and whether a cliffhanger “to be continued...” ending is appropriate. If it is, roll or pick from the table below. If another adventure is unlikely, then a cliffhanger is not recommended.

Once a cliffhanger ending has been established, the narrator should let the players know that the adventure is truly at its end, and that the next session will be the launch of a new adventure, dealing with this new status quo.

### D20 CLIFFHANGER

01–04	A heretofore minor, or previously unknown, threat arrives unexpectedly in <b>OVERWHELMING FORCE</b> — such as a vast aerial navy, a massive ground army, or even a fleet of space ships — demanding the surrender of the adventurers' home city. Faced with this overwhelming force, the odds of survival plummet rapidly.
05–08	A previously trusted ally — whether an individual or an entire nation — suddenly <b>URNS TRAITOR</b> , striking deep at the adventurers' home city or royal family, or revealing their allegiance with an enemy. This stunning turnabout ends the session, whether in the form of a former ally ordering the heroes to be thrown in chains, or their home city's defenses collapsing due to sabotage.
09–11	At the moment of potential <b>Resolution</b> , <b>SOMETHING RELIABLE FAILS</b> utterly, due to sabotage, some other unforeseen condition, or even over-reliance (which should be foreshadowed earlier), making defeat seemingly inevitable. This may be something extraordinary, such as all the ships in an aerial armada suddenly stalling and plummeting to the ground. The session ends with the realization that fate has turned against the heroes.
12–13	The <b>Initial Obstacle</b> and the <b>Resolution</b> turned out to be nothing but a <b>RUSE</b> to conceal the true machinations of the enemy. This casts everything in a new light and reveals that the adventurers have been distracted. They may be in the wrong place, too late, or seem to have already lost everything!
14–15	The goal or subject of the adventure is suddenly <b>WHISKED AWAY</b> , separated from the adventurers dramatically, or, in the case of an inanimate object, either gone or revealed to have never existed at all. The session ends immediately after this crushing realization sinks in.
16–17	The beloved of an adventurer (or respected narrator character) <b>DISAPPEARS MYSTERIOUSLY</b> , perhaps even vanishing in plain sight! The session ends almost immediately after, without even a chance to react.
18–19	One or more adventurers are suddenly and inexplicably <b>TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER WORLD!</b> They barely have a chance to get their bearings and realize how far they are away from home when the session ends.
20	An <b>UNEXPECTED REVELATION</b> or twist reveals all is not as it seems. For example, the adventurers are reveling in their success, but one of them suddenly awakens, realizing that they are captive, hallucinating in a mind machine devised by one of their nemeses. The nemesis puts the adventurer back to sleep and into the dreamscape, wiping their memories. The adventurer wakes with a nagging suspicion that something is not quite right. How will they escape?



# MAD SCIENCE AND INVENTIONS

*I am no scientist. I am a fighting man. My most beloved weapon is the sword, and during a long life I have seen no reason to alter my theories as to its proper application to the many problems with which I have been faced. This is not true of the scientists. They are constantly abandoning one theory for another one.*

– John Carter, *Skeleton Men of Jupiter*

Despite his role as a soldier turned jeddak, John Carter is also no mean thinker. He possesses a brilliant mind that, if he had set it to scholarly pursuits, would likely have made him one Earth's brightest and most acclaimed scientific minds. His influence is primarily that of a leader, but it is greater than merely the arts of warfare and peace-making. His presence on Barsoom challenges the beliefs of all who encounter him, shaking up the status quo. This encounter with the new revives the long-dormant spirit of creativity, invention, and intellectual curiosity.

Though the primary beneficiaries of this reinvigoration are his adopted people, the red Martians, it is not limited to them. Inspired by Carter, Martians red, green, yellow, white, and black all begin to push back the frontiers of what is known and challenge what was previously thought unattainable. Almost as if part of a gestalt, science, engineering, medicine, exploration, and academics begin to advance rapidly, galvanized directly or indirectly by Carter's appearance.

The Jeddak of Jeddaks era is, in short, the best possible time for the sciences, with an emergent interest in all such endeavors dominating most of the civilized nations in the world. The long period of lethargy is at an end, and once more the world is seen as an exciting frontier to explore. Inspired both by Carter and by others, the scientists and engineers of each of the red Martian nations race to outstrip one another with new and wonderful technological accomplishments.

Technology first and foremost surges into the fore, with engineering breakthroughs occurring at an accelerated pace, and massive shifts appearing almost in parallel.

The new spirit of invention cannot be laid entirely at Carter's feet, however. As his offspring and their allies begin to have their own adventures across Barsoom, they encounter new and incredible civilizations and cultures with their own traditions of science and invention. They return with knowledge of this strange and fantastic technology, and in some cases it enters the scientific tradition and inspires further invention and advancement. Furthermore, as these scions of Helium explore their own place in the world of Barsoom, they inevitably encounter a variety of mad scientists, ancient technologies, and even alien-to-Barsoom civilizations equipped with their own technology.

One of these mad scientists is Ras Thavas, sometimes called "the Master Mind of Mars," a brilliant developer in a variety of fields — engineering, medicine, and other sciences. There are few on the planet responsible for such a variety of inventions and original creations, and the fame (and infamy) attached to his name is well-deserved. Fortunately for Carter and the people of Helium, as well as all who value peace, Ras Thavas has given up his prior dreams of conquest and is now content to serve humanity itself, devoting his considerable intellect to more peaceful pursuits.

## NEW METALS AND CHEMICALS

The field of metallurgy is relatively unchanged but for one dramatic development. As in previous eras, aluminum steel is still used for most metallic ship construction. Carborundum aluminum is the harder alloy of aluminum steel and is used to reinforce ships, particularly their superstructure and frames. Forandus was the hardest metal known to Barsoomians and is used for ship plating and structures in need of defensibility.

However, the ever-ingenious Ras Thavas developed a new metal, transparent to the point of near-invisibility, and virtually indestructible. Its one weakness is that, like glass, it is not proof against diamond, and may be cut by objects made of that mineral. Despite this limitation, it is nonetheless highly useful in a variety of circumstances, especially ones where a hidden barrier is required and when any person so blocked is unlikely to have any diamonds on hand.

One of the most coveted of scientific discoveries is, and always has been, the ability to render things invisible. This specific goal is discussed on page 77 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook, as are the invisibility pills developed and used by the people of Invak and Onvak as well as the invisibility compound devised by Phor Tak of Jahar, which turns anything it is painted invisible.

Another means of achieving this desired state is introduced by the Morgors of Sasoom, exploiting a natural resource. A particularly remarkable type



of sand occurs naturally upon Sasoom, refractive in such a way that it bends light rays through them. Difficult to harvest, the sand is highly magnetic. When clustered together tightly, the sand's refractive qualities align so that light rays slide and bend around anything it is in contact with. Morgor spaceships are equipped with reservoirs of this sand, which is released into space around the ship through a myriad of tiny apertures arrayed across the hull. By magnetizing the hull, the ship becomes coated in a fine layer of sand, rendering it essentially invisible. When they wish their ships to become visible, they demagnetize the hull and the sand drifts or falls away. It is unknown whether this is a standard feature for all airships and spaceships on Sasoom, but given the warlike tendencies of the Morgors, it seems likely.

In the realm of astronomy, it is only during the Jeddak of Jeddaks period that the theoretical principle known as the “the compensatory adjustment of masses” as relating to Barsoom and its moons is put to the test and proved to be accurate. This theory posits that Barsoom has an unusual and perhaps unique relationship with its moons, Thuria and Cluros, relating to their mass and gravity. While traveling to one of these moons, the theory states that a traveler's mass is adjusted, rescaling so that the dimensions (and gravitic effects) of matter remain in a constant scale as if from

Barsoom, so that someone is the same height only in relation to the planet, and that gravity will also apply equally as on Barsoom. In layman's terms, this means that the proportion of a person to Barsoom is adjusted when visiting either moon, so that they are relatively the same size and mass on either planet, though a visitor to Thuria or Cluros is in fact reduced dramatically, and a visitor from one of those planets grows considerably.

## COMMUNICATION AND DETECTION

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The Jeddak of Jeddaks period is one where the fields of communication and detection — transmitting and receiving information across a distance — grow by Carter-scaled leaps and bounds. Growing knowledge of Jasoomian sciences through advances in optics, wireless photography, and telephony allow tremendous growth in other sciences as well, and this ability to perceive things previously concealed creates entirely new fields of expertise and knowledge.

For example, the Barsoomians of Toonol have observation devices so powerful that they may view with great detail the surface of Jasoom, giving them advanced knowledge of Earth's technology and developments. Such is their interest in this new world that they can learn some of Earth's

languages, such as English, Urdu, Chinese, Russian, and others, preparing for a time when Jasoom and Barsoom might be allies, or at the very least facilitating diplomacy and communication.

Instruments have become so advanced that airships and other vehicles can be set to “intelligently” detect and direct themselves towards desired destinations, such as Carthoris' directional compass and the infamous torpedo known as the Flying Death, able to steer itself toward the item or flier it is attuned to. Similarly, Ur Raj, an inventor of the Heliumite city of Hastor, has created a device capable of detecting and locating other ships at a distance, recording their unique vibrational patterns, matching them against stored patterns, and thus identifying them.

## FLIERS AND SPACESHIPS

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One of the most dramatic advancements in engineering and technology comes to the field of transportation, particularly airships and spaceships. It is as if a barrier is broken when Carter begins to tinker with his own flier, expanding its capabilities dramatically, and shortly after, this invention is continued by his son Carthoris and others throughout Helium and other cities. In some cases, these new developments in flier engines are simultaneously discovered by others, occurring at almost the same instant, as if the mere idea of improvements were inspirational across the world.





## IMPROVEMENTS TO FLIERS

Engines become at the same time lighter, more fuel-efficient, and capable of producing far more energy. Flier speed is the first to see tremendous improvement in this period, the maximum rate of speed increasing from over 2,000 zodes (300 miles) per hour all the way up to 6,700 zodes (1,000 miles) per hour. Inventor and pilot Ptor Fak of Zodanga tests a new motor developed in his home nation and attempts to set a record for circumnavigation of Barsoom at the equator. Fak is unsuccessful when his engine fails and he crashes near the Forest of Lost Men, but nonetheless the advances made to the engine are able to be duplicated and improved upon, furthering the progress of technology and innovation.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF SPACESHIPS

Out of ignorance, in the period prior to the Jeddak of Jeddaks there was little reason for anyone to try to go to another planet, much less pay attention to them, and thus little effort was expended in such endeavors. Though scientists had long suspected that Barsoom's two moons were inhabited, no serious effort was put to the challenge of actually going to either of them. However, Carter's existence proved that life on other worlds was real, not just theoretical. Unfortunately, his inexplicable means of transit was a dead end, seemingly impossible to duplicate, so a technological means would have to be devised. And as if a seal had been broken, inventors and engineers across Barsoom looked to the stars and instead of thinking, "Is anything out there?", they thought, "How can I get there?", thus creating the race towards space.

Fal Sivas of Zodanga, an assassin guild-master and brilliant inventor, built a ship capable of traveling interplanetary distances, allowing him to visit other worlds. The hulls of this remarkable craft are insulated heavily to protect against cold, heat, and pressure. It contains oxygen- and water-generating machines and food storerooms to handle lengthy voyages and is well-stocked with cameras and high-powered radium rifles. Most significantly,

Fal Sivas has created and installed a mechanical brain to pilot the vessel safely, even controlling the weaponry and all other aspects of its operation. Not one to rough it, Fal Sivas made the quarters sumptuous and comfortable for the lengthy voyages. Though Carter stole the ship and ventured within it to Barsoom's first moon, Thuria, Fal Sivas was able to override Carter's control and force its return, commanding it to never obey another mind and to remain within its hangar until otherwise commanded by Fal Sivas.

Meanwhile, across the city, another inventor named Gar Nal also developed a ship capable of interplanetary flight, acting independently from his rival, Fal Sivas. The ship was completed and used to travel to Thuria, but the enmity between the two men meant that collaboration was impossible until the very end when fear of the wrath of John Carter overcame their rivalry. However, the details of its construction yet remain unknown, as Gar Nal took the engineering secrets of his ship to his death.

## MORGOR SHIPS

Though they likely existed before John Carter ever arrived on Barsoom, it is during the Jeddak of Jeddaks era that Barsoom is first made aware of the Morgors. Their spaceships, mentioned earlier for their ability to turn invisible, are powered by principles that are only guessed at and barely understood on Barsoom. Capable of moving at vast speeds in utter silence, able to travel between Barsoom and Sasoom in roughly 18 days, these vessels are powered by using a combination of the eighth ray and Ray L (otherwise known as "cosmic rays"). Morgor ships collect the latter ray from space and discharge it at tremendous velocities from internal propulsion tubes, rocketing them forward. The combination of these forces, along with the calculated utilization of the concentrated gravitational forces of other celestial bodies, allows Morgor spaceships to slow when they approach planet-side and to maneuver within planetary atmospheres with ease.

Unfortunately, little more is known about these vessels at the time of John Carter's disap-

pearance on Sasoom, thus allowing the Morgors to retain their dramatic tactical advantage over the people of Helium. The resolution of that conflict is up to the narrator to decide, as is the disposition of any technological gains that might result from it.

## THE MECHANICAL MIND

The mechanical brain invented by Fal Sivas to pilot his spaceship is based on his theory that all life is mechanical and follows mechanical principles (not chemical). This line of inquiry requires him to dissect dozens of Barsoomians for observation as he disassembles their brains, taking careful notes about their physical and psychological reactions. Once activated, the ship's brain requires an active connection with a living person, who controls and guides it. Fal Sivas plans to mass produce these mechanical brains and, unsurprisingly, to use them to control his fleet of interplanetary vessels, so that he might rule all the known universe.

Of the many scientific masterminds of the era, Fal Sivas is perhaps the most industrious and successful. He has copious workshops and laboratories active constantly to keep his work going, each staffed by captives, toiling endlessly to serve their evil master. They slave away at Fal Sivas' work knowing that such is his paranoia about being copied that he will inevitably kill them rather than allow them to be free, yet each labors in the hope that they might impress him enough, somehow, that he might spare them.

The mechanical mind piloting his spaceship is but a first working prototype, and Fal Sivas planned on making a variety of sturdy metal bodies to house his mechanical brains, turning them into an armed fleet of invaders to enforce his will throughout his domain. These mechanical beings, in turn, would make more of their kind, creating an unstoppable force, all enslaved to the diabolical will of Fal Sivas. However, his plans fell awry when he met John Carter, who defeated him and took possession of his spaceship. This vessel is described in additional detail on page 81 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook.



## THE TOOLS OF WAR

On Earth, the march of science is almost always set to the drumbeat of war, and upon Barsoom the situation is no different. In addition to the advances in fliers and artificial intelligences — each with their martial implications — some of the more outstanding developments in this age have but a single purpose: to make war better and more efficient.

One of the most ingenious inventions during this period is the appearance of the disintegrating ray, invented by a Jaharian scientist named Phor Tak. Built into either ship-mounted weapons or as rifles, this new ray creates a vibration that causes metals and inorganic materials to shake themselves apart, losing their molecular bonds and scattering into component atoms. When a disintegrating ray is pointed at a flier or vehicle and set to disintegrate metal, the vehicle simply disappears, all metallic components atomized when struck by the ray. Rather than exploding loudly, the targeted vehicle simply ceases to exist, causing the pilots, crew, and any organic material to fall from the sky, still at their original velocity.

The disintegrating ray can also be refined to affect organic materials instead of inorganic, or different types of organic material, making it horrifically effective against living flesh, wood, or other organic matter. Thus, someone armed with these rays can cause a flier to simply vanish from around a pilot and disarm an armed warrior, or the reverse, causing the vessel to lose its crew and the warrior to disappear entirely, leaving their war-harness and weapons behind. The only remedy against these rays is a type of blue paint that can neutralize the rays, and ships made proof against it are distinguished by that color.

The secrets of manufacturing these weapons were classified and kept secret upon Phor Tak's defeat. Should the disintegrating rays — whether ship-mounted or rifle — become commonplace, it is more than likely the use of the anti-disintegration paint will rapidly reappear alongside the rays, adorning ships and possibly even all-encompassing body armor. These rays and the paint are described on page 73 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook.

## MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

The First Born of Kamtol have a device resembling a truth detector, a chair to which are attached a great many sensing apparatuses. This “nerve index machine” was developed by a scientist of Kamtol, and it imprints and records an individual's reflexes, their unique “nerve index.” When they are seated on the chair they may be questioned, and a user familiar with the chair can use it as a makeshift lie detector.

If the method of operation is not known, it requires a Challenging (D2) **Reason + Cunning** test to decipher how to use it at all. Two additional Momentum may be spent in order to master the machine enough to use it as a lie detector. When operated correctly, the nerve index machine allows the user to tune to the subject's nerve index, no matter how far away and how shielded they are, and inflict them with sensation, usually pain and death. To use it in this fashion requires a separate Challenging (D2) **Reason + Cunning** test. If successful, the machine inflicts 2 ☛ of damage with the Psychic quality.

The master machine, thought to be the only one, was quite fragile and well concealed. Though John Carter found and destroyed it, it is entirely possible there is another, backup version of the machine, perhaps an earlier prototype or a second and deadlier iteration in development. The plans of its makings were similarly lost but might still exist somewhere.

## NEW HORRORS OF SCIENCE

A byproduct of ancient technology or strange science is the willingness to use it, without any of the moral or ethical issues that we think of as “human.” This means that scientists, doctors, or engineers in interplanetary adventures are often willing to conduct experiments and further their research in ways that most civilized beings would consider too horrible to countenance. Vat-grown life forms (such as clones) are routinely subjected to vivisection, hybridization, and being spliced into new and frightening configurations. Brains are frequently removed from bodies and placed into the bodies of brute animals or even into other sentient beings. Technological components are grafted onto or

## THE LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE

One means by which savants and scientists of the red Martian nations are all able to progress quite dramatically and learn from one another is a shared language, and the ability to peruse the vast archives of stored information from millennia of study, research, and scientific development across all nations, gathered in epochs when relationships between these places were friendlier. Most red Martian nations have unique written languages — sometimes even different alphabets — but scientific notation and the language used to express ideas in the various sciences is identical, shared across all civilized peoples.

Any scientist character — narrator or player — or one with a scientific background may be assumed to know this language and be able to read and write fluently within it. This language has its own alphabet, known to all who can read it. Anyone who does not know the language must attempt a Challenging (D2) **Reason + Empathy** test to read this scientific argot.

implanted into bodies, and limbs or other vital organs are easily replaced by mechanical substitutes.

For these fiendish voyagers into the realm of weird science, no boundary is sacred. Even these scientists' own bodies are subject to bizarre experimentation, usually in the name of some form of immortality. Heroes might find that a former enemy has transplanted his brain into the body of a one-time ally, or that the villain has built a high-indestructible synthetic body within which he can enact his vengeance. A frequent condition of this bizarre experimentation, too, is the utter lack of any sense of its wrongness, of the transgression against the natural order. These scientists are often surprised at the reaction others have when confronted with their works. Other scientists, however,



revel in the horror that these bizarre experiments cause, and view themselves as free from the shackles of conventional morality and behavior.

Gamemasters introducing aspects of weird science into their games should strive to present something that is clinically devoid of any human feeling, and remind the players how their characters might view these experiments with their own morals and ethics, especially Earthborn characters who's views are shaped by early 20th century Earth.

## THE FROZEN MEN

In the northern domed city of Pankor in the frozen land of Panar, the warlord Hin Abtol has a means of freezing humans for years, decades even, and resuscitating them when need be with a simple thawing and an injection. They awaken almost instantly, though uncomfortable and disconcerted initially, but with minimal ill effects. This way, he keeps warriors in fighting fettle but does not have to feed and sustain them when they are idle. Over a century, Hin Abtol has stored "fully a million" of these men, all soldiers, and his goal is to use these troops as his invading force, all out of envy for the titles and fame of John Carter, Jeddak of Jeddaks and Warlord of Barsoom. When Carter defeats Hin Abtol and Helium destroys Pankor's fleet, the frozen men of Panar are set free to find their own destinies, undoubtedly in warmer climes.

## THE NIGHTMARE CITY OF KORVAS

The city of Korvas, abandoned for more than a thousand years, contains much that would horrify and amaze those interested in science. Guarded by an immense humanoid (130 feet tall) of low intelligence named Joog, the city itself is full of the signs of scientific activity and amoral experimentation. Within the streets are countless skeletons of men and women, the tops of their skulls neatly and unnaturally sliced off. Though their skeletal remains have been interfered with by rats and dragged apart, the surgical precision of the skull cuts indicate medical intervention.

Within the city's depths, an incredible amount of technology continues to operate as if new. Mechanical doors open, admitting entry into a vast laboratory which is still functioning. Inside is a horrific spectacle: life support mechanisms continuing to hum and clatter while inside huge glass tubes, white apes stand motionlessly, the tops of their heads sliced off and bandaged, with oxygen pumped into the cylinders for reasons unknown. An even greater domed pit in the center of the laboratory is filled with similar bodies, though these are red Martians, equally bereft of their skull-plates. Surging around these bodies are rats, which drag the bodies out of the laboratory and into the streets.

The lab is inhabited by Pew Mogel, a lunatic scientist in a hulking, deformed body. Korvas itself is set with surveillance cameras, and he watches any intruders with interest. This television over which he watches his city is an invention of Ras Thavas of Toonol, his former mentor and creator, for Pew Mogel is one of Thavas' Synthetic Men. When John Carter encounters him, Pew Mogel is in the process of training one of his apes to perform surgery, to transplant his brain from its current brutish body into a new and handsome one. Pew Mogel, like many, also wishes to rule all Barsoom, and has been recruiting renegade red Martians to his cause, implanting their brains into the bodies of white apes and storing their bodies in the glass-domed pit in his lab.

The pride of Pew Mogel's achievements is Joog the giant, stitched together out of pieces of the bodies of thousands of red Martians and apes. With his blood full of a self-repairing serum, the giant is an unstoppable behemoth, controlled by a radio device implanted in the ear of the colossus.

Despite his outlandishness, Pew Mogel's army is no small danger, being comprised of thousands of hardened, desperate red Martian outlaws in the bodies of white apes, armed with radium rifles and riding malagors to which are strapped an arsenal of military equipment, including bombs, cannons, and submachine guns. The colossus Joog is carried in a great sling by a hundred malagors, to serve as the bulwark of the army, directed by Pew Mogel himself, sitting within a steel howdah atop its head.

## THE WONDERS OF THE FLESH

The perverted and ghastly medical experimentation of Ras Thavas nonetheless leads to many medical innovations and discoveries that cannot be discounted entirely. As a pioneer of transplantation technology, he can do the following.

- \* Transplant internal organs without hint of rejection or loss of faculties.
- \* Graft new limbs to replace those lost through violence or accidents.
- \* Transplant a living brain into a new body (and back again, if need be) without any loss of memory or degrading of capability.
- \* Transplant portions of brains into other beings, such as half a red Martian brain into that of a white ape, and vice versa.
- \* Create Synthetic Men and component organs, limbs, etc. from mere cells.

While he enjoyed considerable success in Toonol where he catered to the wealthy and privileged, Ras Thavas was eventually driven from his laboratory and into the desolate reaches of the Great Toonolian Marshes. There, he built a city called Morbus (on the ruins of a much more ancient place, rife with underground tunnels) and continued with his fiendish experimentation. Due to the monstrous nature of his work, Thavas was shunned throughout red Martian society, until John Carter had need of his services. Given the equivalent of a pardon by Carter, Thavas continues to live, and though he may not have a lab, his mind is always working, designing all-new monstrous permutations of science and medicine.

His most famous creation is the Synthetic Men — properly called Hormads — humanoid amalgams of parts, brought to unnatural life. These monstrous creations are seemingly immune to pain and fear, knowing no shock from wounds that would be mortal to another. Their limbs may be hewn from their trunks, and their torsos pierced with blades, but only beheading or dismembering them seems to have any effect. Even when severed, limbs and the head continue to exhibit a living vitality, and the





bodies continue to fight, albeit clumsily. Only fire can destroy them, as they are imbued with the “life principle.” They are also well aware of their nature as synthetic creations.

Most Hormads are extremely low in intelligence, and those with normal brains have banded together in the Council of the Seven Jeds to rule the other Hormads and establish a kingdom of their own. They took over and captured Ras Thavas, forcing him first to transplant their brains into hale and strong bodies, then set him to the task of making even more of their kind, with a goal of increasing their numbers to millions and conquering the rest of the world. As their captive creator, Ras Thavas was forced to transplant brains into many red Martians to serve as spies and informants for the Hormad Council of the Seven Jeds.

The contents of the No. 4 vat room escaped, overflowing their vat, a vast and coagulating mass of living flesh, though deformed horribly. It eventually expanded to encompass all of Morbus, until bombed out of existence by John Carter and the Heliumite fleet. At this time Ras Thavas was given a pardon by Carter and allowed to live in Helium, though secretly.

Generally, the Hormads ride tamed malagors, but prior to his reform, Ras Thavas experimented with the possibility of mass-producing malagors to serve as the Hormads’ mounts. These grotesque assemblages of vat-grown tissue, organs, and skeletal mass are described fully on page 175 of the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook.

A more “humanitarian” avenue into Thavas’ work may be found in the person of Vad Varo, formerly known as Ulysses Paxton of Earth, who apprenticed to the Master Mind of Mars and learned many of his surgical techniques. Though Paxton is loath to perform surgeries such as brain transplantation, he might be coaxed to assist in lesser matters, such as organ transplantation or limb restoration.

Another medical innovation came from the aforementioned Fal Sivas of Zodanga, who developed a variety of specialized drugs that he injected into the veins of his subjects, keeping them alive and conscious despite immense trauma and shock, for use during medical experiments and other, even more diabolical, purposes.

## VAMPIRES OF MARS AND OTHER UNTOLD STORIES

Narrators should take note that Barsoomian surgery, flesh crafting, and other fantastical versions of the biological sciences open up their campaigns to all sorts of possibilities. Barsoomian mad scientists of the era could create all manner of monsters to menace the populace. Ancient experiments might lurk in some ruined city or half-buried facility, waiting to be unearthed. Often, Earth mythology and folklore provides an excellent starting point for such developments. Monsters from Earth such as vampires, werewolves, zombies, and all manner of mythological beasts could inspire the twisted and deadly creations of Barsoomian science.

Just remember that ultimately Barsoom is a world of science and John Carter’s universe is one of rational explanations and observable fact, even if at times the results seem almost magical. For example, a race of hidden blood-sucking Martians aren’t supernatural vampires, but something created by science or mutation. Perhaps they are white Martians who altered themselves with plant men DNA to create a race of powerful and nearly immortal blood-drinkers. Or perhaps on Saturn or some other planet there is a race that resembles Earth legends of the vampire and other monsters. Perhaps such a race is even the source of those legends!

Crafting threats and monsters in this fashion is not canonical to the world Burroughs created, but it is thematically appropriate. From Issus to Morgors to the Synthetic Men, earlier tales of monsters and myth no doubt inspired Burroughs in his writing, and they can inspire narrators in their campaigns.



## PERFORMING LIMB AND ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

It may happen that a hero needs a limb or organ restored, through extreme injury or some other mishap. The following guidelines should give the narrator enough of a framework to handle such situations.

It is worth noting that although this kind of surgery does exist on Barsoom, the number of people or books with the knowledge of the procedure and locations suitable to perform it in are few and the risks are great. A narrator can run an entire campaign arc based on the characters trying to acquire all of these things. If this would be disruptive to the main story, players may opt to try to acquire these things alongside other goals.

### STEP ONE: LOCATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE

Before players can perform a transplant, they must have a suitable location in which to undertake the procedure. It is best to find this first, as a limb, organ, or tissue sample won't stay suitable long if it is not correctly preserved in stasis. Suitable locations might be found in ruined cities or in the laboratories of some of Barsoom's most famed scientists, such as Ras Thavas. For a location to be suitable it must have equipment capable of preserving and growing living tissue and be equipped to perform medical procedures.

The players must also acquire the knowledge to grow limbs or perform the transplant. This might mean seeking out the journal or diary of a scientist who has performed such a feat, or tracking down an individual with experience in growing and transplanting living tissue. Players can attempt to do the procedure without either, but this is dangerous and can result in serious complications.

### STEP TWO: DONORS AND PRESERVATION

Ras Thavas had hundreds, if not thousands, of bodies stored for just for this purpose. The players, however, will have to track down an appropriate donor.

Ideally the limb, organ, or tissue should come from a donor of the same race or species as the Martian or beast requiring a transplant. Using those from other races or species is possible but comes with a risk of complications during the transplant procedure. The narrator must determine the suitability of the donor. Players will need to act fast so that the donated tissue does not die before it can be preserved or put into stasis.

At the narrator's discretion, a living source might be found, but based on the circumstances, such ghoulish behavior may require a successful **Empathy + Passion** test at the narrator's chosen difficulty to avoid suffering Trauma for harvesting organs from potentially unwilling donors.

### STEP THREE: THE PROCEDURE

Once the required limb or organ has been found, grafting it onto (or into) its intended host requires a full medical facility (as listed above) and requires the character performing the procedure to take part in an attribute challenge. Assuming that the character knows how to perform the procedure and has a suitable facility and donor, this is a (D3) attribute challenge, with a threshold of 7, that uses **Reason + Empathy** or **Reason + Daring**, at the narrator's choice. If players have partial, incomplete, or no knowledge of the procedure, or a less-than-ideal donor or facility, then the difficulty and threshold should be increased at the narrator's discretion.

Failure with the surgery means that the organ or limb is rejected completely, causing 1 Wound affliction per day until surgically removed.

Complications that occur during the surgery may increase the difficulty of further tests to complete the transplant, increase the difficulty of tests that use the transplanted limb, or in serious cases may mean that the donor limb or organ only functions for a short period of time before needing replacement.

#### SYNTHETIC ORGANS OR LIMBS

Should the source of the transplanted organ or limb be synthetic, each complication rolled when transplanting it causes it to display a trait, revealing the synthetic nature of the transplanted appendage. An eye might pop from its socket, dangling upon the cheek; an arm might twist grotesquely in a way difficult to disguise; etc. These traits are permanent, and though temporary measures can be taken to disguise them (putting the eye back into the socket, for example), the same traits will continue so long as the organ remains with the host.

The science of creating artificial life marches on, but still has a great distance to go before it can be relied upon.



## BRAIN SURGERY

If players wish to undertake the brain swapping surgeries of Ras Thavas, the rules above for limb and organ transplantation can be used, but instead of looking for suitable donors it is a case of finding the participants for the surgery (either Martian or beast) and having a facility with the correct instruments to perform the procedure.

Performing a brain transplant requires a difficulty (D5), threshold 6 attribute challenge. Success means that the operation was performed without a hitch, and that each subject will recover fully in their new body, waking within an hour after the surgery.

If the surgery is successful, the two characters permanently swap their **Might**, **Cunning**, and **Daring** scores as well as any talents that affect either bodies physical abilities. Reason, Empathy and Passion — along with any talents what do not affect any physical abilities — remain unaffected.

With the narrator's permission players can also make use of their new body's renown and accolades, but each time you do so you must make a **Cunning + Empathy** test. The difficulty is based on how well the character you are interacting with knew the previous person. A passing acquaintance may call for a difficulty 1, while a close family member or friend may be difficulty 3. If you are specifically tested for knowledge only the original person would have, you automatically fail and the ruse ends.

Each complication rolled during the procedure, or complications from a narrator's Threat spends or success at cost, can incur one of the following problems.

- \* Adjustment takes longer. Each complication or Threat spent increases the recovery time by one day. The character is otherwise unharmed by the experience.
- \* For some reason, the bodies of each subject begin to reject the implanted brain, causing nausea, headaches, and loss of faculties. This begins to occur one day after the surgery. Each subject, if conscious, must make a Challenging (D2) roll of **Might + Passion** once per day to avoid the rejection, until making three successful rolls. On a failure they take 2 ☛ Confusion stress.
- \* The memories and personality of the host body begin to reassert themselves in subtle ways, influencing the brain. The character may begin to experience strange memories, involuntary movements, and in extreme cases, changes in personality.

- \* The character's memory and physical reflexes are unhindered, but memory of their identity is apparently gone, rendering them amnesiac. This is not a permanent loss, and the narrator should determine the conditions by which the memory can be restored.

Alternatively, you could assign an additional flaw to represent a complication of the surgery. These should not be permanent, and part of the character's recovery after the surgery should be to overcome them, eventually leading to their removal. Here are some examples.

- \* The portion of the brain dealing with motor reflexes has trouble adjusting to the new body's musculature. Once per scene the narrator may increase the difficulty of any tests involving physical action by two steps. This can be avoided by paying 4 Momentum.
- \* The brain's ability to access memory has been impaired, adding one step of difficulty to all actions involving recalling stored knowledge (sciences, etc.). This difficulty can be overcome by choosing to take 2 ☛ of Confusion stress.

A Daunting (D3) test must succeed to recognize the failure in an unsuccessful surgery and restore the brains to their original inhabitants. Failure at this second roll means that each subject will die unless dealt with otherwise, such as having their brain placed into a suitable receptacle for storage.

## THAVASIAN TALENTS

Ras Thavas is considered the greatest and most important physician to have lived in recent times. Well over a thousand years old, this ancient red Martian looks to be no older than a young man, though it is clear when speaking with him that his age should not be determined by the look of his body. While sequestered in his laboratory in the Toonolian Marshes, Thavas developed some of the most important advances in medical science, including the transfusion of blood, replacement of limbs, transplantation of minds, and the creation of life itself.



Unfortunately, Thavas is notoriously secretive of his knowledge and until just recently refused to share his discoveries and findings with anyone. Strangely, however, he took an apprentice several years ago — a Jasoomian named Vad Varo — and imparted to him nearly all of his vast knowledge. Vad Varo has since become a popular jed in the city of Duhor and is reported to be friends with the Warlord himself. Ras Thavas was last seen in the custody of John Carter after one of his facilities was overrun by his monstrous creations.

Since his departure from his laboratory near the city of Toonol, the ambitious ruler of that city has garrisoned the facility and plundered Thavas' notes and records. Scientists sworn to Vobis Kan are hard at work attempting to unlock the secrets discovered by the great Master Mind of Mars.

The talents featured here can be used alongside the rules for performing surgery on characters and may be used to represent knowledge of the techniques that a character requires in order to perform such a feat. In these cases, the narrator may decide to lower the xp cost of the talent, with the discount representing the effort that went into finding out the information, and the remaining cost representing the character learning the necessary theory and techniques to use

the talent. In order to learn any of these talents a character must have access to Ras Thavas himself, his apprentice Vad Varo, or an extensive collection of his notes. It is worth noting that the xp cost of these talents may seem higher than their effects would usually merit; this is due to the rare nature of such talents in an individual, and because having access to these too early on in a *John Carter of Mars* game can very quickly change the stakes and balance of a campaign.

#### **BLOOD TRANSFUSION (GRADE 3)**

*You understand the technique and theory of purifying the blood of a subject or infusing them with the healthy blood of a donor.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When attempting to provide medical treatment using blood transfusion.
- \* **Effect:** When providing medical treatment to help another character recover, you may employ your knowledge of the workings of the blood to ensure they make a speedy recovery. So long as you have access to the proper equipment, you gain a bonus d20 to any roll made to aid in an ally's recovery. In addition, you reduce the Momentum cost of recovering additional afflictions by 1, to a minimum of 1.

#### **LIMB OR ORGAN REPLACEMENT (GRADE 4)**

*Using your great medical knowledge you can reattach a severed limb, or replace a limb or organ entirely with a new one.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When operating to replace a limb or organ.
- \* **Effect:** The difficulty of any test when operating to attach a new limb or organ to a host is decreased by 1. Regardless of the type of limb or organ you replace, you can ignore the first complication rolled on the attribute challenge to perform the surgery.

#### **MIND TRANSFERENCE (GRADE 10)**

*You can remove the brain of a subject and place it into the body of another.*

- \* **Circumstance:** When performing brain surgery on two or more sedated patients.
- \* **Effect:** This power grants you the ability to remove the brain of one patient and replace it with the brain of another. To transfer the brain between patients, you must have at least two individuals to operate on and the appropriate equipment. With this talent, the difficulty of performing this surgery is reduced by 2.





## INVENTION RULES

Throughout the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, we see a rapid rise in the scale and scope of technology upon Barsoom and its neighboring planets. From the interplanetary ships made by Gar Nal, and the brain transplants of Ras Thavas, to the strange magnetic sand able to render Morgor ships invisible, we see examples of the kinds of inventions that brilliant minds can create.

Within the pulp genre, it is not uncommon for the characters to be in a less than ideal situation, only to find, create, or jury rig some kind of invention to help them out. Often, once the item has served its purpose, it is lost, destroyed, or otherwise disappears from the scene. Burroughs was no stranger to introducing an object or invention purely for plot purposes, only for it to disappear and never be heard of again. Sometimes, however, that invention can stick around for a while or come back to bother the characters, causing problems later in the adventure — usually to show the reader the dangers of untested or unstable technology.

The rules detailed here make no attempt to model the hours, years, or decades of research that a character might undertake to create inventions like the mechanical brain or a new type of weapon. Instead, the rules here are guidelines for those players and narrators who wish to have scientifically-minded characters who are interested in creating new items and harnessing or modifying existing technology. With the narrator's permission, the inventions that can be created with these rules may later be purchased with Renown to make them a permanent technology upon Barsoom. (See *Renown and Scientific Accolades*, page 120.)

### TYPES OF INVENTION

For the purposes of the rules written here, inventions are split up into three different types: New or Complex Inventions, Modifications or Improvements, and In the Moment Inventions.

✱ **New or Complex Invention:** These introduce the most interesting gameplay, as a character must collect, or find, rare materials or gain an understanding of a particular science or phenomenon in order to create the invention. This is particularly useful for inventions that have larger impacts and scope when bought with renown (see page 120) or are directly related to the plot of the adventure. It can help give a character some spotlight time in the campaign, as well as a personal goal.

✱ **Modification or Improvement:** The invention is a modification of existing technology, such as improving an existing weapon, modifying an airship, or creating an enhanced healing salve. This type of invention may also require a character to gather materials, but they are more likely to be commonplace upon Barsoom. This is the least dramatic invention, but the most common and simplest to implement.

✱ **In the Moment Invention:** This is the typical convenience invention found in many pulp stories, where a character uses whatever they have on hand to create something suitable for the situation they are in. These inventions rarely last long and are usually unstable and unpredictable.

All inventions have three things in common: they must be paid for when created; they have a use limit; and they can only be made permanent within the world after they have been purchased as a Scientific Achievement with renown (see page 120).

### ANATOMY OF AN INVENTION

Each kind of invention has a grade, used to total its cost in xp, and two vital stats: a complication range and a use limit.

✱ **Grade:** An invention's grade, much like with talents, indicates how powerful the invention's abilities are and how broad or narrow its effects are. Grades are most important when it comes to working out the xp cost of an invention; each grade is worth 5xp. The tables on page 114 give a guide on the base and additional grades an invention may have, but narrators always have the final decision. The xp is only spent if the invention is created successfully.

✱ **Complication Range:** As the item is untested or newly invented the risk of rolling a complication is greater. See *Complication Range sidebar*.

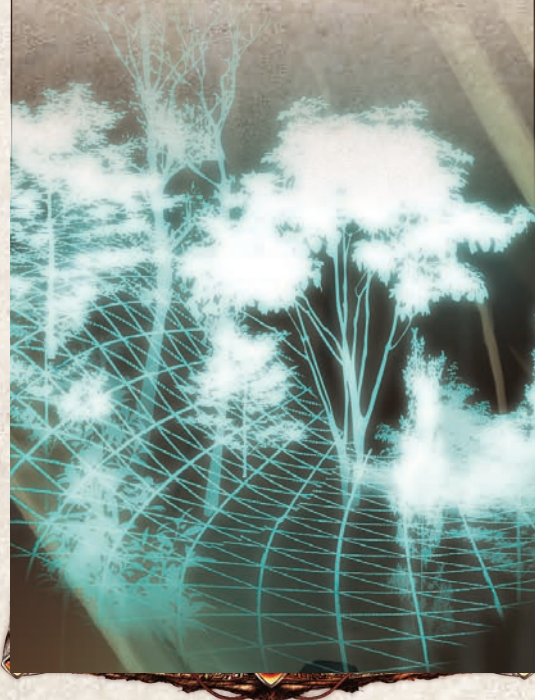


\* **Use Limit:** The use limit is how long an item will last for within the campaign unless bought with renown. In the case of scenes, this only counts for scenes the invention is used in. Once an item has been used to this limit, it can only remain in use by purchasing it with renown.

### COMPLICATION RANGE

Complication range is the range of numbers on which a character suffers a complication. By default, this is a range of 1, meaning a character suffers a complication on a roll of 20.

Each increase to the complication range adds to the numbers that roll a complication. So a complication range of 2 means that a roll of 19 or 20 will cause a complication, a complication range of 3 will cause a complication on a roll of 18, 19 or 20, and so on. A complication range can never be higher than 4 (rolling a complication on a 17-20).



## CREATING AN INVENTION

Players should consider what kind of invention they wish to create: what it might do, how it works and why it exists. *John Carter of Mars* is rationalist pulp, which means items and technology always have a reason for existing and always have some scientific explanation as to how they work, no matter how fantastical they are. It is up to the narrator to decide whether the invention can be made at all and which type of invention is appropriate.

### STEP ONE: CHOOSE THE TYPE OF INVENTION

The player and narrator should decide together what type of invention is appropriate for what the player wishes to create, choosing from the list (repeated below). At this point it should also be decided if there are any requirements for the invention to be made, such as acquiring certain materials, instructions, or an appropriate space in which to work.

- \* **New or Complex Invention.** A new invention or technology that does not yet exist, or which uses an existing technology in an entirely new way. This usually requires specific, sometimes rare, materials, knowledge, tools, or an appropriate space to create which must be acquired through play.
- \* **Modification or Improvement.** Making existing technology better, such as increasing the range or damage of a weapon, improving the effect of a healing salve, or making a ship's use of the eighth ray more efficient. This also includes modifying inventions previously bought with renown (see *Purchasing Inventions*, page 117).
- \* **In the Moment.** The character uses whatever materials are on hand to create an item specific to their situation, such as an improvised smoke bomb, lockpicks, or a jury-rigged single-use device that removes poison from a wound.

INVENTION TYPE	BASE GRADE
In the Moment	1
Modification or Improvement	2
New or Complex invention. The more fantastical, complicated, or "impossible," the higher the base grade.	3-6

**Example:** Jessica's red Martian scientist character, Karvas Kam, has a goal of improving transportation on Barsoom so that far distant nations may more easily interact. Jessica tells her narrator, Niko, that she wishes to invent a teleportation device, intended to allow diplomats to travel to the remote nations of Barsoom with ease. Niko tells Jessica that this invention will be a new or complex invention, as it uses technology not yet developed on Barsoom. Niko also tells Jessica that her character will need to collect a number of materials before she can start to make her invention: radium powder, large stores of metal, and an isolation chamber. In addition to this, Niko also says that Jessica must seek out information on teleportation and any previously failed designs, along with a laboratory and workshop to have access to the tools she needs.





## STEP TWO: CALCULATE GRADE AND XP COST

After deciding on the type of invention and any requirements it may have, the invention needs to be given a grade in order to calculate the xp cost.

Each type of invention has a base grade depending on the type of invention chosen in step 1. This is the minimum grade for the invention.

Added to the base grade are additional grades which come from features and advantages of the invention. The features and advantages table lists the most common of these, but narrators are encouraged to use their judgement should a player wish something not found here. Each grade added to an invention, including its base grade, costs 5xp.

**Note:** When adding improvements or modifications to an object which would already cause damage or have a quality or other factor listed in the table, such as a blade or a firearm, the grade increase only counts for additional stress, qualities, or other factors. If a radium gun already inflicts 2 of stress, that does not need to be paid for when modifying it, but if you wish to increase its stress to 4 the grade will increase by 2.

**Example:** Niko, as the narrator, must now work out the grade and xp cost of the invention that Jessica wishes her character to make. Niko gives it a base grade of 5, reflecting the complicated nature of what Jessica wishes to create. Niko asks Jessica to describe what she wants her invention to do: transport no more than two people over a great distance. Niko adds 3 grades for a major narrative advantage, as being able to teleport over a large distance would be, and another 1 grade for affecting more than one person. This gives the teleportation plates a grade of 9 and an xp cost of 45xp.

## STEP THREE: PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Once the effects of the invention have been decided upon, the grade and xp cost totaled, and any necessary requirements from step one are met, the player rolls a test to determine whether they successfully create their invention. If they are successful, they pay the xp cost and the invention has been created. For particularly complicated inventions, or those that would take a longer period of time to create, narrators may wish to use attribute challenges or multiple tests rather than the single tests presented here.

Each type of invention's complication range and use limit are also noted.

FACTOR OR ADVANTAGE	GRADE INCREASE
Minor narrative advantage. This has no mechanical effect, but instead allows a character to attempt a test that would not be possible otherwise (such as using a makeshift lockpick to attempt to escape a cell) or gives a roleplaying opportunity.	None. Only available for In the Moment inventions that have no grade increases above their base grade.
Major narrative advantage. This has no mechanical effect but allows something to be introduced to the story that might have far-reaching effects, or be further removed from existing technology.	Narrator's discretion, 1-6 based on purpose.
Adds a bonus d20 to a specific test or under a specific circumstance, or generates bonus Momentum.	+1 per bonus d20 or bonus Momentum.
Reduces the difficulty of a later test or increases the difficulty of a narrator character's test.	+1 per step of difficulty increase or decrease.
Inflict or recover stress.	+1 per 1 of stress, or per 2 points of stress recovered.
Cause or recover an affliction.	+2 per affliction caused or recovered.
Has a quality, such as Fearsome, Explosive, or Quiet.	+1 per quality.
Its effect is spread over a wide area, works at longer range than normal (if an improvement), or affects multiple creatures at once.	+1 for each range outside of Near or for every 2 creatures it affects.
Negates a specified amount of stress.	+1 per 2 points of stress negated.
Negates a specified quality. Where an effect on a would trigger a quality, any effects of the quality are negated, instead inflicting only 1 stress.	+2 per quality negated.



## INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SCENES AN INVENTION LASTS FOR

When creating an invention, it lasts a number of scenes equal to its use limit plus one additional scene per Momentum spent at its creation. Momentum cannot be spent after its creation to extend the life of the invention further; it must be bought with renown.

INVENTION TYPE	TEST REQUIRED	COMPLICATION RANGE	USE LIMIT
New or Complex Invention	Reason + Cunning test, with a minimum difficulty of 3, that can be increased depending on the complexity of the invention.	3 or 4 depending on the individual invention.	4 Scenes
Modification or Improvement	Reason + Cunning test at (D3).	2	8 Scenes
In the Moment	+1 per bonus d20 or Reason + Cunning test with a minimum difficulty of (D1), that can be increased depending on circumstance. Momentum.	3	1 Scene

**Example:** Over the course of several episodes, Jessica's character has collected all the requirements to make her invention and has enough xp to pay for it. Niko asks Jessica to make a **Reason + Cunning** (D4) test to represent building the invention. Jessica succeeds on her test. She chooses to spend 2 bonus Momentum to increase the number of scenes the invention lasts for, keeping it working long enough for her to make use of it in the way she wishes. The teleportation plates that she constructs have a complication range of 4 and a use limit of 6 (4 + 2 Momentum spent at creation).

Niko decides to give the invention a flaw, to represent its untested, complicated nature. Niko names the flaw **Unpredictable**: whenever a complication is rolled, the operator must pay 4 Momentum, or risk sending the user to a random destination. If the Momentum is not paid, roll 1d6 on an effect or a 1 the user is transported to a random location of the narrator's choice, otherwise it teleports them as usual.

### OPTIONAL RULE: FLAWS

Narrators who wish to add more complexity to an invention may choose to give it a flaw. This can be done either as the result of a complication being rolled or to reflect the unstable, experimental nature of an invention.

A flaw may cause:

- ✱ A secondary effect when the narrator spends Threat or a player does not spend Momentum to avoid a secondary effect, such as a new weapon inflicting a small amount of stress on the user.
- ✱ A problem when complications are rolled when using the invention, such as a short-range teleportation device sending a target to a random location instead of the one intended.





#### STEP FOUR: FINISHING TOUCHES

Now that the invention has been created, there is one more thing that must be decided: how the invention is used. An invention that a player creates will usually require or affect an attribute test. The specific attribute combination is determined by how the invention functions; a new ranged weapon that has the *Psychic* quality might work using **Passion + Reason**, while a device that acts as a two-way teleporter might require **Daring + Reason**. Narrators and players should work together to find a combination that makes sense but is also inventive and gives the feeling of a strange new invention. The difficulty of this test should always have a base of 1, increased depending on circumstance and the complexity of the creation. The difficulty is always increased by 1 if a character other than the inventor attempts to use the invention.

**Example:** Now that Jessica has created her invention, her narrator decides that using it requires a **Reason + Daring** (D2) test to operate. If anyone other than Jessica attempts to operate the teleportation plates, the difficulty is increased to (D3).

#### USING LIMITS AND COMPLICATION RANGES CREATIVELY

Not every invention that is created will feel like it needs a use limit or a complication range. In fact, you may find that one or both of these things don't feel like they fit with what has been created. In this case, narrators should be creative with how they apply these to an invention (see the example invention *Growth Mineral* Example Inventions, page 119).

Where an invention being used in more than once scene would not make sense — such as a single-use item, something which needs to be left or tended to over time to work, or other such circumstances — use limits may instead represent how long an effect lasts or the amount of time needed before the desired outcome happens. Since the end of the use limit represents how

long an invention lasts, this can also be used to represent time-sensitive inventions. Instead of the use limit only applying to scenes the invention is used in, it instead applies to all scenes in which it is present, giving the character who created it a sense of urgency to use it or get it to its intended destination.

Sometimes it will feel like an invention doesn't need a test to work (see an example of this with the example invention *Eighth Ray Armor* in Example Inventions, page 119). In this case, it is best to consider whether the invention instead affects a test that might need to be made anyway, such as armor affecting defense tests. In these cases, complication range may not represent an issue with using the invention, but damage to the invention or causing it to create an unintended effect or circumstance.

If an invention has a purely narrative effect then narrators should feel free to avoid giving the invention a specific test, instead applying the complication range to tests in which it provides a narrative advantage, such as using a complicated mechanical invention which does nothing other than play music, built to impress the local jed to gain his favor. In this case a complication on the **Passion + Empathy** test to impress him with the invention might mean that he is impressed but does not enjoy the music, or discovers that it was a song written for his love by a rival jed.

#### FAILING TO USE AN INVENTION

When a player fails on a test to use a player-created invention, this shouldn't always mean that nothing happens. A failure or complication on the test might produce an unexpected result, a secondary effect, or a new interesting problem for the players. The same can be said if you allow the test to succeed at cost. All of these should be used as a springboard for adventure by the narrator.



## PURCHASING AN INVENTION

Inventions made with the previously presented rules are not permanent editions to your setting, they exist only until they reach their use limit.

Unless bought with renown, like other items found or jury-rigged in pulp action stories, they are lost, broken or simply forgotten about once they outlive their usefulness.

Players who wish to make an invention they have created permanent can do so by purchasing it as an achievement with renown. The full explanation of the rules for this can be found later in this chapter under *Renown and Scientific Accolades, Scientific Achievements* (page 120).

In short, once a player decides they would like to make their invention a permanent part of the setting, they work with the narrator to discuss the scope (how many people their invention affects or how many people can access and use it) and the impact (how big a change does this bring) and

then pay the cost in renown.

Once the invention becomes a part of the permanent world in this way, narrators may allow players to purchase it as core equipment, usually costing xp equal to the xp it cost to make, though narrators may choose to reduce this cost if the invention in question is widespread or easily available, depending on the scope and impact of the invention when purchasing it with renown. The invention may also carry over its flaw and increased complication range when purchased this way.

### VARIANT RULE: SEMI-PERMANENT INVENTIONS

If narrators do not wish to use the Scientific Achievement and Deed rules presented in this book for purchasing inventions, they can instead use this variant rule to create semi-permanent inventions.

The creation and use of inventions does not change, other than the following changes and additions.

#### USE LIMITS AND REPAIRS

When an invention reaches its use limit, it breaks and cannot be used until a test is made to repair the item. This test will normally use Reason, but may use any attributes appropriate to the repair needed.

- \* If successful, the invention is repaired, its use limit is replenished, and it can continue to function until it needs to be repaired again.
- \* If unsuccessful, the test to repair the invention cannot be made again this scene and must be done during the character's downtime or somewhere they have access to the correct tools and materials.
- \* This test always has the option to succeed at cost, and if this option is taken the compli-

cation it generates means that the invention cannot be repaired again in the future.

- \* If a complication is rolled on the test to repair the invention, it breaks beyond repair.

Any attempt to recreate a previously broken invention is reduced in difficulty by 1, to a minimum of 1. Recreating a broken invention is treated as an invention for the purposes of complication ranges or flaws.

#### RECALIBRATING AND REPRODUCING AN INVENTION

Once an invention has been used in play and has been repaired, the inventor can also attempt to recalibrate it. Immediately following a successful repair, the inventor can make a difficulty 4 test, normally using Reason as one of the attributes. If successful, the complication range is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1.

Once an invention has had its complication range reduced to 1, as long as the invention is still functioning, its creator can reproduce it as a piece of equipment for another character at half the xp cost, which can be paid for by either player. This reproduction is still subject to the use limits of the original invention.



## EXAMPLE INVENTIONS

This section gives some examples of inventions, made using the invention creation rules. These can be introduced into your *John Carter of Mars* campaigns or used as inspiration for the kinds of inventions you can create in play.

The requirements listed here are only suggestions: many of these inventions, and similar ones, may be created with different materials and equipment depending on the nature of the campaign and the narrator's discretion.

## IN THE MOMENT INVENTIONS

### IMPROVISED SMOKE BOMB

*Fashioned in minutes, this smoke bomb can cause confusion and mask an escape. When the loosely tied cloth is thrown to the ground, the radium bullets break, the radium catches the sunlight through the woven cloth and ignites in a flash, burning the powder within and causing enough smoke to obscure vision for a few moments.*

- \* **Requirements:** Powder, radium bullets, cloth
- \* **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 1, 5xp
- \* **Complication range:** 3
- \* **Use limit:** 1
- \* **Flaw:** None
- \* **Effect:** You make a **Cunning + Daring** test to throw the smoke bomb anywhere within Near range. On a successful throw, the powder within the smoke bomb ignites, filling a zone with thick grey smoke. The smoke is thick enough that anyone within it or on the other side of it cannot see through.

### MAKESHIFT LOCK PICK

*Without access to lockpicks or even a thin blade, this improvised tool can be the difference between escape and death. Fashioned by roughly splintering the bone from your previous meal with a bit of loose stone from the cell wall, it may just be enough to slip the lock and help you escape your confinement. Even better, a small sliver of bone is unlikely to cause suspicion.*

- \* **Requirements:** Animal bone, rough stone
- \* **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 1, 5xp
- \* **Complication range:** 3
- \* **Use limit:** 3 (Base of 1 + 3 Momentum spent at creation)
- \* **Flaw:** None
- \* **Effect:** After fashioning this makeshift lock pick you may attempt to pick a lock that you would otherwise have been unable to.

## MODIFICATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

### RADIUM SHOTGUN

*An improvement on the current radium rifles available, the radium shotgun adds a second barrel and radium shells rather than the standard radium bullet. The small radium pellets within the shells do damage over a wider area, making the radium shotgun a devastating weapon at Near range.*

- \* **Requirements:** Two radium rifles, gunsmith workshop
- \* **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 5, 25xp
- \* **Complication range:** 2
- \* **Use limit:** 8
- \* **Flaw:** Kickback. This weapon has a strong kickback when fired. Upon rolling a complication when firing this weapon, the user takes 1 ☐ of Injury stress from the force of the recoil.
- \* **Effect:** This weapon uses two barrels to fire shells containing radium pellets. When using this weapon, select a single target. Any two characters (player or narrator) within Near range of the target are also affected by this attack (narrator's choice) and are treated as secondary targets. On a successful hit, the two secondary targets suffer stress equal to half of the stress suffered by the primary target. This weapon has a base stress of 4 ☐ and has the Explosive quality.

### INVISIBLE DAGGER

*Unlike some weapons that are only coated in the extract that gives a darsen its chameleonic abilities, this dagger had the extract folded into the metal as it was created. This weapon is almost undetectable unless someone knows to look for it, perfect for a master assassin.*

- \* **Requirements:** Darsen invisibility extract, materials and tools to forge a dagger
- \* **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 4, 20xp
- \* **Complication range:** 2
- \* **Use limit:** 10 (8 + 2 Momentum spent at creation)



✱ **Flaw:** Easy to Lose. While this dagger is easy to hide, it's also easy to lose. Whenever you would put this weapon down, or you are disarmed, you must spend 4 Momentum or be forced to lose the dagger. Discovering where it has been dropped or left is a difficulty 4 test.

✱ **Effect:** This dagger is invisible to the untrained eye and functions as a normal dagger dealing 1 ☐ of stress with the Sharp quality. Tests to discover the dagger upon someone's person are difficulty 3. A dagger left in a room or hiding spot is impossible to find unless someone is aware of where it is, but can be discovered if something would reveal its shape, such as having a substance spilled over it or stuck to it, or resting it on something that is soft or loose enough to leave an impression of its shape.

## NEW AND COMPLEX

### EIGHTH RAY ARMOR

*Few panthans wear armor on Barsoom. Its weight and the risk of having the leather straps that hold it together being cut make it far too inconvenient. Eighth ray armor fixes all those problems. Made of strong hard metals, this armor is created with small, well protected pockets of the eighth ray, making it incredibly lightweight. The need for leather straps and buckles has been replaced by coating the soft leather lining with a sticky substance, extracted from moss, that means the armor can be applied directly to the skin. It can be removed when the warrior chooses by applying the counteractive substance to the adhesive.*

- ✱ **Requirements:** Materials and tools to create armor, adhesive moss extract, leather
- ✱ **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 7, 35xp
- ✱ **Complication range:** 3
- ✱ **Use limit:** 4 scenes
- ✱ **Flaw:** Real Weight. Each time a complication is rolled on tests to defend against attacks, one of the pockets containing the eighth ray is punctured, increasing the difficulty of any actions to move or attack by +1. 2 Momentum must

be spent for each puncture before the end of the scene, otherwise this difficulty increase becomes permanent.

- ✱ **Effect:** This armor allows you to negate stress in combat. When taking stress from melee weapons, you negate the first 4 points of stress you suffer on the attack. Furthermore, you also ignore the Sharp quality on attacks, instead taking only the single point of stress for any effects rolled.

### GROWTH MINERAL

*Very little plant life grows in Barsoom's dead sea bottoms. The dry red dust that makes up the soil and the lack of water means that trying to grow anything is likely a fruitless endeavor. This growth mineral has the ability to transform even the most barren places on Barsoom. Even with a lack of water it allows plant life to thrive and grow at a rapid pace.*

- ✱ **Requirements:** Laboratory, meteorite, mineral extracts from healthy soil
- ✱ **Grade and xp cost:** Grade 8, 40xp
- ✱ **Complication range:** 3
- ✱ **Use limit:** 4 Scenes
- ✱ **Flaw:** None
- ✱ **Effect:** This mineral allows you to grow plant life even in the most barren of areas. When you add it to the soil in an area, make a **Reason + Cunning** (D3) test. On a success, you correctly mix the mineral into the soil and can begin to plant crops or other flora there. You must take time to tend to the plants, doing so for a number of scenes equal to the use limit. These scenes must be done separately, rather than one after the other. Tending to the plants requires you to replenish the mineral each time with a **Cunning + Reason** (D3) test. At the end of the use limit, if the majority of these tests have been successful, the plants will be fully grown or ready for harvest, depending on the type of plant.

**Note:** This is the kind of invention that is not used immediately within a game, as its effects will take some time to cultivate. Instead, it is the kind that is made and then bought with renown, designed to affect a large area of Barsoom, or improve the lives of those who have access to the mineral. Therefore, the use limit in scenes is there to represent the checking back and tending to the plants, rather than how many times you can use the mineral. Once bought with renown, the player and narrator can decide if they want this mineral to become commonplace on Barsoom, potentially changing the landscape of the planet itself.



## RENOWN AND SCIENTIFIC ACCOLADES

Renown was introduced in the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook as a way to represent your character's growing reputation, fame, and influence on the setting. The actions of heroes gain them renown, which they can spend on various accolades. In the core rulebook, these accolades are allies and titles, representing both personal social connections made by a character and official recognition and rank.

### RENOWN IN OTHER ERAS

Those of you who have also read the *Dotar Sojat Era Supplemental Rulebook* will notice that achievements and deeds are also included in the renown rules there. Though the rules you'll find in this chapter for scientific achievements and deeds are built around the same basic framework, you do not need that book to use the rules listed here, nor do you need this book to use the rules provided in the other era books.

The achievements and deeds described in this book are focused on scientific discoveries and inventions, as this is a major theme in the Jeddak of Jeddaks era. However, achievements and deeds are flexible enough that you can use them to represent other events in a character's life as well.

Achievements can represent things like founding a new kingdom or reforming an institution. John Carter's own attempts to destroy the assassins' guild, and his creation of his own group of assassin hunters in the pursuit of this goal, are good examples of achievements from the Jeddak of Jeddaks era.

Deeds can also represent more than the discovery of new places or phenomena. You can use deeds to represent killing a great beast, defeating a legendary swordsman, or winning the love of an influential spouse. Gahan of Gathol winning the hand of Tara of Helium is a good example of a deed from the *John Carter* books.

Of course, there is nothing stopping you from using the guidelines for scientific achievements and deeds listed here in earlier eras. Though Barsoom in the books did not experience a renaissance of invention before the Jeddak of Jeddaks era, there is no reason that things could not go differently in your campaign, with famous inventors appearing during Carter's time as Prince of Helium.

The rules here expand on the core renown rules, adding some additional options to allow characters to purchase inventions, or be known for the development of new technologies, scientific breakthroughs, or the discovery of strange new places, creatures, and phenomena.

These rules are an option for groups that want to have more options for characters to spend renown, but they are not right for every campaign. If developing new technologies or science is not a major part of your campaign, or you simply want to stick with the options contained within the core book, those rules will serve for any number of exciting campaigns.

### NEW SCIENCE TALENTS

The Healer and Scientist archetypes are especially useful when it comes to developing new medical procedures or creating new inventions or technology, and the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook provide the Skilled Physician and Perceptive Scientist talents (pages 41 and 43) for expanding player character capability. However, these abilities do not fully address the wide variety of aspects of invention and theory that characterizes scientific development.

Furthermore, the Scientist/Engineer narrator character archetype (page 228) serves as the template for many such individuals. Rather than a talent, however, that archetype's description includes **Mad Invention (Special)** as an overview of the general state of scientific discovery upon Barsoom, rather than a specific talent.

For these reasons, the new talents listed below are presented to round out those from the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook and allow for more focused characters — whether player or narrator. Any character wishing to specialize in invention and/or discovery, whether mechanical, theoretical, or anatomical, may take one of the following talents with the narrator's permission, and the narrator is encouraged to provide one or more of these talents to any relevant narrator character as desired.



### ABSTRACT THEORIST (GRADE 2)

*Your curiosity about, and understanding of, the universe and the very stuff of reality is so profound that your insights can change the world itself.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When trying to use an invention a second time in an adventure.
- ✱ **Effect:** If you spend a Luck point for additional successes when attempting to utilize your invention, you receive an additional 1d20 to the test (up to the normal maximum).

### DEDICATED SCIENTIST (GRADE 3)

*You are so immersed in your research and the pursuit of science that you often neglect your own well-being.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When attempting a long-term research task or attribute challenge.
- ✱ **Effect:** Roll 1d6. If the result is an effect, you suffer one affliction due to self-neglect, and add 3 points of Momentum to the test; otherwise you gain Momentum equal to the result rolled. Momentum from this roll can't be saved or used for any purpose outside of scientific inquiry.

### ENTERPRISING ENGINEER (GRADE 1)

*Your mechanical aptitude gives you an insight into the fine workings of technological devices, including how to restore, improve, and create them.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When dealing with an engine, mechanical device, or instrument.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may add 1d20 to any test involving repairing or using a technological device, though a complication means that in your efforts to improve it, you have damaged the device beyond immediate repair.

### INGENIOUS ANATOMIST (GRADE 3)

*The bodies of humans or other living species, inside and outside alike, are like landscapes — if you are not already familiar with the terrain, you have an instinctual, if ghoulish, ability to find your way.*

- ✱ **Circumstance:** When examining or experimenting with the corpse of a formerly living being.
- ✱ **Effect:** You may roll an additional 1d20 per point of Madness or Trauma you are willing to sacrifice, up to a total of +3d20.

## HUMANS AND THE SPIRIT OF INVENTION

To the red Martian mind, many innovations such as those John Carter and his son Carthoris institute would be unthinkable. The long-lived Martians find great satisfaction in service, even in the most rote or mundane of tasks, and think little of spending long hours devoted to a single task, invariable and without alteration.

To the shorter-lived Earth folk, however, time is of the essence, and any attention that can be wrestled from monotony and put to other use, even if sleeping, is time won from the specter of death. This ingenuity is a characteristic of all humankind, across all cultures. Thus, any Earthborn characters attempting to engineer some technological feat that would allow a process to become easier or require less direct attention receive 1 free Momentum for use toward that innovation.





## SABOTAGE

Though the civilized people of Barsoom enjoy considerable technological developments, they are also generally loath to trust technology as readily as they do a straight sword, a healthy and fast-moving banth, or even their own thews. For all the convenience that technology offers, it also provides a vector by which an enemy might strike at a hero who relies too heavily upon artificial devices or constructs.

Sabotage looms large as a practice in Barsoomian society and is viewed with the same pragmatic mindset as most such matters in Barsoom. It is also a simple expediency, and rare is the one who views it as diabolical. An action taken against a mere possession is no great issue, while such a willful and direct action against a living being is an insult that merits immediate response.

Thus, when a Barsoomian hero discovers they are the victim of sabotage, such as a deliberately disabled flier engine, a jammed radium pistol, or even as part of a larger act of espionage, the sabotage is usually taken as a matter of course. What matters is how to react, and who should be held responsible. For this reason, Barsoomian heroes may sabotage the gear and vehicles of their enemies with aplomb, knowing full well that such an action is not only accepted, but might even be expected.

### THE ART OF SABOTAGE

Sabotaging a vehicle or piece of equipment requires a **Cunning + Reason** test with the difficulty adjusted by the narrator based on the complexity of the device and the nature of the sabotage. The intended saboteur decides how damaging and how concealed the intended sabotage is, ranging from Simple (Do) for “completely disabled and/or obvious” to Epic (D5) for “disabled subtly but critically, and cunningly concealed.” The saboteur then makes a **Cunning + Reason** test, and if successful, the device is sabotaged as intended. That test’s difficulty then becomes the difficulty to detect the sabotage. Any Momentum spent may be used to increase the length of time before the sabotage becomes apparent, at a rate of 1 Momentum per

day. If the test is a failure, the device is not sabotaged and the tampering is evident. A complication might set off an alarm, reveal the identity of the saboteur in some obvious fashion (such as accidentally leaving an identifiable piece of evidence), or have some other side effect.

### NARRATING SABOTAGE

Sabotage offers the narrator an invaluable narrative tool for introducing mystery and subtle conflict into an adventure, as well as waylaying heroes and introducing subplots and diversions where the path might have seemed clear. Narrator characters should use the same roll, and even a failed test or complication can add rich dramatic potential, as the adventurers may become paranoid and suspicious. An especially cunning stratagem might be to intentionally tamper with a device but not actually sabotage it, and leave evidence pointing at a desired target.

## GAINING RENOWN THROUGH SCIENCE

Renown is gained for great deeds witnessed by others. As described in *John Carter of Mars*, most adventures will reward at least 1 renown, as long as the characters are shown to be skilled, heroic, and effective.

Truly impressive feats can be worth additional renown, and that can include things like discovering new people, creating impressive new technological devices, or sabotaging or using the inventions of others. Using an invisible airship to rescue the navy of Helium is a far more impressive feat than simply warning them of the danger they are in. Your actions should still be part of dealing with a challenge, however. Your inventions aren’t worth renown while you are just sitting at home thinking them up. They need to be used.

**Example:** In Jessica’s game, a small army of Warhoon warriors is attacking a downed airship and the heroes. Mark’s character, the Jasoomian mechanic Avery, comes up with an idea to rig up a device that emits a high-pitched sound, driving the Warhoon’s thoats into a frenzy. This disrupts the Warhoon attack and keeps the defenders alive

until a rescue arrives. At the end of the adventure, Jessica awards him an additional renown for the impressive way in which he dealt with the green Martians.

## TITLES FOR SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

One of the ways that renown can be spent is on titles. Generally, this is used for official titles within one of the militaries of Mars, but you can choose titles related to scientific endeavors as well. Many inventors on Barsoom have ranks in the navies of red cities, as airship officers and pilots often have ideas on how to improve their airships. These ranks would be the same as the ranks listed in the core book. Alternatively, a scientific title could represent membership in, or leadership of, a guild or secret society related to invention, medicine, or other science. A guild membership generally costs 2 renown, while leadership of a guild or society is an additional 5 renown. A position within the palace of a jed could also be represented by a title. Something like “Chief Physician to the Jed” would likely be similar in responsibility and benefits to a rank like a padwar or dwar, and can be adjusted based on what the narrator and player feel the responsibility of the position actually entails.

Many scientific titles are also honorary titles. A title like “Foremost Expert on Radium Weapons in all of Helium” does not have a specific group that can be called on like other titles, but also does not have any real responsibilities to any group. As described in the *John Carter of Mars* core rulebook, honorary titles cost the same as an equivalent title in an organization, as this lack of responsibility balances out the lack of assistance. When creating an honorary scientific title, determine the cost based on the amount of experience the character has and how well known they are. A scientist known to other scientists might be the equivalent of a guild member, or about 2 renown, while a title for someone known as one of the top experts in a field might cost 5 renown, similar to a guildmaster. Someone like Ras Thavas, known as the Master Mind of Mars, the greatest surgeon on the planet, could have an honorary title similar to a jed, at 20 renown.



## NEW ACCOLADES

In addition to allies and titles, there are additional ways that characters can spend their renown, to represent the fame they receive for scientific and technological advancements and activities. The two new types of accolades introduced here are scientific achievements and deeds.

### SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Scientific achievements are new creations, inventions, or scientific advancements that have lasting social or cultural ramification beyond just your character. These generally take some time and effort and may in fact take several sessions to accomplish. This isn't simply inventing something that is used once to solve a singular problem, but instead creating science or technology that changes life for whole groups of people. Achievements can be large or small in their effect, but that effect lingers.

Examples of scientific achievements include:

- \* Development of new and advanced medicines.
- \* Development of a new weapon of outstanding power or accuracy.
- \* Development of a totally new psychic ability.
- \* Inventing a device that allows instant communication with cities on the far side of Barsoom.
- \* Proving the evolution of Martian races and their descent from the tree of life.
- \* Creating an airship that can fly beyond the Barsoomian atmosphere.

### PURCHASING ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements cost renown based on two factors: scope and impact. Scope represents the size of the area or group affected by the achievement, while impact represents how drastically that change will affect that group. While an achievement with a high impact often has a high scope as well, it is possible for technology to drastically impact a small group, or for something far reaching to only minimally change how people operate.

***Example:** Carthoris of Helium's invention of the controlling destination compass was something that certainly affected all the cities under Helium's banner, giving it a fairly high scope, but it had only a small to moderate impact on the technology of the day. On the other hand, Ras Thavas' development of medicine that could allow him to transplant brains from one body to another had an extremely large impact... but as he was initially the only one who could perform the procedure, and he lived in an isolated area, it had a relatively low scope.*

When purchasing scientific achievements, you must still take the time in play to accomplish your goal. You don't purchase an invention achievement in order to design and build a new device, you make an invention and then purchase the achievement to make sure it is a permanent part of the world. Full rules for inventing and creating new devices are earlier in this chapter (see page 113).

***Example:** Greg's character, the brilliant inventor and naval officer Pel Tanal, needs to defend the city of Tjanath against assault by a horde of green Martians of Torquas. The deadly aim of the green Martians prevents his navy from approaching close enough to attack and disperse the horde. Pel Tanal develops a method of using the stored eighth ray in the tanks of an airship to repel missile fire, temporarily shielding a ship from ranged attack, and uses the technique to maneuver his ship above the horde, allowing his people to rain fire down on the green Martians and drive them away.*

*Greg decides that he wants to outfit all the ships of Tjanath's navy with this device, making it an achievement and a normal part of their arsenal. This costs him 5 renown, 2 for the scope and 3 for the impact.*

### SCOPE

- \* **Local.** Achievements affecting a city or small, isolated culture cost 2 renown.
- \* **State.** Achievements affecting a moderately sized nation or an important but restricted culture or group (the Okar, the Assassin's Guild, etc.) cost 3 renown.

\* **Kingdom.** Achievements affecting large kingdoms or whole cultures cost 4 renown. Note that due to their ubiquity, red Martian culture cannot be chosen as a culture at this cost. Instead multiple red kingdoms can be affected, but not all of them.

\* **Worldwide.** Achievements affecting all of Barsoom cost 5 renown. Some small isolated pockets might avoid or resist these changes, but even they still recognize the impact of such great accomplishments.

### IMPACT

- \* **Important.** A noteworthy and lasting but incremental change costs 2 renown.
- \* **Critical.** A moderate upheaval or reform to the status quo that changes life in one significant way or numerous smaller ways costs 3 renown.
- \* **Drastic.** A major upheaval or reform to the status quo that alters life in many significant ways costs 4 renown.
- \* **Overwhelming.** A total collapse or reform of the status quo costs 5 renown.

Determining the scope of an achievement can be a matter of either the physical area it affects, the power of the technology, or the rate at which it spreads to new users. The creation of the Guardian of the North was an achievement with a state-level scope (3 renown) due to the fact that it could only reach the isolated Okar kingdoms. On the other hand, the creation of faster motors for fliers could be a scope ranging from local (if it was only one flyer, or the flyers belonging to a small group of pirates, who kept their secret carefully) up to a worldwide scope (if the new motor design quickly spread to all parts of Barsoom). To some extent, setting the scope of a technological advancement is a negotiation between the player and the narrator — how far does the player want their achievement to spread? Do they want to keep it a secret as an advantage, or are they trying to spread it quickly to improve the lot of all the people of Barsoom? And how feasible does the narrator find their choice?



The narrator has final say as to the scope and impact of an achievement.

**Example:** *Jessica's character created a set of teleportation plates as an invention using the rules on page 113. She has decided that she wants to make her invention a permanent fixture on Barsoom and asks her narrator, Niko, if she can purchase it with renown. Jessica wants the creation to affect a large area of Barsoom, so Niko gives it a Worldwide scope (5 renown). Niko determines that this is a revolutionary invention that changes how life on Barsoom works, as it allows diplomats to reach new places quicker to negotiate peace and trade, and allows people to cross vast distances in an instant. Niko decides the impact of the invention is Drastic (4 renown). This gives a total cost of 9 renown to make the invention permanent. Niko also decides that as this will become an established piece of technology, the complication range is reduced to 1 (rather than the 3 it had), but it still retains its flaw.*

## PLANNING FUTURE ACHIEVEMENTS

While you can't purchase your scientific achievement until you've actually introduced your creation to the world, there is no reason you can't plan ahead, working toward an invention achievement over the course of many sessions. Spending time during sessions, or in any downtime between adventures, lets the narrator know what you are working toward, and allows them to work your invention into the game ahead of time.

## BENEFITS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

So, why purchase an achievement, such as an invention, using renown? You've created a new scientific wonder, and that's a reward in its own right, isn't it?

Well, to some extent, yes. Actually inventing a new device that you can use as part of a solution to a problem is certainly a great benefit, whether you make it an achievement or not. You now have your invention, and the knowledge and skill to make more.

The primary benefit of purchasing an achieve-

ment is the change it allows you to make in the setting. You can make sure that your new technology continues on, rather than being a single-use bit of science that solves the current problem and then disappears. Ras Thavas' brain transplant techniques are a bit of medical science that are important to several of the later *John Carter* books. On the other hand, the invisible ships of Phor Tak are destroyed at the end of *A Fighting Man of Mars* and are never discussed again.

Also, when you work with the narrator to set the scope for the achievement, you are signaling your intentions for your achievement. An achievement that you suggest a low scope for is one that you intend to keep rare or to keep secret for a specific group. Suggesting a higher scope means that you fully intend for your achievement to spread to other nations. While this is, of course, determined by the narrator, stating your intention for the scope of the achievement gives the narrator a place to start. If your achievement spreads from there, it is an unusual situation, one likely to be the start of a new adventure.

**Example:** *Having outfitted the ships of Tjanath with his new repulsing ray shield, Greg knows that this is now standard equipment for their navy. In later adventures, he can expect that they have this capability available to them. And when a spy from a rival inventor steals the plans, he knows that he'll have a chance to track the plans down before they are sold to an enemy city.*

In addition to this, if your achievement is particularly relevant to a test, the narrator may reduce your difficulty by 1. This represents how your knowledge gleaned from your achievement can aid you in later work.

**Example:** *Pel Tanal is later on a floating city that is slowly crashing over Mars. The city's tanks full of the eighth ray are ruptured and leaking, and if nothing is done, everyone on the city (and beneath it!) is doomed. He asks the narrator if his experience working with the eighth ray while developing his shield will give him any advantage here, and the narrator agrees that Pel Tanal now has a great deal of experience working with the eighth ray in unusual ways. She reduces the difficulty of Tanal's tests to slow the city's descent by 1.*

## SCIENTIFIC DEEDS

In addition to making marvelous new inventions, your hero might make a new discovery. Perhaps you discover the existence of a tenth ray of light and begin to chart its properties. Or you are the first to set foot on the moon Cluros, or you discover an entirely new species of life, with abilities unlike any known on Barsoom. These sorts of events are deeds.

Scientific deeds are accolades you can take when you are the first find a new location, figure out something about the laws of science that no one has ever learned before, or document a new species on the face of Barsoom. Deeds are significant one-time events that a character becomes famous for. While achievements focus primarily on the changes you are making to the setting, deeds are events that demonstrate your character's intelligence, skill, and bravery. They are discoveries and experiments, more about the legend that your character is gaining for being the first to set foot in a new place or find out new information about how the world of Barsoom works, rather than the changes that your character is making to the world.

Examples of scientific deeds could include:

- \* Finding a lost city of ancient Martians
- \* Deciphering the writings of a lost race
- \* Traveling to another planet
- \* Cataloging a new Martian predator
- \* Discovering the workings of a weather device that is causing terrible storms
- \* Using a prototype weapon to defeat a dangerous foe
- \* Repairing the atmosphere plant and saving all of Barsoom

## PURCHASING DEEDS

The cost of a deed is determined by its scope and impact. Scope is how widely known a deed is, both in terms of who knows about it and who understands and cares about it. A deed with a high scope



is known across vast swaths of Barsoom, and is of clear interest to anyone, while a deed with a low scope is either known only to a select few, or only a small group actually care about it. Impact is a measure of how impressive the deed is, both in terms of the implications of the deed itself, and the lengths to which the hero had to go to accomplish their deed.

### SCOPE

- ✦ **Local.** Deeds affecting a city or small, isolated culture or group cost 1 renown.
- ✦ **State.** Deeds affecting a moderately sized nation or an important but restricted culture or group (the Okarians, the assassins' guild, etc.) cost 2 renown.
- ✦ **Kingdom.** Achievements affecting large kingdoms or whole cultures cost 3 renown. Note that due to their ubiquity, red Martian culture cannot be chosen as a culture at this cost. Instead multiple red kingdoms can be affected, but not all of them.
- ✦ **Worldwide.** Deeds affecting all of Barsoom cost 4 renown. Some small isolated pockets might be unaware of the details of the character's actions, but even they have some knowledge of the character's actions.

### IMPACT

- ✦ Important impact is not used for deeds. Major characters in *John Carter of Mars* are expected to regularly perform important actions. Deeds are only awarded for those acts that go beyond their normal heroism.
- ✦ **Critical.** An impressive deed showing the hero is courageous or skilled costs no additional renown. This is the baseline for any action worthy of becoming a deed.
- ✦ **Drastic.** An exceptionally difficult and noteworthy deed that shows the hero is among the elite of their archetype or people costs 1 renown.

- ✦ **Overwhelming.** A nearly impossible deed showing the hero can accomplish tasks of legendary difficulty and importance costs 2 renown.

Scope and impact usually match closely, as it is unlikely you will accomplish a deed of legendary impact and have it only known among a limited group of people. There are some exceptions, however, particularly in terms of impressive deeds that end up known across a wide region.

*Example: Eric's character, the green Martian warrior Kalek Jal, on his journey to the edges of the known regions of Barsoom, has discovered a city of green Martians with a peaceful, almost pacifistic culture, besieged by white apes. After driving off the apes, he brings an emissary from this culture back to his friends among the red Martians, deciding to treat this as a discovery deed. The narrator decides that this was an impressive deed (costing 0 renown for impact), but that the emissary to the red Martian kingdoms makes a renown cost of 3, for kingdom scope, as this story of the peaceful green Martians quickly spreads across several red Martian kingdoms.*

Though it may seem obvious, much like achievements, you must accomplish a deed, such as a discovery, before you can purchase it with renown. It is usually obvious when you have accomplished a deed or made a discovery during play, and you can then purchase the deed with renown to make this a continuing part of your story. If nothing has happened in play, you cannot simply purchase a deed and then declare you discovered or accomplished something.

### NOT PURCHASING DEEDS

It should be noted that if you do not use your renown to purchase a deed, that does not somehow erase that deed or mean that it was not noteworthy or impressive. It simply means that particular event doesn't become part of the stories that people tell about your hero. By choosing which events you want to highlight with renown and which you do not, you have a great deal of control over what sort of reputation your character acquires.

## BENEFITS OF DEEDS

When a deed becomes important to an action you are attempting in the game, you gain bonus Momentum that can be spent on that action. You cannot save this Momentum: it must be spent immediately on the relevant action, to represent the way in which your famous deed makes it easier for you to influence or charm those who would be impressed by your exploits. Usually, only 1 Momentum is given, but the narrator can decide both when the deed applies, and if a larger amount of bonus Momentum is called for.

*Example: In a later adventure, Kalek Jal is captured in the territory of a nearby red Martian city and brought before its jeddak. When he reveals his name and tries to convince the jeddak of his peaceful intentions, the narrator decides that the story of the peaceful green Martians has spread here, giving Eric an additional point of Momentum to spend on his attempts to talk to the jeddak.*

## TRIBUTES

Inventions and scientific discoveries change the face of Barsoom. In fact, by using your renown on achievements and deeds, one of the things that you are buying is the fact that your scientific achievement will have a continuing influence on the campaign and the world. That continuing influence can show up in a few different ways.

Many of the most obvious ways are discussed in the Benefits of Deeds and Benefits of Achievements sections earlier in this chapter. For things like inventions, purchasing an achievement with renown means that your invention remains available in later adventures, perhaps even becoming part of standard equipment for some groups. It also means, for both achievements and deeds, that those accolades are tied to your character, and people know of your involvement. This is important, because it can influence how people react to you, and even change the difficulty of tests when interacting with people, or with challenges related to your scientific research.

People knowing about your accomplishments



can have other effects as well. Narrator characters may be inspired by your achievements or wish to celebrate your deeds. These tributes to your character's actions do not require additional renown. They can be brought in by the narrator as part of the world reacting to your accomplishments. For achievements and deeds, some possible tributes are:

- \* New locations being named after the character who first discovered them
- \* Other scientists or inventors asking you to collaborate with them or endorse a new device they've created
- \* Institutions attempting to take up the mantle of your work, styling themselves after your adventures or studying the same subjects
- \* Being the target of suitors or matchmakers, particularly if you invented something that could be very profitable
- \* Being asked to demonstrate or discuss your discoveries and inventions in the palaces of jeds and jeddaks
- \* Celebrations on your return from famous voyages of discovery
- \* Receiving a nickname based on your discoveries and accomplishments (as did the Master Mind of Mars, to name an obvious example)
- \* If a long enough period of time passes, having your work studied by others as the building blocks for other new technology

## OTHER FALLOUT FROM SCIENTIFIC ACCOLADES

There are other results of your scientific achievements and deeds, however. They can be turned against you, have unforeseen consequences, and spawn new challenges and adventures.

When you use your renown to purchase a scientific achievement, the scope determines the likely spread of this new technology. However, this is not set in stone. Enemy cities and rival scientists will likely try to steal your inventions and plans, leading to new adventures as you attempt to thwart their activities. A soldier could give your enemies access to a new weapon.

Once others know about your invention, it can also be sabotaged. Blindly relying on your invention can be dangerous as it becomes more known, and people develop ways to disrupt it.

**Example:** *Ur Raj is part of an airship blockade defending the city of Helium after John Carter has disappeared on another adventure. Ur Raj developed and equipped his ship with a device that allows him to detect and identify approaching airships by the sound of their engines. However, a spy from Zodanga has learned of his invention, and altered its responses, causing it to give false positives for approaching airships. Thus Ur Raj's airship flies off chasing phantom signals, and allowing the Zodangans to slip a small flier with a squad of elite swordsmen past the blockade and into the city.*

Also, other scientists may build on your achievement, developing their own improvements or even countermeasures to your device.

**Example:** *Pel Tanal's repulsing ray shield has been in service for some time now, and other inventors are working on devices based on the theory. The inventor Mal Haldor develops a device that turns Pel Tanal's shields into a weapon, disrupting the tanks full of the eighth ray and crashing airships. Pel Tanal discovers his plans to crash the ships of the Jeddak of Ptarth and capture him, as part of a plan to take over the region.*

Achievements and inventions can also help in the short term yet have unforeseen consequences in the long term that make them dangerous or cause additional problems for your hero. Ras Thavas' attempts to create life resulted in the terrible Hormads, who imprisoned him and used him to create more of their number, with the intention of conquering all Barsoom. Even worse, when a vat in which he created the Hormads was no longer being carefully controlled, it continued to make a horrible wave of flesh that threatened to keep growing until it swallowed the whole world! Your hero's own inventions could have similar dire consequences, particularly if it is something of overwhelming impact to Barsoom.

Deeds have their own potential for dangerous consequences. While they do not have the same problem of falling into the hands of enemies or being used against you, they can cause other issues. A dangerous creature you discover might end up in a zoo or be deliberately unleashed in a city. If you find a new and interesting region in the wilds of Barsoom, others may go there as well, perhaps searching for resources. The natives of an isolated city you explored may find themselves under attack, with no one else to turn to. Or the opposite: when you encounter a new society, they also discover you. If they are a warlike culture, intolerant of other species, or given to conquering or enslaving others, you may find that they are a threat to your home, and must be fought.

For narrators, the thing to remember is that achievements and deeds are not just part of the campaign, but events that the player has specifically said they want to be important and remembered. Use these as the building blocks for new and exciting adventures, but also as useful tools and potential solutions in the hands of the heroes. The characters' actions have consequences, but also make sure that they see benefits from using their renown in this way.















# BARSOOM IN THE JEDDAK OF JEDDAKS ERA

*'My better judgment tells me it would be a foolish thing to do,' I said,  
'but if I had followed my better judgment always, my life would have been a very dull one.'*

Edgar Rice Burroughs' *John Carter of Mars: Jeddak of Jeddaks Era Supplemental Rulebook* provides you with an in depth look at the Jeddak of Jeddaks era of play for the *John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom* roleplaying game.

- \* Narrator advice on using the themes and tone of the era and the plots of last eight John Carter novels, including *The Mastermind of Mars* and *Skeleton Men of Jupiter*.
- \* New player character options for Kaldanes and their Rykors, Morgors, Savators, Masenas and Kangaroo Men, including new pre-made talents, flaws, and expanded accolades and renown spends for these rarer seen characters.
- \* New narrator characters, those most beloved and despised of the era.
- \* New strange technology, powers for your players to acquire, and mysterious places of the Jeddak of Jeddaks era to explore, all packed with plot seeds to inspire narrators.
- \* New optional rules for creating exciting inventions that can change the face of your campaigns, and expanded renown rules for characters with exploratory and scientific backgrounds.

This supplement requires the *John Carter of Mars: Adventures on the Dying World of Barsoom* core rulebook.

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