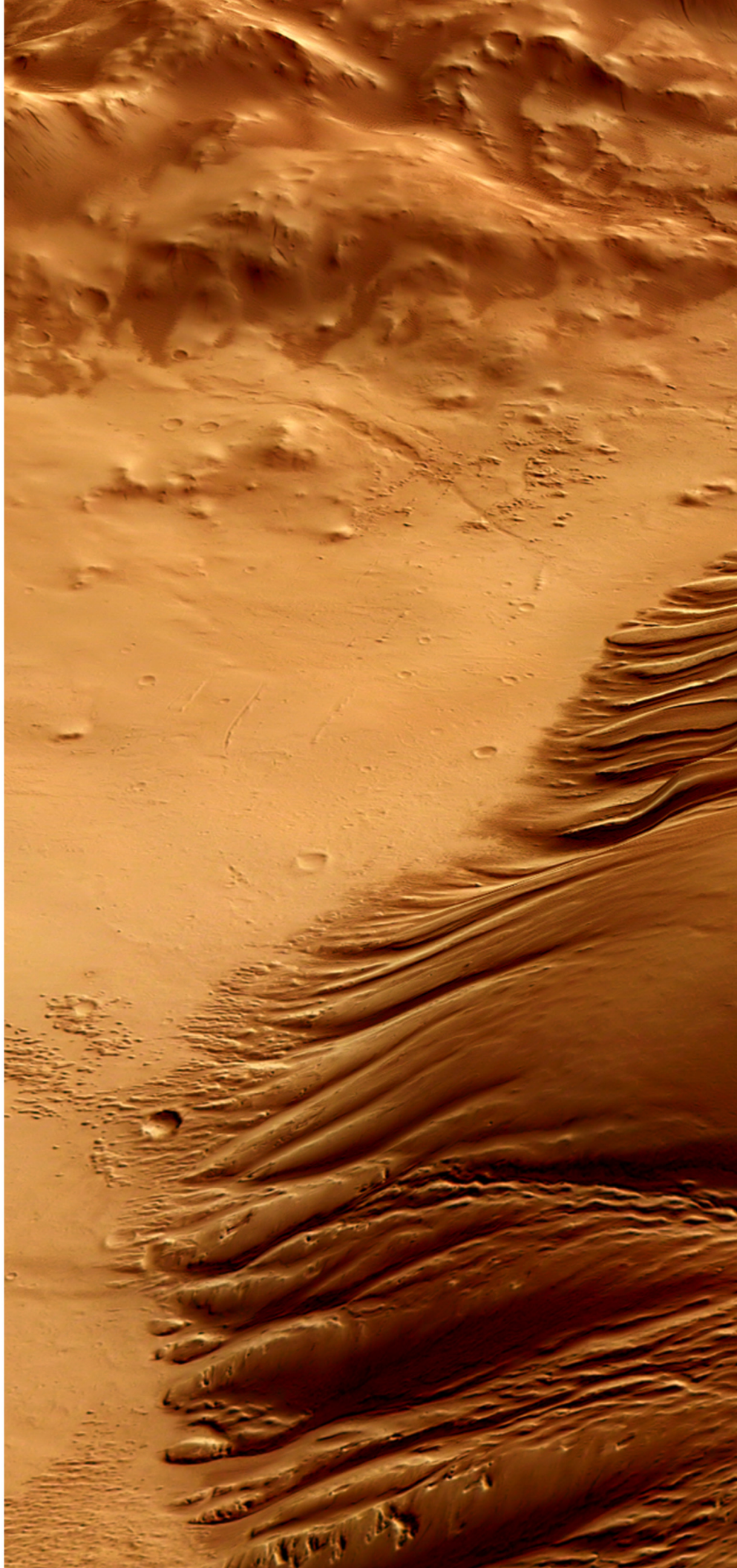


MAARS





MARS

A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF PLANETARY ROMANCE

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 **DAMANT**
ENTERTAINMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Mars!

Not Mars as it is – airless, most likely lifeless, with only the faintest hints of what might have once been a damp, if not necessarily lush and living, world billions of years in the past. No, this is Mars as it should be and as it was once imagined to be – an ancient, dying, but not yet dead world, a world where a vast canal network reaches from pole to pole, bringing water and life to vast and fantastic cities. A Mars where albino apes run a vast empire in the last surviving jungle, a world where warrior tribes of Green Martians raid the outlying cities of the canal dwellers, a world where, in places dark and quiet and forgotten beneath the surface, ancient and terrible intellects plan dark and dire deeds.

It is a Mars of sky-corsairs, of duels with blade and blaster, of vile plots, fantastic inventions, daring rescues, arena battles, and spectacular stunts. It is a Mars where ancient cities can be discovered and their lost treasures plundered, a Mars where a trek across the dry sea bottoms can yield amazing discoveries, where terrible monsters roam the rocky wastes.

It is the Mars of pulp fiction and Saturday morning serials.

It is now yours.





ANCIENT MARS

Long before the distant ancestors of man came down from the trees, the folk of Mars had conquered their world. Millions of years ago, Mars was a rich, lush, wet, world, a world where graceful seacraft cut paths across deep and swelling oceans, a world where verdant jungles filled with exotic animals and plants sprawled over vast regions, a world of rolling lavender hills and rich, fertile, plains.

Across that wet and teeming world spread the nations and peoples of the Red Men of Mars (see **Races**, Page 31). These nations were widely varied in size and culture, from tiny kingdoms barely a days walk across to mighty empires which spanned entire hemispheres. Some were blood-soaked tyrannies dedicated to the worship of dark gods or of power for its own sake; others were enlightened and noble kingdoms which valued learning and justice above all things. The nations rose and fell, forged treaties and went to war, waxed and waned over the course of millennia after millennia, while, far away, the distant ancestors of man slowly learned to walk erect, to chip stone, to coax fire from wood.

The red men spread, and in so doing, met rivals. From the rich jungles came the White Apes, cunning but primitive, who learned the ways of civilization from the red Martians and then turned on their benefactors with fang and sword, carving

their own empires of discipline and strength in the crimson forests. From the wastelands, harsh and hard, came the Green Men, savage and brutal, who swarmed over the border cities in a flood of blade and blood, only to be beaten back to repeat the cycle in another generation. Rumors came to some kingdoms of something terrible beneath the ground, something strange and cold and alien, something which could arise in a night and lay waste to a nation before morning, but these were never confirmed. Despite these threats, and the constant give and take of war, the red men spread to rule the entirety of the globe, save for a few outposts and holdfasts here and there.

What happened next happened slowly. A drought here...a poor harvest there...a particularly long summer and a biting cold winter...few except the wisest saw the emerging pattern, and their predictions went unheeded. There had always been droughts or times of bad weather...perhaps this recent batch was longer or more severe than any ever recorded, but surely next year would be better...or perhaps the year after that...

It took centuries, but eventually, all of the nations of Mars came to understand that their world was dying. A shift in orbit, a change in the temperature of the sun, a tilting of the axis...many were the theories as to “why”, but the reality was inescapable – Mars was drying out. The oceans

pulled back from their shorelines, leaving port cities surrounded by grounded fleets. Rivers became streams and steams became dry gullies. Swamps turned to deserts; jungles wilted to savannahs. The wastelands where the green men dwelled expanded, and their raids could no longer be turned back – first it was the border kingdoms which fell to their savage might, and then other, stronger, nations.

Desperation gripped the rulers and wise men of the oldest and most powerful kingdoms of Mars. Ancient enmities had to be set aside in the name of simple survival. The scientists of the greatest empires turned their combined intellect towards solving the problem, and the vast resources of the nations, hoarded and stockpiled over millennia, were poured into turning ideas into reality.

Eventually, an audacious scheme was settled upon – a network of canals would be built, reaching from the poles to the equator, to pump life-giving water to the cities and farmlands, to preserve and sustain the core kingdoms of Mars. The lands of the white apes and the green men would be left to wither and die, and as for those red kingdoms where the canal network could not reach...well, life is cruel sometimes.

The project took centuries, centuries during which life grew ever harder. The obsessive focus on building the canals took resources from all other pursuits. Art, music, literature, science, history... all were left to grow fallow, the province of dreamers and dilettantes who were shirking their duty to the Great Project. By the time the canals were built, a millennia after they had first been begun, tens of thousands of years of culture had been lost or forgotten. The glorious past of Mars had become a thing of myth and legend, lost in abandoned libraries and tomes crumbled to dust. Only the harsh and dire present remained.

The canals worked. Where they touched, the kingdoms survived – though they were pallid shadows of their former glory. For generations, all of the red Martians had been united in the building of the canals, to the exclusion of almost all other activities, and now, with that accomplished, a palpable sense of confusion and

emptiness fell upon the nations. As often happens in such times, demagogues arose to fill the void, and red men of Mars, saved from death by drought, now faced extinction through war. This era has since become known as “The Age Of The Blood Canals”, and it marks the beginning of the ‘modern’ era of Martian history.

MODERN MARS

Today, Mars is a world of dust and memories. Huge stretches of the planet are empty of civilization. The seabeds have become seemingly endless expanses of desert: Broad, windswept fields of sand and sun-bleached bone. The kingdoms of the red men, which once stretched from pole to pole, now cluster here and there around the globe, tied together tenaciously yet tenuously by the still-functioning canal network. Between these fragile flowers of life and civilization lies wilderness, barren, rocky, and harsh. Here is the domain of the green men, capable of surviving on what water than can forage from the deep pools or extract from the tough plants which still grow in the blasted wastelands. They rule the ruined and forgotten cities and all the places between, and they pen in the red men, who dare not venture too far from their walled cities lest they become victims of the roving marauders.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

“Cold, and continued dry.” Such is the general weather report for Mars. The inhabited areas, mostly the northern and equatorial continental mass, reach highs of 60 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and usually 0 to 20 below in the winter. (Despite this, the canals do not freeze). Rain is unknown. At best, during exceptionally moist climactic periods, there will be a damp fog or a thin drizzle, but such events are almost literally once in a lifetime, and are memorialized and celebrated as signs of good omen.

Ironically, the warmest region on the planet is the North Polar Jungle, but since this is held by the ferocious and disciplined white apes, the red men of the southern cities cannot easily move in, despite several brutal wars.

The southern half of Mars is dominated by the dead sea beds. Towards the south pole, the sea beds become a region of permafrost, but in more equatorial climes, some rare combinations of conditions can produce fertile oases.

LIFE ON MARS

While the main focus of **MARS** is on high adventure and daring action, knowing a few basic details of what life is like on Mars adds vital verisimilitude. This sections contains a few tidbits about Martian life which can make the game come alive.

FOOD

Most Martian food is plant-based. There is simply not enough arable land to raise too many meat animals, and most meat animals have other purposes, such as labor or transportation. Meat is generally eaten about once a week in small portions, almost as a garnish or side dish. Main courses with meat occur only on special holidays. When a thornpatch (q.v.) sprouts near to a civilized region, there will be a sudden influx of rare and exotic meats, as the animals which dwell in these strange regions do not exist anywhere else on Mars. Those nations which are close to the Polar Jungle may also have more access to meat, but at the risk of angering the Apes.

DRINK

Alcohol is as beloved by Martians as by humans, and considerable resources are devoted to producing it – though, as with many other aspects of life on Mars, there is often a dual purpose, with the same plant providing both food and the makings of a potent brew. Ancient wines found in the lost cities or in wrecks on the dry seabeds can command obscene prices.

The green men of Mars are driven to an instant berserker fury by the merest taste of alcohol, which is why many carry skins of fermented barrelthorn juice with them into battle.

GAMBLING

An ancient civilization, the red men of Mars have many games of skill, chance, or both. The

most popular is *lavkal*, a game played with cards, which has some 2,000 known variants. It is loosely based on the most common Martian pantheon of gods, with winning hands based on matching the sets of gods who appeared in particular myths. Much of the strategy of the game involves bidding on unclaimed cards deposited in the center of the table. Other games include *villoj*, played with two 6-sided and two 8-sided dice, and *bovarl*, another card game with much simpler rules, usually played by children.

TECHNOLOGY

The red Martians are surrounded by past glories. Much of their technology is maintained by rote; the theory behind it and the knowledge needed to improve upon it are long gone. At one time, they commanded machines which could gouge mile-wide canals deep into the planet and which could grow snythe-men to guard and maintain them; now, radium guns are handed down from father to son as priceless heirlooms and the militaries drill mostly with sword and bow. The great sky-corsairs are kept in fine repair and new ones can be built so long as the *viazal* mines continue to operate, but the designs are rigidly defined and no one understands enough math or physics to improve upon them.

The great radium engines at the heart of every Martian city provide power to the buildings, power which is used to provide heat, light, and running water. These engines rarely fail, so long as they have fuel; if one breaks down, the city must be abandoned.

Martians do not have any means of wireless communication, but each city is linked internally by an imaging network and by public address systems. (The Martian ‘imager’ is a communication system which projects the translucent image of the speaker to the person being contacted; most homes have one and public access systems are available. Sound-operated mechanisms determine the proper destination for the call.)

Most local transport is by boat down or up the canals, or by riding beast. Tracked vehicles, powered by radium cells, exist and can be used to cross the wastelands, but they are rare and are

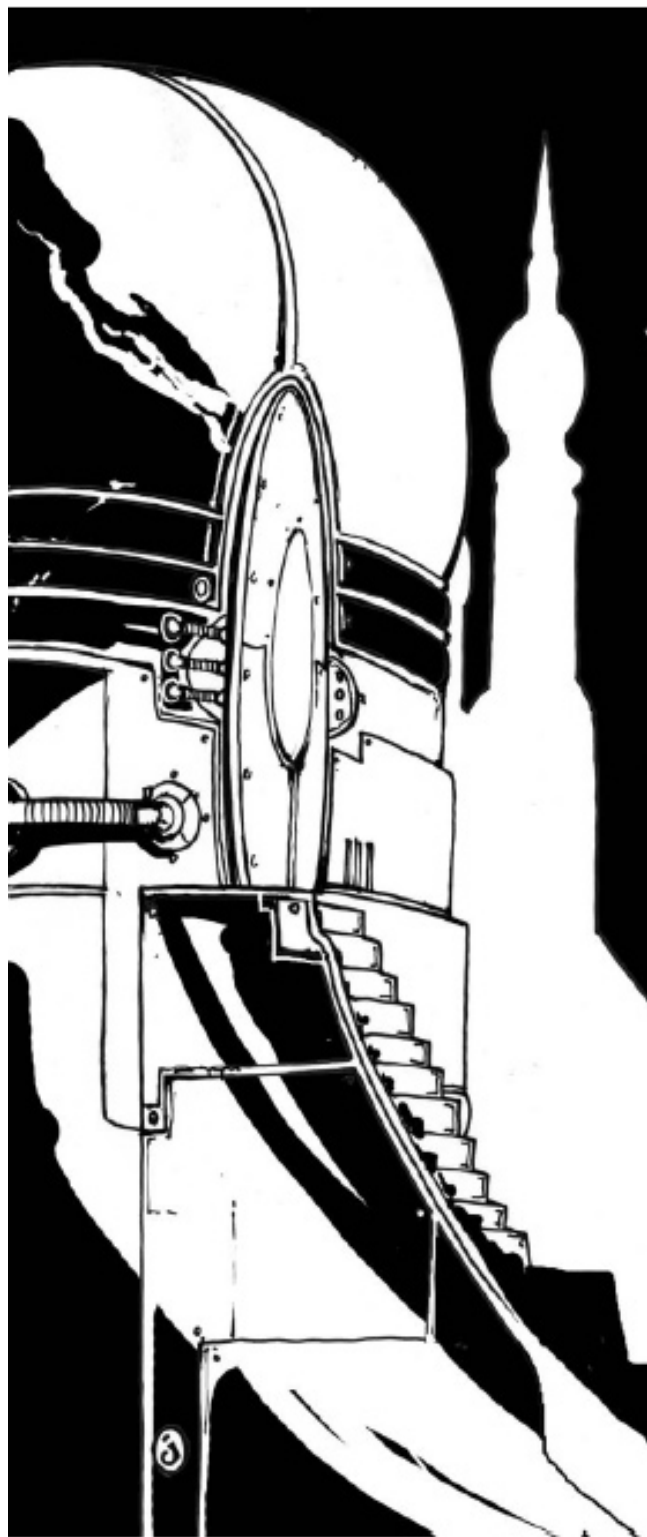
generally controlled by the local government. Few private citizens have need for them. Those with such needs prefer more elegant personal sky-corsairs.

RESOURCES

Red Martian civilization requires resources. Food and water are the most essential and the most tenuous. So long as the canals flow, farming techniques perfected over millennia assure a steady supply of food, but even a slight drop in water levels or an unusually long winter can cause reserves to dip drastically low. Red Martians tend to over-farm, with the surplus carefully preserved and stored. Unfortunately, such vast stockpiles of food attract raiders, and cities on the border of the territories of the green men, or which do not maintain good relations with their neighbors (or strong standing armies), often face attacks.

Martian civilization also depends on mining, though to a lesser extent. The ruins are so vast that it is often easier to scavenge and recycle metals and ores from the crumbling outer cities than it is to dig for more. Thus, mines tend to focus on especially rare metals, especially those needed to maintain advanced and delicate technology, or the potent mineral radium, source of all power on Mars. Radium is consumed by power plants and weapons, and must be constantly replaced. Its nature is such that it cannot be stored in bulk, so the radium mines are constantly going. When one is depleted, it is often cause for concern or even panic, unless a new supply is already known to exist. Brutal and sometimes genocidal wars are fought over dwindling supplies of the element. Many red Martians will venture deep into the green wastes, the dead seas, or even, sometimes, the grey expanses in order to be the one to secure a new source.

The endless millennia of mining have left Mars riddled with huge and abandoned mines. Aided by mole-machines and other advanced tools, these ancient pits can reach very deep into the planet's mantle, often dropping down ten or more miles. Some of them reach into places which were ancient and lost when the red men were still primitive man-beasts, and there are things buried down there which can sense that a path of escape has been opened...



HOLIDAYS

Red Martians, like most sentient beings, mark special occasions. While the many different red Martian cultures have different local holidays, a few events are so universal that nearly all societies practice them in one form or another.

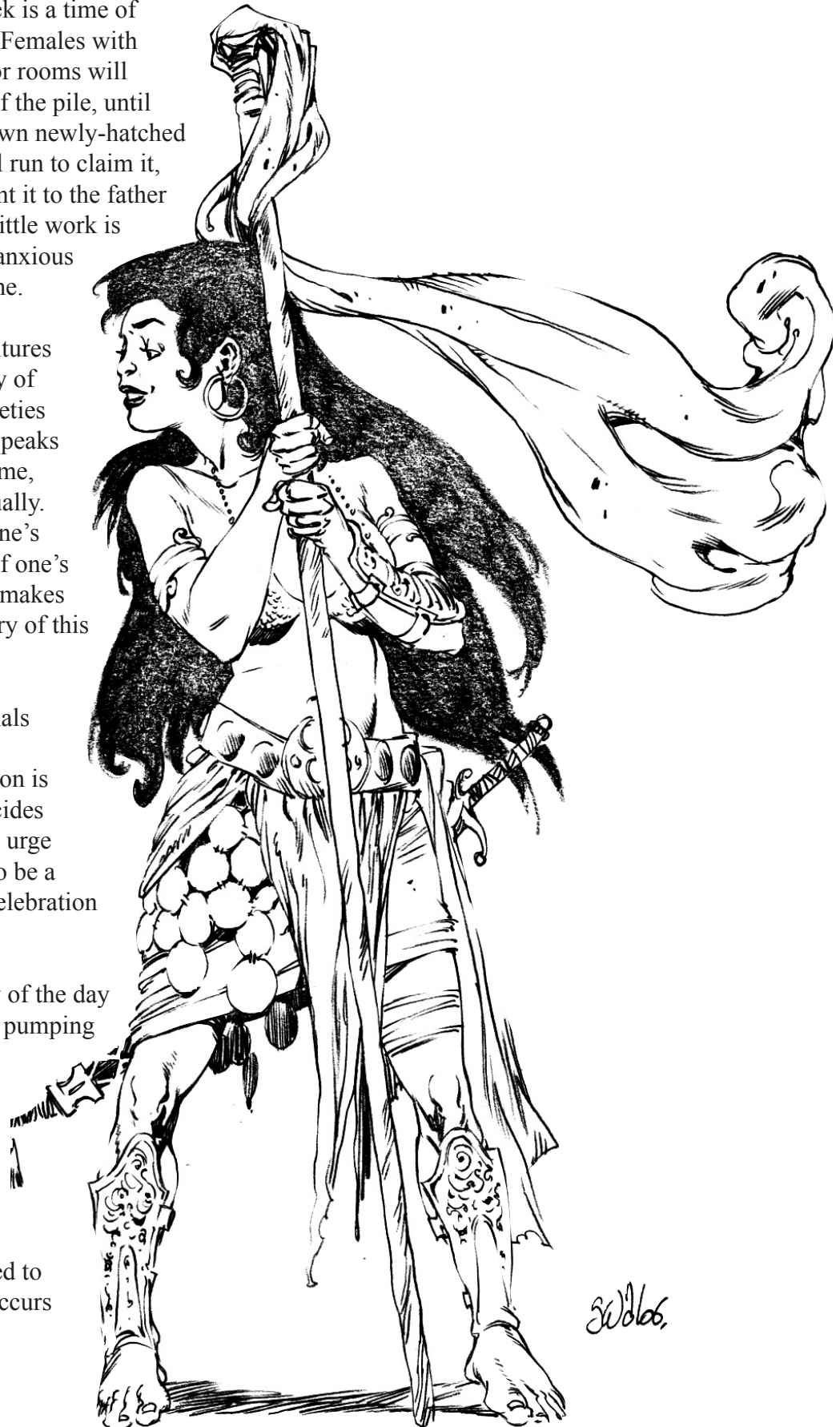
Hatching Week: While there are exceptions, the

mating cycles of the red men of mars dictate that all eggs will be laid within a two-week period and will hatch within a one-week period roughly three months later. This week is a time of special joy and celebration. Females with eggs waiting in the incubator rooms will wait patiently at the edges of the pile, until the distinctive cry of their own newly-hatched child is heard. Then she will run to claim it, and leave the room to present it to the father and the rest of her family. Little work is done by, or expected from, anxious parents-to-be during this time.

First Name: While other cultures celebrate an individual's day of birth, most red Martian societies mark the day when a child speaks his own name for the first time, and celebrates this day annually. To the Martians, speaking one's own name is a declaration of one's own individuality, and so it makes sense to mark the anniversary of this day

Water's Peak: When the canals flood for the first time each spring, a three-day celebration is held. That this usually coincides with the onset of the mating urge means that the party tends to be a rather raucous and bawdy celebration of life and hope.

First Flow: The anniversary of the day the canals began to operate, pumping their bounty of life from the poles to the equator, is celebrated every year. This is a somber ceremony, as it exists to remind everyone of the centuries of labor and sacrifice which were required to create the vast network. It occurs in late summer.



THE RED KINGDOMS

Once, the red men of Mars ruled the planet from pole to pole, with only the most remote wilderness wholly in the hands of the green men or the white apes, with the grey men a dread legend at most. Today, there are a but a handful of regions where the red Martians still rule unopposed, tiny clusters of petty kingdoms holding off the encroaching forces of decay for as long as they can. So long as the water flows through the canals, these holdfasts of civilization will endure...

The largest still-civilized region is known as Alvalia, and it is located in the northern hemisphere of Mars, perilously close to the encroaching jungles of the white apes. It consists of the Kingdom of Callor Maralin, the Maranian Holdings, and the Falan Reaches. Southwest is the nation of Baltan and some minor states, and southeast, the Lonarian Kingdom and its associated nations. Separating these three clusters of nations is barren waste, home to dozens of ruined cities, roaming bands of green men, and strange and deadly creatures.

CALLOR MARALIN

Callor Maralin is one of the oldest nations on Mars today which still retains some knowledge of its true past and history. While most of the details are long lost, legends and tales discuss the grandeur and glory of Callor – its great kings, warriors, and scholars, the vast reaches of Mars which it once ruled, and the crucial role it played in establishing the planet-saving canal network. (It is worth noting that some other nations, most especially Baltan and Lonar, greatly dispute these claims)

Callor today is of course a weak and wavering shadow of its former glory, but it retains its dignity even when dressed in rags. Almost alone of the surviving major kingdoms, it maintains an active Academy, though it is more concerned with recovering fragments of lost knowledge than with making new discoveries. The great central city of Avak Callor, the heart of the Kingdom, has only a few areas of ruin. Trade is brisk and active along the central canal, and the Sky-Corsairs of

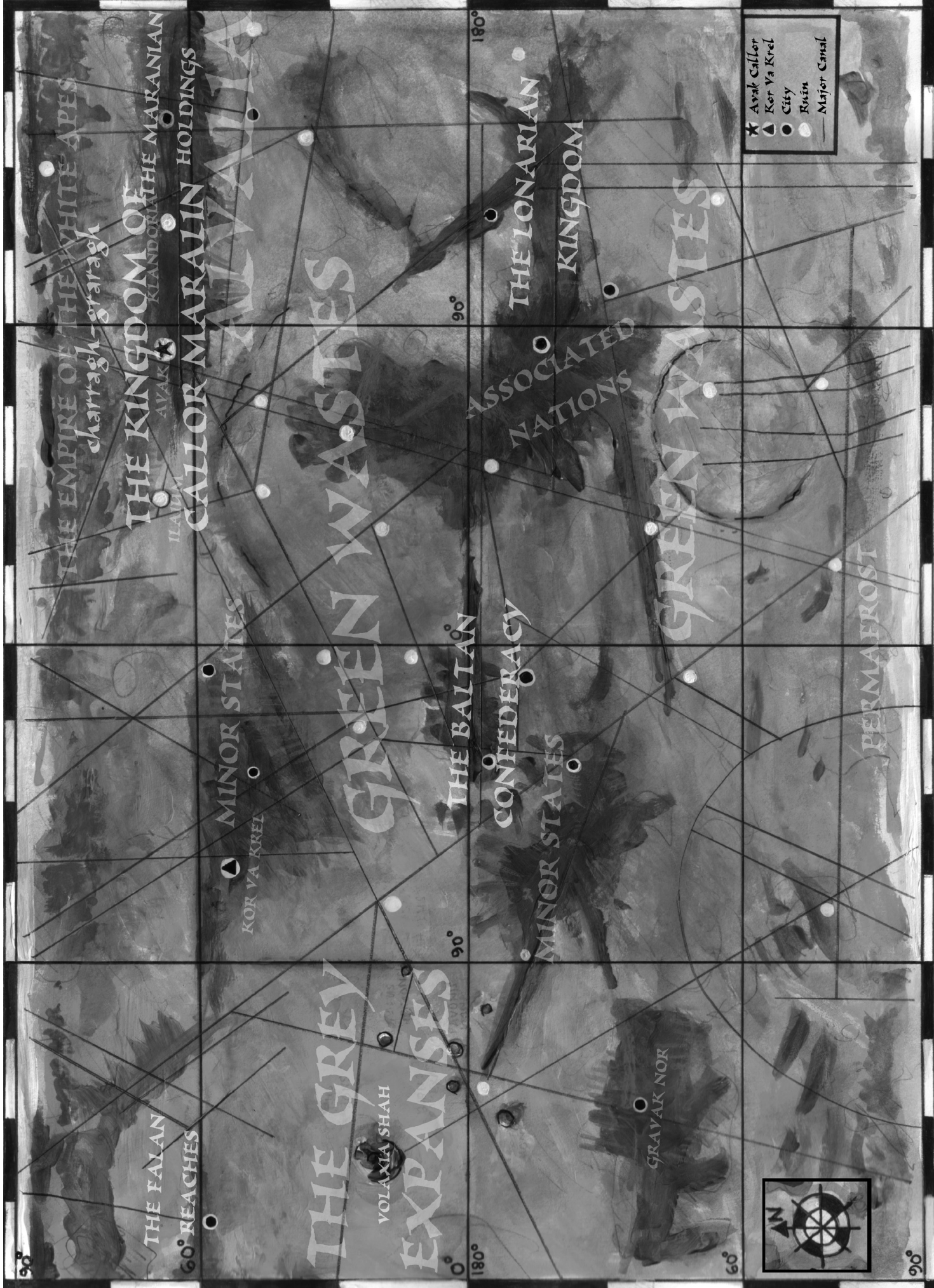
Callor regularly fly to distant lands to engage in trade and diplomacy. The King of Callor even maintains an embassy among the white apes, having earned their grudging respect during the Twelfth Long Summer War a generation past.

The King of Callor is chosen by an election of the Sapphire Council, a collective consisting of the top twelve nobles of the Kingdom. Nobility is inherited, though it is tradition that the eldest child of any noble family marry a worthy commoner – this tradition is credited with keeping the ruling class of Callor vigorous and wise, as well as “in touch” with the people they rule. The king or queen, once elected, holds the position for life, save in cases of extreme madness or disability. The Sapphire Council retains an advisory role.

The current ruler of Callor is the aging King Mallion. A cunning and fierce general in his youth, his body is now broken and frail, but his spirit remains strong – perhaps too strong. Some feel it is time for a new ruler, but Mallion will relinquish neither his grip on life nor on the throne. Many, however, dread his eventual and inevitable passing, as his long reign has brought stability and certainty to Callor. Further, enemies of the kingdom will surely take advantage of the chaos and confusion of his passing to launch attacks or engage in malicious subterfuge.

The military of Callor is reputed to be among the finest remaining on Mars. Whereas many kingdoms, especially those with no neighboring foes, have stripped their armies down to ad-hoc militias or purely ceremonial units, Callor mandates a full year of service and combat training for all citizens. In addition to making sure every resident of the Kingdom can be called on to come to its defense, it also builds a broad camaraderie among the people, strengthening the sense of unity and purpose which keeps Callor from sinking into the mire of languid despair which grips many nations. Perhaps 5% of those who complete their year of training go on to become lifetime soldiers.

This high level of military preparedness is a good thing, because it is generally believed Callor will soon be at war. Baltan has not launched any



THE EMPIRE OF THE WHITE APES
charragh-graragh

THE KINGDOM OF
KLANDOR
CALLOR MARALIN HOLDINGS
ILAHIM AVAKS
ALVAVALLA

MINOR STATES
KOR VA KREL

THE GREY
VOLAXIA SHAH
EXPANSES

THE BALTIAN
CONFEDERACY
MINOR STATES

THE LONARIAN
KINGDOM

ASSOCIATED
NATIONS

GREEN WASTES

PERMAFROST

- ★ Avak Callor
- ▲ Kor Va Krel
- City
- Ruin
- Major Canal



outright attacks and, indeed, maintains a public posture of goodwill, peace, and free trade, but several plots and schemes have been traced back to that corrupt and decadent land – all of which, very conveniently, lead nowhere near to the palace of Lady Villeral. It is generally believed she is merely waiting for a sign of weakness or faltering – but may be willing to launch an invasion even if none such manifests.

Likewise, Lonaria poses an ever-growing threat. The High Theocrat has long condemned the ‘sin’ and ‘wickedness’ of Callor, and the temptation to expand the ranks of the faithful is one he is unlikely to resist for long.

Justice and law in Callor is swift and sure. There are no prisons as such. Crimes for which compensation can be made are punished by labor until three times such compensation has been earned. Crimes for which there can be no compensation are punished with a swift and painless death, unless the victim, or his family, pleads for mercy – in such a case, the criminal is assigned to labor for life in service to the Kingdom. Slavery as such does not exist – no criminals are ever “owned” by private citizens.

Avak Callor, often simply called Avak, is the largest city remaining in the Alvalia region and may be the largest still-populated city on Mars, though it is dwarfed by such ruins as Klandoria and Ilaium. The city is bisected by a grand canal, and divided into a dozen districts by as many lesser canals, all of which flow outwards to the surrounding rings of farmland before returning to drain back into the central waterway.

The city holds half a million people, including the farmers. Originally, it held ten times that many, but that was long ago. Rather than allow the city to fall completely into disrepair outside the densely populated inner zones, Avak mandates that its citizens contribute a certain amount of labor each year to trying to stave off the slow crawl of entropy. While this is a failing endeavor, it has greatly slowed the process of collapse and decay, to the point where Avak has only a few ruined zones, not endless miles of them.

The King’s Palace is a crescent-shaped building topped with three huge spires – two smaller ones at the ends of the ‘crescent’ and a large one in the center. This is not only the home of the king; it is the center of the government of Callor. It sits in the center of a large stone plaza, which is a gathering place for the citizens when a proclamation is to be made or when, as occasionally happens, the people gather to make a request or a demand of their king. It is tradition that when the plaza is full, the king *must* appear to address or hear the people.

Callorian Characters

Player Characters from Callor are likely to be enthusiastic, optimistic, and well-rounded. Callorian tradition and culture encourages pursuit of both mental and physical activities. Typical Callorian characters include explorers who wish to travel past the ‘safe’ canal routes into the lost regions; soldiers eager to prove themselves in battle for a worthy cause; low-ranking nobles seeking to distinguish themselves in advance of the expected demise of King Mallion; and scholars hoping to recover knowledge lost millennia past.

BALTAN

Baltan, or the Baltan Confederacy, is the latest shape taken by the ever-shifting patterns of alliance and backstabbing which define the region. The folk of Baltan and its surrounding satellite kingdoms are said to eat deceit and drink treason; while this is a somewhat cruel exaggeration, it is not without reason that throughout the red Martian territories, the word “baltannish” is used where humans would use “Byzantine” or “Machiavellian”.

Currently, the Baltan Confederacy is under the firm grip of Lady Villeral, a matronly but brilliantly cruel woman who had so meticulously managed her ascension that no one even noticed her until she walked into the power vacuum she had artfully arranged, 10 years ago. Since then, her considerable intellect and will have been turned to reinforcing and buttressing her position through webs of interlocking alliances and dependencies, so that anyone who could betray her would face too much hostility to ever

ascend to power. She has also grown somewhat bored with rearranging the pieces in Baltan, and has turned her gaze northwards to Callor, which she considers arrogant and overrated. Military conquest is difficult, so she prefers to try to corrupt from within.

Baltan is divided by the canals into several distinct regions, each of which maintains some degree of putative independence from central control, though the reality of this varies with the strength of the current ruler. Each region maintains its own military and is responsible for its own food supply, and there is constant tension between regions to keep any one from achieving too much power.

Wealth and power are everything in Baltan. Even the farmers constantly jockey for position and prestige. Every social level is dominated by a constant struggle to rise, or at least to stay in the same place. The Baltan claim this competition makes them strong; in reality, it often prevents them from cooperating to achieve any major goal. That said, those who do manage to rise out of the mire of Baltan society can be counted on to be iron willed, cunning, and determined to an extraordinary degree.

Most of the cities of Baltan are in ruins – but the ruins are inhabited. The well-maintained sections of the cities are reserved for the elite of the military, noble, and merchant classes. The rest of the populace must dwell in the slowly-collapsing outer ruins. If these masses chose to do so, they could rebuild and maintain their domiciles – or unite against their overlords – but the Baltanese love of personal advancement and the perception of all others as potential enemies prevents such movements from taking hold.

Within the maintained sections, Baltan has a decadent, lavish, beauty. Fine silks encrusted with jewels form the garments of both men and women, and everything from swords to serving trays is ornate and refined. Comfort and artistry are everywhere; almost nothing is allowed to be purely functional. The canal barges and sky corsairs of the Baltan elite are lavish and baroque creations, and if they are somewhat slower and

clumsier than the elegant simplicity of those of other nations, the Baltanese do not care.

Baltan is known for its many decadent delights. Slavery is common here, and anyone captured in the surrounding wastelands or convicted of a crime is likely to end up in chains. The fortunate slaves serve as personal aides to the powerful; most, however, are consigned to wretched labor in the radium mine or to battle to the death in the gladiatorial pits, which are second only to those of the Ape Empire in the grandeur and gore.

Baltan Characters

Player Characters with a Baltan origin are likely to be clever, subtle, and devious – even if their motives are noble and pure, they will accomplish them by indirect means. Typical Baltan characters include a noble seeking the perfect ‘edge’ to guarantee his rise to power, a merchant looking to undermine his rivals by finding the only source of rare elements, a lowborn orphan who has mastered stealth and now sells his services to the highest bidder, and a skilled fighter whose lack of mental acuity means he hopes to ride someone else’s coattails to power and privilege.



LONARIA

With the long, slow, death of their world ahead of them and the knowledge that their culture and race exist only by the dint of an immensely complex technological artifact, it is not surprising that the red men of Mars make much room in their life for spirituality. The ancient and revered gods and spirits of Mars form a vital part of daily life in all red Martian communities, but in Lonaria, this has reached extremes. The many diverse sects and faiths which can be found across the planet have been distilled down to a single, rigorous, catechism whose dictates and rules form the basis of all day-to-day existence. There is no distinction between church and state here; it is one and the same.

Five millennia ago, the Lonarian region was a rich and prosperous kingdom, similar in many ways to Callor, with libraries and academies, prosperous farms and fields, and a stable government. Then, a plague swept through the area. It is not certain where it came from; the canal water is constantly filtered and purified. Some believed that mining operations may have opened up a sealed vault filled with the disease; others blame wandering merchants or canal gypsies. However, in the chaos, confusion, and fire which followed, a charismatic and cunning man named Balon Kollan blamed the people themselves. They had become distracted and had turned away from the faith of their ancestors, they had worshipped false gods, they had angered their ancestral spirits, and this was the retribution. However, since some were spared, it was clear this was just a warning – the gods would roll back their curse if the people would return to them. The educated scoffed – but the masses, in panic, listened. Within a month, the plague had run its course, and Kollan claimed that this was due to constant prayer and sacrifice. Despite the fact that many of the noble class survived the plague, Kollan was elevated to supreme power by popular acclaim.

Over the rest of his life, Kollan created the Codex Kollania, a holy tome which represented his version of the “true” Martian faith. This version actually drew from the teachings of many obscure and vanished cults, and preached a dour

ascetism which had never been embraced by any widespread red Martian culture. Nonetheless, Lonaria adopted this version as its native religion, and soon, religion, government, and culture all became different facets of the same thing, wedded to a militant distaste for dissent. The libraries and learning centers of Lonaria were shuttered, their books and scrolls locked away where only the most elite of the priesthood could study them.

Lonar today is a fairly grim place. The inhabited regions are well-maintained, but stripped of all finery or art. The majority dwell in small apartment, each identically furnished based on social class and job. Life is lived according to fixed schedules for waking, eating, work, and constant religious devotion. Even the selection of mates is done by the Theocrats.

Relations with Callor and Baltan are equally chilly. Baltan is too distant to be too much of a threat, but their hedonistic decadence and disdain for anything beyond short-term self-aggrandizement runs wholly counter to the Lonarian worldview. Callor, a place of free and open inquiry where many faiths are openly practiced is likewise loathed. Neither Callor nor Baltan are likely to launch invasions soon, but the constant fear of such is preached by the Theocrats. Many observers feel that if the weather turns fair enough to sustain a long march west or north, Lonar might just launch a pre-emptive strike.

THE APE EMPIRE

The area surrounding the north pole of Mars, by dint of unusual volcanic activity and water-soaked soil, holds the sole remaining thriving jungle of Mars. Such a place would be home to the red men, save that it has already been claimed by the Empire of the Apes. From this northern holdfast, they strike south at the nearest red kingdoms, seeking expansion and tribute.

The Ape Empire (or *charragh-graragh*, as they call it) is a bastion of primitive, but strong, civilization. They never mastered the advanced skills and techniques of the red men, but can wield iron swords with ferocious might and lethal discipline. The Empire is divided into provinces, each ruled by an Emperor (or *gragh-gor*) appointed directly by the Emperor. The Emperor is responsible for all that occurs within his province, and the Emperor's personality directly influences the nature of the province. As Emperors change, so does the region they rule, sometimes subtly, sometimes grandly.

The Empire is fed by the canal networks, as they all flow through the polar jungle ring on their way to the rest of the northern hemisphere. Once, the apes tried to throttle the canals, to hold half of Mars hostage to their whim – and found themselves under assault by the Synthetic Army,

the guardians of the canals. Since then, they have let the water flow freely, and often take advantage of the canals on their wars of conquest.

None who dwell within a month's march of the Empire's borders sleeps securely. The Empire is aggressive, constantly seeking new land, and is stymied only by the logistics of supplying large armies. During warm seasons, when the fertile zone near the poles expands, the armies march south, conquering and demanding tribute; when the fields go fallow once again, the borders of the Empire retract.

At this point, the Ape Empire and the Kingdom of Callor maintain a steady peace, each respectful of the other's military might. The Empire sees Callor as a threat, however – their constant seeking after ancient knowledge might grant them the type of weapons needed to decimate the Empire, and their closeness to the southern reaches of the polar Jungle makes an invasion logistically possible. For this reason, the apes make it subtly known to the enemies of Callor that should that kingdom be invaded, the apes will send legions south to harry and harass the Callorians on a second front. (They have made it far less clear that such legions will not withdraw once Callor falls, but will drive out the other invaders and hold it for themselves)



THE GREY EXPANSES

During the rise of the red kingdoms, the “Grey Men” of Mars were nothing but nightmare and legend, stories told to frighten children or explain away any odd occurrence. Since the drying of Mars began and the canal network was completed, though, they have proven themselves terrifyingly real.

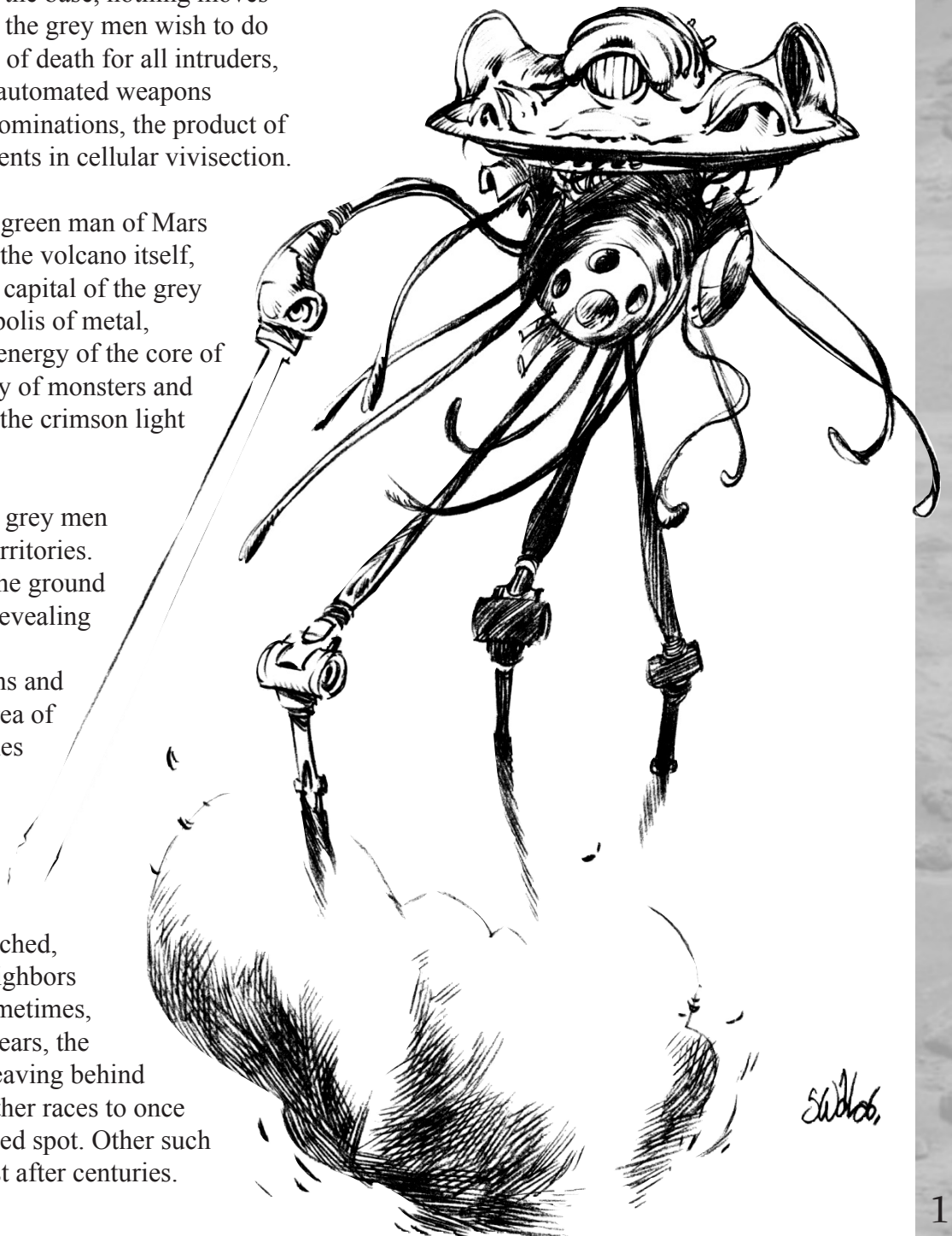
The main region of grey control is the area surrounding *volaxia shah*, the immense volcano whose peak rises 15 miles above the surface. For a hundred miles around the base, nothing moves or lives save that which the grey men wish to do so. The region is a zone of death for all intruders, a nightmarish realm of automated weapons systems and hideous abominations, the product of the grey men’s experiments in cellular vivisection.

While no red, white, or green man of Mars knows what lies within the volcano itself, many speculate it is the capital of the grey men – a massive metropolis of metal, powered by the roiling energy of the core of Mars itself, a hellish city of monsters and machines forever lit by the crimson light of the volcano’s core.

Elsewhere on Mars, the grey men have staked out other territories. Seemingly at random, the ground will explode upwards, revealing their towering walking machines. Lethal poisons and deadly rays scour the area of all life, with the machines relentlessly tracking down and killing any who escape the initial attack. And then – nothing. Once some predefined border is reached, the tripods stop, and neighbors are left unmolested. Sometimes, after days, months, or years, the machines will retreat, leaving behind nothing and allowing other races to once again dwell in the vacated spot. Other such regions are still held fast after centuries.

Areas where the grey men have held sway for a time slowly become devoid of all life. The soil becomes as dust, not merely dry, but both lifeless and incapable of supporting life. Where they reign, no life but theirs can thrive, and when they leave, they leave behind a void where life will never again take hold.

Overall, the territory held by the grey men is slowly growing. There is no obvious pattern to the expansion nor any seeming hostility aimed at one of the other races of Mars – the grey men seem oblivious to all other sentient life.



THE GREEN WASTES

The name given to these regions is ironic, because they are mostly barren of plant life – and what plants do grow there range from lavender to crimson in hue. The name refers, rather, to the dominant animal life form – the green men of mars, the brutal savages who thrive in the harsh conditions.

Most of what is now wasteland was once part of the red men's kingdoms. Only at the very borders of the lands, where the deserts of ancient Mars once stood, did the green men dare to come. Today, those border cities are long gone; the deserts have swallowed them, and many more, besides. The ruins are now the homes of the savages – they nest in them during the long, cold, Martian winter, and emerge to raid and war when the ground warms.

The Green Wastes hold more than violent death, however. They hold secrets – lore lost from the surviving red kingdoms may well be found here, forgotten in sealed vaults beneath the ruined cities. More tangible wealth is also known to exist here – as the waters receded and the kingdoms of Mars died, many cities were abandoned in haste when the green raiders appeared on the horizon. Vaults piled with gems and gold, armories still stocked with radium-pistols and shock-pikes, hangers where sky-corsairs wait to take off...all of these may still exist in the savage-haunted ruins. Reaching such places is not for the timid or the ill-prepared.

It might seem that the wastes are lifeless – but this is not so. While the dry expanses cannot support agriculture or civilization, there are still hardy plants which can suck water from the deepest reserves, melt it out of the permafrost, or catch it on the harsh winds. Then, there are creatures which prey

upon the plants, and other creatures which prey upon them. The ecosystem of the wastes is sparse and hard-edged, but it is not non-existent. The ability of many forms of Martian life to store water or to hibernate for long stretches of time makes some very unusual life forms possible, creatures which emerge to hunt only rarely and which have become things of terror and legend.

THE RUINED CITIES

At the height of their power, the red men ruled all of the surface Mars, with the white apes and the green savages herded to tiny enclaves or unwanted barrens. Today, the canal network reaches less than a quarter of what was once the red domain, and only a small portion of even that tiny region is actively inhabited and protected. The rest is wilderness, but wilderness dotted with the remnants of glory.

There are thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of dead cities. Some are little more than mounds of rubble, barely distinguishable from random geological formations. Others are massive, crumbling, metropolises, still mostly intact, with the faded signs of stores leering mockingly out at the empty streets.

Few are utterly uninhabited, however – they may hold green Martians, red nomads, renegades and bandits, wild beasts, or even stranger things. Each is a mystery, and few who are wise tread the abandoned streets or venture into the seemingly



empty buildings with abandon, lest their own souls add to the tally of ghosts which already haunt the crumbling ruins.

THE RED KING OF THE GREEN MEN

Some 15 years ago, a man named Valish Borkan attempted to overthrow King Mallion of Callor. He had raised a small army of supporters and had planned a quick strike against the King and the Sapphire Council when all were sitting together. However, a traitor in his camp alerted the King, and the coup was foiled. Borkan's army was captured and most were killed, but Borkan managed to slip into the dank sewer passages beneath Callor and escape into the surrounding fields. There, he stole a volesh and rode out into the wastes beyond. It was assumed by all that he would die there, either at the hands of the elements or at the hands of the green Martians.

It was the latter which found him first. He killed a dozen with his radium pistol before the charges gave out; then he drew his ceremonial knife and continued to fight, even as they tore his flesh. The chieftain of the tribe was impressed with his courage, and decided to keep him as a slave – the tribe was currently well-fed, and so, could afford this luxury.

Borkan valued his own life above all things. The crippling wounds he suffered in his battle with the greens had left him unable to run, so, he realized he had to learn to survive among the savages. Mastering their primitive language was simple enough. He soon became able to give the chief solid advice – where to find water and meat, how best to defeat an enemy tribe by luring them into an ambush, and so on. By the time the tribe was settling in to winter in the ruined city of Kar Va Krel, the chief viewed Borkan as an invaluable aid.

Borkan then began to twist the chief's mind. The wily red Martian pointed out all manner of hostile and suspicious acts committed by the other tribal elders and leaders, the oldest and toughest of the brutes. One by one, the chief eliminated these threats to his power, until he found himself with only Borkan by his side.

Borkan then began the second phase of his plan. He taught the green men all he knew about metalworking and military discipline. He showed their few smiths and crafters how to improve the quality of their blades and armor, and showed their warriors how to amplify their strength by working together. Such alien ideas were often met with rage and anger from the primitives, but the chieftain of the tribe made short work of dissenters.

When the winter ended, the tribe moved out again, but it no longer roamed purposelessly. It moved to the well-known path of a smaller tribe, and set upon them, using the weapons and tactics taught to them by Borkan. The tribe slaughtered all of the warriors and young men, but captured the females and children. They then proceeded to do the same thing to several other tribes over the course of the wandering seasons. When it came time to shelter again in the city, the population of the tribe had grown dramatically.

The children captured alive were raised as warriors of the tribe, and the eggs of the captured females were laid in the same places as the eggs of the tribe's native women, so that the children would not be marked in any way as to their origin. Both of these acts were grossly against ancient custom and tradition, but the promise of wealth and power mollified those who would protest (as did Borkan's earlier culling of all of the more intelligent and experienced tribal leaders). The green Martians never really valued tradition for its own sake, in any event – they followed tradition because no one suggested a better or different way to do things.

Year after year, the pattern continued, until the tribe was the largest green Martian band known. However, feeding such an army was nearly impossible – the difficulties of finding sufficient food and water were the primary controls on the size of any green Martian clan, and they were being reached. Thus, Borkan moved to the second phase of his plan. He had spent some time 'grooming' prospective replacements for the aging chief, and finally selected one. The chief was slain and eaten, and the new chief, thoroughly controlled by Borkan, took control.

The massive warband then marched on the nearest outskirts of the red Martian civilization. The canal dwellers expected nothing more than a quick skirmish which would send the primitives running, but they were wrong. Attacking in disciplined ranks and using complex flanking tactics, the green horde swept across the defenses of the city. They surrounded it and prepared to invade, while Borkan issued his ultimatum to the red Martian leaders – provide us food, in regular caravans, or be exterminated. Facing annihilation, the city agreed to pay this tribute.

The same tactics brought three other outlying cities under Borkan's control. Food caravans now flow to the city of Kor Va Krel, which is somewhat less ruined than it was. No red man other than Borkan has been permitted inside the city's bounds, but scouts and spies have reported that there are forges and armories operating throughout the year, and that an entire generation of green Martians is being raised and trained as soldiers for Borkan's expanding army. Technically, Borkan remains the 'slave' of the current Chief, but even the simple-minded emerald brutes understand who their true chieftain is.

Borkan's plans are simple – he will continue to gather tribute from the fringes until his army is strong enough, then, he will march on Callor. Once he has conquered it, he will form a united force of red and green Martians, a planet-conquering army. His ambitions are grandiose, perhaps ludicrously so, but he has thus far achieved his goals.

THE DARK BELOW

Mars is an ancient world, and it has been alive since the earliest days of the Solar System. Even as life slowly evolved on or near the surface, far more ancient creatures dwelled far beneath. It is possible they, too, once lived in the sunlight, only to be driven below by some catastrophe which occurred out of the memory of even the grey men; it is likewise possible that they have always dwelled in darkness. Down deep, where sunlight has never reached, there is a world mostly unsuspected by those above.

The cavern systems of Mars are vast and intricate. There are many odd connections between them, unexpected tunnels that connect two otherwise disparate structures. Such passages seem too convenient and too common to have come about purely by chance, but there is little sign of workmanship or the use of tools in their construction.

The underworld of Mars is very cold...but it is also wet. The water which once filled the surface fled to the poles...and down below. Here, miles below the surface, there is a constant cold dampness, the stone walls slick and moist at all times. In the endless dark, there is an equally endless din and echo of droplets, sometimes enhanced by the gurgling of a rushing stream or the roar of a waterfall. If there was light to see them, there would be wonders here almost beyond description – a cascade of water down endless tiers of stone, rushing for well over a mile. A vast cavern of impossible size, holding within it an great, dark, and mostly still expanse of water – the legendary Last Ocean of Mars, the Dark Sea, the Black Waters. Within this unknown ocean dwell things too strange to name or describe, creatures whose minds are not merely cold and forbidding like the grey men, but impossible for any creature which knows the sight of the sun to fathom or comprehend. In the midnight gloom miles below the surface of the dying world, things sleep, and dream, and begin to stir...

THE WHISPERING LORD

Every species produces freaks, sports, exceptions. It is such oddities which enable a species to advance, change, or adapt. Without variation, there is no evolution. Even the most ancient and stagnant of species can sometimes produce those who defy the expectations of their culture.

So it is even with the Grey Martians. Those cold and enigmatic beings, forever joined in a dark and silent purpose, sometimes produce one who does not fit, an atavistic throwback whose warped mind contains feelings beyond an icy malevolence towards all who still walk in the sunlight. These oddities have ambition, pride, and drive, and can conceive of, and lust for, a life beyond completing



the Great Work in the dark and machine-filled caverns below.

Usually, such freaks are detected and found early in life, but some are especially canny, and hide their differences from their fellows until it is time to strike. One such was Wulushul.

Wulushul was assigned to work on the dissection of red Martian brains, a task which often sent him (suitably protected) to the surface in order to find appropriate experimental subjects. While there, he found some deep aspect of himself stirred by the sight of the broad crimson plains, the time-worn mountain peaks, and the glistening array of night stars. Secretly, he began to dream of something beyond the lightless caves and the ceaseless drone of the mechanisms. The old ambitions, the ancient drive which had taken his most ancient of ancestors out to explore those sparkling lights, awoke in him.

He did not share this vision with the rest of his people. He hoarded the concept, as one might hoard a precious jewel, and he studied and pondered the concept when he was sure he was fully alone. One day, he could abide it no more. He took control of one of the tripods and fought his way to the surface. There, he found a wandering band of red Martian nomads. He slew a few, and then issued demands to the rest. They would be his slaves, and he would let them live. Otherwise, they would be exterminated.

He took the survivors with him to a city he had found on an earlier trip, a lost metropolis known as Grava Nor. This city had the advantage of being located near an untapped vein of radium, as well as an underground lake which could provide water to keep the slaves alive.

The first task was the construction of a suitable palace, a place where Wulushul could leave the confines of the war machine and walk freely. Once this was done, he set his slaves to building all manner of machines. They did not understand the purpose of their labor, but obeyed their new lord's instructions.

THE DEAD SEAS

The seas of Mars once covered most of the world's southern hemisphere, as well as forming a barrier between the dominant landmass and the northern polar icecaps. Today, they are empty. The southern sea, covering about half the surface of the world, is crossed by the canals leading from the south pole to the surviving civilizations of the central continent. It is a harsh, dry, wasteland, with few ruins or other remnants of civilization. Only on the mountain peaks – once island chains – do dead cities remain.

However, the sea bed offers other riches. As the oceans receded, they left behind lakes and pools, and in some places, there is water lying just below the surface. Uncounted millennia of ancient life has made the seabottom soil rich and fecund, and in the deepest valleys and lowest rifts of the former oceans, life yet thrives. Renegades from the north, green Martians, and strange beasts all have staked out these small damp oasis.

Further, the long eons when the seas were full have left behind relics in the form of sunken ships, now exposed. Lost knowledge, ancient treasure, strange weapons, and more may be easily take from these hulks, but such ships are also the lairs of bandits, renegades, or monsters.

THE CANALS

An artificial construct visible from a distance of 20 million miles, the canal network of Mars is currently the single most advanced engineering project known on any world, making the Pyramids or the Great Wall of China seem like piles of mud. The existence of civilized life on Mars is due entirely to the canals, built by the distant ancestors of the current red Martians. That no red Martian civilization today could accomplish such a feat – or even describe how it was done – is a sad testament to how far the Martians have fallen. If the canals fail, they cannot be repaired. Currently, the canal system is remarkably self-maintaining, but the repair systems themselves may someday begin to break down.

The main canals, visible from Earth, are 1 to 5 miles in width, and run from pole to pole. When they near the cities, they explode in a webwork of smaller canals, running through and around the city proper, then reunite and keep going. Often, a city will cause a canal to branch into two slightly smaller canals, each going to other cities.

The canal depth varies with the seasons. In the warm summers, they are filled to overflowing. In the winter, only a thin trickle, barely 20% of the summers flow, runs to keep the cities alive.

The canals themselves are made of a material called luvial, which can no longer be manufactured, worked, or repaired. The metal is amazingly strong, does not rust, and seems to 'heal' over time from what little damage it does accrue. The canals are as shiny and clean as they were when they were first built over 10,000 years ago. However, the metal is porous -- and this is essential to the functioning of the canals, as the water flowing through them seeps into the surrounding soil, creating broad fertile zones, especially around the cities, where the canals explode into webworks.

The ground for about 10 miles around each city is capable of supporting enough agriculture to feed the populace, and where cities cluster together, a sparse natural ecosystem can develop, surrounding the civilized regions with a thin, but vital, belt of wilderness. Up the canal routes, near the north pole, the leakage from the poles themselves, combined with the subsurface geological activity, create another belt of rich life. The canals are never blocked by weeds or plant life, nor do any fish or other forms of marine life swim in them. The water is always perfectly pure.

No other artifacts of luvial are known to exist. Rumors of such have led to the disappearances of more than a few treasure-hunters. Typically, luvial is alleged to be found in the most distant parts of the deep sea beds or in the heart of the Grey Expanses.

THORNPATCHES

Life on Mars is tenacious. The survival of the various Martian species despite the cooling of their world is proof of that, but even the non-sentient life clings to existence with admirable will. As the Martian climate changed, evolution kicked into high gear. Plants adapted to long periods of drought -- sometimes decades or more. Many animal species developed the ability to excrete a sort of mucous which could dry to a tough husk, preserving the animal within for an indefinite period. The result was the appearance of an ecosystem which could sleep for years or decades, awakening in a frenzy of activity when water supplies increased.

Over the course of years, Mars occasionally has bouts of increased water. Rainfall never happens, but the deep permafrost sometimes thaws, creating a moister environment. When this happens in a region, there is a sudden and dramatic explosion of life. In days, barren wasteland becomes filled with a mad tangle of crimson and lavender plantlike, mostly in the form of twisting thornvines. The vines can grow to as much as a foot thick in a matter of days. Once this occurs, animals which burrowed below ground and encapsulated themselves awaken, tearing out of their cocoons and bursting forth from the sandy soil. Ravenous with hunger, they begin a mad frenzy of feeding and mating, hoping to produce another generation before the wet times end and the new forest returns to dust.

These regions are known as thornpatches. They occupy anywhere from 1 to 1000 square miles of territory when they bloom, and they will usually last 4d4 weeks. They often spring up near or around abandoned cities, perhaps because the cities were originally built in regions with easy access to water. If word of one reaches civilization, it will set off a mad race. The lifeforms found in and around a thornpatch do not exist anywhere else on modern Mars -- they are relics of an ancient era and are thus of much interest to everyone from farmers to scientists.

OASES

Even rarer than thornpatches are oases – regions where the right combination of conditions produce and upwelling of groundwater from some forgotten underground source. Once this occurs, the dead soil around revitalizes, long-dormant seeds sprouting furiously. Such regions will be anywhere from a quarter mile to ten miles across, and may last for a few weeks to a few decades, depending on local conditions.

If an oasis is known to exist, it will attract all manner of beings. Unlike thornpatches, oases are not necessarily overrun with exceptionally hostile and toothy life forms. Most have only a few native animals, though some are known to harbor rather aggressive plants. A tribe of green men might make an oasis their home for a winter, rather than seeking out a ruined city at which to shelter. Renegades expelled from a red Martian nation might settle here, using it as a base from which to raid their enemies. If it is close to their territory, the white apes will claim it, and will begin to strip it of all worth before the shifting weather patterns render it to dust once again.

Often, an oasis is found by pure chance. They are so small, and the barren wastelands of Mars so vast, that many exist for years without being discovered, especially if they are far from the canals or the main caravan routes. Travelers exploring the dead seas or lost in the green wastes may count themselves blessed by the gods to find an oasis just when they need it most.

Of course, an inhabited oasis might well appear to be empty. The locals would hide to size up intruders, before deciding how best to attack in order to defend their home.

THE RED NOMADS

While most of the red Martians clung to their cities and kingdoms, even as the borders contracted in the wake of the onrushing desert, a few either could not or would not do so. Some found their kingdoms excluded from the planned canal network and were asked to migrate to a foreign land. Some considered the canal network a monumental folly, doomed to failure. Other were simply caught up in the chaos and could not manage the migration before disaster struck them. From these disparate sources came the wandering red nomads of Mars.

The red nomads, like the green men, spend their time on the move. They are less suited to the harsh desert wastes than the brutal barbarians, but are much more intelligent. The two groups, thus, have reached a sort of parity – the intelligence and organization of the red Martians counterbalancing the numbers and ferocity of the green Martians so that neither race dominates the wastes.

There are thousands of red Martian tribes, usually composed of between 20 and 200 members. Every adult – male and female – is considered to be a warrior of the tribe, save for the crippled or the aged. Unlike the brutal greens, the red Martians care for all of the tribe who have not committed some grievous sin against it. (Such criminals are either slain cleanly, or are simply abandoned and forced to fend for themselves in the wastes)

Nomadic red Martian females do not form nests, nor is there a common mating time. They have adapted to their new lifestyle. Each female who has laid an egg carries it with her, bound tightly to her body by a complex padded harness. While most eggs hatch only at night, when the tribe is camped, a rare few hatch ‘on the march’ – this is considered an omen of great things for the child.

The various red tribes are not inherently warlike, but many find themselves competing for an oasis or a thornpatch, or falling to war over claims of who ‘traditionally’ owns some patch of good hunting land or who has the rights to use a particular ruined city as a campground. These squabbles can lead to anything from bloodless

contests of speed and skill to ‘champion duels’ to out-and-out slaughter where not one member of the losing tribe is permitted to live.

In addition, there are sometimes battles between the city dwellers and the nomads. The nomads see nothing wrong with taking some portion of the harvest during the growing season, or of riding pell-mell across the fields. Some have even taken to raiding or demanding tribute – usually in the form of food and beverages – from outlying cities with poor armies. This has caused many city-dwellers to condemn the nomads as little different from the green Martians, a generally unfair comparison. Battles between city-dwellers and nomads are brief and bloody – if the canal folk have any kind of trained security force, the wanderers are quickly put to rout; if they do not, they will fall to the nomads primitive weapons.

Sometimes, relations are more peaceful. The Nomads often have access to a variety of treasures and resources they have little need of, and are happy to trade scavenged gold or gems for well-made swords or a functioning radium rifle. They are also couriers of news, providing information on green man migrations or other events which occur in the far wilderness.

THE POLAR STATIONS

The blood of Mars is water pumped from the poles, and the heart of Mars, therefore, are the polar stations. On each pole, there are hundreds of such. Each is a massive construct, perhaps a quarter mile high and a half-mile square, composed of shimmering silvery metal, unbreakable translucent blue glass, and crackling fields of orange energy. Each sits in the center of a never-frozen mile-wide lake, from which canals blossom.

The pumping stations are fully automated. No Martian – red, green, white, or grey – stalks through the halls or adjusts the machinery. That job is left, firstly, to the gargantuan thinking engines which sit below each station, massive conglomerations of gears and sparks, which analyze all the information received from the canal telesensors and respond appropriately, and, secondly, to the Synthe-men, the immortal and incorruptible guardians of the canals.

Each station consists of several key components. The tower serves as an observation post and a signal receiver, but, more importantly, it catches and condenses all liquid which is brought past it



on the winds. The tower also contains powerful wind-driven turbines which serve to provide additional power to the mighty engines and pumps, reducing the strain on the power radium generators.

The base of the station, usually a large dome, contains the workshops and maintenance rooms which the synthe-men use to repair and replace worn out components. It also contains a section of living quarters, food supplies, and meeting rooms for red Martians who might come to oversee or improve the stations. However, these rooms are not accessible without proper authorization, and no one has provided that for centuries. The synthe-men dutifully keep the living quarters in perfect maintenance, waiting for the scientists or engineers which will never come.

At the heart of the dome is the interface to the calculating engine which maintains each station. Here, synthe-men can come to query the great mechanical mind, giving it questions in the form of complex patterns of wire and receiving answers in a terse, artificial voice which is obeyed unquestioningly. Red Martians will be allowed access to this room only if they can provide appropriate identification.

Beneath the dome is the great radium pile, an engine which can power the station for millennia, provided it is kept fueled and maintained. The heat surrounding the engine is so intense that even the synthe-men cannot work with it directly; here, mechanical men must do the job, controlled directly by the clockwork mind which guides the tower itself.

Lastly, there are the laser bores and the pumps. These drill down for miles, into the deep permafrost which has absorbed all the oceans of Mars, and bring up the precious life-giving water. This is then sent through countless purification filters and then sent out to the canals.

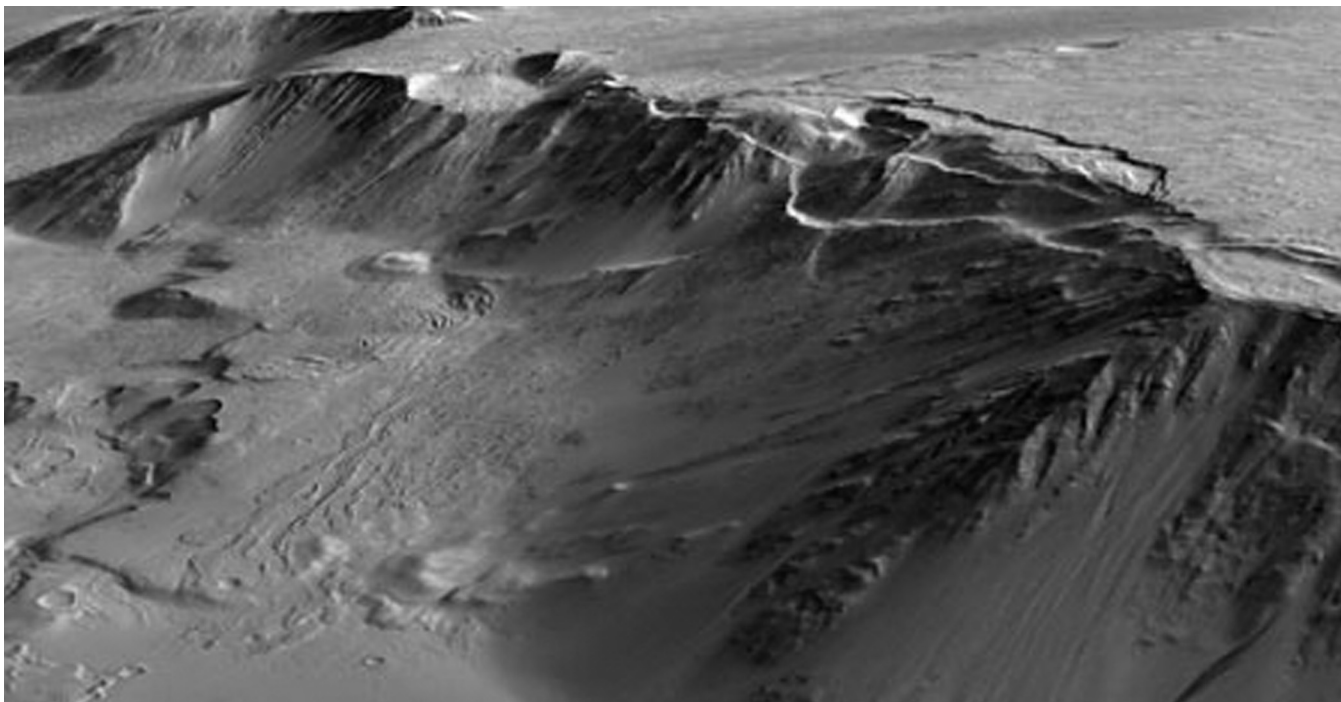
The tower is protected by armies of synthe-men soldiers, which will mercilessly kill any living being which approaches and which does not provide proper credentials. In addition, the towers hold a variety of offensive weaponry, from

radium-cannons to missile launchers to somno-beams, all of which can and will be turned against foes.

Each tower is self-contained, but they are linked by communication beams. Each one connects to the two or three nearest, and they pass along messages to their neighbors, and so on. Underground pipes link the towers as well, so that a drought in one region can be balanced by a surplus from the others. Should there be a conflict of needs, the mechanical minds resolve it based on the populations being served.

The north and south polar stations do not communicate, however. Though the canal grid is ultimately linked pole-to-pole, there are no connections by which the pumping stations can talk.

After tens of thousands of years, the pumping system still works magnificently. Less than one percent of the towers have failed, and those have had their duties easily subsumed by the rest of the network. However, the rate of failure has increased sharply in recent centuries. Nothing is immune to the ravages of time, and the chemical matrix which creates each new generation of synthe-men slowly degrades. Eventually, they will be unable to sustain themselves, or will be corrupted and debased by progressive errors in the matrix, and then the long, slow, and inevitable decline of the entire pumping network will begin.



CREATION SUMMARY

In **MARS**, the Gamemaster (GM) is the storyteller -- the one who portrays the world of Mars for the players, ruling on the actions of the characters and presenting obstacles and challenges to test their mettle.

The players portray characters within the world of Mars -- They are heroes, the central focus of the story and the game. Through their actions the characters can rise to greatness, or fall to ruin.

To create a character, follow the steps at right:

- 1) Determine your character concept. You should develop your character in consultation with the other players, and the GM.
- 2) Generate ability scores.
- 3) Choose race and class.
- 4) Assign and adjust ability scores.
- 5) Determine character features based on abilities, class and race (including Talents, Action Points, Hit Points, Parry and Dodge, Initiative, Saving Throws, etc.).
- 6) Select character occupation.
- 7) Select skills and record them, including benefits from class, race and ability scores.
- 8) Select feats.
- 9) Select your equipment, and determine Wealth.
- 10) Finalize your character, to personalize your Martian hero.

ABILITIES

In **MARS**, abilities determine the physical and mental characteristics of your character. The below methods are used to generate characters. Players and Gamemasters should agree on which method is to be used for all characters.

Standard Generation Method: To generate a set of ability scores for a character, roll 4d6 and discard the die with the lowest face value. This will create a score between 3 (all four dice rolling 1s) and 18 (three of the four dice coming up as 6s). Being able to remove the lowest number inclines the average value of each score and tends to create characters with higher than average abilities, as befits a hero. Repeat this procedure, and once you have generated six scores, place them in any order desired until all six numbers have been assigned to an ability.

Heroic Character Generation: This variant creates heroes with high scores to simulate their position as exceptional beings. While there is still some room for low scores in this method, each character created with it will generally have at least one very high ability and potentially more. Ability scores start at a value of 8 and get a bonus equal to 1d10, rolled separately for each ability. After generation, the values can be moved between the different abilities. This method is very flexible, but it can result in more powerful characters than any other generation variant because characters will never start with any ability modifier lower than -1.

Ability modifiers are the numbers that you apply to a die roll when your character tries to do something related to that ability. The modifiers are:

Score	Modifier	Score	Modifier
1	-5	14-15	+2
2-3	-4	16-17	+3
4-5	-3	18-19	+4
6-7	-2	20-21	+5
8-9	-1	22-23	+5
10-11	0	24-25	+6
12-13	+1	etc....	

Each ability partially describes your character and effects some of her or her actions. Every character has six basic Ability Scores:

Strength (STR)
Dexterity (DEX)
Constitution (CON)
Intelligence (INT)
Wisdom (WIS)
Charisma (CHA)

The Score of these Abilities ranges from 0 to infinity. The normal human (or Red Martian) range is 3 to 18. It is possible for a creature to have a score of “none”. A score of “none” is not the same as a score of “0”. A score of “none” means that the creature does not possess the ability at all. The modifier for a score of “none” is +0.

A character with a CON of 0 is dead. A 0 in any other score means the character is helpless and cannot move.

Keeping track of negative ability score points is never necessary. A character’s ability score cannot drop below 0.

STRENGTH

Strength measures your character’s physical power. Any creature that can physically manipulate other objects has at least 1 point of Strength.

You apply your character’s Strength modifier to:

Melee attack rolls.

Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or thrown weapon. (*Exceptions:* Off-hand attacks receive only one-half the character’s Strength bonus, while two-handed attacks receive one and a half times the Strength bonus.)

Any checks with skills that have Strength as their key ability.

Strength checks (for breaking down doors and the like.)

A creature with no Strength score can't exert force, usually because it has no physical body or because it doesn't move. The creature automatically fails Strength checks. If the creature can attack, it applies its Dexterity modifier to its base attack instead of a Strength modifier.

DEXTERITY

Dexterity measures agility, reflexes and balance. Any creature that can move has at least 1 point of Dexterity.

You apply your character's Dexterity modifier to:

Ranged attack rolls.

Melee attack rolls, when armed with a finesse weapon and possessing the Weapon Finesse feat.

Defense Value (DV), provided that the character can react to the attack.

Reflex saving throws, for avoiding traps and other attacks that you can escape by moving quickly.

Any checks with skills that have Dexterity as their key ability.

A creature with no Dexterity score can't move. If it can act, it applies its Intelligence modifier to initiative checks instead of a Dexterity modifier. The creature fails all Reflex saves and Dexterity checks.

CONSTITUTION

Constitution represents your character's health and stamina. Any living creature has at least 1 point of Constitution.

You apply your character's Constitution modifier to:

Each roll of a Hit Die (though a penalty can never drop a result below a 1).

Fortitude saving throws, for resisting poison, massive damage and similar threats.

Any checks with skills that have Constitution as their key ability.

If a character's Constitution changes enough to alter his or her Constitution modifier, his or her hit points also increase or decrease accordingly at the same time.

A creature with no Constitution has no body or no metabolism. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect works on objects. The creature is also immune to ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, and massive damage, and always fails Constitution checks.



INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence determines how well your character learns and reasons. Any creature that can think, learn, or remember has at least 1 point of Intelligence.

You apply your character's Intelligence modifier to:

The number of skill points gained at each level (though a penalty can never drop the result below a 1).

Any checks with skills that have Intelligence as their key ability.

A creature with no Intelligence score is an automaton, operating on simple instincts or programmed instructions. It is immune to all mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects) and automatically fails Intelligence checks.

An animal has an Intelligence score of 1 or 2. Sentience begins at a score of 3 or better.

WISDOM

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, intuition and perception. While Intelligence represents one's ability to analyze information, Wisdom represents being in tune with and aware of one's surroundings. Any creature that can perceive its environment in any fashion has at least 1 point of Wisdom.

You apply your character's Wisdom modifier to:

Will saving throws (for negating the effects of mind-altering powers or devices).

Any checks with skills that have Wisdom as their key ability.

Anything with no Wisdom score is an object, not a creature. Anything without a Wisdom score also has no Charisma score, and vice versa.

CHARISMA

Charisma measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, leadership ability and physical attractiveness.

You apply your character's Charisma modifier to:

Any checks with skills that have Charisma as their key ability.

Any check that represents attempts to influence others.

Ability scores can increase with no limit. Poisons, diseases, and other effects can cause temporary ability damage. Ability points lost to damage return naturally, typically at a rate of 1 point per day for each affected ability.

When an ability score changes, the modifier associated with that score also changes.



RACES OF MARS

While Mars today is a dying world, it was once a world so vibrant and full of life that it spawned a plethora of sentient races. Three of these still roam the surface of the world in large numbers, while others have retreated to the shadows or have become things of legend.

Of the races below, the red men, the green men, and the white apes are all suitable as player characters, though individuals of the latter two will most likely be outcasts or renegades if they join up with members of other races. It is recommended that a group of adventurers be composed primarily of red men and earthmen, with at most one character who is a green man or a white ape. Alternatively, a campaign could focus entirely on a green tribe's fight for survival in the harsh wastes, or on the military campaigns of a squadron of white apes. See "Campaigns On Mars" (Page XX) for more details.

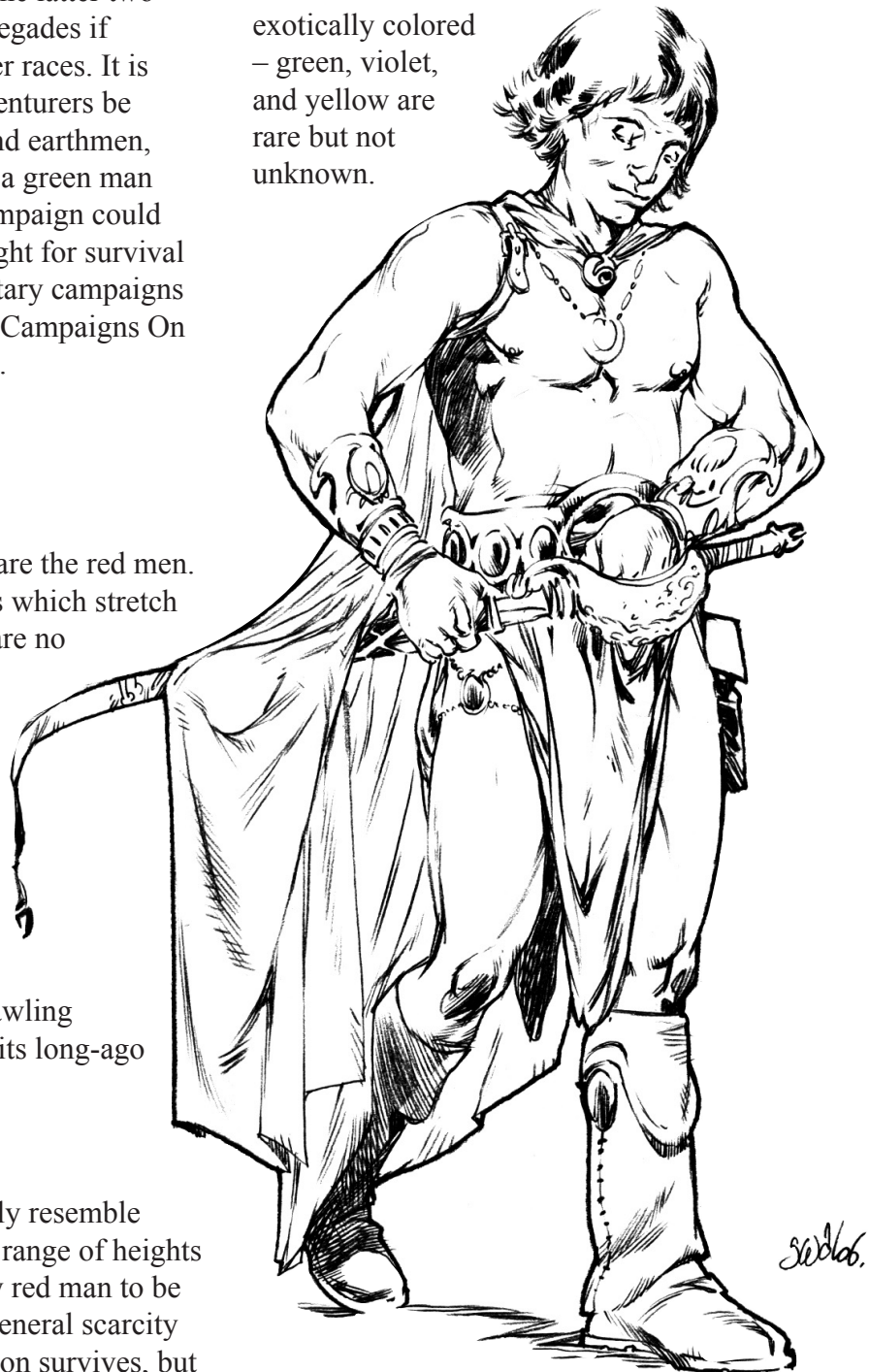
RED MEN

The most advanced race on Mars are the red men. They are the builders of the canals which stretch across the planet, and while they are no longer capable of such feats, they still retain access to advanced technology, from lethal radium guns to the great sky-corsairs which float far above the sandy surface of the red planet. Their cities dot the planet, with massive towers and pylons straining to touch the dusky sky. Far more cities, though, lie in sprawling ruins, remnants of their empire at its long-ago height.

PHYSIOLOGY

In appearance, the red men strongly resemble humans, having roughly the same range of heights and weights. It is very rare for any red man to be overweight, however, due to the general scarcity of food. The red Martian civilization survives, but it does not thrive – see below.

As the name indicates, the chief factor which distinguishes a red Martian from a human is the color of their skin. Their skin is generally crimson in hue, with variants ranging from a light lavender to a brilliant, almost burning, scarlet. Their hair is usually black, turning grey with age, though other colors do occur rarely – blonde hair is the next most common, followed by brown and red. Their eyes are often blue, black, or grey, but are sometimes more exotically colored – green, violet, and yellow are rare but not unknown.



Red Martians males rarely have facial hair; among those who do, mustaches are more common than beards. Facial hair, if it exists at all, rarely begins to grow before middle age. Baldness is almost unknown. Body hair, on both males and females, is non-existent.

Many of the other differences are not externally visible. Red Martian skin is somewhat thicker and drier than human skin, locking in precious moisture. They do not sweat. Their eyes have a thin, tough, membrane over them which protects them from blowing dust and high levels of glare.

The most important difference, though, is that red Martians are monotremes – egg laying mammals. While it is possible for Martians to mate at any time, there is a single period of roughly two weeks duration each year when fertility is at its peak, in early spring. (See “Holidays”, Page 9-10) Shortly after this time, eggs are planted in a central incubator. Every Martian city has at least one such place, and the largest have several. Identifying the mother of any given egg is not needed; they can be identified with perfect accuracy by smell. The eggs are then left to grow and hatch, which occurs some six months after being laid. The newly-hatched Martians are then gathered up by their parents and taken home. If a mother dies while waiting for an egg to hatch, the orphan will be adopted temporarily by a volunteer and cared for until it can eat solid food; it will then be turned over to the father to be raised. (If both parents are dead, a relative or friend will usually take responsibility. There are no orphanages among the red Martians.)

A typical Martian female can produce one child per year and has about 20 fertile years in which to do so; however, the scarce food and harsh conditions of modern Mars cause most families to have no more than 2 children, keeping populations stable. A few highly expansionist cultures do produce very large families, but these societies often collapse under the weight of their own numbers before they can conquer their distant neighbors – large-scale war across the sands is a difficult endeavor.

Beyond that, the red Martians are very similar to

humans – even to the point, strangely, of being interfertile with them. They can eat and digest the same foods and have very similar nutritional requirements. Their lifespans are marginally longer than that of humans – living to 100 (in Earth years) is considered typical, and elders of 140 are not unknown. With suitable makeup and clothing, a red Martian could pass unnoticed on Earth.

CULTURE

It is as difficult to summarize red Martian culture as it would be to summarize all human culture. They have the same range of emotions and personality types, and there is no single, over-arching trait which defines them. They have dozens of wildly varying cultures, ranging from military dictatorships to peaceful agrarian societies. There are several major religions and many small cults or sects. They have a wide range of economic systems, though most have some form of private property ownership.

However, all the diverse cultures of the red Martians do share some common traits – they are wholly dependant on the canal network for their survival and they are all aware that their world is slowly but surely dying. These add a certain patina to all cultures, an overlay on top of the existing, highly varied, base. There is a strong sense of fatalism and a general malaise. Big dreams have no place in a dying world. Many individuals tend to turn inwards, to art, religion, or philosophy. Invention and creation are dying.

In addition, the frantic need to complete the canals (see “Ancient Mars”, page 6) and the bloody wars which followed created a gap in Martian history. The knowledge, lore, and culture of the pre-canal red Martians is known only in pieces and fragments. The greatest accomplishments of the species are locked behind a wall of time and war; all the current Martians can do is to look at the wonders left over and marvel at them. As the relics of advanced technology fail, the various kingdoms and empires and republics of Mars slowly sink into barbarism, the remaining functioning items becoming more akin to magical relics than advanced tools.

A few cultures, such as Callor Maralin (see Page 11), defy this stereotype, and actively seek new knowledge or to recover old knowledge. Other cultures react to the sense of impending doom by waging war or by seeking solace and purpose in newly-forged religious beliefs. Most, though, seem to be merely “going through the motions”, carrying on the traditions of their ancestors simply because no one can proffer an appealing alternative.

There are a large number of Martian faiths, but most are variants on a single set of core beliefs: A pantheon of mostly-distant gods who oversee the major aspects of life, but do so in a mechanistic and generally detached manner, combined with a form of ancestor worship which holds that ones deceased family members can take an active role in one’s life – either by interceding with the gods or by bringing luck or fortune to the living. A common practice in many faiths is for each family member to pen a small summary of their life and needs for the past week, and then to burn it at a family alter. Doing so transmits it to the ancestral spirits, who then read it. Other faiths hold that one’s ancestors are always watching and that such rituals are unneeded.

ADVENTURERS

Given the state of Mars today, it is interesting to note that there are still those who dare to do great things. Such individuals are somewhat atypical in most communities, but they are generally not ostracized for this; rather, they are lauded and admired for bringing back some of the spirit and drive which allowed the red Martians of old to conceive of, and then build, so magnificent a structure as the canal network.

Those who seek lives of excitement (or have such lives thrust upon them) are a highly varied lot. Some common types are:

The young warrior who seeks to prove himself in real combat.

The scholar whose quest for lore takes him from the comfortable but inadequate libraries.

The merchant or trader looking for rare and precious items.

The explorer who simply wishes to see what is out there.

The cunning thief who finds the challenge to be more important than the reward.

The driven individual seeking to redress a grievous wrong.

A single such person can, and often does, inspire others – old friends, lovers, or family servants will often find themselves drawn into a web of adventure.

RED MARTIAN RACIAL TRAITS

Red Martians are medium humanoids with a base move of 30’.

Red Martians gain a +2 on all Fortitude saves against blinding effects or damage to their eyes.

Red Martians gain +4 skill points at first level and +1 skill point at each additional level. They also gain a bonus feat at first level.

GREEN MEN

The green men of Mars are not nearly so advanced as the red men. They evolved at about the same time, but on opposite sides of the globe. While the red men were forced to use cunning and cooperation to defeat the many monstrous beasts of the red planet, the strong and powerful green men learned to rely mostly on brute force. Thus, they never evolved much beyond a primitive tribal culture.

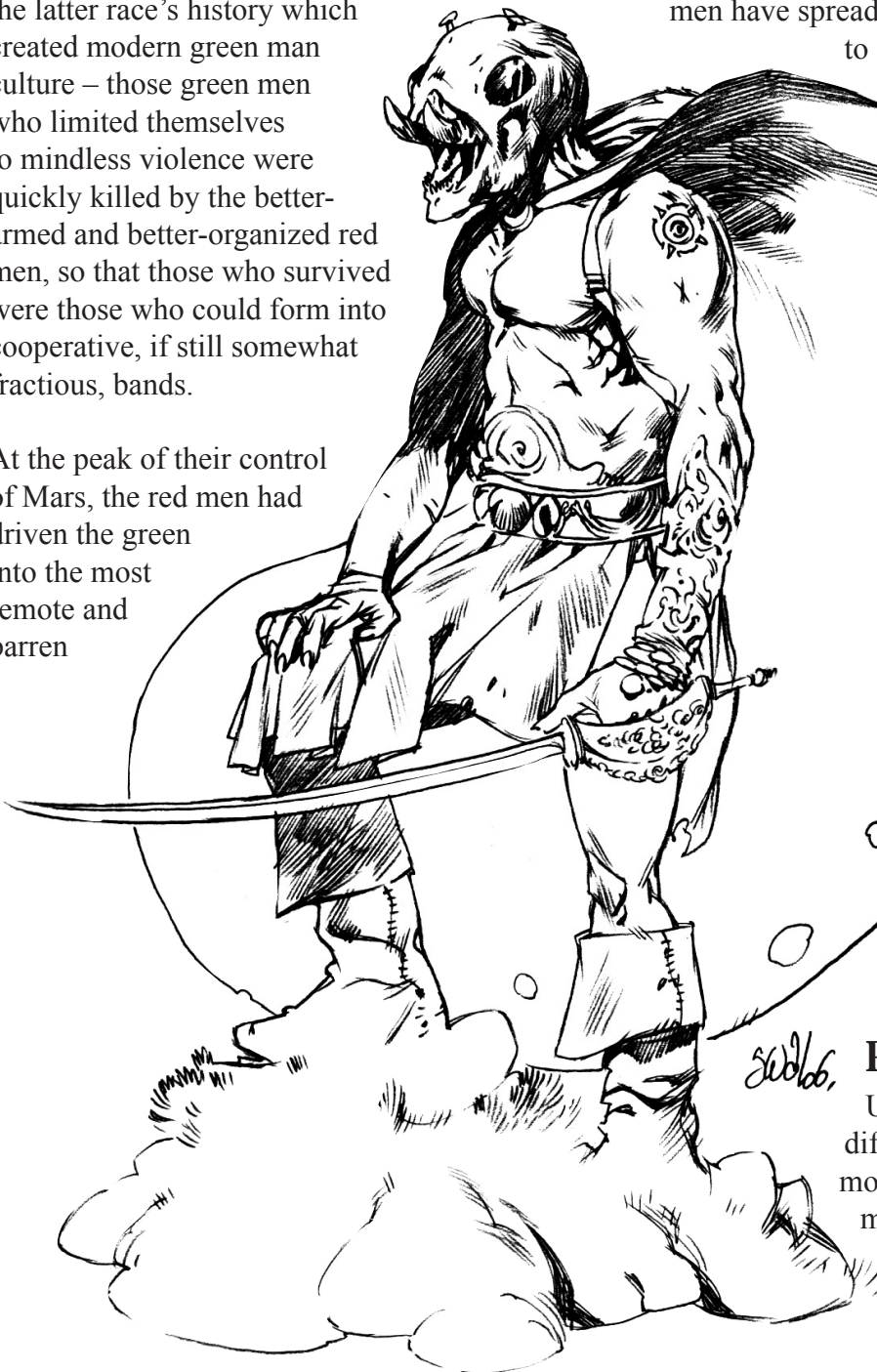
Indeed, it was contact with the red men early in the latter race's history which created modern green man culture – those green men who limited themselves to mindless violence were quickly killed by the better-armed and better-organized red men, so that those who survived were those who could form into cooperative, if still somewhat fractious, bands.

At the peak of their control of Mars, the red men had driven the green into the most remote and barren

wastelands. There, they brutes slowly learned to survive in the harshest conditions and managed to crudely mimic some of the arts of the red men, learning the very basics of smithing and animal husbandry. Their numbers were kept in check by their very nature – any sufficiently large band of green men fell to civil war or launched itself in futile rage against the nearest outpost of the red men, only to be driven back or slaughtered.

Since the time of the canals, however, the green men have spread and prospered. Already able to survive with little water, the retreating oceans and dying rivers merely expanded their territory. As the red men turned all efforts towards building the canals, their frontier cities fell to an emerald onslaught – and as the frontier receded, the tribes expanded.

Today, outside the islands of canal-fed civilization, all of Mars is wasteland, and all of the wasteland is claimed by the green men.



PHYSIOLOGY

Unlike the red men, the green men differ from the men of Earth by far more than skin color. A typical green man is a hulking brute seven to eight feet tall, with massive tusks which can be used to inflict grievous wounds. In

addition, the green men's hands end in sharp, tearing, claws, making an unarmed green man nearly as dangerous as an armed one – possibly more, as an unarmed one is probably hungry and desperate.

The skin of a green man is smooth, hairless, and somewhat hard and waxy, providing a mild form of armor. They are utterly hairless, and have the same eye protection as the red man. They are warm-blooded creatures, but they are not mammals – the females do not nurture the newly hatched young, who are hatched ready to eat anything the adults can eat.

The green men are omnivores, though they prefer meat when they can get it, and are not at all above cannibalism – indeed, it would be considered strange and wrong not to eat the corpse of a comrade who died of anything other than some form of disease.

The green men also lay eggs. In the wild, the family will carry an egg with them. Among the 'tribal' green men, the eggs are usually laid when the tribe is safely ensconced in a ruined city or other safe location. They are generally laid in random, concealed locations, and, when they hatch, the young must make their way to the adults of the tribe for protection. A female typically lays a clutch of 3 to 5 eggs, with the expectation 1 or 2 of those hatched will last long enough to find adults.

Green men mature very rapidly, reaching physical maturity after only one Martian year. They typically live for 40 or 50 Earth years, if they do not die by violence before then, which is a rare thing. A green Martian who has lived long enough to have his skin darken with age (a 40 year old green man has skin of deep olive hue) is a warrior to be feared, both strong and canny.

CULTURE

There are two dominant forms of green man culture. The first, almost never seen on modern Mars, except in the jungles surrounding the north pole, is that of the solitary wanderer or small family band. The 'family' will exist just long

enough to hatch an egg and teach the child the basics of language and survival, then break up into independent individuals once again.

Far more common on modern Mars is the tribe. A tribe is a band of between 20 and 100 green men, organized around the strongest fighter, who is the chief. There are few other political or social divisions -- there are fighters, and there are children too young to fight, and there are females. That is about it. The green men have very little concept of religion or spirituality beyond a crude form of sympathetic magic – eating the meat of a strong animal gives you some of its strength, making and smashing the image of an enemy will harm that enemy, and so on. A few of the smartest green men become something akin to shamans or witch doctors by careful manipulation of this belief.

There are no family bonds among the tribal green men. Mating is done by instinct and carries no emotional connotations. Children are raised by the tribe. Among the few remaining 'wild' green men, children are raised just until they can survive on their own; then both parents and children part to live alone, except when caring for an egg or a hatchling.

Tribes of green men keep a history of the most important events to impact the tribe, passed down orally. The language of the tribal green men has evolved over the years, becoming somewhat more complex and rich, while the original language of the nomadic wanderers remains extremely simple, capable of expressing only the most basic concepts. Some of the more daring (or foolish) scholars among the red men try to capture green men with a good grasp of their tribe's history, as such rote-learned lore can contain clues to lost cities or forgotten artifacts which the tribe may have come upon in generations past.

Since the fall of most of the red kingdoms, many of the tribes of green men have adapted the abandoned cities for their own use. During the warm Martian summer, the green men wander the wastelands seeking food or plunder. During the cold winter, they retreat to the cities, where they produce the next generation and practice what

crafts they have mastered. The oldest cities are long since plundered, but tribes sometimes find a relatively recent ruin which can still yield up some treasures. (The green men have no economy as such, but they do love pretty gems and appreciate the worth of a well-made sword)

ADVENTURERS

Few among the green men understand anything beyond fighting, eating, and mating. However, there are a rare few born every generation who aspire to more. These might be the forerunners of new, superior race, or they may simply be a strange quirk of genetics, but either way, they are distinct from their fellows. They ask questions, they seek answers. They are curious about who built the cities in which the green men spend the winters, and they ask why the tribes always war instead of uniting against their foes.

Such types often do not live past childhood, but those who are especially cunning, or simply as strong as they are smart, do. They can become tribal leaders, or, more often, they leave their bands and wander, seeking something they cannot easily identify. Many will lurk on the outskirts of the red Martian civilization, trying to learn from them. Sometimes, they will encounter red Martians in dire circumstances in the wastes, and offer aid in exchange for knowledge.

GREEN MARTIAN RACIAL TRAITS

+4 Strength, +2 Con, -4 Intelligence, -2 Dex:
The Green Martians are fantastically strong and healthy, but are very dim-witted and somewhat clumsy, besides.

Large size: Green Martians are considered Large creatures. They have a 10' reach, and suffer a -1 to Defense and Attack rolls. Their base speed is 40'.

Green Martians have few social skills, especially when dealing with other races. They suffer a -4 penalty on all Charisma based skills (and on Sense Motive) when used against non-Green Martians, with the exception of Intimidate.

Green Martians have a +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Survival checks.

Green Martians get a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saves to resist the effects of heat, hunger, or thirst.

Green Martians are ECL +1.

Green Martians receive no bonus feat at first level and gain -4 skill points at first level and -1 skill point at each additional level. (Minimum 1 skill point/level)

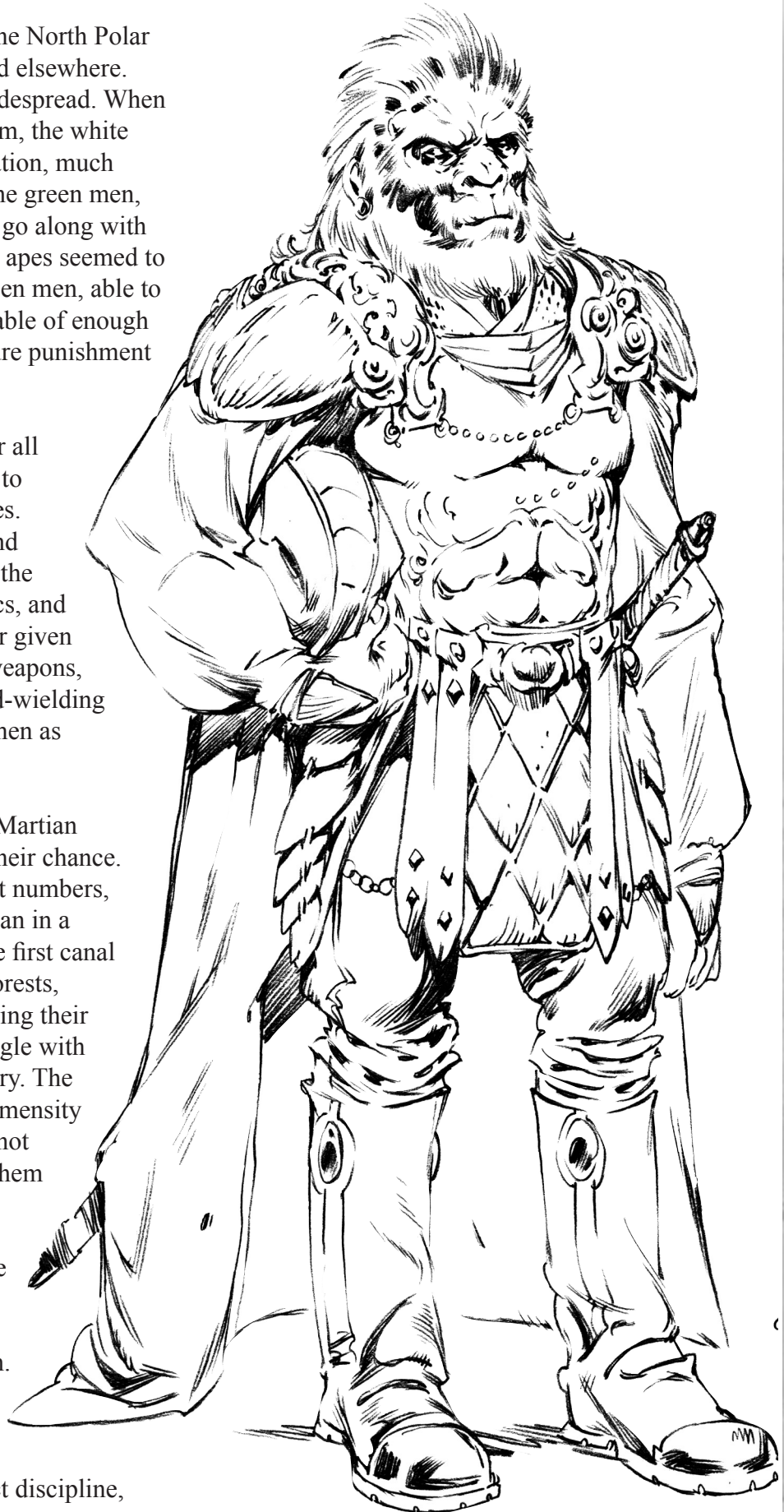
WHITE APES

The white apes of Mars control the North Polar Jungle and are occasionally found elsewhere. Long ago, they were far more widespread. When the red Martians encountered them, the white apes had only the crudest civilization, much like the green men – but unlike the green men, they had cunning and intellect to go along with savagery and strength. The white apes seemed to be far more tractable than the green men, able to be taught complex tasks and capable of enough self-control that the threat of future punishment could deter violent rages.

Over time, the apes were used for all sorts of brute labor, from mining to construction to household services. They learned mining, farming, and many skills and crafts, including the rudiments of literacy, mathematics, and military tactics. (They were never given radium guns or other advanced weapons, but were often formed into sword-wielding units and sent against the green men as expendable infantry troops.)

When the great crisis hit the red Martian civilization, the white apes saw their chance. Sent to work on the canals in vast numbers, they were able to organize and plan in a way they could not before. As the first canal work reached the rich northern forests, they rebelled en masse, slaughtering their overseers and fleeing into the jungle with whatever supplies they could carry. The red men, stretched thin by the immensity of the canal building task, could not spare the forces needed to track them down; they limited themselves to setting guards on the canals to prevent further attacks. The white apes retreated further into the depths of the violet forests, and there set up their own civilization.

Millennia of enslavement had given them some framework for their culture. Strict discipline,



order, cooperation, and obedience to a powerful authority was the only lifestyle most had know, and with their red masters gone, they looked among themselves for new leaders. Their society flourished, to some extent, as the most charismatic or powerful drew followers to themselves. These small bands would then cluster around other bands, and so forth. A return to the original nomadic lifestyle was not tenable, given both the number of refugees from red Martian domination and the fact that, over millennia, the apes had become used to a certain degree of civilization. Carnivores, the apes became master breeders and ranchers, and they used the plentiful rock which could be found near the polar boundaries to construct their cities.

As Mars dried, the jungles contracted. Resources became scarce, and war was inevitable. Skilled imitators but poor creators, the white apes fought with swords and armor patterned after those of the red men. Eventually, the shrinking jungle and constant battle led to the creation of a single, unified, alliance of city-states, one which could organize the manpower (well, apepower) needed to continue to wring life out of the surrounding environment and even dream of expansion and glory.

The white apes today pose a serious threat to the dominion of the red men. Should they ever take and hold a major canal city, they will have a foothold from which they can begin to spread southwards. The white apes have numbers; the red men have superior technology, but the latter is slowly crumbling into disrepair and the knowledge to create it anew is long lost.

PHYSIOLOGY

The white apes resemble the men of Earth much less than either the Red or Green men, but more than the Grey Men. They are huge, hulking, white-furred apes, akin to Earthly gorillas but somewhat larger and much shaggier, with massive jaws lined with razor-sharp teeth. Their hands are somewhat clumsier and thicker than those of the red men, but they do have grasping feet, and their clothing and armor are designed to take full advantage of this fact.

Their fur is uniformly white, with few mottlings or patterns other than those caused by disease. The color variation is limited – from a brilliant snowy white to a pale, dirty grey is as far as it goes. Their eyes are generally a brilliant and icy blue, with some individuals having grey or green tints.

As with the red men, the white apes are monotremes, but they do not have a particular fertile period. Females can lay eggs year-round. A typical white ape female will produce one young every two years, though sometimes a single egg will hatch into twins, or, very rarely, triplets. (In such a case one of the babies will most likely be very weak, and will be left to die.)

White apes are fantastically strong, hardy, and agile. They can be very intelligent, but most are not – there is a strong streak of savage brutality within them which no amount of civilization can cure.

They are short-lived – a white ape is mature at 10, and old at 30. A wizened elder will be 50 or so, and will be losing hair along his head and neck. As white apes age, their savagery recedes and their wisdom grows – it was the enslavement by the red men which created the conditions for a sufficiently large population of barenecks to come to exist. This large population of clever and self-controlled older apes was capable of formulating and coordinating the complex plans required for rebellion and the establishment of a self-sufficient culture.

White apes are primarily carnivores. They can eat plants, especially fruits, as supplementary foods, but they will starve without a steady supply of meat.

CULTURE

White ape culture is a strange blend of bestial savagery, cold discipline, and decadent decay. Apart from a few surviving bands of roaming savages far from the Jungle Empire, they dwell primarily in walled cities of marble and granite, all united under the rule of a single Emperor. The provinces of the Empire – each controlled by a

dominant city-state – cluster around the canal network. They do not seek to control the flow of water down the canals, as their one attempt to do this proved disastrous (see “Ape Empire”, page 16), but they do make use of them. (The original settlements of the apes were far from the canals; they relocated once it became possible to do so.)

Social class in the Empire is everything, but social class is not fixed. Anyone can aspire to rise to the rank of Emperor, if they have the cunning and might to do so. Most such aspirants fail, of course, and their fate is death – either directly, or after a stint in the infamous battle-pits.

However, ambition is relatively rare among the apes. Most, especially those with some degree of wealth or social status to begin with, prefer to simply enjoy what they’ve got. The Empire is weakening, not from external forces (the red men have rarely pressed any attacks northwards), but from internal decay. Most of the apes prefer drunken revelry and mindless spectacle to the hard work of planning and orchestrating expansion.

The apes have a polygamous society, where a single male may maintain a harem of wives. The poorest or weakest of the apes have no wives; the majority can keep one, and the wealthy and powerful have two or more. Childrearing is considered “women’s work”, with eggs cared for solely by the mother (usually, eggs are placed in rooms kept warm with a constantly-tended fire). A father tends not to concern himself with offspring until they are six or so – it is then that training in some sort of professional skills generally begins.

For lowborn apes with any sort of ambition, the military is the primary destination – the problem is that there are no enemies, per se. However, the Imperators (mostly barenecks) know that an army of young and restless soldiers is a poor thing to keep nearby, so, there are constant feints south, raids on the northmost red Martian cities, primarily to provide “something to do”. The northern jungle has begun to attract green men, and these provide “barbarian tribes” against which the disciplined ape centurions can test their mettle. The clash of ape and green man is

spectacular – mindless savagery against savagery honed and disciplined to a brutal edge.

For there is still savagery beneath all the trappings of decadent imperialism. Simple disagreements among the apes, especially the hot-blooded young males, explode into brutal, bloody, battle. The apes idea of “entertainment” is cruelty – gladiatorial fights are invariably to the death, and spectacular and imaginative tortures are applied to criminals or captured prisoners or war. The more gruesome and depraved the scene, the more the primal heart of the white ape rejoices. Only the barenecks show any sort of restraint or decorum. In the few years they have between the ascent of wisdom and the collapse of the body from sheer age, they seek to create and preserve some sort of white ape civilization worthy of the name; thus, the cities of the Empire contains libraries filled with scrolls of art, philosophy, and ethics, which no ape reads or cares for until he is too old for it to do any good.

Surrounding each city-state is a swarm of grazing fields, mines, and quarries. The apes need iron for blades, stone for building, and meat for eating, and the majority of the citizens live painful, brutal, lives providing these things. There are sometimes orchards and farms as well – the potent wine (*grazag*) of the white apes comes from fruit which grows only in select areas.

The cities of the white apes are linked by roads, laboriously hacked through the ever-encroaching jungle. Maintaining these roads is another task which requires brute manual labor, along with considerable combat skill – the jungles teem with hostile animals and encroaching green men. Should the roads fail, trade between the cities, and the coordination which allows the Empire to function as a single political entity and not a squabbling collection of independent cities would be lost.

ADVENTURERS

After the red men, the white apes are the most likely of the races of Mars to leave their home cities and explore the wider world beyond. A particularly ambitious Imperator might wish to

retake some of the older, abandoned, cities. A glitch in the canals or a new plague might cause the local fields to grow fallow, forcing such a move. The green men might be growing more restless, leading to a crusade to wipe them from the region. A southern march might result in an unexpected conquest, and the apes will then need to keep and hold a red Martian city.

However, it is also possible for a white ape to leave his kind behind and seek his fortune on his own. The late-blooming wisdom of the barenecks sometimes appears early in life, and some apes combine ambition with a disdain for brutality, leaving them no means of ascent within their harsh society. An ape who committed a crime against a more powerful figure might choose to flee the Empire rather than end his life in the battle pits. Curiosity might drive a young ape to seek out the world beyond the northern jungles, to see what wonders wait to be discovered.

WHITE APE RACIAL TRAITS

White Apes are Medium Humanoids with a base move of 30'.

+2 Str, -2 Wis, -2 Cha: White Apes are very strong, but are often prone to irrational actions and a lack of insight.

Thick Fur: The heavy fur coat of the White Ape grants a +4 bonus on all saves to resist the environmental effects of cold, as well as DR 2 against cold damage.

Clumsy: The hands of the White Apes are not as well developed for gripping as those of the Red or even the Green Martians, so they suffer a -2 penalty on all rolls where fine manipulation is required, such as Sleight of Hand.

Prehensile Toes: White Apes can grasp objects with their feet. This grants them a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks. It also may grant other useful abilities at the Game Master's discretion – for example, a White Ape could dangle from a branch with his hands and perform a grapple with his feet. It does *not* permit any sort of extra attacks per round, under any circumstances, though it may allow a White Ape to attack with a weapon held in his feet if his hands are tied. (Obviously, a Balance check or the like would be called for at an appropriately high DC – at least 20)

White Apes receive no bonus feat at first level and gain -4 skill points at first level and -1 skill point at each additional level. (Minimum 1 skill point/level)

GREY MEN

The term “Grey Men” is grossly inaccurate, for the grey Martians are almost entirely unlike men in physical form or mental outlook – indeed, only the Living Brains are more alien in nature. The grey men have been creatures of legend and mystery since the earliest records of the red Martians, and even today, very little is known of them aside from rumors and fables. The following information, thus, is *not* known to most inhabitants of Mars – and, indeed, it might not be entirely true. The grey men are mysterious and strange, and Game Masters should feel free to alter any details in order to maintain the aura of strangeness.

PHYSIOLOGY

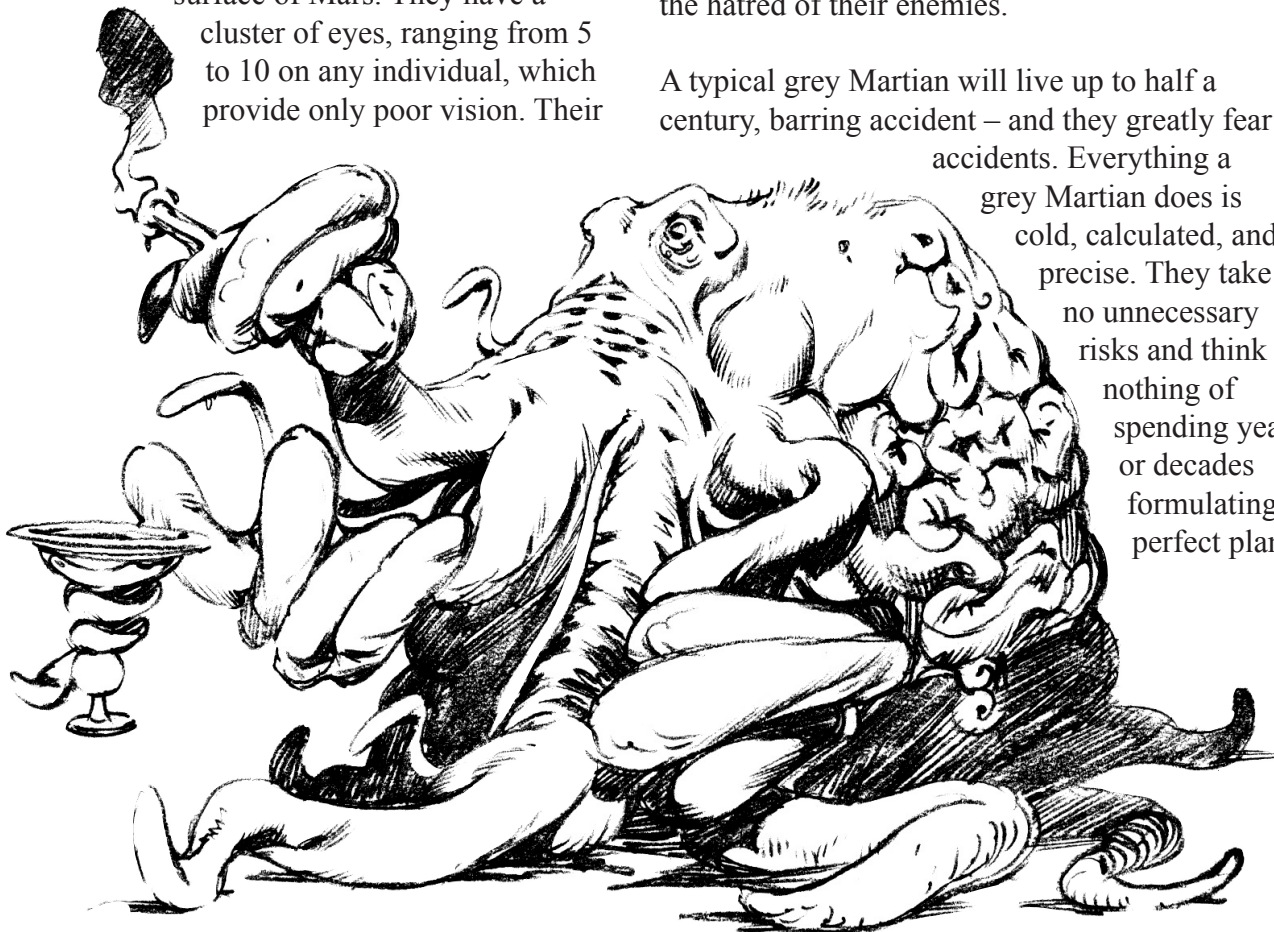
The grey men are roughly the same size of a typical red Martian or Earthman, but that is the extent of the resemblance. They are hexapodal invertebrates, something like gargantuan octopi, but their limbs are far thicker and stronger, capable of supporting them as they travel on the surface of Mars. They have a cluster of eyes, ranging from 5 to 10 on any individual, which provide only poor vision. Their

central body is roughly ovoid, with the brain – at least half again as large a human’s – located in the center. It is surrounded by a tough shell of cartilage.

Physically, the grey Martians are extremely weak. Even with their thick limbs and even in the light gravity of Mars, they move slowly. Their senses are poor. Their lifespans are very long, but their reproductive cycle is slow and sporadic, with precious few children born each year. They are hermaphroditic, and each is capable of producing offspring independently, but they prefer to exchange genetic material to produce more viable children. There is neither pleasure nor emotional attachment to this act; it means nothing more to the grey men than casual physical contact.

The grey Martians cannot live for long on the surface of Mars. The sunlight, weak as it is, burns them, and the dry air desiccates them. Only when contained in their great walking war machines can they venture forth into the crimson sands. Otherwise, they dwell far below the surface, in the still-moist caverns. It is only here that they dare to expose their flesh, safe from the ravenous sun and the hatred of their enemies.

A typical grey Martian will live up to half a century, barring accident – and they greatly fear accidents. Everything a grey Martian does is cold, calculated, and precise. They take no unnecessary risks and think nothing of spending years or decades formulating a perfect plan.



In color, grey Martians are, obviously, grey, ranging from a very pale grey – almost a pallid white – to a deep, darker grey which is close to black. Some are solidly colored, while others have a patched or piebald pattern to them. The colors tend to fade with age, until the very oldest of the race are practically albino.

CULTURE

The grey men of Mars are the second-oldest race to inhabit the planet. They were ancient and dying when the red Martians first evolved. Aeons ago, when the Earth was ruled by the giant reptiles, the grey men lived on the surface of a swampy, lush, Mars. There they built mighty cities and created craft which could leave the planet behind and carry them across the solar system and even to distant suns. This glory age is now not even a memory – only a handful of truly rare and almost incomprehensible artifacts remain to speak of it. Even the grey Martians themselves scarcely recall it, as that sort of life is now utterly foreign to them.

As the grey Martians evolved, their bodies became weaker even as their minds became more and more potent. They moved down underground, carving out great cities and reshaping the underworld of Mars. The vast cavern systems which burrow through Mars today are due, in part, to their long-ago actions.

The grey Martians slowly lost all trace of emotion. Love, compassion, hatred, rage...all of these faded away, leaving only two things in their minds – cold, calculating, logic untempered by concepts of justice or mercy, and a frigid, terrible *envy* of all other life – life which still walks beneath the sun, which still has the capacity to feel.

There is only a single grey Martian society, and it is run by a sort of complex consensus. The lack of emotion also brings with it a lack of individual ambition, greed, or rebelliousness, so the goals of the society can usually be quickly decided upon, and the best individuals to fulfill those goals are appointed to do so. The greys do not have a hive mind, as such, but are in constant communication

with each other. Individual personality traits tend to be muted, expressed mostly as odd quirks or as particular areas of special interest – one grey Martian might spend a century studying a particular type of red Martian pottery, for example, trying to figure out the practical purpose of the complex decorative swirls.

The grey Martians are extremely advanced, technologically. They have tapped into the molten core of Mars for their power, and their huge cities are run by gargantuan calculating engines the size of skyscrapers. Transport tubes buried miles below the surface link the major settlements. Food is produced in huge vats, a bland mash which provides the complete nutritional requirements. (However, the grey Martians are sometimes struck by a strange, atavistic urge for the flesh and especially blood of living beings. When this occurs, they will send a tripod out to the nearest red or green Martian settlement and capture a few dozen victims, who are taken below and devoured.)

Should the Martians need to leave their enclaves, they do so only in their legendary war machines. These are gargantuan tripods surmounted by an ovoid shell. The metal which composes them is virtually immune to damage – only the largest radium-cannons of the red Martians have shown even the slightest effect. Armed with a variety of weapons, the tripods are given a wide berth by all other inhabitants of Mars. Those few who do not flee them are found only as incinerated corpses, if they are found at all.

Though their numbers are dwindling, the Grey Martian's territory is expanding. Their plans are growing closer to completion, and they have a constant need for more resources. Thus, the regions they hold – known as the Grey Expanses – continue to spread across the planet.

GREY MARTIAN RACIAL TRAITS

Grey Martians are medium-size aberrations with a base move of only 15'.

Str -4, Con -2, Int +4, Wis +2: Grey Martians have almost completely neglected their physical development and have allowed their bodies to greatly degenerate.

-2 Initiative: Grey Martians react slowly to combat situations, as they are utterly unprepared for direct, interpersonal, conflict. Note that this modifier does not apply if they are in one of their war machines.

-2 Spot and Search, +2 Listen: The eyes of the grey Martians are atrophied from eons spent in the dim caverns. Unless in their machines, they have poor visual acuity. However, their hearing is very keen.

Cowardice: Grey Martians have little courage. If a fight is going poorly, they will retreat and plan to strike back rather than battle on for 'honor' or 'glory'. Thus, they suffer a -4 penalty on all Will saves to resist fear effects.

Single-mindedness: By the same token, the Grey Martians are resolute once fixed on a course of action, provided that course of action is still succeeding. They gain a +2 on Will saves against mind-affecting effects, other than those which are also Fear effects.

Alien Minds: The culture and worldview of the Grey Martians is utterly and completely alien. Any Charisma-based skills, other than intimidate, suffer a -4 penalty when used against them, and they suffer a -4 penalty on the use of all such skills. (Including Intimidate, unless they are within a war machine at the time).

Grey Martians receive no bonus feat at first level and gain -4 skill points at first level and -1 skill point at each additional level. (Minimum 1 skill point/level)



SYNTH-MEN

In order to build the great canals of Mars, the red Martians needed to unite, to set aside millennia of feuds and wars and oaths of blood vengeance. Accepting and understanding this took generations, just as accepting and understanding the ecological change that was slowly destroying the planet. Finally, though, it was done – all the varied empires of Mars were either united in their vision of the canals, or had been somehow nullified. However, this unity spawned another problem. Once the canals were built and the water flowing, whosoever controlled the canals would control Mars. They could starve their enemies or hold entire regions of the world hostage. Each of the dozens of kingdoms which comprised the Canal Coalition viewed the others with suspicion, wondering which would betray, and when.

Thus, work was painfully slow, as each faction watched the others for signs of undue ambition. A dozen plans of control over the network were drawn up, each promising fairness and security, but all rested, ultimately, on the trustworthiness of those who agreed to abide by the plans. Who would guard the guardians?

A century into the long process of construction, a new idea was born. Even as much of the old science was being lost, some new advances were still being made, especially in the biological sciences. The art of building synthetic chemical life, creatures akin to normal biological beings but wholly artificial, had just begun to flower as the great drying began. It was hoped this would lead to new sources of food, but that turned out to be a dead end. Still, it offered the solution to a different problem.

No Martian could be trusted with power over the canals – but *synthetic* Martians could! The overseers and controllers and maintainers of the canals would be a race of synthetic humanoids – synthe-men! Built to be as incapable of betraying their trust as a red Martian is of leaping to Phobos, they would have no loyalty to any kingdom, or family, or religion, or ideology other than the preservation of the canals.

The plan worked. Today, it is the synthe-men who run the polar stations, who clear blockages, who repair cracks or leaks, and who protect the network from all harm. Green raiders or white apes, mad scientists of blood-crazed warlords – all those who tamper with the canal network face an implacable, unstoppable, and utterly resolute foe.

PHYSIOLOGY

Synthe-men are made, not born. They are grown in great crystalline vats, which are filled with a thick green liquid. Into this liquid is poured a blend of chemicals and a strange, netlike, substance known as the formative matrix. This matrix attracts and shapes the chemical stew, causing it form into the equivalents of organs, muscles, bones, skin – and mind. The brains of synthe-man is built according to precise specifications. It awakens from the vat alert and intelligent, knowing its designated function and



all the skills needed to perform it.

Synthe-men are pale creatures, almost albino, and hairless. Their eyes are silver-grey. Their size and weight varies according to their task, but they are generally within the norm for the red Martians. They appear to be about 20 years of age when decanted, and show no signs of the passage of time until they pass their hundredth year, at which point, the chemical matrix begins to degrade rapidly, leading to an apparent age increase of ten years for every one which passes, until the system breaks down completely at about age 105 to 106. A synthe-man neither fears nor welcomes this death – it is simply something which happens. He would only be bothered if he was going to die with a vital duty unfulfilled and no one to replace him.

The synthe-men eat and drink much the same food as the red Martians, though they need smaller quantities and do not care about taste or variety. Their chemical bodies are immune to disease and highly resistant to poison. Their organs are strong and resilient, and many are fitted with redundancies. If a synthe-man is threatened with a critical hit, the roll to confirm the critical suffers a -4 circumstance modifier.

SOCIETY

Synthe-men live to serve. They cannot conceive of any other life, nor do they desire it. There is no long-smoldering resentment among the tireless maintainers of the polar stations, nor do they sit and dream of a better, or even a different, life. Their task *is* their life, and ill-guided attempts to ‘liberate’ or ‘emancipate’ them will most likely result in tragedy.

Synthe-men, in general, lack imagination or creativity. They are not incapable of free will or creative thought; they just have little need of it. Only if confronted with a crisis wholly beyond their built-in lexicon of situations and responses will they be forced to find new solutions to problems.

They do not have names – they have job designations and batch numbers. “Pipe Fitter FG56A1”, “Drill Maintenance GH678J”, and so

on, are typical “names”. Their name and number is marked on their skin during their gestation, appearing on the back of the right hand. This marking contains complex photorefective cells, allowing it to be ‘read’ by various sensors which, in turn, control security within the polar pumping stations.

Synthe-men lack most emotions. They feel a vague pleasure at doing their job well, and feelings of guilt, shame, or sadness if they fail. They will react with cold but deadly force to those who seek to damage the canals or the pumps. Beyond that, they are ciphers. They do not have friends, not even among each other. They do not hate, or love, or carry grudges. They obey their orders to the best of their ability and that is all there is to it.

SYNTHE-MEN RACIAL TRAITS

Medium humanoids. Base move 30’.

Constructed for a purpose: Every synthe-man has a job to do. They get a +2 in the attribute most relevant to their purpose (usually, this will be the element linked to their primary class – a synthe-man Smart Hero/Ordinary will have a +2 to Intelligence.) In turn, abilities not relevant to their job are downgraded – each Synthe-man has a -2 in the attribute least relevant to their task.

Focused: Synthe-men rarely learn anything outside their specialty. They may never put ranks in cross-class skills, or take feats not related to their job.

Uncreative: Synthe-men are not incapable of original thought, but it’s not easy for them. They suffer a -4 modifier on all checks which involve leaps of logic, inductive reasoning, or creative artistic ability.

EARTHMEN

Sometimes called Terrans, Earthers, or Earthlings, it is often the case that men and women from the small green planet third from the sun find their way to the dusky sands of Mars. Such individuals may find their way there via a variety of means (See “Campaigns”), but, once there, find a world both familiar and alien.

Mechanically, Earthmen may be created using any iteration of the D20 rules. They may choose skills or feats which are inapplicable on Mars.

While there are no hard and fast rules, it is generally assumed that **MARS** occurs somewhere between 1850 and 1950, and any Earth characters will have appropriate skills. While a century passes on Mars with no noticeable change, quite a deal happened on Earth during that time.

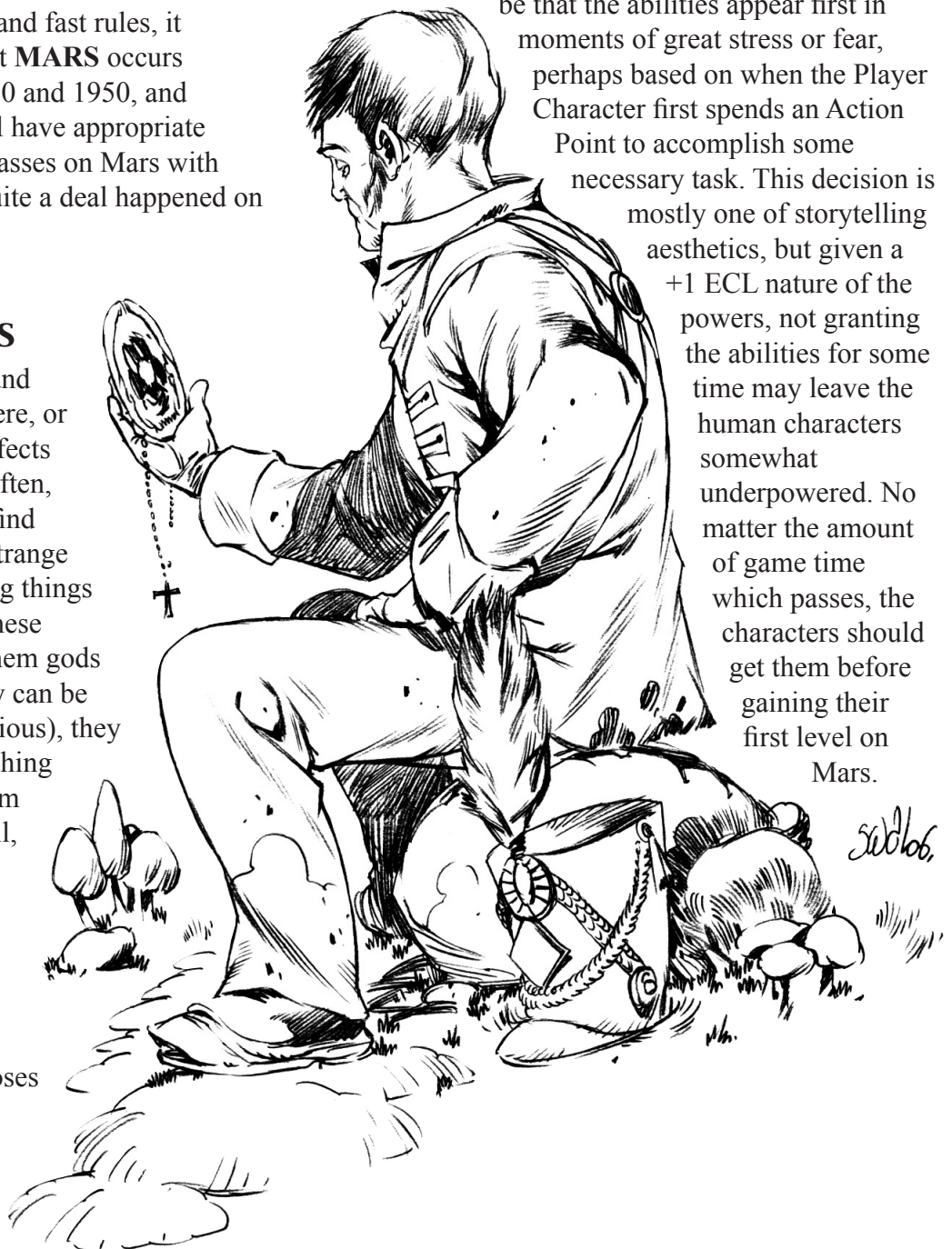
STRANGE POWERS

Mars is an alien world, and its food, water, atmosphere, or gravity may have odd effects on human physiology. Often, human visitors to Mars find themselves gifted with strange abilities, capable of doing things no Martian can. While these abilities will not make them gods among men (though they can be used to gull the superstitious), they will grant humans something of an edge and make them exceptional beings – well, even more exceptional than their oddly-colored skin or bizarre habit of giving birth to unshelled young.

If the Game Master chooses to grant such powers to humans, he must make several decisions.

Fixed or variable? Does Mars affect all Earthmen the same way, or do the strange forces of the Red Planet interact differently with each visitor? Either works well within the genre. The former is more useful when there are only a few Earthers mixed with mostly native-born PCs; the latter is preferable if the entire party consists of Earthmen, as it gives each one a unique ‘hook’.

Instant or gradual? Do the Earthmen discover their powers within seconds or minutes of their arrival on Mars, or does it take days, weeks, or even months before they manifest? It may be that the abilities appear first in moments of great stress or fear, perhaps based on when the Player Character first spends an Action Point to accomplish some necessary task. This decision is mostly one of storytelling aesthetics, but given a +1 ECL nature of the powers, not granting the abilities for some time may leave the human characters somewhat underpowered. No matter the amount of game time which passes, the characters should get them before gaining their first level on Mars.



The Powers

The Game Master should feel free to add to or expand this list. Each power costs a variable number of points. Every four points chosen is the equivalent of a +1 ECL. Generally, no one should have more than 4 points worth of powers – these are designed to give Earthmen an exotic edge, not create the “Legion of Martian Superheroes.”

Please note also that the powers are primarily internal in nature. There are no laser eyes or lightning bolts here. The Game Master may choose to add such abilities if he wishes, but they undermine the ‘feel’ of the game.

Alien Mind: The structures of the Earthman’s brain is odd and alien, rendering it highly resistant to powers designed to work on the minds of those native to Mars. The character gains a +2 racial bonus on all Will saves against mind-affecting powers used by Martian natives.

Cost: 1 point.

Commanding Presence: Something about the character’s alien nature strikes an odd, almost subconscious, chord in the Martian psyche. Perhaps some long-vanished race of Martian Overlords came from Earth? No matter the cause, the character gains a +1 racial bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks against Martians for each point spent.

Cost: 1 point/+1 racial bonus to all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

Disease Immunity: The character’s immune system rejects utterly any strange Martian germs, granting him total immunity to all diseases on the Red Planet.

Cost: 2 points

Efficient Digestion: The character easily absorbs nutrition from Martian foods. He needs to consume only half the normal supply of food and water in order to live.

Cost: 1 point for 1/2 normal rations, 2 points for 1/3 normal rations, 3 points for 1/4 normal rations and 4 points for 1/5 normal rations.

Enhanced Balance: The character’s sense of balance is greatly enhanced by the lower gravity

of Mars. He is able to bounce and tumble about with extraordinary agility. He gains a +1 on all Tumble and Balance checks for each point spent, and if he spends four points on this ability, also gains a +1 dodge bonus to Defense. This bonus is lost if the character is flat-footed or otherwise denied his dexterity bonus.

Cost: 1 point for +1 to Tumble and Balance checks, 4 points for +1 dodge bonus to Defense.

Enhanced Reflexes: The character’s nerves and muscles twitch faster on Mars, granting him extraordinary reaction abilities. He gains a +2 racial bonus to initiative checks for each point spent on this power. If he spends 4 points, he is also considered to never be flat-footed.

Cost: 1 point for each +2 racial bonus to initiative; 4 points to never be flat-footed.

Enhanced Senses: Though it might seem odd that eyes adapted for the brighter sun and ears adapted for the thicker air of Earth would somehow provide greater sensory capacity in the dim light and thin atmosphere of Mars, some quirk of physiology had made this precisely the case! The character gains a +1 to all Spot and Listen checks.

Cost: 1 point for +1 to Spot and Listen

Exotic Senses: The air, odd sunlight, or strange food of Mars has altered the character’s senses, granting him access to new forms of perception. The following senses are available.

Sense	Point Cost
Darkvision (60’)	1
Low-light Vision	2
Scent	2
Tremorsense	2
Blindsight (30’)	3

Fearless: Perhaps the very alien nature of the world makes the character feel, subconsciously, that it’s all “not real”, or perhaps the atmosphere stimulates the adrenal response. Either way, the character is very hard to scare, gaining a +2 on saves against Fear effects.

Cost: 1 point for +2 on all Will saves against Fear effects.

Figure of Legend: The character resembles a prophesied figure, someone who is part of ancient lore and religion and is known to almost all those of Mars. Wherever he goes, his deeds are told and retold, with tales traveling ahead of him faster than would seem plausible.

Cost: 1 point for +1 to reputation bonus.

Intuitive Knowledge: Somehow, the character has an innate understanding of all things Martian. Perhaps it is a form of ancestral memory or a type of past-life regression; perhaps the knowledge was placed there by powers unknown. The character automatically knows at least 1 Martian language fluently, and also gains a +1 on all Knowledge checks directly related to Martian lore or history, but not sciences or technical subjects. (Thus, the character may know that Martians can build flying craft, but not the details of *how* to build them.)

Cost: 1 point to speak a single Martian language fluently and gain a +1 to all Mars-related knowledge checks; +1 to all Mars-related knowledge checks for each additional point.

Mighty Thews: The lower gravity of Mars has had a noticeable affect on certain aspects of the character's physiology. His encumbrance and jumping capacity are all calculated as if his strength was 5 points higher. This has no effect on melee combat. This ability can be taken twice.

Cost: 2 points

Poison Resistance: The character's exotic human physiology is capable of shrugging off the poisons and toxins of Mars, gaining a +2 to saves against all poisons for each point.

Cost: 1 point per +2 save against poisons, up to 4 points for +8.

Resilient: The character's Earth-bred physique is capable of standing up to damage which would fell even the mightiest of green Martian warriors! His massive damage save is increased by 2.

Cost: 1 point for each +2 to Fortitude saves against massive damage.

Sensory Protection: The character's senses, used to the bright lights and thick air of Earth, are notable resistant to forces which can overwhelm

the weaker senses of the Martians. The character gains a +2 on all saves against effects which cause *blindness* or *deafness*.

Cost: 1 point for +2 on all saves against *blindness* or *deafness*.

Superior Toughness: The character can take a tremendous amount of damage, ignoring countless cuts, scrapes, and bruises which would fell a lesser man.

Cost: 2 points for +1 hit point/level.

Tough Hide: The character's flesh and bone, formed under the crushing gravity of Earth, is dense enough to turn aside some of the weapons of Mars. The character gains DR 1/- against all melee weapons, bows, and crossbows, but not against radium guns and the like.

Cost: 4 points

Truly Heroic: The character has arrived on Mars for a *reason*, even if that reason is initially unknown to him. Somehow, some power or powers have conspired to place him here, and they are acting, behind the scenes, to see that he achieves whatever goal they have set forth for him. Because of this, he gains extra Action Points.

Cost: 2 points for +1 Action Point per level.

Unfazeable: The character can keep a clear head no matter what. Whether it is due to an unusual brain physiology or physical toughness, the character is highly resistant to being *dazed*, *nauseated*, or *stunned*.

Cost: 1 point for a +1 to all Fortitude saves against effects which cause *daze*, *nausea*, or *stun* conditions.

CLASSES

Characters in **MARS** live lives of danger, excitement and adventure. Each chooses a path through life and the means by which he will seize fame, wealth or power.

Your character class is your vocation: it determines your strengths, your training and more. Alone with race it determines, in game terms, who you are.

Classes are described as follows:

Ability

This entry tells which ability is typically associated with that class.

Hit Die

The die type used by characters of the class to determine the number of hit points gained per level.

A player rolls one die of the given type each time his or her character gains a new

level. The character's Constitution modifier is applied to the roll. Add the result to the character's hit point total. Even if the result is 0 or lower, the character always gains at least 1 hit point. A 1st-level character gets the maximum hit points rather than rolling (although the Constitution modifier is still applied).

Action Points

The number of action points gained per level.

Class Skills

This section of a class description provides a list of class skills and also gives the number of skill points the character starts with at 1st level and the number of skill points gained each level thereafter. A character's Intelligence modifier is applied to determine the total skill points gained each level (but always at least 1 point per level, even for a character with an Intelligence penalty).

A 1st-level character starts with 4 times the number of skill points he or she receives upon attaining each level beyond 1st. The maximum ranks a character can have in a class skill is the character's level +3.

A character can also buy skills from other classes' skill lists. Each skill point buys a half rank in these cross-class skills, and a character can only buy up to half the maximum ranks of a class skill.

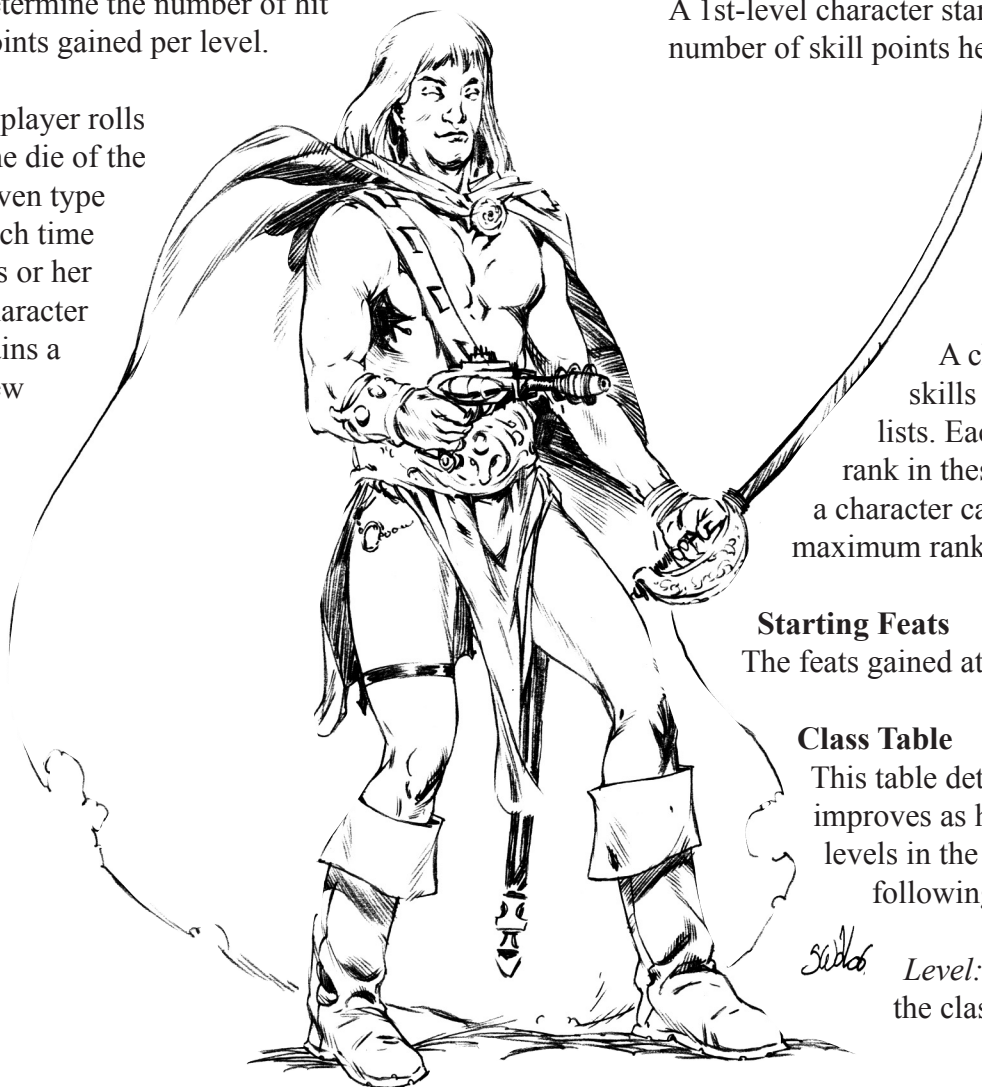
Starting Feats

The feats gained at 1st level in the class.

Class Table

This table details how a character improves as he or she attains higher levels in the class. It includes the following information

Sid **Level:** The character's level in the class.



Base Attack Bonus: The character's base attack bonus and number of attacks.

Fort Save: The base save bonus for Fortitude saving throws. The character's Constitution modifier also applies.

Ref Save: The base save bonus for Reflex saving throws. The character's Dexterity modifier also applies.

Will Save: The base save bonus for Will saving throws. The character's Wisdom modifier also applies.

Special: Level-dependent class features, each explained in the section that follows.

Dodge Bonus: The character's bonus to Defense Value while dodging. (see Combat)

Parry Bonus: The character's bonus to Defense Value while parrying. (see Combat)

Reputation Bonus: The character's base Reputation bonus.

Class Features

This entry details special characteristics of the class, including bonus feats and unique talents, that are gained as a character attains higher levels in the class.

Level-dependent Benefits

In addition to attack bonuses and saving throw bonuses, all characters gain other benefits from advancing in level. The following is a summary of these additional benefits, which can be seen in the table below.

XP: This column shows the experience point total needed to achieve a given character level. As a character accumulates experience points through play, his or her level increases to match the one given on the chart. Unless specific campaign rules dictate otherwise, a new level is gained as soon as the character's experience point total meets or exceeds that level's threshold.

Class Skill Max Ranks: The maximum number of ranks a character can have in a class skill is equal to his or her character level +3. A class skill is

Level	XP	Class Skill Max Ranks	Cross-Class Max Ranks	Feats	Ability Increases
1st	0	4	2	1st	-
2nd	1,000	5	2.5	-	-
3rd	3,000	6	3	2nd	-
4th	6,000	7	3.5	-	Single
5th	10,000	8	4	-	-
6th	15,000	9	4.5	3rd	All
7th	21,000	10	5	-	-
8th	28,000	11	5.5	-	Single
9th	36,000	12	6	4th	-
10th	45,000	13	6.5	-	All
11th	55,000	14	7	-	-
12th	66,000	15	7.5	5th	Single
13th	78,000	16	8	-	-
14th	91,000	17	8.5	.	All
15th	105,000	18	9	6th	-
16th	120,000	19	9.5	-	Single
17th	136,000	20	10	-	-
18th	153,000	21	10.5	7th	All
19th	171,000	22	11	-	-
20th	190,000	23	11.5	-	Single

a skill associated with a particular class. Class skills are listed in each class description.

Cross-Class Max Ranks: For cross-class skills (skills not associated with a character's class), the maximum number of ranks is one-half the maximum for a class skill. Half-ranks (.5) indicated on the table don't improve skill checks; they simply represent partial purchase of the next skill rank, and indicate that a character is training to improve that skill.

Feats: This column indicates the levels at which a character gains Feats (one at 1st level, one more at 3rd level, and one more at every 3rd level thereafter. Feats are described later in this chapter.

Ability increases: This column indicates the levels at which a character gains ability score increases. At 4th level, and every four levels thereafter (8th, 12th, 16th and 20th levels), a character gains against a permanent +1 increase to any one of his ability scores (marked on the chart as "Single"). At 6th level and every four levels thereafter (10th, 14th and 18th levels), each character gains against a permanent +1 increase to *all* of his ability scores. (marked on the chart as "All.") For multiclass

characters, feats and ability score increases are gained according to the character's overall level, not class level.

Multiclassing

Any character can multiclass without penalty in **MARS**, so long as the Gamemaster agrees that the character is in a suitable environment in which to learn the necessary skills and talents of the class.



THE STRONG HERO

Mars is a rough, hostile, primitive place. While the red men still maintain some vestiges of high technology, much of the world is run by sheer muscle power. The ability to lift a burden, swing a mighty blade, or bring down a foe with a punch are all very valuable, both in day-to-day living and adventuring.

Strong heroes are most commonly found among the white apes of Mars, as they value raw power tremendously, and secondarily among the green men, who consider strength as only slightly less important than brutal endurance. They are found among the red men as well, but less so – the red men value muscle, but quickness of mind or body is often more important. Among the grey men, they are virtually non-existent – those shriveled beings consider raw might to be of no possible use.

Typical roles for a Strong hero include soldiers (especially swordsmen), guards, laborers, and underworld thugs.

Ability: Strength

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: Strong heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Strong hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Climb (Str), Craft (structural) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (streetwise, tactics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), and Speak Language (none).

Also, the starting occupation selected can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (3 + Int modifier)x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Strong hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	Talent	+0	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+0	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+1	Talent	+1	+2	+0
4th	+4	+2	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+2	+0
5th	+5	+3	+1	+1	Talent	+2	+3	+1
6th	+6/+1	+3	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+3	+1
7th	+7/+2	+4	+2	+2	Talent	+3	+4	+1
8th	+8/+3	+4	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+4	+1
9th	+9/+4	+4	+3	+3	Talent	+4	+5	+2
10th	+10/+5	+5	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+5	+2

CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Strong hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Strong hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Extreme Effort Talent Tree

A Strong hero can push him or herself to make an extreme effort. The effort must relate either to a Strength check or a Strength-based skill check. You must decide to use this ability before making the check.

Extreme Effort: The effort requires a full-round action and provides a +2 bonus on the check.

Improved Extreme Effort: The effort requires a full-round action and provides a +2 bonus that stacks with the bonus provided by extreme effort (+4 total).

Prerequisite: Extreme effort.

Advanced Extreme Effort: The effort requires a full-round action and provides a +2 bonus that stacks with the bonuses provided by extreme effort and improved extreme effort (+6 total).

Prerequisites: Extreme effort, improved extreme effort.

Ignore Hardness Talent Tree

The Strong hero has an innate talent for finding weaknesses in objects. This allows a Strong hero to ignore some of an object's hardness when making a melee attack to break it.

Ignore Hardness: The Strong hero ignores 2 points of an object's hardness.

Improved Ignore Hardness: The Strong hero ignores 2 additional points of an object's hardness (for a total of 4).

Prerequisite: Ignore hardness.

Advanced Ignore Hardness: The Strong hero ignores 2 additional points of an object's hardness (for a total of 6).

Prerequisites: Ignore hardness, improved ignore hardness.

Melee Smash Talent Tree

The Strong hero has an innate talent that increases melee damage.

Melee Smash: The Strong hero receives a +1 bonus on melee damage.

Improved Melee Smash: The Strong hero receives an additional +1 bonus on melee damage (+2 total).

Prerequisite: Melee smash.

Advanced Melee Smash: The Strong hero receives an additional +1 bonus on melee damage (+3 total).

Prerequisites: Melee smash, improved melee smash.

Mighty Leaping Talent Tree

The low gravity of Mars makes tremendous leaps possible, for those trained to use their muscles well. This talent tree allows for truly astounding jumps.

Mighty Leaping I: You ignore height limits on leaps. You add +4 to all Jump checks.

Mighty Leaping II: You gain an additional +4 on all Jump checks. (Total +8)

Prerequisite: Mighty Leaping I

Mighty Leaping III: You gain an additional +4 on all Jump checks. (Total +12)

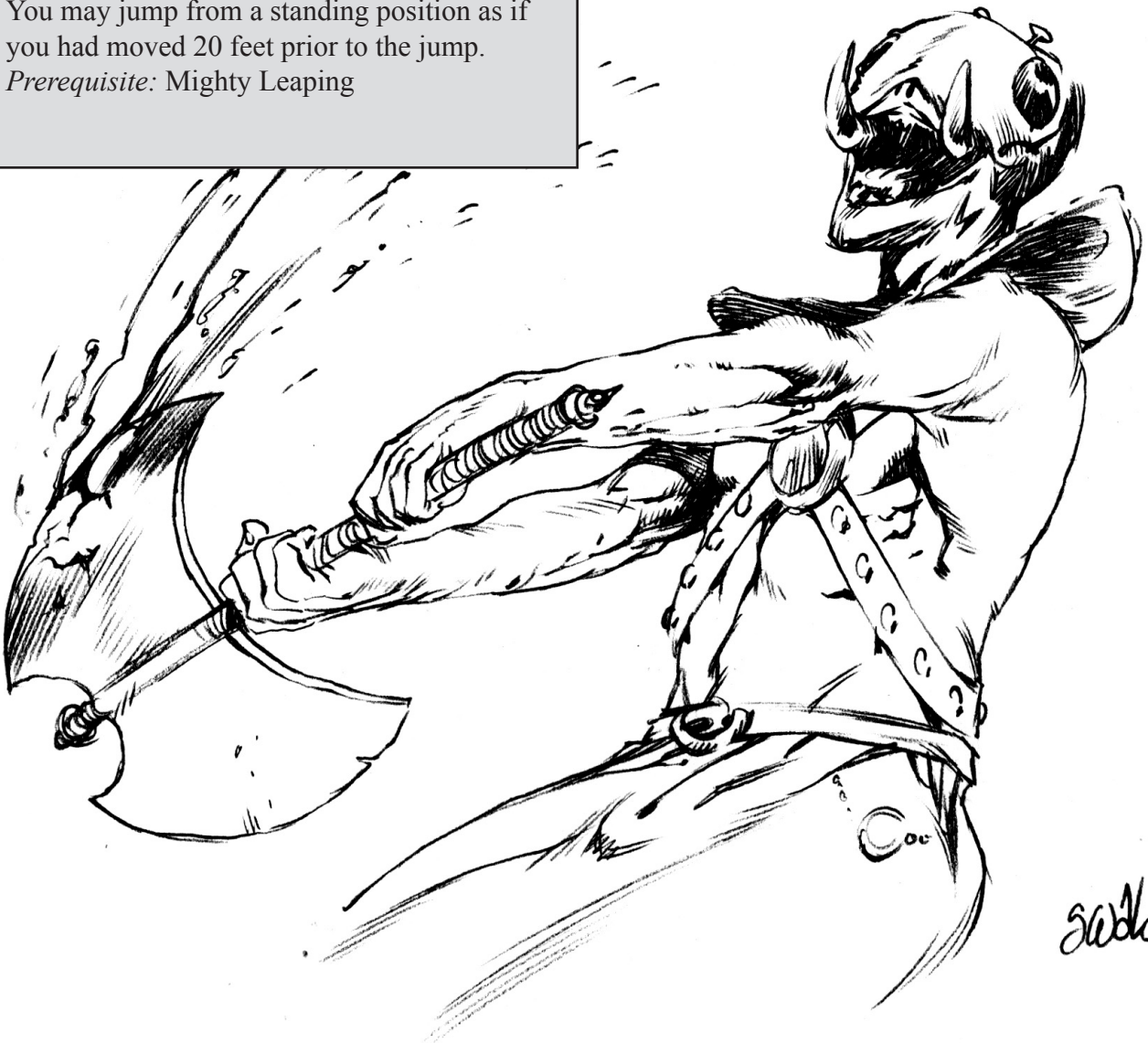
Prerequisite: Mighty Leaping II

Springing Legs: You suffer no penalties for not moving prior to either a high or long jump. You may jump from a standing position as if you had moved 20 feet prior to the jump.

Prerequisite: Mighty Leaping

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Strong hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Strong hero must meet any prerequisites.

Animal Affinity, Athletic, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cleave, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Great Cleave, Greater Sunder, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Sunder, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Power Attack



THE FAST HERO

There are many reasons for a modern Martian to seek to emphasize their dexterity. Threats which cannot be deflected, but which can be avoided, are all too common. Being able to outrun a green man is as good as being able to outfight him – and a lot easier to achieve. In the ruined cities, an agile sneak may find opportunities a hulking hunk of muscle will not. Even among the white apes and the green men, those born somewhat less strong than their comrades can compensate by being faster. The refined red Martians also appreciate grace and dexterity in combat – it does not matter how hard a marauder may be able to hit with an axe, if one can drop him with a well-placed radium blast from a hundred paces. Even the grey men sometimes find agility to be useful, on the rare occasions they slip out of their metal shells and roam the planet in their natural forms.

Typical roles for fast heroes include scouts, fencers, thieves, and pilots.

Ability: Dexterity

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: Fast heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Fast hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Balance (Dex), Craft (Martian tech) (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (history, streetwise) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Pilot Airship (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), and Tumble (Dex).

Also, the starting occupation the character selects can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (5 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats

In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Fast hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+0	+1	+0	Talent	+1	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+0	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+1	Talent	+2	+1	+1
4th	+3	+1	+2	+1	Bonus feat	+3	+2	+1
5th	+3	+1	+3	+1	Talent	+3	+2	+1
6th	+4	+2	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+3	+2
7th	+5	+2	+4	+2	Talent	+5	+3	+2
8th	+6/+1	+2	+4	+2	Bonus feat	+6	+4	+2
9th	+6/+1	+3	+4	+3	Talent	+6	+4	+3
10th	+7/+2	+3	+5	+3	Bonus feat	+7	+5	+3

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Fast hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Fast hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Defensive Talent Tree

The Fast hero gains the ability to improve his or her innate defensive talents as the hero attains new levels.

Evasion: If the Fast hero is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the Fast hero suffers no damage if he or she makes a successful saving throw.

Uncanny Dodge 1: The Fast hero retains his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by a hidden attacker. (The hero still loses his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense if the hero is immobilized.)

Prerequisite: Evasion.

Uncanny Dodge 2: The Fast hero can no longer be flanked; the hero can react to opponents on opposite sides of him or herself as easily as he or she can react to a single attacker.

Prerequisites: Evasion, uncanny dodge 1.

Defensive Roll: The Fast hero can roll with a potentially lethal attack to take less damage from it. When the Fast hero would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a ranged or melee attack), the Fast hero can attempt to roll with the damage.

A Fast hero spends 1 action point to use this talent. Once the point is spent, the hero makes a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt). If the save succeeds, he or she takes only half damage. The Fast hero must be able to react to the attack to execute a defensive roll—if the hero is immobilized, he or she can't use this talent.

Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, the Fast hero's evasion talent doesn't apply to the defensive roll.

Prerequisites: Evasion, uncanny dodge 1.

Opportunist: The Fast hero can spend 1 action point to use this talent. Once the point is spent, the hero can make an immediate attack against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. Even a Fast hero with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use this talent more than once per round.

Prerequisite: Evasion.

Increased Speed Talent Tree

The Fast hero can increase his or her natural base speed.

Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by 5 feet.

Improved Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by 5 feet. This talent stacks with increased speed (10 feet total).

Prerequisite: Increased speed.

Advanced Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by 5 feet. This talent stacks with increased speed and improved increased speed (15 feet total).

Prerequisites: Increased speed, improved increased speed.

Acrobatic Talent Tree

The world of **MARS** is one of high adventure and spectacular stunts. The Acrobatic talent tree allows a Fast hero to engage in some especially dramatic tricks and maneuvers.

Second Chance: If you fail a Balance or Tumble check, you may spend an Action Point to retry it immediately. Even if the check was part of a free action or a move action, doing this uses up all remaining actions for the turn.

Last-Minute Twist: You are adept at dodging potentially lethal blows. Any attempt to confirm a critical hit against you suffers a -4 circumstance penalty.

Prerequisite: Second Chance

Grace Under Pressure: You may attempt to use sleight of hand against an opponent as you move by him, albeit at a -5 penalty to your skill check. You must threaten an opponent to be able to target them. This is considered to be part of your movement and does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Prerequisite: Second Chance

Rebound: You may perform two Jump checks in a single round, provided you take no other movement actions. Your total movement may still not exceed your normal allowed movement in the round, but you can change direction by jumping twice.

Prerequisite: Second Chance

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Fast hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Fast hero must meet any prerequisites.

Acrobatic, Circular Combat, Combat Expertise, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Elusive Target, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Focused, Improved Disarm, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Mobility, Parry, Perfect Balance, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Stab, Stealthy, Sword and Blaster.



THE TOUGH HERO

Mars is a harsh place. Even within the canal-fed cities of the red men, food can be scarce and manual labor is necessary as the ancient machines sputter and die. Beyond this small islands, there is wasteland, haunted by barbarian hordes and savage animals beyond description. Water is effectively non-existent, and food nearly so. Only the hardest can survive in such a place.

The green men produce the most Tough heroes, as they live in the harshest parts of the planet, but there is no shortage of tough, burly, individuals among the red men or the white apes. The grey men, pathetically fragile of body, produce none; at least, none has been known to exist in aeons, and a 'Tough' grey Martian would still be extremely feeble.

Roles for Tough heroes include survivalists, explorers, messenger, hermits, and anyone else who relies on their ability to keep on going, no matter what.

Ability: Constitution

Hit Die: 1d10

Action Points: Tough heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Tough hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Martian Technology) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history, streetwise) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Also, the starting occupation the character selects can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (3 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Tough hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Tough hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Tough hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Damage Reduction Talent Tree

The Tough hero has an innate talent to ignore a set amount of damage from most weapons, but not from energy or special attack forms (which may or may not exist, depending on the campaign). Before the hero can select a talent from this tree the hero must have previously selected at least one talent from the Energy Resistance or Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Damage Reduction 1/—: The Tough hero ignores 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons.

Prerequisite: One other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Damage Reduction 2/—: The Tough hero ignores an additional 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons (DR 2/— total).

Prerequisites: Damage reduction 1/—, one other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Damage Reduction 3/—: The Tough hero ignores an additional 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons (DR 3/— total).

Prerequisites: Damage reduction 1/—, damage reduction 2/—, one other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+0	+0	Talent	+0	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus Feat	+0	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+1	Talent	+1	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+1	+3	+1
5th	+3	+3	+1	+1	Talent	+1	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+4	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+2	Talent	+2	+5	+2
8th	+6/+1	+4	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+6	+2
9th	+6/+1	+4	+3	+3	Talent	+3	+6	+3
10th	+7/+2	+5	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+7	+3

Energy Resistance Talent Tree

The Tough hero is particularly resistant to certain kinds of deadly energy effects. These talents can be selected in any order.

Acid Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of acid damage equal to his or her Constitution modifier.

Cold Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of cold damage equal to his or her Constitution modifier.

Electricity Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of electricity damage equal to his or her Constitution modifier.

Fire Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of fire damage equal to his or her Constitution modifier.

Sonic/Concussion Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of sonic or concussion damage equal to his or her Constitution modifier.



Unbreakable Talent Tree

The Tough hero is particularly resilient thanks to the following talents.

Remain Conscious: The Tough hero gains the ability to continue to perform actions when he or she would otherwise be considered unconscious and dying. When the Tough hero's hit points reach -1, the hero can perform as though he or she were disabled, making either an attack action or a move action every round until the hero reaches -10 hit points (and dies) or the hero's hit points return to 1 or higher. The hero can choose to succumb to unconsciousness if he or she thinks that doing so might prevent him or her from taking more damage.

Robust: The Tough hero becomes especially robust, gaining a number of hit points equal to his or her Tough level as soon as he or she selects this talent. Thereafter, the hero gains +1 hit point with each level of Tough he or she gains.

Second Wind: The Tough hero can spend 1 action point to gain a second wind. When the hero does this, he or she recovers a number of hit points equal to his or her Constitution modifier. This talent does not increase the Tough hero's hit points beyond the character's full normal total.

Stamina: The Tough hero recovers twice as fast as normal. So, the hero recovers 2 hit points per character level per evening of rest, 2 points of temporary ability damage per evening of rest, and awakens in half the normal time after being knocked unconscious.
Prerequisite: Robust.

Survivalist Talent Tree

The wastelands of Mars trivially cull the weak from the strong...and the strong from the nigh-invincible. Tough heroes who take talents from this tree are capable of enduring almost anything, and may emerge alive from the most grueling treks.

In order to take talents from this tree, you must have the Endurance feat. All bonuses given here stack with any bonuses from that feat.

Improved Endurance: You gain a +2 bonus on all checks to resist the effects of hunger, thirst, extreme heat or cold, and so on. This stacks with bonus from Endurance, granting a +6 total.

Incredible Reserves: You may go up to Constitution bonus days without food or water without suffering any ill effects.
Prerequisite: Improved Endurance

Unflagging: You may go up to Constitution bonus days without sleep without suffering any ill effects.
Prerequisite: Improved Endurance

Longstrider: While your combat move remains unchanged, your ability to travel at a brisk walking pace is greatly improved. Your daily move is increased by 25%.
Prerequisite: Improved Endurance

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Tough hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Tough hero must meet any prerequisites.

Alertness, Athletic, Brawl, Confident, Endurance, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Great Fortitude, Improved Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Feint, Knockout Punch, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Power Attack, Streetfighting, Toughness.

THE SMART HERO

Mars is a world of harsh wastes and brutal savagery, but it is also a world of wonder, from the graceful sky-corsairs to the life-giving canals. It was intellect, not physical might, which allowed the red Martians to build their planet-girdling empires before Mars began to dry, and it was that same intellect that preserved their culture in the face of ecological disaster. Even today, they hold fast to their outposts of civilization by dint of intelligence, organization, and technology.

There are but a few Smart heroes among the green Martians – a tiny handful of relative geniuses exist, and it is they who have created what passes for green man culture. They are usually tribal leaders or great craftsman. Smart heroes are slightly more common among the white apes, who have some room in their society for strategists, engineers, and artists. Among the grey men, they are dominant – to those cold and calculating beings, raw intellect is all that matters.

Ability: Intelligence

Hit Die: 1d6

Action Points: Smart heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Smart hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Computer Use (Int), Craft (chemical, Martian

Technology, pharmaceutical, structural, visual art, writing) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Forgery (Int), Knowledge (ancient history, art, business, civics, current events, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, streetwise, tactics, technology, theology and philosophy) (Int), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), and Speak Language (none).

Also, the starting occupation the hero selects can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (9 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 9 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Smart hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Smart hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Smart hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	Talent	+0	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+0	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Talent	+2	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+3	Talent	+3	+1	+2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+3	Bonus feat	+4	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+4	Talent	+5	+2	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+4	Bonus feat	+6	+3	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+4	Talent	+6	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+5	Bonus feat	+7	+3	+4

Research Talent Tree

The Smart hero has a natural aptitude for study and fact-finding. These talents can be selected in any order.

Savant: Select one of the skills listed in the following paragraph. The hero must have ranks in the skill if it is Trained Only. The Smart hero gets to add a bonus equal to his or her Smart level when making checks with that skill. A Smart hero can take this talent multiple times; each time it applies to a different skill.

Computer Use, Craft (any single skill), Decipher Script, Demolitions, Disable Device, Forgery, Investigate, Knowledge (any single skill), Navigate, Repair, Research, Search.

Linguist: With this talent, the Smart hero becomes a master linguist. Whenever the hero encounters a new language, either spoken or written, that he or she does not know the Smart hero can make an Intelligence check to determine if he or she can understand it. The check is made with a bonus equal to the hero's Smart level. For a written language, the bonus applies to a Decipher Script check instead. The DC for the check depends on the situation: DC 15 if the language is in the same group as a language the hero has as a Read/Write Language or Speak Language skill; DC 20 if the language is unrelated to any other languages the hero knows; and DC 25 if the language is ancient or unique. With this special ability, a Smart hero can glean enough meaning from a conversation or document to ascertain the basic message, but this ability in no way simulates actually being able to converse or fluently read and write in a given language.

A single check covers roughly one minute of a spoken language or one page of a written language.

Prerequisite: At least 1 rank in either Read/Write Language or Speak Language for each of three different languages.

Strategy Talent Tree

The Smart hero has the brainpower to see solutions in most situations. These talents can be selected in any order, but before the hero can select a talent from this tree he or she must have previously selected at least one talent from the Research Talent Tree.

Exploit Weakness: After 1 round of combat, the Smart hero can designate one opponent and try to find ways to gain an advantage by using brains over brawn. The Smart hero uses a move action and makes an Intelligence check (DC 15) with a bonus equal to his or her Smart level. If the check succeeds, for the rest of the combat the Smart hero uses his or her Intelligence bonus instead of either Strength or Dexterity bonus on attack rolls as the hero finds ways to outthink his opponent and notices weaknesses in his opponent's fighting style.

Prerequisite: One talent from the Research Talent Tree.

Plan: Prior to an encounter the Smart hero can develop a plan of action to handle the situation. Using this talent requires

preparation; a Smart hero can't use this talent when surprised or otherwise unprepared for a particular situation. Creating a plan requires 1 minute.

After creating the plan the Smart hero makes an Intelligence check (DC 10) with a bonus equal to his or her Smart level. The result of the check provides the Smart hero and allies with a circumstance bonus. A Smart hero can't take 10 or 20 when making this check.

Check Result	Bonus
9 or lower	+0
10–14	+1
15–24	+2
25 or higher	+3

This bonus can be applied to all skill checks and attack rolls made by the Smart hero and his or her allies, but the bonus only lasts for the first 3 rounds after making the plan. After that time, reduce the bonus by 1 point (to a minimum of +0) for every additional round the situation continues, as the vagaries of circumstance begin to unravel even the best-laid plans.

Prerequisite: One talent from the Research Talent Tree.

Trick: The Smart hero has the ability to temporarily confuse a target through the use of ploy and deception. The target must have an Intelligence score of 3 or higher to be susceptible to a trick, must be within 30 feet of the hero, and must be able to hear and understand the hero.

To play a trick on a target, the hero must use a full-round action and make an Intelligence check (DC 15), adding his or her Smart level as a bonus. If the Intelligence check succeeds, the target can try to think quickly and ignore the trick.

The target resists the trick by making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + Smart hero's class level + Smart hero's Int bonus). If the saving

throw fails, the target becomes dazed (unable to act, but can defend normally) for 1 round. A trick can only be played on a particular target once per encounter. After the first trick in an encounter, whether the attempt succeeds or not, that target becomes wary and immune to such ploys. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Prerequisite: One talent from the Research Talent Tree.

Forgotten Lore Talent Tree

Much of what was once known on Mars has been forgotten. A Smart hero who takes this talent tree has picked up countless bits and pieces of this information.

Fragment of Knowledge: You have studied so much that you have bits and pieces of knowledge about almost everything. By spending an Action Point, you gain the equivalent of 4 ranks in any Knowledge skill or Decipher Script in which you have less than 4 ranks, for purposes of a single skill roll. All normal bonuses for Intelligence, feats, and so on still apply.

Fragment of Knowledge II: As above but you gain 6 temporary ranks.

Prerequisite: Fragment of Knowledge

Fragment of Knowledge III: As above, but you gain 8 temporary ranks.

Prerequisite: Fragment of Knowledge

Rapid Recall: In times of stress, you can remember what you know perfectly. By spending an Action Point, you make take 20 on any Knowledge Skill in which you have at least one rank as a standard action. This does not apply to ranks gained from the Fragment of Knowledge Talents.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Smart hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Smart hero must meet any prerequisites.

Builder, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Educated, Gearhead, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Meticulous, Spark of Genius, Surgery, Studious, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus

THE DEDICATED HERO

In many ways, modern Mars is a grimly fatalistic place. The primitives simply accept the world as it is; the more sophisticated beings are aware that civilization is precarious at best. Nonetheless, many find the best way to face the future is not with passive acceptance, but with determination and drive. The Dedicated hero has found something worth believing in, working for, or caring about.

Among the red Martians, Dedicated heroes may be skilled doctors or bold leaders. The green men of Mars have few such, but there are always some skilled tribal healers who have learned something of herbal lore. The white apes also produce such heroes, though in fewer numbers – that species tends towards either indolent self-indulgence or brutal savagery. The grey men have a number of specialists in medical science, but such concepts as ‘empathy’ are alien to them, making this class rare.

Ability: Wisdom

Hit Die: 1d6

Action Points: Dedicated heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Dedicated hero’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Craft (pharmaceutical, visual art, writing) (Int),
Gamble (Wis), Knowledge (ancient history,

art, business, civics, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, streetwise, tactics, technology, theology and philosophy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Treat Injury (Wis).

Also, the starting occupation the hero selects can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (5 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Dedicated hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Dedicated hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Dedicated hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Talent	+0	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Talent	+1	+1	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+2	+2
5th	+2	+3	+1	+3	Talent	+2	+2	+2
6th	+4	+3	+2	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+4	Talent	+3	+3	+3
8th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Bonus feat	+4	+4	+3
9th	+6/+1	+4	+3	+4	Talent	+4	+4	+3
10th	+7/+2	+5	+3	+5	Bonus feat	+5	+5	+4

Empathic Talent Tree

The Dedicated hero's innate talents give him or her a great capacity for empathy.

Empathy: The Dedicated hero has a knack for being sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of others without having those feelings and thoughts communicated in any objectively explicit manner. This innate talent provides a bonus on checks involving interaction skills (Bluff, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Sense Motive), provided the hero spends at least 1 minute observing his or her target prior to making the skill check. The bonus is equal to the hero's Dedicated level.

Improved Aid Another: The Dedicated hero's bonus on attempts to aid another increases by +1 on a successful aid another check. This talent can be selected multiple times, each time increasing the bonus by +1.

Prerequisite: Empathy.

Intuition: The Dedicated hero has an innate ability to sense trouble in the air. The Dedicated hero can make a Will saving throw (DC 15). On a successful save, the hero gets a hunch that everything is all right, or the hero gets a bad feeling about a specific situation, based on the GM's best guess relating to the circumstances. This talent is usable a number of times per day equal to the character's Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Empathy.

Healing Talent Tree

The Dedicated hero has a talent for healing.

Healing Knack: The hero has a knack for the healing arts. The hero receives a +2 bonus on all Treat Injury skill checks.

Healing Touch 1: The Dedicated hero's ability to restore damage with a medical kit or perform surgery with a surgery kit increases by +2 hit points.

Prerequisite: Healing knack.

Healing Touch 2: The Dedicated hero's ability to restore damage with a medical kit or perform surgery with a surgery kit increases by +2 hit points, which stacks with healing touch 1 for a total of +4 hit points.

Prerequisites: Healing knack, healing touch 1.



Insightful Talent Tree

The Dedicated hero's innate insightfulness serves her well.

Skill Emphasis: The Dedicated hero chooses a single skill and receives a +3 bonus on all checks with that skill. This bonus does not allow the hero to make checks for a trained-only skill if the hero has no ranks in the skill.

Aware: The Dedicated hero is intuitively aware of his or her surroundings. The hero adds his or her base Will saving throw bonus to Listen or Spot checks to avoid surprise.

Prerequisite: Skill emphasis.

Faith: The Dedicated hero has a great deal of faith. It might be faith in self, in a higher power, or in both. This unswerving belief allows the Dedicated hero to add his or her Wisdom modifier to the die roll whenever the hero spends 1 action point to improve the result of an attack roll, skill check, saving throw, or ability check.

Prerequisite: Skill emphasis.

Cool Under Pressure: The Dedicated hero selects a number of skills equal to 3 + the hero's Wisdom modifier. When making a check with one of these skills, the Dedicated hero can take 10 even when distracted or under duress.

Prerequisite: Skill emphasis plus either faith or aware.

Devotion Talent Tree

The Dedicated hero is firmly committed to a single cause, person, place, or thing. This may be a lover, a kingdom, a religion, or an item. When acting to defend that thing from direct harm, the Dedicated hero gains exceptional prowess.

The Game Master must approve of the thing to which the Dedicated hero is devoted.

Hero's Resolve: When acting to protect the object of this tree, you gain a 'free' Action Point. This may be spent as normal, but only when doing so *directly* works to protect or save the object of devotion. This talent may be taken multiple times; each time, an additional bonus Action Point is granted. The Action Points 'recharge' when you gain an additional level.

Indomitable: You may make two Will saves against any mind-affecting power which would cause you to harm or neglect the object of your devotion. Use the higher of the two rolls. All normal bonuses apply to both rolls.

Prerequisite: Hero's Resolve

Bleed For The Cause: If you are within 5 feet of the object of your devotion when it is attacked (obviously, this applies only to physical things such as a person or a sacred item), you may spend an Action Point to take all the damage from a single attack made against it. You must declare this after a successful hit but *before* damage dice are rolled.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Dedicated hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be from this list, and the Dedicated hero must meet any prerequisites.

Alertness, Attentive, Blind-Fight, Deceptive, Educated, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Far Shot, Iron Will, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Surgery, Track, Weapon Focus.

THE CHARISMATIC HERO

It is a fundamental rule of the universe that it is often better to be able to get people to do things for you than to do them yourself, and this remains quite true on Mars. All of the races of Mars produce Charismatic heroes. From the dashing swashbucklers of the red men to the great tribal leaders of the green to the cool planners and plotters of the grey, there is no shortage of individuals with charm, panache, or simply the ability to take charge.

Because of the fairly strong differences between the races of Mars, some of the Charismatic heroes abilities suffer some penalties. When using the Charm and Captivate Talents on a member of a different race, the hero may add only 1/2 their levels of Charismatic hero. The Charismatic hero may normally only call in favors from members of his own race, unless he has spent considerable time (Game Master's discretion) living among others.

Ability: Charisma

Hit Die: 1d6

Action Points: Charismatic heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Charismatic hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Bluff (Cha), Craft (visual art, writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather

Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (ancient history, art, business, civics, streetwise, theology and philosophy) (Int), Perform (act, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, wind instruments) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), and Speak Language (none).

Also, the starting occupation the hero selects can provide additional class skills to choose from.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the feat all characters get at 1st level, a Charismatic hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Charismatic hero.

Talents: At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Charismatic hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than once unless expressly indicated.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Talent	+0	+0	+2
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Bonus Feat	+0	+0	+2
3rd	+1	+2	+2	+1	Talent	+1	+1	+2
4th	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus feat	+1	+1	+3
5th	+2	+3	+3	+1	Talent	+1	+1	+3
6th	+3	+3	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+2	+3
7th	+3	+4	+4	+2	Talent	+2	+2	+4
8th	+4	+4	+4	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+3	+4
9th	+4	+4	+4	+3	Talent	+3	+3	+4
10th	+5	+5	+5	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+3	+5

Charm Talent Tree

The Charismatic hero has an innate talent for being charming and captivating.

Charm: The Charismatic hero gets a competence bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks made to influence members of his chosen gender. (Some characters are charming to members of the opposite gender, others to members of the same gender.) The bonus is equal to the character's Charismatic level.

A Charismatic hero can only charm Gamemaster characters with attitudes of indifferent or better. The charm bonus can't be used against characters who are unfriendly or hostile.

This ability can be taken more than once (for another gender).

Favor: The Charismatic hero has the ability to acquire minor aid from anyone he or she meets. By making a favor check, a Charismatic hero can gain important information without going through the time and trouble of doing a lot of research. Favors can also be used to acquire the loan of equipment or documents, or to receive other minor assistance in the course of an adventure.

A Charismatic hero spends 1 action point to activate this talent. To make a favor check, roll a d20 and add the character's favor bonus, equal to the character's Charismatic level. The GM sets the DC based on the scope of the favor being requested. The DC ranges from 10 for a simple favor to as high as 30 for formidable and highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal favors. A Charismatic hero can't take 10 or 20 on this check, nor can the hero retry the check for the same (or virtually the same) favor. Favors should help advance the plot of an adventure. A favor that would enable a character to avoid an adventure altogether should always be unavailable to the character, regardless of the result of a favor check.

The GM should carefully monitor a Charismatic hero's use of favors to ensure that this ability isn't abused. The success or failure of a mission shouldn't hinge on the use of a favor, and getting a favor shouldn't replace good roleplaying or the use of other skills. The GM may disallow any favor deemed to be disruptive to the game.

Prerequisite: Charm.

Captivate: The Charismatic hero has the ability to temporarily beguile a target through the use of words and bearing. The target must have an Intelligence score of 3 or higher to be susceptible to a captivate attempt, must be within 30 feet of the hero, must be flat-footed or not in combat, and must be able to see, hear, and understand the hero.

To captivate a target, the hero must use an attack action and make a Charisma check (DC 15), adding his or her Charismatic level as a bonus. If the Charisma check succeeds, the target can try to resist.

The target resists the captivation attempt by making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + Charismatic hero's class level + Charismatic hero's Cha bonus). If the saving throw fails, the hero becomes the target's sole focus. The target pays no attention to anyone else for 1 round and remains flat-footed. This focusing of the target's attention allows other characters to take actions of which the captivated target is unaware. The effect ends immediately if the target is attacked or threatened.

A Charismatic hero can concentrate to keep a target captivated for additional rounds. The Charismatic hero concentrates all his or her effort on the task, and the target gets to make a new Will save each round. The effect ends when the hero stops concentrating, or when the target succeeds on the save. This is a Mind-Affecting ability.

Prerequisites: Charm, Favor.

Fast-Talk Talent Tree

The Charismatic hero has an innate talent for bending the truth and dazzling others with a combination of words, mannerisms, and charm.

Fast-Talk: The Charismatic hero has a way with words when attempting to con and deceive. With this talent, he or she applies his or her Charismatic level as a competence bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Gamble checks the hero makes while attempting to lie, cheat, or otherwise bend the truth.

Dazzle: The Charismatic hero has the ability to dazzle a target through sheer force of personality, a winning smile, and fast-talking. The target must have an Intelligence score of 3 or higher to be susceptible to a dazzle attempt, must be within 30 feet of the hero, and must be able to see, hear, and understand the hero. To dazzle a target, the hero must use an attack action and make a Charisma check (DC 15), adding his or her Charismatic level as a bonus. If the Charisma check succeeds, the target can try to resist.

The target resists the dazzle attempt by making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + Charismatic hero's class level + Charismatic hero's Cha bonus). If the save fails, the target receives a -1 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws for a number of rounds equal to the character's Charismatic level.

This talent can be selected multiple times, each time worsening the dazzled penalty by -1. This is a Mind-Affecting ability.

Prerequisite: Fast-talk.

Taunt: The Charismatic hero has the ability to temporarily rattle a target through the use of insults and goading. The target must have an Intelligence score of 3 or higher to be susceptible to a taunt, must be within 30 feet of the hero, and must be able to hear and understand the hero.

To taunt a target, the hero must use an attack action and make a Charisma check (DC 15), adding his or her Charismatic level as a bonus. If the Charisma check succeeds, the target can try to resist.

The target resists the taunt by making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + Charismatic hero's class level + Charismatic hero's Cha bonus). If the save fails, the target becomes dazed (unable to act, but can defend normally) for 1 round.

A taunt can be played on an opponent any number of times. This is a Mind-Affecting ability.

Prerequisites: Fast-talk, dazzle.



Leadership Talent Tree

The Charismatic hero has a talent for leadership and inspiration.

Coordinate: The Charismatic hero has a knack for getting people to work together. When the hero can spend a full round directing his or her allies and makes a Charisma check (DC 10), the hero provides any of his or her allies within 30 feet a +1 bonus on their attack rolls and skill checks. The bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to the hero's Charisma modifier. The hero can coordinate a number of allies equal to one-half his or her Charismatic level, rounded down (to a minimum of one ally).

Inspiration: The Charismatic hero can inspire his or her allies, bolstering them and improving their chances of success. As above, but bestowing a +2 morale bonus on saving throws, attack rolls, and damage rolls. A Charismatic hero can't inspire him or herself. *Prerequisite:* Coordinate.

Greater Inspiration: The Charismatic hero can inspire his or her allies to even greater heights, bolstering them and improving their chances of success. As above, for a total of a +3 morale bonus.

Prerequisites: Coordinate, inspiration.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Charismatic hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list, and the Charismatic hero must meet any prerequisites.

Agile Riposte, Creative, Deceptive, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Low Profile, Menacing Aura, Point Blank Shot, Renown, Steely Gaze, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Panache Talent Tree

The Charismatic hero is simply so stylish, so smooth, so slick, that he gains several benefits simply from his mere presence.

Artful Dodge: The Charismatic hero gains a +1 Dodge bonus if he succeeds with a Tumble check (DC 15). This check is a free action and in no way interferes with any other movements, nor does it add to movement, allow the Hero to avoid obstacles, etc. It merely models the characters stylish moves in combat. If a natural 1 is rolled on the check, the character has overreached himself and has fallen most embarrassingly prone; in addition, he may not use any other talents from this tree during the remainder of the current encounter.

Stunning Draw: If the Charismatic hero draws his weapon as part of a move action, he may do so with such flare that, on the next round, he moves to the top of the initiative order *for that round only*, returning to his normal place in the following round.

Brilliant Execution: When the Charismatic hero rolls a natural 20 on any skill check made during a stressful situation, he may choose to have performed the action with exceptional grace and aplomb. All enemies within 30 feet who can see the Hero must make a Will save (DC 10+the Charismatic Hero's charisma bonus+the Charismatic Hero's class levels) or by *stunned* for one round. For obvious reasons, using this talent negates being hidden, moving silently, or the like.

Prerequisite: Artful Dodge, Stunning Draw.

MULTICLASSING

A character may add new classes as he or she progresses in levels, thereby becoming a multiclass character. The class abilities from all of a character's classes combine to determine a multiclass character's overall abilities.

Class and Level Features

As a general rule, the abilities of a multiclass character are the sum of the abilities provided by each of the character's classes.

Level

"Character level" is a character's total number of levels. It is used to determine when feats and ability score increases are gained

"Class level" is the character's level in a particular class. For a hero whose levels are all in the same class, character level and class level are the same.

Hit Points

A hero gains hit points from each class as his or her class level increases, adding the new hit points to the previous total.

Base Attack Bonus

Add the base attack bonuses for each class to get the hero's base attack bonus. A resulting value of +6 or higher provides the hero with multiple attacks.

Base Attack Bonus	Additional Attacks
+6	+1
+7	+2
+8	+3
+9	+4
+10	+5
+11	+6/+1
+12	+7/+2
+13	+8/+3
+14	+9/+4
+15	+10/+5
+16	+11/+6/+1
+17	+12/+7/+2
+18	+13/+8/+3
+19	+14/+9/+4
+20	+15/+10/+5

To use multiple attacks in the same round, a character must use a full attack, which is a full-round action.

Saving Throws

Add the base save bonuses for each class together.

Defense Bonuses

Add the Defense bonuses (Dodge and Parry) for each class together.

Reputation Bonus

Add Reputation bonuses together.

Skills

A multiclass hero uses his or her character level to determine the maximum ranks the hero can have in a skill. If a skill is a class skill for any of a multiclass hero's classes, then use character level to determine a skill's maximum rank. (The maximum rank for a class skill is 3 + character level.)

When a multiclass hero gains a level in a class, he or she spends that level's skill points as a member of that class. Only that class's class skills may be purchased as class skills. All other skills, including skills for another class the hero has levels in, are considered cross-class skills when ranks in those skills are purchased at this level.

Class Features

The character gets all class features (talents, bonus feats, or other special abilities) of all classes for the levels he or she possesses.

Feats

A multiclass character receives a new feat every three character levels, regardless of individual class level.

Ability Increases

A multiclass character increases one ability score by +1 every four character levels, regardless of individual class level.

Adding a Second Class

When a character with one class gains a level, he or she may choose to increase the level of his or her current class or pick up a new class

at 1st level. This could be a basic class or, if the character qualifies for it, an advanced class. The character gains the 1st-level base attack bonus, base save bonuses, class skills, other class features of the new class, hit points of the appropriate die type, and the new class's number of skill points gained at each additional level (not that number x4, as is the case for a 1st-level character).

Picking up a new class is not exactly the same as starting a character in that class. When picking up a new class, a hero doesn't receive maximum hit points but should roll the new Hit Die.

Advancing a Level

Each time a multiclass character attains a new level, the hero either increases one of his or her current class levels by one or picks up a new class at 1st level.

When a multiclass character increases one of his or her class levels by one, the character gets all the standard benefits that characters receive for attaining the new level in that class: more hit points, possible bonuses on attack rolls, Defense, and saving throws (depending on the class and the new level), a new class feature (as defined by the class), and new skill points.

Skill points are spent according to the class that the multiclass character just advanced in. Skills are purchased at the cost appropriate for that class.

In general, a character can have levels in as many different classes as there are classes.

OCCUPATIONS

A hero may hold other jobs as his or her career unfolds, but the benefits of a starting occupation are only applied once, at the time of character creation.

Many starting occupations have a prerequisite that the character must meet to qualify for the occupation. Each occupation provides a number of additional permanent class skills that the character can select from a list of choices. Once selected, a permanent class skill is always considered to be a class skill for the character. If the skill selected is already a class skill for the character, he or she also gains a one-time competence bonus for that skill.

Some starting occupations provide a Reputation bonus or a bonus feat (in addition to the two feats a 1st-level character already receives). A character still must meet any prerequisites for these bonus feats.

Choose one occupation from the available selections and apply the benefits to the character as noted in the occupation's description.

ACADEMIC

Academics include librarians, archaeologists, scholars, professors, teachers, and other education professionals.

Academics are found primarily among the red Martians and the grey men, and rarely among the white apes. White ape academics are likely to be considered freaks or oddities by their kin, but may nonetheless wield considerable power due to the knowledge they have discovered. There are no academics among the green Martians.

Prerequisite: Age 23+. *Wealth:* 2d4 +3

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (writing), Decipher Script, Gather Information, Knowledge (ancient history,

art, business, civics, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, tactics, technology, or theology and philosophy), Research, or add a new Read/Write Language or a new Speak Language.

ADVENTURER

All of the races of Mars save for the grey men produce adventurers, those motivated to seek out new thrills and new places merely because they are new. Many Earthmen who come to Mars will be adventurers, though this depends, of course, on what forces brought them there.

Prerequisite: Age 15+. *Wealth:* 2d4 +1

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Climb, Demolitions, Disable Device, Drive, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (ancient history, streetwise, tactics, or technology), Move Silently, Pilot, Ride, Spot, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Martial Weapons Proficiency, or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

ATHLETE

Both the red men and the white apes have organized sports and competitions as primary components of their culture. The green Martians rarely engage in mock-combat or non-lethal confrontations; they are an athletic people but they have few athletes, per se. The concept of physical exertion as entertainment or a means of earning status is utterly incomprehensible to the grey Martians.

Red Martian athletes include fencers, long-distance runners, and players of complex team sports; white ape athletes include gladiators, wrestlers, and those who specialize in feats of great strength and dexterity. There are few 'team' sports among the white apes.

Prerequisite: STR or DEX 13 *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives

a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Balance, Climb, Drive, Jump, Ride, Swim, Tumble.

Bonus Feat: Select either Martial Weapons Proficiency or Brawl.

BLUE COLLAR

This role exists only among the white apes and the red Martians; the greens have no such complex divisions of labor and the grey men relegate all such work to slaves or machines. Blue collar occupations include factory work, food service jobs, construction, service industry jobs, taxi drivers, postal workers, and other jobs that are usually not considered to be desk jobs.

Prerequisite: Age 18+. *Wealth:* 2d4 +2

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Craft (Martian technology, or structural), Climb, Drive, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Repair, Ride.

CANALER

A small, but stable, culture of Red Martians dwells on the canals themselves – traveling up and down them, living by trading goods and information. Some of these are extended family units; others are wanderers who like the roaming lifestyle but who are not part of the “wild” Red Martian culture. Canalers are well-traveled and adaptable.

Prerequisite: Age 15+ *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Swim is always a class skill for canalers. (In addition, choose two of the following as class skills. If the skill you choose is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus to that skill: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gamble, Navigate, Perform, Repair, Speak Language, Survival, Treat Injury)

Bonus Feat: Canalers get Surface Vehicle Operation (Powered Canal Boat or Unpowered Boat) as a bonus feat.

Special: Canalers gain a +1 to Reputation, as they are widely traveled and have a friend in every port.

CREATIVE

This occupation exists primarily among the red Martians, though the white apes have quite a few singers, storytellers, and especially sculptors among their number. The green Martians have a few bards or keepers of tribal lore, as well as some who can paint sagas of the tribe in crude images along the walls of the ruined cities or carve totems signifying great power from the bones of fallen foes. The grey men have no concept of art for art's sake, or for any other purpose.

Prerequisite: Age 15+. *Wealth:* 2d4 +2

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Computer Use, Craft (visual art or writing), Disguise, Forgery, Knowledge (ancient history or art), Perform (act, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, or wind instruments), Spot.

CRIMINAL

Every society has its malcontents and lawbreakers, but most Martian societies deal with them harshly. There are few 'career criminals' among any of the races of Mars, save those who are very skilled. Of course, 'criminal' is a relative term, and the aristocrats of Baltan have been plagued by more than one daring individual who seeks to distribute wealth from the high towers of the Players down to the huts of the Lowborn – after extracting a suitable percentage for his own operating expenses, of course!

Prerequisite: Age 15+. *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gamble, Hide, Knowledge (streetwise), Move Silently, Sleight of Hand.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

DILETTANTE

The red Martians and the white apes both produce fair numbers of dilettantes. Some idle nobles seek to better themselves by studying combat, history, or lost lore; others seek merely to enjoy the fruits of wealth earned by the sweat of someone else's brow and to squeeze every possible bit of joy from the planet before the canals run dry. Neither the grey Martians nor the green men have any concept of this lifestyle.

Prerequisite: Age 18+. *Wealth:* 2d4+6

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Gamble, Intimidate, Knowledge (ancient history or history), Ride, or add a new Speak Language. *Reputation Bonus Increase:* +1.

DOCTOR

All cultures save the brutal green men value the assistance of healers, though the advancement of the art varies greatly. The white apes have a rough body of accumulated lore and wisdom which sometimes heals and sometimes kills. The medical science of the red Martians at their height was almost godlike; today, some culture retain most of their lost arts while others are little better than the white apes. The grey men are masters of medicine, though their knowledge has been gained primarily by means of the torturous vivisection of living beings. Among the green Martians, most tribes consider a wound received in war to be a test – either the warrior is strong enough to overcome the injury or he dies of his weakness. However, some of the larger or more sophisticated tribes do produce shamans and herbalists who can tend a wound fairly well.

Prerequisite: Age 25+. *Wealth:* 2d4+4

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Craft (pharmaceutical), Computer Use, Knowledge (earth and life sciences, or technology), Search, Treat Injury.

ENTREPRENEUR

The relatively stagnant and ritualistic cultures of Mars produce few of these paragons of capitalism. There are, however, a few wandering traders, canny merchants, and the like which can be found among both the red Martians and the white apes.

Prerequisite: Age 18+. *Wealth:* 2d4+4

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Bluff, Diplomacy, Gamble, Knowledge (business, history, or technology).

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

INVESTIGATIVE

The larger canal cities and the sprawling metropoli of the white apes both produce individuals whose job it is to seek out the truth – usually for pay.

Prerequisite: Age 23+. *Wealth:* 2d4+2

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (visual art or writing), Decipher Script, Forgery, Gather Information, Investigate, Knowledge (civics, earth and life sciences, or streetwise), Research, Search, Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Most of the red Martian cities have strict and millennia-old codes of law, and enforcing or interpreting such laws is usually an honored and respectable profession. Among the white apes, the role of city guard or watchmen is likewise honored, though the nature of white ape society tends to mean there is one law for the rich and one for the poor, despite the formal pretense of a culture rules by a strict code. The grey Martians, with their collective decision making and lack of crude emotions such as greed or love, have few criminals and thus, few police – but there are always rogues and those who will seek them out.

Prerequisite: Age 20+. *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Diplomacy, Drive, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics, earth and life sciences, streetwise, or tactics), Listen.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Combat Martial Arts, Armor Proficiency, or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

MILITARY

Every Martian society maintains some means of defense against outside attack or internal dissent. Red, green, white, and grey alike all have defense forces which are well-funded and well-respected. Among the white apes, military service is especially valued, as the much feared albino legions actually do embody the virtues of discipline and service the white apes aspire to but rarely achieve.

Prerequisite: Age 18+. *Wealth:* 2d4 +1

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Demolitions, Drive, Hide, Knowledge (tactics), Move Silently, Navigate, Pilot, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Armor Proficiency, or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

RELIGIOUS

Of all the Martian cultures, only the grey men are utterly devoid of religious or spirituality. The others all have some concept of gods, spirits, or an afterlife, and all have some individuals whose job it is to interpret the will of the gods, to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, and to preserve and related religious lore. From the great marble temples of the apes to the brutal shamans of the green men, religion is found across Mars.

Prerequisite: Age 23+. *Wealth:* 2d4+2

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a

+1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Decipher Script, Knowledge (ancient history, art, history, streetwise, or theology and philosophy), Listen, Sense Motive.

RURAL

Outside the crumbling towers and palaces of the central canal cities or the stone walls of the white apes sprawl farmland and ranches, the sources of life for the great cities. The farmers, herders, and the like who dwell here are often overlooked by the city dwellers, but they are nonetheless vital. The green Martians have no such folk among them, and the grey Martians grow their synthetic food in vast factory complexes.

Prerequisite: Age 15+. *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Balance, Climb, Drive, Handle Animal, Repair, Ride, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Martial Weapons Proficiency.

STUDENT

Knowledge must be passed on. Students can be found in all of the Martian cultures, though they are relatively rare among the green men, who have little lore and few teachers. The grey Martians select only an elite to learn general knowledge and lore; the majority are taught only what is needed for them to perform their assigned tasks. The study of lore is often seen as weak or strange among the white apes, but there are always a few who aspire to more than brute soldier or idle play.

Prerequisite: Age 15+. *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Knowledge (ancient history, art, business, civics, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, technology, or theology and philosophy), Perform (act, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, or wind instruments), Research.

TECHNICIAN

This role is most common among the grey men, as their entire society rests on the well-functioning of their machines. A breakdown in the mechanisms which run their underground cities would result in disaster. The red Martians, while slightly less dependant on their tools for day-to-day living, nonetheless value the few luxuries left to them, and honor those who can keep the old machines functioning year after year. There are no technicians among the white apes or the green men, as neither maintains machines of any complexity.

Prerequisite: Age 23+. *Wealth:* 2d4+3

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill the character selects is already a class skill, he or she receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill. Computer Use, Craft (chemical, Martian technology or structural), Knowledge (business, earth and life sciences, physical sciences, or technology), Repair, Research.

TRIBAL

Large numbers of Martians – mostly green – live in primitive societies where they must survive in a harsh wilderness. Tribal occupations include a wide range of overlapping duties – scout, warrior, or shaman. The wandering red nomads and some of the outcast bands of white apes also tend to fit into the tribal category. Some Earthers from ‘primitive’ societies – such as Native Americans from the 19th century – might also take this occupation. (Such ‘primitives’ are often better adapted for the harsh realities of Mars than sophisticated city-dwellers!)

Prerequisite: Age 15+ *Wealth:* 2d4+1

Skills: Choose two of the following as class skills. If the skill you choose is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus to that skill: Climb, Handle Animal, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Navigate, Ride, Spot, Survival, Swim
Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Alertness, Animal Affinity, Brawl, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Guide, Run, Stealthy, Track,.

THREE: SKILLS & FEATS



SKILLS

At each level, a character gets skill points that are used to buy skills. The character's class and Intelligence modifier determine the number of points received.

If the character buys a class skill, he or she gets 1 rank in the skill for each skill point spent. If the character buys a cross-class skill, he or she gets 1/2 rank per skill point. The maximum rank in a class skill is equal to character level + 3. The maximum rank in a cross-class skill is one-half of this number.

USING SKILLS

To make a skill check, roll:

1d20 + skill modifier

(Skill modifier = skill ranks + ability modifier + miscellaneous modifiers)

Skill Ranks: A character's ranks in a skill is based on the number of skill points the character has invested in the skill. Some skills can be used even if the character has no ranks in the skill; doing this is known as making an untrained skill check.

Ability Modifier: The ability modifier used in the skill check is the modifier for the skill's key ability (the ability associated with the skill's use). The key ability of a skill is noted in its description.

Miscellaneous Modifiers: Miscellaneous modifiers include bonuses provided by feats and class features, and penalties such as the ones associated with the nonproficient use of armor, among others.

Unlike with attack rolls and saving throws, a natural roll of 20 on the d20 is not an automatic success when making a skill check, and a natural roll of 1 is not an automatic failure.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

Some checks are made against a Difficulty Class (DC). The DC is a number set by the GM (using the skill rules as a guideline) that a character must attain to succeed.

Difficulty (DC)	Example (Skill Used)
Very easy (0)	Notice something large in plain sight (Spot)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Climb)
Average (10)	Hear an approaching guard (Listen)
Tough (15)	Disarm a trap (Disable Device)
Challenging (20)	Swim a canal against a strong current (Swim)
Formidable (25)	Read Grey Martian text, thousands of years old (Decipher Script)
Heroic (30)	Leap across a 30-foot chasm (Jump)
Superheroic (35)	Convince the guards that even though you're not wearing noble clothing, and you're not on the list, they should let you into the party. (Bluff)
Nearly impossible (40)	Track a Red Martian Nomad across the Dead Seas at night after a week-long sandstorm (Survival)

OPPOSED CHECKS

Some skill checks are opposed checks. They are made against a randomized number, usually another character's skill check result. For example, Move Silently vs. Listen; Sense Motive vs. Bluff; or Hide vs. Spot.

For ties on opposed checks, the character with the higher key ability score wins. If those scores are the same, roll again.

TRYING AGAIN

If a character fails on a skill check, he or she can sometimes try again. Check the skill description to find out if, and under what circumstances, a character can try again. Many skills, however, have natural consequences for failing that must be accounted for. Some skills can't be tried again once a check has failed for a particular task. If the use of a skill carries no penalty for failure, a character can take 20 and assume that he or she keeps trying until he or she eventually succeeds.

UNTRAINED SKILL CHECKS

Generally, if a character attempts to use a skill he or she doesn't have any ranks in, the character makes a skill check as described. The character's

skill modifier don't include skill ranks because the character doesn't have any. The character does get other modifiers, though, such as the ability modifier for the skill's key ability.

Some skills can be used only if the character is trained in the skill.

FAVORABLE & UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Some situations may make a skill easier or harder to use, resulting in a bonus or penalty to the skill modifier or a change to the skill check's DC.

The GM can alter the odds of success in four ways to take into account exceptional circumstances:

1. Give the skill user a +2 circumstance bonus to represent conditions that improve performance, such as having the perfect tool for the job, getting help from another character, or working under conditions that are significantly better than normal.
2. Give the skill user a -2 circumstance penalty to represent conditions that hamper performance, such as being forced to use improvised tools or having misleading info.

3. Reduce the DC by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task easier, such as having a friendly audience when making a Perform check.

4. Increase the DC by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task harder, such as making a Perform check in front of a hostile audience.

Conditions that affect a character's ability to perform the skill change the character's skill modifier. Conditions that modify how well the character must perform the skill to succeed change the DC. A bonus on a character's skill modifier or a reduction in the DC of the check have the same result—they create a better chance for success. But they represent different circumstances, and sometimes that difference is important.

TIME & SKILL CHECKS

Using a skill might take a round, several rounds, or even longer. It might take no time at all. Types of actions define how long activities take to perform within the framework of a combat round (6 seconds) and how movement is treated with respect to the activity. See the skill description for specifics on how long a skill takes to use.

In general, using a skill that requires concentration while in close combat is dangerous. Nearby opponents can make attacks of opportunity against a character when he or she lets his or her guard down.

TOOLS

Some skill applications require the use of tools. If tools are needed, the specific items required are mentioned in the skill description. If the character doesn't have the appropriate tools, he or she can still attempt to use the skill, but the character takes a -4 penalty on his or her check.

A character may be able to put together some impromptu tools to make the check. If the GM allows it, reduce the penalty to -2 (instead of -4) for using impromptu tools. It usually takes some time (several minutes to an hour or more) to collect or create a set of impromptu tools, and it

may require a skill check as well.

CHECKS WITHOUT ROLLS

A skill check represents an attempt to accomplish some goal, usually in the face of time pressure or distraction. Sometimes, though, a character can use a skill under more favorable conditions and eliminate the luck factor.

Taking 10

When a character is not being threatened or distracted, he or she may choose to take 10. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, calculate the result as if the character had rolled a 10 (an average roll on a d20). For many relatively routine tasks, taking 10 results in a success.

Distractions and threats make it impossible for a character to take 10. A character also can't take 10 when using a skill untrained, though the GM may allow exceptions for truly routine activities.

Taking 20

When a character has plenty of time, is faced with no threats or distractions, and the skill being attempted carries no penalty for failure, a character can take 20. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the skill check, calculate the result as if the character had rolled a 20.

Taking 20 is the equivalent of attempting the check over and over again until the character gets it right. Taking 20 takes twenty times as long as making a single check (2 minutes for a skill that can normally be checked in 1 round).

AIDING ANOTHER

In some situations, characters can cooperate to accomplish a given task. One character is designated as the leader in the effort, while the others try to aid the character in his or her efforts. A character aids another by making a skill check (DC 10). This is an attack action, and the character can't take 10 on this check. If the check succeeds, the character's ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to apply to his or her skill check to complete the task.

In many cases, a character's help won't be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters

can help at the same time. The GM limits aid another attempts as he or she sees fit for the conditions.

SKILL SYNERGY

Sometimes, the GM may decide that having one skill provides a bonus when a character uses another skill in certain situations. The character must have at least 5 ranks in the related skill to gain this synergy bonus, and the GM must agree that the two skills can complement each other in the given situation. In such cases, the character receives a +2 synergy bonus on the skill check.

ABILITY CHECKS

Sometimes a character tries to do something to which no specific skill applies. In these cases, the character makes an ability check: Roll 1d20 and apply the appropriate ability modifier. The GM assigns a DC, or sets up an opposed check when two characters are engaged in a contest using one ability against another. In some cases, a test of one's ability doesn't involve luck. When two characters arm wrestle, for example, the stronger character simply wins. In the case of identical scores, make opposed Strength checks.



SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

Skills are presented in alphabetical order, in the following format. Entries that do not apply to a particular skill are omitted in that skill's description.

SKILL DESCRIPTION FORMAT

SKILL NAME (KEY ABILITY) TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR PENALTY

The skill name line and the line beneath it include the following information:

Key Ability: The abbreviation for the ability whose modifier applies to the skill check. Exceptions: Speak Language and Read/Write Language have "None" given as their key ability because the use of these skills never requires a check.

Trained Only: If "Trained Only" appears on the line beneath the skill name, a character must have at least 1 rank in the skill to use it. If "Trained Only" is omitted, the skill can be used untrained. If any particular notes apply to trained or untrained use, they are covered in the Special section (see below).

Armor Penalty: If "Armor Penalty" appears on the line beneath the skill name, apply the armor penalty for the armor the character is wearing to checks involving this skill.

Check: What a character can do with a successful skill check, and the check's DC.

Try Again?: Any conditions that apply to repeated attempts to use the skill for a particular purpose. If this entry is omitted, the skill check can be tried again without any inherent penalty other than taking additional time.

Special: Any particular notes that apply, such as whether a character can take 10 or take 20 when using the skill.

Untrained: Any details about using a skill untrained. If this entry doesn't appear, it means

the skill works the same even when used untrained, or that an untrained character can't make checks with this skill (true for skills that are designated "Trained Only").

Time: How much time it takes to make a check with this skill.

BALANCE (DEX) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: The character can walk on a precarious surface. A successful check lets the character move at half his or her speed along the surface as a move action. A failure indicates that the character spends his or her move action keeping his or her balance and does not move. A failure by 5 or more indicates that the character falls. The difficulty varies with the conditions of the surface.

Narrow Surface	DC	Difficult Surface	DC
7–12 in. wide	10	Uneven or angled	10
2–6 in. wide	15	Slippery surface	10
Less than 2 in. wide	20		

Add +5 to the DC if the narrow surface is slippery or angled; add +10 if it is both slippery and angled.

Being Attacked While Balancing: While balancing, the character is flat-footed (the character loses his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense, if the character has one), unless the character has 5 or more ranks in Balance. If the character takes damage, he or she must make a Balance check again to remain standing.

Accelerated Movement: The character can try to cross a precarious surface more quickly than normal. The character can move his or her full speed, but the character takes a –5 penalty on his or her Balance check. (Moving twice the character's speed in a round requires two checks, one for each move action.)

The character can attempt to charge across a precarious surface. Charging requires one Balance check at a –5 penalty for each multiple of the

character's speed (or fraction thereof) that the character charges.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Balance check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Focused feat gets a +2 bonus on all Balance checks.

Time: Balancing while moving one-half the character's speed is a move action.

Accelerated movement, allowing the character to balance while moving his or her full speed, is also a move action.

BLUFF (CHA)

Check: A Bluff check is opposed by the target's Sense Motive check when trying to con or mislead. Favorable and unfavorable circumstances weigh heavily on the outcome of a bluff. Two circumstances can work against the character: The bluff is hard to believe, or the action that the bluff requires the target to take goes against the target's self-interest, nature, personality, or orders.

If it's important, the GM can distinguish between a bluff that fails because the target doesn't believe it and one that fails because it asks too much of the target. For instance, if the target gets a +10 bonus because the bluff demands something risky of the target, and the target's Sense Motive check succeeds by 10 or less, then the target didn't so much see through the bluff as prove reluctant to go along with it. If the target's Sense Motive check succeeds by 11 or more, he has seen through the bluff, and would have succeeded in doing so even if it had not placed any demand on him (that is, even without the +10 bonus).

A successful Bluff check indicates that the target reacts as the character wishes, at least for a short time (usually 1 round or less), or the target believes something that the character wants him or her to believe.

A bluff requires interaction between the character and the target. Targets unaware of the character can't be bluffed.

Feinting in Combat: You can use Bluff to mislead an opponent in melee combat (so that it cannot dodge or parry your next attack effectively). To feint, make a Bluff check opposed by your target's Sense Motive check, but in this case, the target may add its base attack bonus to the roll along with any other applicable modifiers.

If your Bluff check result exceeds this Sense Motive check result, your target is denied its Dexterity bonus to DV for the next melee attack you make against it. The attack must be made on or before your next turn.

Feinting against an opponent of a different race is difficult because it's harder to read their body language; you take a -2 penalty to your Bluff check. Against a nonhumanoid creature, you take a -4 penalty. Against a creature of animal intelligence (1 or 2), it's even harder; you take a -8 penalty. Against a nonintelligent creature, feinting is impossible.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: A character can use Bluff to help him or her hide. A successful Bluff check gives the character the momentary diversion needed to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of the character. (See the Hide skill)

Sending a Secret Message: A character can use Bluff to send and understand secret messages while appearing to be speaking about other things. The DC for a basic message is 10. Complex messages or messages trying to communicate new information have DCs of 15 or 20. Both the sender and the receiver must make the check for the secret message to be successfully relayed and understood.

Anyone listening in on a secret message can attempt a Sense Motive check (DC equal to the sender's Bluff check result). If successful, the eavesdropper realizes that a secret message is contained in the communication. If the eavesdropper beats the DC by 5 or more, he or she understands the secret message.

Whether trying to send or intercept a message, a failure by 5 or more points means that one side

or the other misinterprets the message in some fashion.

Try Again?: Generally, a failed Bluff check makes the target too suspicious for the character to try another bluff in the same circumstances. For feinting in combat, the character may try again freely.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a bluff (except for feinting in combat), but can't take 20.

A character with the Deceptive feat gets a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks.

Time: A bluff takes at least 1 round (and is at least a full-round action) but can take much longer if the character tries something elaborate. Using Bluff as a feint in combat is an attack action.

BLUFF MODIFIERS	
Example	Sense Motive
Target wants to believe you	-5
The bluff is believable	+0
The bluff is hard to believe or puts target at risk	+5
The bluff is very hard to believe or puts target at significant risk	+10
The bluff is way out there--too incredible to consider	+20

CLIMB (STR) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: With each successful Climb check, the character can advance up, down, or across a slope or a wall or other steep incline (or even a ceiling with handholds). A slope is considered to be any incline of less than 60 degrees; a wall is any incline of 60 degrees or steeper.

A failed Climb check indicates that the character makes no progress, and a check that fails by 5 or more means that the character falls from whatever height he or she had already attained (unless the character is secured with some kind of harness or other equipment).

The DC of the check depends on the conditions of the climb. If the climb is less than 10 feet, reduce the DC by 5.

Since the character can't move to avoid an attack, he or she is flat-footed while climbing (the character loses any Dexterity bonus to Defense). Any time the character takes damage while climbing, make a Climb check against the DC of the slope or wall. Failure means the character falls from his or her current height and sustains the appropriate falling damage.

Accelerated Climbing: A character can try to climb more quickly than normal. The character can move his or her full speed, but the character takes a -5 penalty on his or her Climb check. (Moving twice the character's speed in a round requires two checks, one for each move action.)

Making Handholds and Footholds: A character can make handholds and footholds by pounding pitons into a wall. Doing so takes 1 minute per piton, and one piton is needed per 3 feet. As with any surface with handholds and footholds, a wall with pitons in it has a DC of 15.

Catching Yourself When Falling: It's practically impossible for a character to catch him or herself on a wall while falling. Make a Climb check (DC equal to wall's DC + 20) to do so. A slope is relatively easier to catch on (DC equal to slope's DC + 10).

Special: Someone using a rope can haul a character upward (or lower the character) by means of sheer strength. Use two times a character's maximum load to determine how much weight he or she can lift.

A character can take 10 while climbing, but can't take 20.

A character without climbing gear takes a -4 penalty on Climb checks. At the GM's discretion, certain kinds of climbing attempts might require only a rope or some other implement, or even just one's hands and feet, rather than a full set of climbing gear to avoid the penalty.

A character with the Athletic feat gets a +2 bonus on all Climb checks.

DC	Example Wall or Surface
0	A slope too steep to walk up.
5	A knotted rope with a wall to brace against.
10	A rope with a wall to brace against. A knotted rope. A surface with sizable ledges to hold on to and stand on, such as a rugged cliff face.
15	Any surface with adequate handholds and footholds (natural or artificial), such as a rough natural rock surface. An unknotted rope. Pulling yourself up when dangling by your hands.
20	An uneven surface with just a few narrow handholds and footholds, such as a coarse masonry wall or a sheer cliff face with a few crevices and small toeholds.
25	A rough surface with no real handholds or footholds

A smooth surface cannot be climbed.

Time: Climbing at one-half your speed is a full-round action. Moving half that far (one-fourth the character's speed) is a move action.

Accelerated climbing, allowing the character to climb at his or her full speed, is a full-round action. A character can move half that far (one-half his or her speed) as a move action.

COMPUTER USE (INT)

Check: Computers are very rare on Mars. Indeed, modern electronic computers are unknown. The few Red Martian civilizations advanced enough to master the technology use gargantuan 'calculating engines' or 'mechanical brains', which are immense machines that sit in the heart of the city, connected to various points by a network of pressurized tubes and mechanical feeds. Someone who wishes to access the machine must spend some time to formulate his question and encode it on a punch card or, in some cases, arrange wires or colored crystals on a plug board. Once this is done, the machine begins to chug away at the problem, and will, eventually, spit out an answer.

The actual means by which the thinking machines work have been long forgotten. The Martians, even the most advanced, maintain them mostly by rote – and according to instructions occasionally issued by the machines themselves, which can analyze their own condition and recommend repairs. The power of the machines is simultaneously vast and limited – they can, for example, predict the weather with tremendous accuracy up to five years in the future, but cannot be used for mundane tasks such as writing or game playing. In many ways, they are more akin to oracles than computers, and will often warn of coming events, such as a Green Martian assault or a natural disaster. They are not libraries or storehouses of data – the Martians never linked their bulk information storage to their 'computers'. Thus, 'hacking' them in search of files is meaningless.

In **MARS**, Computer Use skill becomes a form of divination, where a skilled character who has access to one of the great machines can get answers to complex conundrums.

To do this, access itself must be granted. The powerful machines are not for anyone to query; only an elite hierarchy is allowed to use them. Terminals where questions can be entered are guarded. The wealthy can sometime purchase time to ask questions (via an interceding technician, naturally) with a Purchase DC of 15. Otherwise, characters must somehow get access to the terminals or convince a technician to input the question for them. Depending on the character's reputation and influence, this can be an easy or nigh-impossible task.

The chance of a correct answer is determined from the chart below, which gives the DC of the Computer Use check required to get the machine to provide an optimal response. Failure by 3 or less produces a partially-useful answer, one which is either garbled or slightly misleading. Failure by 10 or more produces a devastatingly wrong answer. Even a clean success will produce an answer which is often subject to some interpretation – the mechanical brains view of the world is very different from that of a Martian's, and what seems 'simple' to it may be wholly confusing to the reader.

Question Type	Base DC
Simple	15
Moderate	20
Complex	25
Very Complex	30

Simple questions are those where the answer requires very little in the way of insight and includes few variables, especially those relating to the responses of sentient beings: "What food should be given to the herds?" "What is the shortest canal route to Lonaria from Callor?"

Moderate questions involve some degree of insight, interpretations of probable behaviors, and often contain variable factors: "What weapons are best to bring into Baltan?" "How many troops will be needed to turn back the Green Martian attack?"

Complex questions involve many variables and leaps of intuition. Answers to these questions are often a "best guess" based on available data and random events (such as player action in response

to the answer!) can render them meaningless.

"Will someone try to kill me if I go to Baltan?"

"How can we defeat the Green Martians when we lack the manpower?"

Very Complex questions strain the predictive power of the engine to its limits and may cause showers of sparks to fly or deep booming sounds to echo throughout the city. They involve large numbers of variables and a constant 'pruning' of paths of probability. As with complex questions, the answers may be nullified by the actions of player characters or NPCs. "Who shall be the next ruler of Baltan?" "How can entropy be reversed?"

It is also possible, even with a success, for the machine to simply say "This question cannot be answered.", or words to that effect.

The DC is modified as follows:

Time: If the question pertains to events happening more than a few days in the future, the machine will have more difficulty answering it, and more skill will be needed in setting up the inputs:

More than a week:	+2
More than a month:	+5
More than a year:	+10

Distinct Individuals: If the machine is asked to predict or interpret the responses of large numbers of individuals, it will require more detailed information and inputs. Note that an army, tribe, or nation does not count as millions of individuals – indeed, predicting the actions of a mob is relatively easy. For many purposes, each identifiable collective can be considered an 'individual' for these purposes – for example, a question about the actions of three detachments of White Ape legionnaires is a question about three 'individuals' and the DC is increased by 2.

3-5 individuals:	+2
6-7 individuals:	+5
8-10 individuals:	+10
11 or more:	+15, +1 for each additional 5.

Randomness: This is somewhat subjective, and

refers to how many potentially unpredictable factors could affect the outcome. For example, a rock falling from a tower suffers from very few random factors – short of bouncing off a sky-corsair which happened along at the wrong moment, it's going to fall. On the other hand, predicting whom a Baltanese Courtier will take to a social event requires considerable guesswork and judging of probabilities.

No Randomness:	-3
Slight Randomness:	+0
Considerable Randomness:	+3
Extreme Randomness:	+5

Try Again?: Yes, though a success doesn't cancel the effects of a previous failure.

Special: A character can take 10 when using the Computer Use skill. A character can take 20 in some cases, but not in those that involve a penalty for failure.

A character with the Gearhead feat gets a +2 bonus on all Computer Use checks.

Time: Computer Use requires at least a full-round action. The GM may determine that some tasks require several rounds, a few minutes, or longer, as described above.

CONCENTRATION (CON)

Check: A character makes a Concentration check whenever he or she may potentially be distracted while engaged in some action that requires his or her full attention (such as making a Disable Device or Treat Injury check). Situations such as taking damage, working in a bouncing vehicle, or dealing with severe weather can require a character to make a Concentration check.

If the Concentration check succeeds, the character may continue with the action. If the Concentration check fails, the action automatically fails (with the appropriate ramifications, if any), and the action is wasted.

A successful Concentration check still doesn't allow a character to take 10 when in a stressful situation; he or she must roll the check as normal.

The check DC depends on the nature of the distraction.

Try Again?: Yes, though a success doesn't cancel the effects of a previous failure, such as the disruption of an action that was being concentrated on.

Special: A character can use Concentration to avoid attacks of opportunity when attempting a skill check that normally provokes attacks of opportunity. The DC to do so is 15.

If the Concentration check succeeds, the character may attempt the action normally without incurring any attacks of opportunity. If the Concentration check fails, the related check automatically fails just as if the character's concentration had been disrupted by a distraction. The character does not provoke attacks of opportunity, however.

This use of Concentration applies only to skill checks. It does not apply to other actions that normally provoke attacks of opportunity, such as movement or making unarmed attacks.

A character with the Focused feat gets a +2 bonus on all Concentration checks.

Time: Making a Concentration check doesn't require an action; it is either a reaction (when attempted in response to a distraction) or part of another action (when attempted actively).

CRAFT (INT)

This skill encompasses several categories, each of them treated as a separate skill: Craft (chemical), Craft (Martian technology)(which combines electronic and mechanical), Craft (pharmaceutical), Craft (structural), Craft (visual arts), and Craft (writing).

Craft skills are specifically focused on creating objects. To use a Craft skill effectively, a character must have a kit or some other set of basic tools. The purchase DC of this equipment varies according to the particular Craft skill.

Check: To use Craft, first decide what the character is trying to make and consult the

category descriptions below. Make a Wealth check against the given purchase DC for the object to see if the character succeeds in acquiring the raw materials. If the character succeeds at that check, make the Craft check against the given DC for the object in question. If the character fails the check, he or she does not make the object, and the raw materials are wasted (unless otherwise noted).

Generally, a character can take 10 when using a Craft skill to construct an object, but can't take 20 (since doing so represents multiple attempts, and the character uses up the raw materials after the first attempt). The exception is Craft (writing); a character can take 20 because the character does not use up any raw materials (and thus no Wealth check is required to use the skill).

Craft (chemical) (Int) Trained Only

This skill allows a character to mix chemicals to create acids, bases, explosives, and poisonous substances.

Acids and Bases: Acids are corrosives substances. Bases neutralize acids but do not deal damage. A base of a certain type counteracts an acid of the same type or a less potent type.

Explosives: Building an explosive from scratch is dangerous. If the Craft (chemical) check fails, the raw materials are wasted. If the check fails by 5 or more, the explosive compound detonates as it is being made, dealing half of its intended damage to the builder and anyone else in the burst radius.

If the check succeeds, the final product is a solid material, about the size of a brick. An explosive compound does not include a fuse or detonator. Connecting a fuse or detonator requires a Demolitions check.

Type of Acid	Purchase DC	Craft DCs Acid	Base	Time
Mild (1d6/1d10) ¹	8	15	10	1 min.
Potent (2d6/2d10)	12	20	15	30 min.
Concentrated (3d6/3d10)	16	30	20	1 hr.
1 The dice rolls in parentheses are typical contact damage/immersion damage caused per round of immersion.				

Type of Scratch-Built Explosive	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Reflex DC (save for half damage)	Time
Improvised (1d6/5 feet) ¹	6	10	10	1 round
Simple (2d6/5 feet)	12	15	12	10 min.
Moderate (4d6/10 feet)	16	20	12	1 hr.
Complex (6d6/15 feet)	20	25	15	3 hr.
Powerful (8d6/20 feet)	25	30	15	12 hr.
Devastating (10d6/25 feet)	30	35	18	24 hr.
1 The figures in parentheses are typical damage/burst radius for each type of explosive.				
Scratch built explosives deal concussion damage.				

Poisonous Substances: Solid poisons are usually ingested. Liquid poisons are most effective when injected directly into the bloodstream. Gaseous poisons must be inhaled to be effective. The table below summarizes the characteristics of various poisons.

Save DC: The Difficulty Class of the Fortitude save to negate the effects of the poison.

Initial Damage: The damage a character takes immediately upon failing his or her Fortitude save.

Secondary Damage: The damage a character takes after 1 minute of exposure to the poison if the character fails a second saving throw. Ability score damage is temporary, unless marked with an asterisk, in which case the damage is permanent ability drain. Unconsciousness lasts for 1d3 hours, and paralysis lasts 2d6 minutes.

Purchase DC: The DC for the Wealth check necessary to obtain the raw materials to craft

the poison, or to purchase one bottle of solid or liquid poison or one high-pressure cylinder of gaseous poison. A bottle holds four doses, while a cylinder holds enough gas to fill a 10-foot-radius area.

Restriction: The restriction rating for the poison, if any, and the appropriate black market purchase DC modifier. Remember to apply this modifier to the purchase DC when making a Wealth check to acquire the poison on the black market.

Craft DC: The DC of the Craft check to create a quantity of the poison.

Time: The amount of time required for the Craft check.

If the Craft check succeeds, the final product is a synthesized solid or liquid poison stored in a bottle (containing 4 doses) or a gas stored in a pressurized cylinder. When released, the gas is sufficient to fill a 10-foot-radius area and takes 1 round to fill the area.

Table: Poisons

Poison	Type	Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Purchase DC	Restriction	Craft DC	Time
Yaboa Powder	Ingested	15	1d4 Str	2d4 Con	9	Res (+2)	24	4 hr.
Redthorn (plant)	Injury	18	1d6 Str	2d6 Str	14	Lic (+1)	n/a	n/a
Whipvine venom (plant)	Injury	15	1d4 Con	1d4 Con	14	Lic (+1)	n/a	n/a
Chloroform ¹	Inhaled	17	Unconsciousness 1d3 hours	—	9	Res (+2)	24	4 hr.
Cyanide	Injury	16	1d6 Con	2d6 Con	15	Mil (+3)	31	15 hr.
Knockout gas	Inhaled	18	1d3 Dex	Unconsciousness 1d3 hours	12	Res (+2)	26	8 hr.
Radium shavings	Ingested	12	1d2 Con	1d4 Con	6	Res (+2)	18	2 hr.
Grey Martian green gas (gas)	Inhaled	14	1d2 Con	1d4 Con	9	Res (+2)	20	4 hr.
Shalag liver (creature)	Injury	13	1d6 Str	Paralysis 2d6 minutes	13	Lic (+1)	n/a	n/a
Grey Martian red gas (gas)	Inhaled	18	1d4 Con	2d4 Con	15	Illegal (+4)	30	15 hr.
Paladas Root	Injury	19	1d3 Dex	2d4 Con	9	Res (+2)	23	4 hr.
Nerve Gas	Inhaled	22	1d6 Con	2d6 Con	21	Illegal (+4)	42	48 hr.

¹ Chloroform gives off vapor that causes unconsciousness. Applying chloroform to an unwilling subject requires a successful grapple check and pin.
n/a: Certain poisons can't be made with the Craft skill. Instead, such a poison must be obtained by extracting it from the creature in question.

Special: A character without a chemical kit takes a –4 penalty on Craft (chemical) checks.

A character with the Builder feat gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (chemical) checks.

Craft(Martian Technology) (Int) Trained Only
There are no ‘electronics’, as such, on Mars. Most technology is a blend of electromechanical systems and exotic metals with unique properties. For this reason, Craft (Mechanical) and Craft (Electronic) blend together into a single skill called Craft (Martian Technology). Some typical tasks are:

Task	DC	Time
Radium pistol	15	24 hr.
Radium-powered canal boat engine	15	48 hr.
Airship propulsion drive.	20	72 hr.
Powered canal boat	20	120 hr.
Calculating engine	30	240 hr.
Grey Martian Heat Ray	35	240 hr.

(The above assumes most of the basic components – wires, frames, radium cells, and so on – are available and ‘merely’ need to be properly assembled.)

Craft (pharmaceutical) (Int) Trained Only
This skill allows a character to compound medicinal drugs to aid in recovery from treatable illnesses. A medicinal drug gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of a disease.

The Craft (pharmaceutical) check is based on the severity of the disease to be countered as measured by the DC of the Fortitude save needed to resist it.

Disease Fort. Save DC	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Time
14 or lower	5	15	1 hr.
15–18	10	20	3 hr.
19–22	15	25	6 hr.
23 or higher	20	30	12 hr.

Special: A character without a pharmacist kit takes a –4 penalty on Craft (pharmaceutical) checks.

A character with the Medical Expert feat gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (pharmaceutical) checks.

Craft (structural) (Int)
This skill allows a character to build wooden, concrete, or metal structures from scratch, including bookcases, desks, walls, houses, and so forth, and includes such handyman skills as plumbing, house painting, drywall, laying cement, and building cabinets.

Type of Scratch-Built Structure (Examples)	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Time
Simple (bookcase, false wall)	5	15	12 hr.
Moderate (catapult, shed, house deck)	10	20	24 hr.
Complex (bunker, domed ceiling)	15	25	60 hr.
Advanced (house)	20	30	600 hr.

When building a structure from scratch, the character describes the kind of structure he or she wants to construct; then the Gamemaster decides if the structure is simple, moderate, complex, or advanced in scope and difficulty.

Special: A character without a mechanical tool kit takes a –4 penalty on Craft (structural) checks. A character with the Builder feat gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (structural) checks.

Craft (visual art) (Int)
This skill allows a character to create paintings or drawings, or in some other way create a work of visual art.

When attempting to create a work of visual art, the character simply makes a Craft (visual art) check, the result of which determines the quality of the work.

Unless the effort is particularly elaborate or the character must acquire an expensive piece of

equipment, the basic components have a purchase DC of 5.

Check Result	Effort Achieved
9 or lower	Untalented amateur
10–19	Talented amateur
20–24	Professional
25–30	Expert
31 or higher	Master

Creating a work of visual art requires at least a full-round action, but usually takes an hour, a day, or more, depending on the scope of the project.

Special: A character with the Creative feat gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (visual art) checks.

Craft (writing) (Int)

This skill allows a character to create plays, journals, histories and similar works of writing.

When creating a work of writing, the player simply makes a Craft (writing) check, the result of which determines the quality of the work.

No Wealth check is necessary to use this Craft skill.

Check Result	Effort Achieved
9 or lower	Untalented amateur
10–19	Talented amateur
20–24	Professional
25–30	Expert
31 or higher	Master

Creating a work of writing requires at least 1 hour, but usually takes a day, a week, or more, depending on the scope of the project.

Special: A character with the Creative feat gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (writing) checks.

DECIPHER SCRIPT (INT) TRAINED ONLY

Check: A character can decipher writing in an ancient language or in code, or interpret the meaning of an incomplete text. The base DC is 20 for the simplest messages, 25 for standard codes, and 30 or higher for intricate or complex codes or exotic messages.

If the check succeeds, the character understands the general content of a piece of writing, reading about one page of text or its equivalent in 1 minute. If the check fails, the GM makes a Wisdom check (DC 10) for the character to see if he or she avoids drawing a false conclusion about the text. (Success means that the character does not draw a false conclusion; failure means that the character does.)

The GM secretly makes both the skill check and the Wisdom check so the character can't tell whether the conclusion drawn is accurate or not.

Try Again?: No, unless conditions change or new information is uncovered.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Decipher Script check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Studious feat gets a +2 bonus on all Decipher Script checks.

Time: Decipher Script takes 1 minute or more, depending on the complexity of the code.

DIPLOMACY (Cha)

Check: A character can change others' attitudes with a successful check (see the table below). In negotiations, participants roll opposed Diplomacy checks to see who gains the advantage. Opposed checks also resolve cases where two advocates or diplomats plead opposing cases before a third party.

Diplomacy can be used to influence a GM character's attitude. The GM chooses the character's initial attitude based on circumstances. Most of the time, the people the heroes meet are

indifferent toward them, but a specific situation may call for a different initial attitude. The DCs given in the accompanying table show what it takes to change someone's attitude with the use of the Diplomacy skill. The character doesn't declare a specific outcome he or she is trying for; instead, make the check and compare the result to the table below.

Try Again?: Generally, trying again doesn't work. Even if the initial check succeeds, the other character can only be persuaded so far. If the initial check fails, the other character has probably become more firmly committed to his or her position, and trying again is futile.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Diplomacy check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Trustworthy feat gets a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks.

Time: Diplomacy is at least a full-round action. The GM may determine that some negotiations require a longer period of time.

Bribery and Diplomacy

Offering money or another form of favor can, in the right situation, improve a character's chances with a Diplomacy skill check. Bribery allows a character to circumvent various official obstacles when a person in a position of trust or authority is willing to accept such an offering.

When a character requires a bribe to render services, then a hero's Diplomacy check automatically fails if a bribe isn't attached to it. If a bribe isn't required, a hero can add a bribe to get a bonus on his or her skill check. This can backfire, as some characters will be insulted by a bribe offer (their attitude changes one step for the worse) and others will report the hero to the proper authorities.

To bribe a character, make a Wealth check. Typical DCs are shown on below, but the GM may modify the DC as he or she sees fit. If the hero succeeds in the check, he or she gains a +2 bonus on the Diplomacy check. For every point by which the hero beats the DC, increase the bonus by +1 (to a total maximum bonus of +10).

Bribe Target	Purchase DC
Private Guard	7
Bureaucrat	10
Officer of Law	10

Attitude	Means	Possible Actions
Hostile	Will take risks to hurt or avoid you	Attack, interfere, berate, flee
Unfriendly	Wishes you ill	Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult
Indifferent	Doesn't much care	Act as socially expected
Friendly	Wishes you well	Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate
Helpful	Will take risks to help you	Protect, back up, heal, aid

Initial Attitude	Hostile	Unfriendly	New Attitude Indifferent	Friendly	Helpful
Hostile	19 or less	20	25	35	45
Unfriendly	4 or less	5	15	25	35
Indifferent	—	0 or less	1	15	25
Friendly	—	—	0 or less	1	15

DISABLE DEVICE (INT) TRAINED ONLY

Check: The GM makes the Disable Device check so that the character doesn't necessarily know whether he or she has succeeded.

Open Lock: A character can pick conventional locks, finesse combination locks, and bypass electronic locks. The character must have a tool that they can use, appropriate to the sort of lock (lockpick set for mechanical locks, harmonizing crystals for Martian crystal locks, etc.). If the character does not have the appropriate tools, he or she takes a -4 penalty on your check. The DC depends on the quality of the lock, and ranges from 20 to 50.

Traps and Sabotage: Disabling (or rigging or jamming) a simple mechanical device has a DC of 10. More intricate and complex devices have higher DCs. The GM rolls the check. If the check succeeds, the character disables the device. If the check fails by 4 or less, the character has failed but can try again. If the character fails by 5 or more, something goes wrong. If it's a trap, the character springs it. If it's some sort of sabotage, the character thinks the device is disabled, but it still works normally.

A character can rig simple devices to work normally for a while and then fail some time later (usually after 1d4 rounds or minutes of use).

Try Again?: Yes, though the character must be aware that he or she has failed in order to try again.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Disable Device check. A character can take 20 to open a lock or to disable a security device, unless the character is trying to prevent his or her tampering from being noticed.

A character with the Cautious feat and at least 1 rank in this skill gets a +2 bonus on all Disable Device checks.

Time: Disabling a simple mechanical device is a full-round action. Intricate or complex devices require 2d4 rounds.

DISGUISE (CHA)

Check: A character's Disguise check result determines how good the disguise is. It is opposed by others' Spot check results. Make one Disguise check even if several people make Spot checks. The GM makes the character's Disguise check secretly so that the character is not sure how well his or her disguise holds up to scrutiny.

If the character doesn't draw any attention to him or herself, however, others don't get to make Spot checks. If the character comes to the attention of people who are suspicious, the suspicious person gets to make a Spot check. (The GM can assume that such observers take 10 on their Spot checks.)

The effectiveness of the character's disguise depends in part on how much the character is attempting to change his or her appearance.

Disguise	Modifier
Minor details only	+5
Appropriate uniform or costume	+2
Different sex	-2
Different race	-15

The races of Mars are so distinct that it is almost impossible for any individual to disguise himself as a member of another race. Subtract 15 from any Disguise check for any attempt to perpetrate such a disguise, and quadruple the time required to put it on.

In the event humans from Earth are adventuring on Mars, there is a +3 bonus to Spot checks to detect a Red Martian disguised as a human or vice-versa – provided some form of makeup is used to change the skin tone or the individual stays completely in the shadows!

Try Again?: No, though the character can assume the same disguise again at a later time. If others saw through the previous disguise, they are automatically treated as suspicious if the character assumes the same disguise again.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 when establishing a disguise.

A character without a disguise kit takes a -4 penalty on Disguise checks.

A character with the Deceptive feat gets a +2 bonus on all Disguise checks.

A character can help someone else create a disguise for him or her, treating it as an aid another attempt.

Time: A Disguise check requires 1d4 x10 minutes of preparation. The GM makes Spot checks for those who encounter the character immediately upon meeting the character and again each hour or day thereafter, depending on circumstances.

DRIVE (DEX)

Check: There are very few land vehicles on Mars. Most travel between Red Martian cities is via the canals, and long-distance travel is by airship. There is no support infrastructure in the wastelands or the dead sea bottoms, so land vehicles must carry their own fuel supplies, and even radium cartridges can wear out eventually. Because of this rarity, a character must take the Vehicle Operations feat or suffer a -4 penalty on all Drive checks.

In addition, Drive is never a class skill – classes with Drive as a class skill will receive Ride instead; if they already have Ride as a class skill, they get a +1 bonus to it.

Routine tasks, such as ordinary driving, don't require a skill check. Make a check only when some unusual circumstance exists (such as inclement weather or an icy surface), or when the character is driving during a dramatic situation (the character is being chased or attacked, for example, or is trying to reach a destination in a limited amount of time).

Try Again?: Most driving checks have consequences for failure that make trying again impossible.

Special: A character can take 10 when driving, but can't take 20.

Time: A Drive check is a move action.

ESCAPE ARTIST (DEX) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: Make a check to escape from restraints or to squeeze through a tight space.

Restraint	DC
Ropes	Opponent's Dex check +20
Net	20
Handcuffs	35
Tight space	30
Grappler	Opponent's grapple check

For ropes, a character's Escape Artist check is opposed by the Dexterity check result of the opponent who tied the bonds. Since it's easier to tie someone up than to escape from being tied up, the opponent gets a +20 bonus on his or her Dexterity check.

For a tight space, a check is only called for if the character's head fits but his or her shoulders don't. If the space is long, such as in an airshaft, the GM may call for multiple checks. A character can't fit through a space that his or her head doesn't fit through.

A character can make an Escape Artist check opposed by his or her opponent's grapple check to get out of a grapple or out of a pinned condition (so that the character is just being grappled). Doing so is an attack action, so if the character escapes the grapple he or she can move in the same round.

Try Again?: A character can make another check after a failed check if the character is squeezing through a tight space, making multiple checks. If the situation permits, the character can make additional checks as long as he or she is not being actively opposed.

Special: A character can take 10 on an Escape Artist check. A character can take 20 if he or she is not being actively opposed (a character can take 20 if he or she is tied up, even though it's an opposed check, because the opponent isn't actively opposing the character).

A character with the Nimble feat gets a +2 bonus on all Escape Artist checks.

Time: Making a check to escape from being bound by ropes, handcuffs, or other restraints (except a grappler) requires 1 minute. Escaping a net is a full-round action. Squeezing through a tight space takes at least 1 minute, maybe longer, depending on the distance that must be crossed.

FORGERY (INT)

Check: Forgery requires materials appropriate to the document being forged, and some time. To forge a document the character needs to have seen a similar document before. The complexity of the document, the character's degree of familiarity with it, and whether the character needs to reproduce the signature or handwriting of a specific individual, provide modifiers to the Forgery check, as shown below.

Factor	Check Modifier	Time
Document Type		
Simple (typed letter, business card)	+0	10 min.
Moderate (letterhead, business form)	-2	20 min.
Complex (stock certificate, driver's license)	-4	1 hr.
Difficult (passport)	-8	4 hr.
Extreme (military/law enforcement ID)	-16	24 hr.
Familiarity		
Unfamiliar (seen once for less than a minute)	-4	
Fairly familiar (seen for several minutes)	+0	
Quite familiar (on hand, or studied at leisure)	+4	
Forger has produced other documents of same type	+4	
Document includes specific signature	-4	

Some documents require security or authorization codes, whether authentic ones or additional forgeries. The GM makes the character's check secretly so the character is not sure how good his or her forgery is.

The Forgery skill is also used to detect someone else's forgery. The result of the original Forgery check that created the document is opposed by a Forgery check by the person who examines the document to check its authenticity. If the examiner's check result is equal to or higher than the original Forgery check, the document is determined to be fraudulent. The examiner gains bonuses or penalties on his or her check as given in the table below

Condition	Examiner's Check Modifier
Type of document unknown to examiner	-4
Type of document somewhat known to examiner	-2
Type of document well known to examiner	+0
Document is put through additional tests ¹	+4
Examiner only casually reviews the document ¹	-2
¹ Cumulative with any of the first three conditions on the table. Apply this modifier along with one of the other three whenever appropriate.	

A document that contradicts procedure, orders, or previous knowledge, or one that requires the examiner to relinquish a possession or a piece of information, can increase the examiner's suspicion (and thus create favorable circumstances for the examiner's opposed Forgery check).

Try Again?: No, since the forger isn't sure of the quality of the original forgery.

Special: To forge documents and detect forgeries,

one must be able to read and write the language in question. (The skill is language-dependent.)

A character can take 10 when making a Forgery check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Meticulous feat gets a +2 bonus on all Forgery checks.

Time: Forging a short, simple document takes about 1 minute. Longer or more complex documents take 1d4 minutes per page or longer.

GAMBLE (Wis)

Check: To join or start a game, a character must first pay a stake. The character sets the purchase DC of the stake if he or she starts the game, or the GM sets it if the character joins a game. Stakes run from penny-ante (purchase DC 4) to astronomical (purchase DC 24). A character cannot take 20 when purchasing a stake.

If the stake is within the character's means (it is equal to or less than his or her Wealth bonus), the character stands no chance of winning any significant amount. The character might come out ahead, but the amount is not enough to affect his or her Wealth bonus. Since paying the stake didn't cost any points of Wealth bonus, the character doesn't lose anything either.

If the stake is higher than the character's Wealth bonus (before applying any reductions from purchasing the stake), the character gets a +1 bonus on his or her Gamble check for every point the purchase DC is above the character's Wealth bonus.

The character's Gamble check is opposed by the Gamble checks of all other participants in the game. If the character beats all other participants, he or she wins and gains an increase to his or her Wealth bonus. The amount of the increase depends on the difference between the character's check result and the next highest result among the other participants.

Result Difference	Wealth Increase
1-9	+1
10-19	+2
20-29	+3
30-39	+4
40 or more	+5

Try Again?: No, unless the character wants to put up another stake.

Special: A character can't take 10 or take 20 when making a Gamble check.

A character with the Confident feat gets a +2 bonus on all Gamble checks.

Time: A Gamble check requires 1 hour.



GATHER INFORMATION (CHA)

Check: By succeeding at a skill check (DC 10) and spending 1d4+1 hours passing out money and buying drinks, a character can get a feel for the major news items in a neighborhood. This result assumes that no obvious reasons exist why information would be withheld. The higher the check result, the better the information.

If the situation doesn't require the expenditure of money, no Wealth check is necessary.

Information ranges from general to protected, and the cost and DC increases accordingly for the type of information the character seeks to gather, as given in the table below.

Info Type	DC	Purchase DC
General	10	5
Specific	15	10
Restricted	20	15
Protected	25	20

General information concerns local happenings, rumors, gossip, and the like. Specific information usually relates to a particular question. Restricted information includes facts that aren't generally known and requires that the character locate someone who has access to such information. Protected information is even harder to come by and might involve some danger, either for the one asking the questions or the one providing the answer. There's a chance that someone will take note of anyone asking about restricted or protected information.

The character can increase the amount of money used to gather information, gaining a circumstance bonus by effectively offering a bribe (though the process might entail buying more expensive drinks, not necessarily offering a character extra money). Increase the Wealth check DC by 2 for each +1 circumstance bonus the character wants to add to his or her skill check.

Try Again?: Yes, but it takes 1d4+1 hours for each check, and characters may draw attention to themselves if they repeatedly pursue a certain type of information.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Gather Information check, but cannot take 20.

A character with the Trustworthy feat gets a +2 bonus on all Gather Information checks.

Time: A Gather Information check takes 1d4+1 hours.

HANDLE ANIMAL (CHA) TRAINED ONLY

Check: The time required to get an effect and the DC depend on what the character is trying to do.

Task	Time	DC
Handle an animal	Move action	10
"Push" an animal	Full-round action	25
Teach trick	1 week	See text
Train an animal	See text	See text

Handle an Animal: This means to command an animal to perform a task or trick that it knows. If the animal is wounded or has taken any ability score damage, the DC increases by +5. If the check is successful, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

"Push" an Animal: To push an animal means to get it to perform a task or trick that it doesn't know, but is physically capable of performing. If the check is successful, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

Teach an Animal a Trick: The character can teach an animal a specific trick, such as "attack" or "stay," with one week of work and a successful Handle Animal check. An animal with an Intelligence of 1 can learn a maximum of three tricks, while an animal with an Intelligence of 2 can learn a maximum of six tricks.

The character can teach an animal to obey only that character. Any other person attempting to make the animal perform a trick takes a -10 penalty on his or her Handle Animal check. Teaching an animal to obey only the character counts as a trick (in terms of how many tricks the animal can learn). It does not require a check; however, it increases the DC of all tricks the character teaches the animal by +5. If the animal

already knows any tricks, the character cannot teach it to obey only that character.

Possible tricks include, but are not limited to, the following.

Attack (DC 20): The animal attacks apparent enemies. The character may point to a particular enemy to direct the animal to attack that enemy. Normally, an animal only attacks humans and other animals. Teaching an animal to attack all creatures (including unnatural creatures such as undead and aberrations if they exist in your campaign) counts as two tricks.

Come (DC 15): The animal comes to the character, even if the animal normally would not do so (such as following the character onto a boat).

Defend (DC 20): The animal defends the character (or is ready to defend the character if no threat is present). Alternatively, the character can command the animal to defend a specific other character.

Down (DC 15): The animal breaks off from combat or otherwise backs down.

Fetch (DC 15): The animal goes and gets something. The character must point out a specific object, or else the animal fetches some random object.

Guard (DC 20): The animal stays in place and prevents others from approaching.

Heel (DC 15): The animal follows the character closely, even to places where it normally wouldn't go.

Perform (DC 15): The animal does a variety of simple tricks such as sitting up, rolling over, and so on.

Seek (DC 15): The animal moves into an area and searches for something of interest. It stops and indicates the first thing of interest it finds. What constitutes an item of interest to an animal can vary. Animals almost always

find other creatures or characters of interest. To understand that it's looking for a specific object, the animal must make an Intelligence check (DC 10).

Stay (DC 15): The animal stays in place waiting for the character to return. It does not challenge other creatures that come by, though it still defends itself if it needs to.

Track (DC 20): The animal tracks the scent presented to it.

Work (DC 15): The animal pulls or pushes a medium or heavy load.

Train an Animal: Rather than teaching an animal individual tricks, the character can train an animal for a general purpose. Essentially, an animal's purpose represents a preselected set of known tricks that fit into a common scheme. An animal can be trained for one general purpose only, though if the animal is capable of learning additional tricks (above and beyond those included in its general purpose) it may do so. Training an animal for a purpose requires fewer checks than teaching individual tricks.

Combat Riding (DC 20, 6 weeks): An animal trained to bear a rider into combat knows Attack, Come, Defend, Down, Guard, and Heel. An animal trained in riding may be "upgraded" to an animal trained in combat riding by spending three weeks and making a Handle Animal check (DC 20). If the animal was trained in other tricks (in addition to those provided by training the animal for riding), those tricks are completely replaced by the combat riding tricks.

Fighting (DC 20, 3 weeks): An animal trained for combat knows the following tricks: Attack, Down, and Stay.

Guarding (DC 20, 4 weeks): An animal trained to guard knows the following tricks: Attack, Defend, Down, and Guard.

Laboring (DC 15, 2 weeks): An animal trained for heavy labor knows Come and Work.

Hunting (DC 20, 6 weeks): An animal trained for hunting knows Attack, Down, Fetch, Heel, Seek, and Track.

Performing (DC 15, 4 weeks): An animal trained for performing knows Come, Fetch, Heel, Perform, and Stay.

Riding (DC 15; 3 weeks): An animal trained to bear a rider knows Come, Heel, and Stay.

Try Again?: Yes.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 when handling animals.

An untrained character uses Charisma checks to handle and push animals, but he or she can't teach or train animals.

A character with the Animal Affinity feat and at least 1 rank in this skill gets a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal checks.

Time: See above. Teaching or training an animal takes a number of days. The character does not have to spend the entire time training the animal; 3 hours per day is enough. (Spending more than 3 hours per day does not reduce the number of days required.) The character cannot spread the days out; if the character does not complete the training during a period of consecutive days, the effort is wasted.

HIDE (DEX) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: A character's Hide check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone who might see the character. The character can move up to half his or her normal speed and hide at no penalty. At more than half and up to the character's full speed, the character takes a -5 penalty. It's practically impossible (-20 penalty) to hide while attacking, running, or charging.

The hide check is also modified by the character's size:

Size	Modifier
Fine	+16
Diminutive	+12
Tiny	+8
Small	+4
Medium-size	+0
Large	-4
Huge	-8
Gargantuan	-12
Colossal	-16

If people are observing the character, even casually, he or she can't hide. The character can run around a corner so that he or she is out of sight and then hide, but the others then know at least where the character went.

Cover and concealment grant circumstance bonuses to Hide checks, as shown below. Note that a character can't hide if he or she has less than one-half cover or concealment.

Cover	Bonus
Three-quarters	+5
Nine-tenths	+10

Creating a Diversion to Hide: A character can use the Bluff skill to help him or her hide. A successful Bluff check can give the character the momentary diversion needed to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of the character. While the others turn their attention from the character, he or she can make a Hide check if the character can get to a hiding place of some kind. (As a general guideline, the hiding place has to be within 1 foot for every rank the character has in Hide.) This check, however, is at a -10 penalty because the character has to move fast.

Tailing: A character can use Hide to tail a person in public. Using the skill in this manner assumes that there are other random people about, among whom the character can mingle to remain unnoticed. If the subject is worried about being followed, he or she can make a Spot check (opposed by the character's Hide check) every time he or she changes course (goes around a street corner, exits a building, and so on). If he or she is unsuspecting, he or she generally gets only a Spot check after an hour of tailing.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Hide check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Stealthy feat gets a +2 bonus on all Hide checks.

Time: A Hide check is an attack action.

INTIMIDATE (CHA)

Check: With a successful check, a character can forcibly persuade another character to perform some task or behave in a certain way. A character's Intimidate check is opposed by the target's level check (1d20 + the target's character level or Hit Dice). Any modifiers that a target may have on Will saving throws against fear effects apply to this level check. If the character succeeds, he or she may treat the target as friendly for 10 minutes, but only for purposes of actions taken while in the character's presence. (That is, the target retains his or her normal attitude, but will chat, advise, offer limited help, or advocate on the character's behalf while intimidated.)

Circumstances dramatically affect the effectiveness of an Intimidate check. There are limits to what a successful Intimidate check can do. The character can't force someone to obey his or her every command or do something that endangers that person's life. If the character fails by more than 5, the target may actually do the opposite of what the character wishes.

Demoralize Opponent: You can also use Intimidate to weaken an opponent's resolve in combat. To do so, make an Intimidate check opposed by the target's modified level check (see above). If you win, the target becomes shaken for 1 round. A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. You can intimidate only an opponent that you threaten in melee combat and that can see you. See the feats "Steely Gaze" and "Menacing Aura".

Try Again?: No. Even if the initial check succeeds, the other character can only be

intimidated so much, and trying again doesn't help. If the initial check fails, the other character has become more firmly resolved to resist the intimidator, and trying again is futile.

Special: A character can take 10 when making an Intimidate check, but can't take 20.

A character immune to fear effects can't be intimidated.

A character may add a +2 bonus to his or her Intimidate check for every size category the character is larger than his or her target. Conversely, the character takes a -2 penalty to his or her check for every size category the character is smaller than his or her target.

A character with the Confident feat gets a +2 bonus on all Intimidate checks and on level checks to resist intimidation.

Time: An Intimidate check is a full-round action.

JUMP (STR) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: The DC and the distance the character can cover vary according to the type of jump the character is attempting.

The character's Jump check is modified by his or her speed. The DCs specified below assume a speed of 30 feet (the speed of a typical human). If the character's speed is less than 30 feet, he or she takes a penalty of -6 for every 10 feet of speed less than 30. If the character's speed is greater than 30 feet, he or she gains a bonus of +4 for every 10 feet over 30.

If the character has ranks in the Jump skill and succeeds on a check, the character lands on his or her feet (when appropriate) and can move as far as the character's remaining movement allows. If the character attempts a Jump check untrained, the character lands prone unless he or she beats the DC by 5 or more. Standing from a prone position is a move action.

Distance moved by jumping is counted against maximum movement in a round. A character can

start a jump at the end of one turn and complete the jump at the beginning of your next turn.

Long Jump: This is a horizontal jump, made across a gap such as a chasm or stream. At the midpoint of the jump, the character attains a vertical height equal to one-quarter the horizontal distance.

The DC for the jump is equal to the distance jumped (in feet). A character cannot jump a distance greater than his or her normal speed. The character must move at least 20 feet in a straight line before attempting the jump or the DC for the jump is doubled.

If the character fails the check by less than 5, he or she doesn't clear the distance, but can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to grab the far edge of the gap. The character ends his or her movement grasping the far edge. If that leaves the character dangling over a chasm or gap, getting up requires a move action and a Climb check (DC 15).

High Jump: This is a vertical leap, made to jump up to grasp something overhead, such as a tree limb or ledge. The DC for the jump is the height x4 (in feet), assuming that the character can move at least 20 feet in a straight line before attempting the jump. If this is not the case, the DC for the jump is doubled.

If the character succeeds on the check, he or she can reach the height. The character grasps the object he or she was trying to reach. If the character wishes to pull him or herself up, the character can do so with a move action and a Climb check (DC 15). If the character fails the Jump check, he or she does not reach the height, and lands on his or her feet in the same square from which the character jumped.

The difficulty of reaching a given height varies according to the size of the character or creature. Generally, the maximum height a creature can reach without jumping is given in the table below. (As a Medium-size creature, a typical human can reach 8 feet without jumping.) If the creature is long instead of tall, treat it as one size category smaller.

Creature Size	Max. Height
Colossal	28 ft.
Gargantuan	64 ft.
Huge	32 ft.
Large	16 ft.
Medium-size	8 ft.
Small	4 ft.
Tiny	2 ft.
Diminutive	1 ft.
Fine	0.5 ft.

Hop Up: The character can jump up onto an object as tall as his or her waist with a Jump check (DC 10). Doing so counts as 10 feet of movement. The character does not need to get a running start to hop up (the DC is not doubled if you do not get a running start).

Jumping Down: If the character intentionally jumps from a height, he or she takes less damage than if the character just falls. The DC to jump down from a height is 15. The character does not have to get a running start to jump down (the DC is not doubled if the character does not get a running start).

If the character succeeds on the check, he or she takes falling damage as if the character had dropped 10 fewer feet than he or she actually did.

Special: Effects that increase a character's speed also increase the character's jumping distance, since the check is modified by the character's speed. A character can take 10 when making a Jump check. If there is no danger associated with failing, the character can take 20.

A character with the Acrobatic feat gets a +2 bonus on all Jump checks. A character with the Run feat gains a +2 competence bonus on Jump checks preceded by a 20-foot move. Tumble can provide a +2 synergy bonus on Jump checks (see Skill Synergy).

Time: Using the Jump skill is either a move action or a full-round action, depending on whether the character starts and completes the jump during a single move action or a full-round action.

KNOWLEDGE (INT) TRAINED ONLY

This skill encompasses several categories, each of them treated as a separate skill. These categories are identified and defined below.

Check: A character makes a Knowledge check to see if the character knows something.

The DC for answering a question within the character's field of study is 10 for easy questions, 15 for basic questions, and 20 to 30 for tough questions.

Ancient History: The study of the long-forgotten cultures, kingdoms, and technology of Mars, much of which is so buried and distorted by time it might as well be magical.

Art: Fine arts and graphic arts, including art history and artistic techniques.

Business: Business procedures, investment strategies, and corporate structures. Bureaucratic procedures and how to navigate them.

Civics: Law, legislation, litigation, and legal rights and obligations. Political and governmental institutions and processes. Each Red Martian culture has its own laws, customs, and traditions. This skill suffers a -2 penalty when used in 'foreign' cultures, unless the character has specifically studied the culture or has lived there at least a month.

Earth and Life Sciences: Biology, botany, genetics, geology, and paleontology. Medicine and forensics.

History: Events, personalities, and cultures of the recent past. Archaeology and antiquities. This skill also encompasses the normal d20 skill of "current events", since news travels slowly on Mars.

Physical Sciences: Astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and engineering.

Streetwise: Street and urban culture, local underworld personalities and events.

Tactics: Techniques and strategies for disposing and maneuvering forces in combat.

Technology: The familiarity necessary to identify various technological devices.

Theology and Philosophy: Liberal arts, ethics, philosophical concepts, and the study of religious faith, practice, and experience.

Try Again?: No. The check represents what a character knows, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let the character know something he or she never knew in the first place.

Special: An untrained Knowledge check is simply an Intelligence check. Without actual training, a character only knows common knowledge about a given subject.

A character can take 10 when making a Knowledge check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Educated feat gets a +2 bonus on any two types of Knowledge checks.

The GM may decide that having 5 or more ranks in a specific Knowledge skill provides a character with a +2 synergy bonus when making a related skill check.

Time: A Knowledge check can be a reaction, but otherwise requires a full-round action.

LISTEN (WIS)

Check: Make a Listen check against a DC that reflects how quiet the noise is that a character might hear or against an opposed Move Silently check.

The GM may call for a Listen check by a character who is in a position to hear something. A character can also make a Listen check voluntarily if he or she wants to try to hear something in the character's vicinity.

The GM may make the Listen check in secret so that the character doesn't know whether not hearing anything means that nothing is there or

that the character failed the check. A successful Listen check when there isn't anything to hear results in the character hearing nothing.

Try Again?: A character can make a Listen check every time he or she has the opportunity to hear something in a reactive manner. As a move action, the character may attempt to hear something that he or she failed (or believes he or she failed) to hear previously.

Special: When several characters are listening to the same thing, the GM can make a single 1d20 roll and use it for all the listeners' skill checks.

A character can take 10 or take 20 when making a Listen check. Taking 20 means the character spends 1 minute attempting to hear something that may or may not be there to hear.

A character with the Alertness feat gets a +2 bonus on all Listen checks.

A sleeping character can make Listen checks, but takes a -10 penalty on the checks.

Time: A Listen check is either a reaction (if called for by the GM) or a move action (if a character actively takes the time to try to hear something).

MOVE SILENTLY (DEX) ARMOR PENALTY

Check: A character's Move Silently check is opposed by the Listen check of anyone who might hear the character. A character can move up to half his or her normal speed at no penalty. At more than half speed and up to the character's full speed, he or she takes a -5 penalty. It's practically impossible (-20 penalty) to move silently while attacking, running, or charging.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Move Silently check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Stealthy feat gets a +2 bonus on all Move Silently checks.

Time: Move Silently is a move action.

NAVIGATE (INT)

Check: Make a Navigate check when a character is trying to find his or her way to a distant location without directions or other specific guidance. Generally, a character does not need to make a check to find a local street or other common urban site, or to follow an accurate map. However, the character might make a check to wend his or her way through a dense forest or a labyrinth of underground storm drains.

For movement over a great distance, make a Navigate check. The DC depends on the length of the trip. If the character succeeds, he or she moves via the best reasonable course toward his or her goal. If the character fails, he or she still reaches the goal, but it takes the character twice as long (the character loses time backtracking and correcting his or her path). If the character fails by more than 5, he or she travels the expected time, but only gets halfway to his or her destination, at which point the character becomes lost.

A character may make a second Navigate check (DC 20) to regain his or her path. If the character succeeds, he or she continues on to his or her destination; the total time for the trip is twice the normal time. If the character fails, he or she loses half a day before the character can try again. The character keeps trying until he or she succeeds, losing half a day for each failure.

Length of Trip	DC
Short (a few hours)	20
Moderate (a day or two)	22
Long (up to a week)	25
Extreme (more than a week)	28

When faced with multiple choices, such as at a branch in a tunnel, a character can make a Navigate check (DC 20) to intuit the choice that takes the character toward a known destination.

If unsuccessful, the character chooses the wrong path, but at the next juncture, with a successful check, the character realizes his or her mistake. A character cannot use this function of Navigate to find a path to a site if the character has no idea where the site is located. The GM may choose to make the Navigate check for the character in

secret, so he or she doesn't know from the result whether the character is following the right or wrong path.

A character can use Navigate to determine his or her position on earth without the use of any high-tech equipment by checking the constellations or other natural landmarks. The character must have a clear view of the night sky to make this check. The DC is 15.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Navigate check. A character can take 20 only when determining his or her location, not when traveling.

A character with the Guide feat gets a +2 bonus on all Navigate checks.

Time: A Navigate check is a full-round action.

PERFORM (Cha)

This skill encompasses several categories, each of them treated as a separate skill. These categories are identified and defined below.

Check: The character is accomplished in some type of artistic expression and knows how to put on a performance. The character can impress audiences with his or her talent and skill. The quality of the character's performance depends on his or her check result.

RESULT	PERFORMANCE
10	Amateur performance. Audience may appreciate your performance, but isn't impressed.
15	Routine performance. Audience enjoys your performance, but it isn't exceptional.
20	Great performance. Audience impressed.
25	Memorable performance. Audience enthusiastic.
30	Masterful performance. Audience awed.

The eight Perform categories, and the qualities each one encompasses, are as follows.

Act: The character is a gifted actor, capable of performing drama, comedy, or action-oriented roles with some level of skill.

Dance: The character is a gifted dancer, capable of performing rhythmic and patterned bodily movements to music.

Keyboards: The character is a musician gifted with a talent for playing keyboard musical instruments.

Percussion Instruments: The character is a musician gifted with a talent for playing percussion musical instruments, such as drums, cymbals, triangle, xylophone, and tambourine.

Sing: The character is a musician gifted with a talent for producing musical tones with your voice.

Stringed Instruments: The character is a musician gifted with a talent for playing stringed musical instruments, such as banjo, guitar, harp, lute, sitar, and violin.

Wind Instruments: The character is a musician gifted with a talent for playing wind musical instruments, such as flute, bugle, trumpet, tuba, bagpipes, and trombone.

Try Again?: Not for the same performance and audience.
Special: A character can take 10 when making a Perform check, but can't take 20.

A character without an appropriate instrument automatically fails any Perform (keyboard), Perform (percussion), Perform (stringed), or Perform (wind) check he or she attempts. At the GM's discretion, impromptu instruments may be employed, but the performer must take a -4 penalty on the check because his or her equipment, although usable, is

inappropriate for the skill. Every time a character takes the Creative feat, he or she gets a +2 bonus on checks involving two Perform skills the character designates. See the feat description for more information.

Time: A Perform check usually requires at least several minutes to an hour or more.

PILOT AIRSHIP (DEX) TRAINED ONLY

This is the skill necessary for the operation of the graceful Martian airships.

Check: Typical piloting tasks don't require checks. Checks are required during combat, for special maneuvers, or in other extreme circumstances, or when the pilot wants to attempt something outside the normal parameters of the vehicle. When flying, the character can attempt simple maneuvers and stunts (actions in which the pilot attempts to do something complex very quickly or in a limited space).

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Pilot check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Vehicle Expert feat gets a +2 bonus on all Pilot checks.

Time: A Pilot check is a move action.

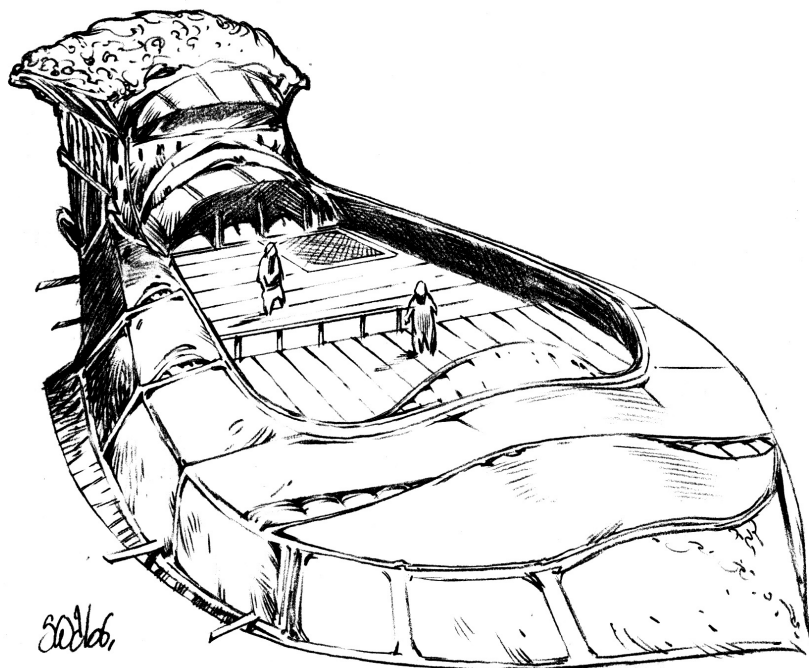
PROFESSION (WIS)

Check: A character makes Profession checks to improve his or her Wealth bonus every time he or she attains a new level. The DC for the check is the character's current Wealth bonus. If the character succeeds at the Profession check, his or her Wealth bonus increases by +1. For every 5 by which the character exceeds the DC, his or her Wealth bonus increases by an additional +1. A character can't take 10 or take 20 when making a Profession check to improve his or her Wealth bonus.

How many ranks a character has in the Profession skill (including ranks the character may have just acquired after gaining a level) also adds to the Wealth bonus increase the character receives upon gaining a new level.

In addition to the Wealth bonus increase a character gains from your Profession check result (if the check succeeds), the number of ranks the character has in this skill increases his or her Wealth bonus as follows.

Ranks	Wealth Bonus Increase
1–5	+1
6–10	+2
11–15	+3
16–20	+4
21–23	+5



Special: If the Gamemaster deems it appropriate, a character can add his or her Profession modifier when making a Reputation check to deal with a work- or career-related situation.

Every time a character takes the Windfall feat, he or she gets a cumulative +1 bonus on all Profession checks.

READ/WRITE LANGUAGE (NONE) TRAINED ONLY

The Read/Write Language skill doesn't work like a standard skill.

- A character automatically knows how to read and write his or her native language; the character does not need ranks to do so.
- Each additional language costs 1 rank. When a character adds a rank to Read/Write Language, he or she chooses a new language that the character can read and write.
- A character never makes Read/Write Language checks. A character either knows how to read and write a specific language or doesn't.
- To be able to speak a language that the character can read and write, he or she must take the Speak Language skill for the appropriate language.
- A character can choose any language, modern or ancient. (See below for suggestions.) The GM might determine that a character can't learn a specific language due to the circumstances of the campaign.

Each race on Mars possesses their own unique language, all of which (save one) are derived from Ancient Martian. Over thousands of years, the languages have split into the racial variants (the Synthe-men language remaining the closest to the root of Ancient Martian).

Red Martian has regional dialects from Kingdom to Kingdom. The dialects are distinct enough that skill checks to read and write a dialect different from your own are performed at a -4 penalty.

Kingdom dialects can be taken as separate languages for the purposes of this skill (and are considered in the Red Martian "group" for the purposes of the Smart Hero's Linguist talent).

There are no regional or tribal dialects among the White Apes or Green Martians (The Ape Empire possessing a uniform language, and Green Martian being so simplistic, variations are not really possible).

Grey Martian is the only language not derived from Ancient Martian -- it pre-dates it. It is not possible for members of the surface-dwelling races to purchase ranks in it, as it is far too alien to grasp.

REPAIR (INT) TRAINED ONLY

Check: Most Repair checks are made to fix complex devices. The DC is set by the GM. In general, simple repairs have a DC of 10 to 15 and require no more than a few minutes to accomplish. More complex repair work has a DC of 20 or higher and can require an hour or more to complete. Making repairs also involves a monetary cost when spare parts or new components are needed, represented by a Wealth check. If the GM decides this isn't necessary for the type of repair the character is attempting, then no Wealth check is needed.

Jury-Rig: A character can choose to attempt jury-rigged, or temporary, repairs. Doing this reduces the purchase DC by 3 and the Repair check DC by 5, and allows the character to make the checks in as little as a full-round action. However, a jury-rigged repair can only fix a single problem with a check, and the temporary repair only lasts until the end of the current scene or encounter. The jury-rigged object must be fully repaired thereafter.

A character can also use jury-rig to jump-start an engine or electronic device. The DC for this is at least 15, and it can be higher depending on the presence of security devices. The jury-rig application of the Repair skill can be used untrained.

Try Again?: Yes, though in some specific cases, the GM may decide that a failed Repair check has negative ramifications that prevent repeated checks.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 on a Repair check. When making a Repair check to accomplish a jury-rig repair, a character can't take 20.

Repair requires a tool, depending on the task. If the character do not have the appropriate tools, he or she takes a -4 penalty on the check.

Craft (Martian Technology) can provide a +2 synergy bonus on Repair checks made for Martian devices .

A character with the Gearhead feat and at least 1 rank in this skill gets a +2 bonus on all Repair checks.

Time: Variable, as decided by the GM. A character can make a jury-rig repair as a full-round action, but the work only lasts until the end of the current encounter.

RESEARCH (INT)

Check: Researching a topic takes time, skill, and some luck. The GM determines how obscure a particular topic is (the more obscure, the higher the DC) and what kind of information might be available depending on where the character is conducting his or her research.

Information is a scarce commodity on Mars. Most of the Red Martian cities are isolated and contain only a few fragments of lore. There are few up-to-date encyclopedias or dictionaries; many such works are either lost or badly incomplete. As a consequence, the Game Master should increase the DC of any skill checks for information unlikely to be of day-to-day use in the culture in which the research is taking place.

Note also that only the Red and White Martians retain libraries, archives, or the like. The Green Martians have only their oral tradition and the

Synthe-men are literally born knowing what they need to know. As for the Grey Martians... they have the finest archives on the planet, with the knowledge of the race stored and indexed for anyone who needs it – but the odds of anyone not a Grey Martian getting to this information, much less understanding it, are astronomical.

Information ranges from general to protected. Given enough time (usually 1d4 hours) and a successful skill check, the character gets a general idea about a given topic. This assumes that no obvious reasons exist why such information would be unavailable, and that the character has a way to acquire restricted or protected information. The higher the check result, the better and more complete the information. If the character wants to discover a specific fact, date, map, or similar bit of information, add +5 to +15 to the DC.

Try Again?: Yes.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 on a Research check.

A character with the Studious feat gets a +2 bonus on all Research checks.

Time: A Research check takes 1d4 hours.

RIDE (DEX)

Check: Typical riding actions don't require checks. A character can saddle, mount, ride, and dismount without a problem. Mounting or dismounting an animal is a move action. Some tasks, such as those undertaken in combat or other extreme circumstances, require checks. In addition, attempting trick riding or asking the animal to perform an unusual technique also requires a check.

Animals ill suited as mounts provide a -2 penalty on their rider's Ride check.

Guide with Knees (DC 5): The character can react instantly to guide his or her mount with his or her knees so that the character can use both hands in combat or to perform some other action. Make the

check at the start of the character's round. If the character fails, he or she can only use one hand this round because the character needs to use the other to control his or her mount.

Stay in Saddle (DC 5): The character can react instantly to try to avoid falling when his or her mount rears or bolts unexpectedly or when the character takes damage.

Fight while Mounted (DC

20): While in combat, the character can attempt to control a mount that is not trained in combat riding (see the Handle Animal skill).

If the character succeeds, he or she uses only a move action, and the character can use his or her attack action to do something else. If the character fails, he or she can do nothing else that round. If the character fails by more than 5, he or she loses control of the animal.



Soft Fall (DC 15): The character reacts instantly when he or she falls off a mount, such as when it is killed or when it falls, to try to avoid taking damage. If the character fails, he or she takes 1d6 points of falling damage.

Leap (DC 15): The character can get his or her mount to leap obstacles as part of its movement.

Use the character's Ride modifier or the mount's Jump modifier (whichever is lower) when the mount makes its Jump check (see the Jump skill). The character makes a Ride check (DC 15) to stay on the mount when it leaps.

Fast Mount or Dismount (DC 20; armor penalty applies): The character can mount or dismount as a free action. If the character fails the check, mounting or dismounting is a move action. (A character can't attempt a fast mount or dismount unless he or she can perform the mount or dismount as a move action this round, should the check fail.)

Special: If the character is riding bareback, he or she takes a -5 penalty on Ride checks.

For animals trained in combat riding, the character does not need to make this check. Instead, the character can use his or her move action to have the animal perform a trick (commonly, to attack). The character can use his or her attack action normally.

Cover (DC 15): The character can react instantly to drop down and hang alongside his or her mount, using it as one-half cover. The character can't attack while using his or her mount as cover. If the character fails, he or she doesn't get the cover benefit.

A character can take 10 when making a Ride check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Animal Affinity feat gets a +2 bonus on all Ride checks.

Time: Ride is a move action, except when otherwise noted for the special tasks listed above.

SEARCH (INT)

Check: The character generally must be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be examined. A character can examine up to a 5-foot-by-5-foot area or a volume of goods 5 feet on a side with a single check.

A Search check can turn up individual footprints, but does not allow a character to follow tracks or tell the character which direction the creature or creatures went or came from.

DC	Task
10	Ransack an area to find a certain object.
20	Notice a typical secret compartment, a simple trap, or an obscure clue.
25+	Find a complex or well-hidden secret compartment or trap; notice an extremely obscure clue.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 when making a Search check.

A character with the Meticulous feat gets a +2 bonus on all Search checks.

Time: A Search check is a full-round action.

SENSE MOTIVE (WIS)

Check: A successful check allows the character to avoid being bluffed (see the Bluff skill). Sense Motive does not, however, allow a character to determine whether a given statement is a lie.

The character can also use the skill to tell when someone is behaving oddly or to assess someone's trustworthiness. In addition, a character can use this skill to make an assessment of a social situation. With a successful check (DC 20), the character can get the feeling from another's behavior that something is wrong. Also, the character can get the feeling that someone is trustworthy and honorable.

Try Again?: No, though the character may make

a Sense Motive check for each bluff made on the character.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Sense Motive check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Attentive feat gets a +2 bonus on all Sense Motive checks.

A character can use Sense Motive to detect that a hidden message is being transmitted via the Bluff skill (DC equal to the bluff check result of the sender). If the character's check result beats the DC by 5 or more, the character understands the secret message as well. If the character's check fails by 5 or more, the character misinterprets the message in some fashion.

Time: A Sense Motive check may be made as a reaction to another character's Bluff check. (When that's the case, the GM may roll the character's Sense Motive check in secret, so the character doesn't necessarily know someone's trying to bluff him or her.) Using Sense Motive to get a sense of someone's trustworthiness takes at least 1 minute.

SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX) TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR PENALTY

Check: A check against DC 10 lets a character palm a coin-sized, unattended object. Minor feats of sleight of hand, such as making a coin disappear, also have a DC of 10 unless an observer is concentrating on noticing what the character is doing.

When a character performs this skill under close observation, the character's skill check is opposed by the observer's Spot check. The observer's check doesn't prevent the character from performing the action, just from doing it unnoticed.

When a character tries to take something from another person, the character's opponent makes a Spot check to detect the attempt. To obtain the object, the character must get a result of 20 or higher, regardless of the opponent's check result.

The opponent detects the attempt if his or her check result beats the character's check result, whether the character takes the object or not. A character can use Sleight of Hand to conceal a small weapon or object on his or her body.

Try Again?: A second Sleight of Hand attempt against the same target, or when being watched by the same observer, has a DC 10 higher than the first check if the first check failed or if the attempt was noticed.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Sleight of Hand check, but can't take 20.

A character can make an untrained Sleight of Hand check to conceal a weapon or object, but must always take 10.

A character with the Nimble feat and at least 1 rank in this skill gets a +2 bonus on all Sleight of Hand checks.

Time: A Sleight of Hand check is an attack action.

SPEAK LANGUAGE (NONE) TRAINED ONLY

For an overview of Martian languages, see the Read/Write Language skill entry. Like Read/Write Language, the Speak Language skill doesn't work like a standard skill.

- A character automatically knows how to speak his or her native language; the character does not need ranks to do so.
- Each additional language costs 1 rank. When a character adds a rank to Speak Language, he or she chooses a new language that he or she can speak.
- A character never makes Speak Language checks. A character either knows how to speak and understand a specific language or doesn't.
- To be able to read and write a language that the character can speak, he or she must take the Read/Write Language skill for the appropriate language.

- A character can choose any language, modern or ancient. (With the exception of Grey Martian for non-grey characters -- see the entry for Read/Write Language for details). The GM might determine that a character can't learn a specific language due to the circumstances of the campaign.

SPOT (WIS)

Check: The Spot skill is used to notice items that aren't immediately obvious and people who are attempting to hide. The GM may call for a Spot check by a character who is in a position to notice something. A character can also make a Spot check voluntarily if he or she wants to try to notice something in his or her vicinity.

The GM may make the Spot check in secret so that the character doesn't know whether not noticing anything means that nothing is there or that the character failed the check.

A successful Spot check when there isn't anything to notice results in the character noticing nothing. Spot is often used to notice a person or creature hiding from view. In such cases, the character's Spot check is opposed by the Hide check of the character trying not to be seen. Spot is also used to detect someone in disguise (see the Disguise skill), or to notice a concealed weapon on another person.

A character's Spot check is modified by a -1 penalty for every 10 feet of distance between the character and the character or object he or she is trying to discern. The check carries a further -5 penalty if the character is in the midst of activity. **Try Again?:** A character can make a Spot check every time he or she has the opportunity to notice something in a reactive manner. As a full-round action, a character may attempt to notice something that he or she failed (or believe he or she failed) to notice previously.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 when making a Spot check.

A character with the Alertness feat gets a +2 bonus on all Spot checks.

Time: A Spot check is either a reaction (if called for by the GM) or a full-round action (if a character actively takes the time to try to notice something).

SURVIVAL (WIS)

Check: A character can keep his or herself and others safe and fed in the wild.

- | DC | Task |
|----|---|
| 10 | Get along in the wild. Move up to half the character's overland speed while hunting and foraging (no food or water supplies needed). The character can provide food and water for one other person for every 2 points by which the character's check result exceeds 10. |
| 15 | Gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against severe weather while moving up to half the character's overland speed, or gain a +4 circumstance bonus if stationary. The character may grant the same bonus to one other character for every 1 point by which the character's check result exceeds 15. |
| 18 | Avoid getting lost and avoid natural hazards, such as sinkholes. With the Track feat, a character can use Survival checks to track a character or animal across various terrain types. |

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Survival check. A character can take 20 when tracking, or if there is no danger or penalty for failure, but not on periodic checks to get along in the wild.

A character with the Guide feat gets a +2 bonus on all Survival checks.

Time: Basic Survival checks occur each day in the wilderness or whenever a hazard presents itself. When using Survival with the Track feat to track a character or animal, checks are made according to distance, as described in the Track feat.

SWIM (STR) ARMOR PENALTY

Due to the rarity of liquid water on Mars, Swim is never a class skill for native Martians, with the exception of those who take the Canaler occupation. Characters for whom Swim is a class skill may take Ride or Climb as class skills instead; if both of those are already class skills, they may gain a +1 bonus to those skills.

Check: A successful Swim check allows a character to swim one-quarter his or her speed as a move action or half the character's speed as a full-round action. Roll once per round. If the character fails, he or she makes no progress through the water. If the character fails by 5 or more, he or she goes underwater.

If the character is underwater (from failing a swim check or because the character is swimming underwater intentionally), the character must hold his or her breath. A character can hold his or her breath for a number of rounds equal to the character's Constitution score, but only if the character does nothing but take move actions or free actions. If the character takes an attack action or a full-round action, the amount of breath the character has remaining is reduced by 1 round. (Effectively, a character in combat can hold his or her breath only half as long as normal.) After that period of time, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round to continue holding his or her breath. Each round, the DC of the check increases by 1. If the character fails the check, the character begins to drown.

The DC for the Swim checks on Mars is 10.

Each hour that the character swims, make a Swim check against DC 20. If the character fails, he or she becomes fatigued. If the character fails a check while fatigued, the character becomes

exhausted. If the character fails a check while exhausted, the character becomes unconscious. Unconscious characters go underwater and immediately begin to drown.

Try Again?: A new check is allowed the round after a check is failed.

Special: A character takes a penalty of –1 for every 5 pounds of gear he or she carries, including armor and weapons.

A character can take 10 when making a Swim check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Athletic feat gets a +2 bonus on all Swim checks.

Time: A Swim check is either a move action or a full-round action, as described above.

TREAT INJURY (WIS)

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task attempted.

Long-Term Care (DC 15): With a medical kit, the successful application of this skill allows a patient to recover hit points and ability points lost to temporary damage at an advanced rate—3 hit points per character level or 3 ability points restored per day of complete rest. A new check is made each day; on a failed check, recovery occurs at the normal rate for that day of rest and care. A character can tend up to as many patients as he or she has ranks in the skill. The patients need complete bed rest (doing nothing all day). The character needs to devote at least 1/2 hour of the day to each patient the character is caring for.

Restore Hit Points (DC 15): With a medical kit, if a character has lost hit points, the character can restore some of them. A successful check, as a full-round action, restores 1d4 hit points. The number restored can never exceed the character's full normal total of hit points. This application of the skill can be used successfully on a character only once per day.

Revive Dazed, Stunned, or Unconscious Character (DC 15): With a first aid kit, the character can remove the dazed, stunned, or unconscious condition from a character. This check is an attack action.

A successful check removes the dazed, stunned, or unconscious condition from an affected character. The character can't revive an unconscious character who is at –1 hit points or lower without first stabilizing the character.

Stabilize Dying Character (DC 15): With a medical kit, a character can tend to a character who is dying. As an attack action, a successful Treat Injury check stabilizes another character. The stabilized character regains no hit points, but he or she stops losing them. The character must have a medical kit to stabilize a dying character.

Surgery (DC 20): With a surgery kit, a character can conduct field surgery. This application of the Treat Injury skill carries a –4 penalty, which can be negated with the Surgery feat. Surgery requires 1d4 hours; if the patient is at negative hit points, add an additional hour for every point below 0 the patient has fallen.

Surgery restores 1d6 hit points for every character level of the patient (up to the patient's full normal total of hit points) with a successful skill check. Surgery can only be used successfully on a character once in a 24-hour period.

A character who undergoes surgery is fatigued for 24 hours, minus 2 hours for every point above the DC the surgeon achieves. The period of fatigue can never be reduced below 6 hours in this fashion.

Treat Disease (DC 15): A character can tend to a character infected with a treatable disease. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects (after the initial contamination), the treating character first makes a Treat Injury check to help the diseased character fend off secondary damage. This activity takes 10 minutes.

If the treating character's check succeeds, the

treating character provides a bonus on the diseased character's saving throw equal to his or her ranks in this skill.

Treat Poison (DC 15): A character can tend to a poisoned character. When a poisoned character makes a saving throw against a poison's secondary effect, the treating character first makes a Treat Injury check as an attack action. If the treating character's check succeeds, the character provides a bonus on the poisoned character's saving throw equal to his or her ranks in this skill.

Try Again?: Yes, for restoring hit points, reviving dazed, stunned, or unconscious characters, stabilizing dying characters, and surgery. No, for all other uses of the skill.

Special: The Surgery feat gives a character the extra training he or she needs to use Treat Injury to help a wounded character by means of an operation.

A character can take 10 when making a Treat Injury check. A character can take 20 only when restoring hit points or attempting to revive dazed, stunned, or unconscious characters.

Long-term care, restoring hit points, treating disease, treating poison, or stabilizing a dying character requires a medical kit. Reviving a dazed, stunned, or unconscious character requires either a first aid kit or a medical kit. Surgery requires a surgery kit. If the character does not have the appropriate kit, he or she takes a -4 penalty on the check.

A character can use the Treat Injury skill on his or herself only to restore hit points, treat disease, or treat poison. The character takes a -5 penalty on your check any time he or she treats his or herself. A character with the Medical Expert feat gets a +2 bonus on all Treat Injury checks.

Time: Treat Injury checks take different amounts of time based on the task at hand, as described above.

TUMBLE (DEX) TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR PENALTY

Check: A character can land softly when he or she falls, tumble past opponents in combat, or tumble through opponents.

Land Softly: The character can make a Tumble check (DC 15) when falling. If the check succeeds, treat the fall as if it were 10 feet shorter when determining damage.

Tumble past Opponents: With a successful Tumble check (DC 15), the character can weave, dodge, and roll up to 20 feet through squares adjacent to opponents, risking no attacks of opportunity. Failure means the character moves as planned, but provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

Tumble through Opponents: With a successful Tumble check (DC 25), the character can roll, jump, or dive through squares occupied by opponents, moving over, under, or around them as if they weren't there. Failure means the character moves as planned, but provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

Try Again?: No.

Special: A character with 5 or more ranks in Tumble gains a +3 dodge bonus to Defense (instead of the normal +2) when fighting defensively, and a +6 dodge bonus (instead of the normal +4) when engaging in total defense.

A character can take 10 when making a Tumble check, but can't take 20.

A character with the Acrobatic feat and at least 1 rank in this skill gets a +2 bonus on all Tumble checks.

Time: A character can try to reduce damage from a fall as a reaction once per fall. A character can attempt to tumble as a free action that must be performed as part of a move action.

FEATS

Here is the format for feat descriptions.

FEAT NAME: The name of the feat.

Prerequisite: A minimum ability score, another feat or feats, a minimum base attack bonus, and/or the minimum ranks in a skill that a character must have to acquire this feat. This entry is absent if a feat has no prerequisite.

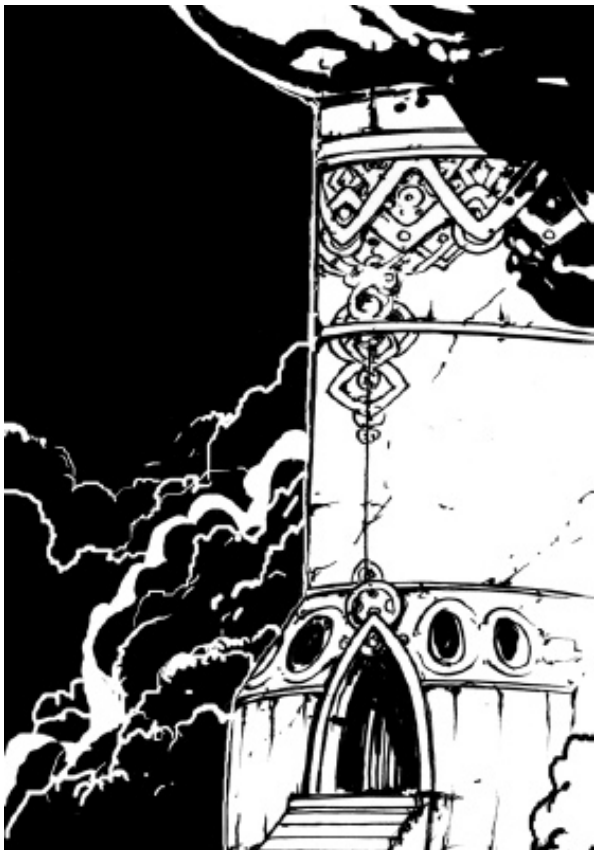
A character can gain a feat at the same level at which he or she gains all the prerequisites.

A character can't use a feat if the character has lost a prerequisite.

Benefit: What the feat enables a character to do.

Normal: What a character who does not have this feat is limited to or restricted from doing. If there is no particular drawback to not possessing the feat, this entry is absent.

Special: Additional facts about the feat.



ACROBATIC

You have excellent body awareness and coordination

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Jump checks and Tumble checks.

Special: Remember that the Tumble skill can't be used untrained.

ADVANCED COMBAT MARTIAL ARTS

You are a master of unarmed fighting.

Prerequisites: Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Martial Arts, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: When the character scores a critical hit on an opponent with an unarmed strike, the character deals triple damage.

Normal: An unarmed strike critical hit deals double damage.

ADVANCED TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

You are a master at fighting with a weapon in each hand.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: The character gets a third attack with his or her offhand weapon, albeit at a -10 penalty. For using a melee weapon in one hand and a ranged weapon in the other, see the "Sword & Blaster" feat, which stacks with this one.

AGILE RIPOSTE

You have learned to strike when your opponent is most vulnerable--at the instant your opponent strikes at you.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Dodge.

Benefit: Once per round, if the opponent the character has designated as his or her dodge target (see the Dodge feat) makes a melee attack or melee touch attack against the character and misses, the character may make an attack of opportunity against that opponent. Resolve and apply the effects from both attacks simultaneously.

Even a character with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use the Agile Riposte feat more than once per round. This feat does not grant more attacks of opportunity than the character is normally allowed in a round.

ALERTNESS

You have finely tuned senses.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Listen checks and Spot checks.

ANIMAL AFFINITY

You are good with animals.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal checks and Ride checks.

Special: Remember that the Handle Animal skill can't be used untrained.

ARMOR PROFICIENCY

You are proficient with armor. Unlike other d20 games, **MARS** requires only a single feat for the use of armor, regardless of type (Armor is just not that common on Mars).

Benefit: When a character wears a type of armor with which he or she is proficient, the character gains the benefit of the armor's damage reduction against attacks. Also, the armor check penalty applies only to Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble checks.

Normal: A character who wears armor with which he or she is not proficient has the damage reduction of the armor halved and an additional -2 to all Dex rolls. Also, he or she suffers its armor check penalty on attack rolls and on all skill checks that involve moving.

ATHLETIC

You have a talent for athletic endeavors.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Climb checks and Swim checks.

ATTENTIVE

You are acutely observant.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Sense Motive checks.

BLIND-FIGHT

You know how to fight in melee without being able to see your foes.

Benefit: In melee combat, every time the character misses because of concealment, the character can reroll the miss chance roll one time to see if the character actually hits.

The character takes only half the usual penalty to speed for being unable to see. Darkness and poor visibility in general reduces the character's speed to three-quarters of normal, instead of one-half.

BRAWL

You deal more damage in a fist fight.

Benefit: When making an unarmed attack, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls, and the character deals nonlethal damage equal to 1d6 + his or her Strength modifier.

Normal: Unarmed attacks normally deal nonlethal damage equal to 1d3 + Strength modifier.

BUILDER

You have a knack for constructing things.

Benefit: Pick two of the following skills: Craft (chemical), Craft (Martian technology), and Craft (structural). The character gets a +2 bonus on all checks with those skills.

CAUTIOUS

You are especially careful with tasks that may yield catastrophic results.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Disable Device checks.

Special: Remember that the Disable Device skill can't be used untrained.

CIRCULAR COMBAT

Even when surrounded by talented foemen, you can avoid their blades.

Prerequisite: Int 13+, Dex 13+, Base Parry or Dodge bonus 5+

Benefit: When you are surrounded by skilled opponents you may deny them any cumulative bonus to attack provided that you are not flat-footed or otherwise denied your Dex bonus to Defense. This does not negate bonuses due to flanking.

Normal: If a number of skilled opponents attack a single target, they gain significant 'to hit' modifiers.

CLEAVE

You can follow through with a powerful melee attack.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Power Attack.

Benefit: If the character deals an opponent enough damage to make the opponent drop (either by knocking the opponent out due to massive damage or by reducing the opponent's hit points to less than 0), the character gets an immediate extra melee attack against another opponent adjacent to the character. The character can't take a 5-foot step before making this extra attack. The extra attack is with the same weapon and at the same bonus as the attack that dropped the previous opponent. The character can use this ability once per round.

COMBAT EXPERTISE

You are trained at using your combat skill for defense as well as offense.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13.

Benefit: When the character uses the attack action or the full attack action in melee, the character can take a penalty of up to -5 on his or her attack roll and add the same number (up to +5) to the character's Defense. This number may not exceed the character's base attack bonus. The changes to attack rolls and Defense last until the character's next action. The bonus to the character's Defense is a dodge bonus (and as such it stacks with other dodge bonuses the character may have).

Normal: A character without the Combat Expertise feat can fight defensively while using the attack or full attack action to take a -4 penalty on attacks and gain a +2 dodge bonus to Defense.

COMBAT MARTIAL ARTS

You are skilled at attacking and dealing damage with unarmed strikes.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: With an unarmed strike, the character deals lethal or nonlethal damage (the character's choice) equal to 1d4 + the character's Strength modifier. The character's unarmed attacks count as armed, which means that opponents do not get attacks of opportunity when the character attacks them unarmed. The

character may make attacks of opportunity against opponents who provoke such attacks.

Normal: Without this feat, a character deals only 1d3 points of nonlethal damage.

Unarmed attacks normally provoke attacks of opportunity, and unarmed combatants cannot normally make attacks of opportunity.

COMBAT REFLEXES

You can respond quickly and repeatedly to opponents who let their guard down.

Benefit: The maximum number of attacks of opportunity the character may make each round is equal to the character's Dexterity modifier +1. The character can still only make one attack of opportunity on a single opponent. With this feat, the character may also make attacks of opportunity when flat-footed.

Normal: A character without the Combat Reflexes feat can make only one attack of opportunity per round and can't make attacks of opportunity when flat-footed.

Special: The Combat Reflexes feat doesn't allow a Fast hero with the opportunist talent to use that talent more than once per round.

COMBAT THROW

You can use an opponent's momentum against him.

Prerequisite: Defensive Martial Arts.

Benefit: The character gains a +2 bonus on opposed Strength and Dexterity checks any time the character attempts trip or grapple attacks, or when the character tries to avoid a trip or grapple attack made against him or her.

CONFIDENT

You exude a natural self-confidence.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Gamble checks and Intimidate checks, and on level checks to resist intimidation.

CREATIVE

You have a creative streak.

Benefit: Pick two of the following skills: Craft (visual art), Craft (writing), Perform (act), Perform (dance), Perform (keyboards), Perform (percussion instruments), Perform (sing), Perform (string instruments), and

Perform (wind instruments). The character gets a +2 bonus on all checks with those two skills.

Special: A character can select this feat as many as five times. Each time, the character selects two new skills from the choices given above.

DEAD AIM

You are capable of lining up deadly shots with ranged weapons.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, Far Shot.

Benefit: Before making a ranged attack, the character may take a full-round action to line up your shot. This grants the character a +2 circumstance bonus on his or her next attack roll. Once the character begins aiming, he or she can't move, even to take a 5-foot step, until after the character makes his or her next attack, or the benefit of the feat is lost. Likewise, if the character's concentration is disrupted or the character is attacked before his or her next action, the character loses the benefit of aiming.

DECEPTIVE

You are especially good at misleading and giving false impressions.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks and Disguise checks.

DEFENSIVE MARTIAL ARTS

You are skilled at avoiding harm in battle.

Benefit: The character gains a +1 dodge bonus to Defense against melee attacks (while using dodge defense).

Special: A condition that makes the character lose his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense also makes the character lose dodge bonuses. Also, dodge bonuses stack, unlike most other types of bonuses.

DODGE

You are adept at dodging attacks.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13.

Benefit: During the character's action, the character designates an opponent and receives a +1 bonus to Dodge defense against any subsequent attacks from that opponent. The character can select a new opponent on any action.

Special: A condition that makes the character lose his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense also makes the character lose dodge bonuses. Also, dodge bonuses stack with each other, unlike most other types of bonuses.

DOUBLE TAP

You can make two quick shots with a radium gun as a single attack.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: When using a radium gun with at least two shots remaining, the character may fire two shots as a single attack against a single target. The character receives a -2 penalty on this attack, but deals +1 die of damage with a successful hit.

DRIVE-BY ATTACK

You are skilled at attacking from either a moving vehicle or while mounted on a riding beast.

Benefit: The character takes no speed penalty when making an attack while in a moving vehicle. Also, if the character is the driver, he or she can take his or her attack action to make an attack at any point along the vehicle's movement.

Normal: When attacking from a moving vehicle, a character takes a penalty based on the vehicle's speed (or the riding beasts speed). Passengers can ready an action to make an attack when their vehicle reaches a particular location, but the driver must make his or her attack action either before or after the vehicle's movement.

EDUCATED

You are especially skilled at certain fields of study.

Benefit: Pick two Knowledge skills. The character gets a +2 bonus on all checks with those skills.

Special: A character can select this feat as many as seven times. Each time, the character selects two new Knowledge skills.

ELUSIVE TARGET

You can use opponents as cover when engaged in melee combat.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Defensive Martial Arts.

Benefit: When fighting an opponent or multiple opponents in melee, other opponents attempting to target the character with ranged attacks take a -4 penalty. This penalty is in addition to the normal -4 penalty for firing into melee, making the penalty to target to character -8.

Special: An opponent with the Precise Shot feat has the penalty lessened to -4 when targeting the character.

ENDURANCE

You are capable of amazing feats of stamina.

Benefit: The character gains a +4 bonus on the following checks and saves: hourly Swim checks to avoid becoming fatigued, Constitution checks to continue running, Constitution checks to hold the character's breath, Constitution checks to avoid damage from starvation or thirst, Fortitude saves to avoid damage from hot or cold environments, and Fortitude saves to resist suffocation or drowning.

EXOTIC WEAPON PROFICIENCY

Choose one exotic weapon from the equipment section. The character is proficient with that melee weapon in combat.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: The character makes attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon without being proficient with it takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the character takes the feat, he or she selects a different exotic melee weapon.

FAR SHOT

You can get greater distance out of a ranged weapon.

Benefit: When the character uses a ranged weapon, its range increment increases by one-half (multiply by 1.5). When the character throws a weapon, its range increment is doubled.

FOCUSED

You maintain your focus even under difficult circumstances.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Balance checks and Concentration checks.

GEARHEAD

You have a knack with machines.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Computer Use checks and Repair checks.

Special: Remember that the Computer Use skill and the Repair skill can only be used untrained in certain situations.

GREAT CLEAVE

You can wield a melee weapon with such power that you can strike multiple times when you drop your opponents.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Power Attack, Cleave, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: As Cleave, except that the character has no limit to the number of times he or she can use it per round.

GREAT FORTITUDE

You're tougher than normal.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saving throws.

GREATER CRITICAL

Select one weapon which you have already selected with the Improved Critical feat. You have learned to wield that weapon with such skill as to regularly inflict devastating amounts of damage.

Prerequisite: Improved Critical, base attack bonus +16.

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, your threat range is tripled. This supersedes the doubling provided by the Improved Critical feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

GREATER SUNDER

As a follow-up to sundering an opponent's weapon, you can make an immediate attack on him.

Prerequisite: Sunder, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: If you completely destroy an opponent's weapon in melee combat, you immediately get a melee attack against that opponent as if you had not used your attack for the sunder attempt.

GREATER WEAPON FOCUS

Choose one type of weapon (if desired, this weapon could be 'unarmed strike' or 'grapple'), for which you have already selected Weapon Focus. You are extraordinarily skilled with this weapon.

Prerequisites: Weapon Focus in the selected weapon, character level 8.

Benefit: You add +1 to all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses to attack rolls, including the bonus granted by the Weapon Focus feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

GREATER WEAPON SPECIALIZATION

Choose one type of weapon (if desired, this weapon could be 'unarmed strike' or 'grapple'), for which you have already selected Weapon Specialization. You are supremely good at inflicting damage with this weapon.

Prerequisites: Weapon Focus in the selected weapon, Weapon Specialisation in selected weapon, Greater Weapon Focus in selected weapon, character level 12.

Benefit: You add +2 to all damage inflicted with the weapon you have specialized with. If

the weapon is a ranged weapon, the target must be within 30 feet. This bonus stacks with other damage bonuses, including the bonus granted by the Weapon Specialisation feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

GUIDE

You keep your wits about you in the wilderness.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Navigate checks and Survival checks.

HEROIC SURGE

You can perform an additional action in a round.

Benefit: The character may take an extra move action or attack action in a round, either before or after the character's regular actions. The character may use Heroic Surge a number of times per day depending on his or her character level (as shown below), but never more than once per round.

Character Level	Times per Day
1st–4th	1
5th–8th	2
9th–12th	3
13th–16th	4
17th–20th	5

IMPROVED BRAWL

You deal extensive damage in a fistfight.

Prerequisites: Brawl, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When making an unarmed attack, the character receives a +2 competence bonus on his or her attack roll, and the character deals nonlethal damage equal to 1d8 + the character's Strength modifier.

Normal: Unarmed attacks normally deal nonlethal damage equal to 1d3 + Strength modifier.

IMPROVED BULL RUSH

You know how to push opponents back.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Power Attack.

Benefit: When the character performs a bull rush, the character does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender.

IMPROVED COMBAT MARTIAL ARTS

You are highly skilled at attacking and dealing damage with unarmed strikes.

Prerequisites: Combat Martial Arts, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: The character's threat range on an unarmed strike improves to 19–20.

Normal: A character without this feat threatens a critical hit with an unarmed strike only on a 20.

IMPROVED COMBAT THROW

You excel at using an opponent's momentum against him.

Prerequisites: Defensive Martial Arts, Combat Throw, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: In melee combat, if an opponent attacks and misses the character, the character may immediately make a trip attack against the opponent. This counts as an attack of opportunity, which the character can make even if he or she is unarmed. Attacking unarmed in this way does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Special: This feat doesn't grant the character more attacks of opportunity than he or she is normally allowed in a round.

IMPROVED CRITICAL (GENERAL)

Select one weapon. You have learned to wield that weapon with such skill as to frequently inflict devastating quantities of damage.

Prerequisites: Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, your threat range is doubled.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

IMPROVED DISARM

You know how to disarm opponents in melee combat.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: The character does not provoke an attack of opportunity when the character attempts to disarm an opponent, nor does the opponent get a chance to disarm the character.

IMPROVED FEINT

You are skilled at misdirecting your opponent's attention in melee combat.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Brawl, Streetfighting.

Benefit: The character can make a Bluff check in combat as a move action. The character receives a +2 bonus on Bluff checks made to feint in melee combat.

Normal: Feinting in combat requires an attack action.

IMPROVED INITIATIVE

You react more quickly than normal during a fight.

Benefit: The character gets a +4 circumstance bonus on initiative checks.

IMPROVED KNOCKOUT PUNCH

You are extremely skilled at cold-cocking unprepared opponents.

Prerequisites: Brawl, Knockout Punch, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When making the character's first unarmed attack against a flat-footed opponent, treat a successful attack as a critical hit. This critical hit deals triple damage. The damage is nonlethal damage.

Special: Even if the character has the ability to treat unarmed damage as lethal damage, the damage from a knockout punch is always nonlethal.

IMPROVED SWORD AND BLASTER

You can fire at distant targets with an energy weapon while still defending yourself with a blade.

Prerequisite: Dex 15+, Precise Shot, Sword And Blaster

Benefit: When fighting with an energy weapon in one hand and a melee weapon in the other, you no longer provoke an attack of opportunity if you fire at targets not in a square you threaten.

IMPROVED TRIP

You are trained in tripping opponents in melee combat and following through with an attack.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: The character does not provoke an attack of opportunity when the character tries to trip an opponent while the character is unarmed.

If the character trips an opponent in melee combat, the character immediately gets to make a melee attack against that opponent as if the character had not used his or her attack action for the trip attempt.

IMPROVED TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

You are an expert at fighting with a weapon in each hand.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: The character gets a second attack with his or her offhand weapon, albeit at a –5 penalty. For using a melee weapon in one hand and a ranged weapon in the other, see the “Sword & Blaster” feat, which stacks with this one.

Normal: Without this feat, a character can only get a single extra attack with an off-hand weapon.

INTRICATE FIGHTING

You are skilled at combining weaponplay with art, and your style demonstrates a deadly panache.

Prerequisites: Cha 13+, Weapon Focus (any weapon), Parry, Combat Expertise

Benefit: Whenever you have your focus weapon in one hand you may add your Charisma bonus as a parry bonus to your Defense Value.

Special: This may be taken multiple times, each time with a different focus weapon.

IRON WILL

You have a stronger will than normal.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws.

KNOCKOUT PUNCH

You are skilled at cold-cocking unprepared opponents.

Prerequisites: Brawl, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When making the character’s first unarmed attack against a flat-footed opponent, treat a successful attack as a critical hit. This damage is nonlethal damage.

Special: Even if the character has the ability to treat unarmed damage as lethal damage, the damage from a knockout punch is always nonlethal.

LIGHTNING REFLEXES

You have faster than normal reflexes.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Reflex saving throws.

LOW PROFILE

You maintain a less visible presence than others of your station.

Benefit: Reduce the character’s Reputation bonus by 3 points.

MARTIAL WEAPON PROFICIENCY

Choose one martial weapon from the equipment section. The character is proficient with that melee weapon in combat.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: The character makes attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon without being proficient with it takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the character takes the feat, he or she selects a different martial weapon.

MEDICAL EXPERT

You have a knack for aiding the sick and injured.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (pharmaceutical) checks and Treat Injury checks.

Special: Remember that the Craft (pharmaceutical) skill can't be used untrained.

MENACING AURA

You project a constant, imposing aura of menace that gives many of your opponents pause before they even get a chance to attack you.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 16 ranks, Cha 15, Steely Gaze

Benefit: You may make a demoralise opponent attempt as a free action against any opponent who comes within 15 feet of you, whether or not it is your turn to act. You may do this against any number of opponents each round.

METICULOUS

You are thorough and painstakingly complete.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Forgery checks and Search checks.

MOBILITY

You are skilled at dodging past opponents and avoiding attacks they make against you.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Dodge.

Benefit: The character gets a +4 bonus to dodge Defense against attacks of opportunity provoked when the character moves out of a threatened square.

Special: A condition that makes a character lose his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense also makes the character lose dodge bonuses. You cannot use your parry bonus with this feat.

NIMBLE

You have exceptional flexibility and manual dexterity.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Escape Artist checks and Sleight of Hand checks.

Special: Remember that the Sleight of Hand skill can't be used untrained.

PARRY

You are experienced and effective at parrying your enemies' attacks.

Prerequisites: Str 13, base parry bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain a +1 parry bonus.

PERFECT BALANCE

You move with ease even over the most precarious surfaces.

Prerequisite: Dex 15+ , Balance 5 Ranks

Benefit: You may always move at your full speed when balancing, without the normal penalty to checks. This includes charging.

Normal: Moving at more than half speed while balancing imposes a -5 penalty.

Special: If you have this feat, and perform a Charge maneuver while spending at least half the distance balancing, your opponent loses any Dexterity bonus to Defense against your first attack.

PERSONAL FIREARMS PROFICIENCY

You are proficient with the use of radium weapons, including pistols, rifles and mounted rifles. Earthmen coming to Mars must take this feat to use such weapons, even if they already know the feat from Earth.

Benefit: The character can fire any personal firearm without penalty.

Normal: Characters without this feat take a -4 penalty on attack rolls made with personal firearms.

Special: Since radium weapons are rare on Mars, few individuals are trained in them. Proficiency with them is never granted as a basic class feature.

POINT BLANK SHOT

You are skilled at making well-placed shots with ranged weapons at close range.

Benefit: The character gets a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons against opponents within 30 feet.

POWER ATTACK

You can make exceptionally powerful melee attacks.

Prerequisite: Strength 13.

Benefit: On the character's action, before making attack rolls for a round, the character may choose to subtract a number from all melee attack rolls and add the same number to all melee damage rolls. This number may not exceed the character's base attack bonus. The penalty on attacks and bonus on damage applies until the character's next action.

PRECISE SHOT

You are skilled at timing and aiming ranged attacks.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: The character can shoot or throw ranged weapons at an opponent engaged in melee without penalty.

Normal: A character takes a -4 penalty when using a ranged weapon to attack an opponent who is engaged in melee combat.

QUICK DRAW

You can draw weapons with startling quickness.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: The character can draw a weapon as a free action.

A character with this feat may throw weapons at his or her full normal rate of attacks.

Normal: A character can draw a weapon as a move action. If a character has a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, the character can draw a weapon as a free action when moving.

RAPID STAB

You can bring a second weapon into play with alarming speed.

Prerequisite: Dex 15+ , Two-Weapon Fighting

Benefit: When your off-hand weapon is light, you may attack with it as part of a standard action, though you suffer an additional -2 penalty to both attacks.

RENOWN

You have a better chance of being recognized.

Benefit: The character's Reputation bonus increases by +3.

RUN

You are fleet of foot.

Benefit: When running, the character moves a maximum of five times his or her normal speed instead of four times. If the character is in heavy armor, the character can move four times his or her speed rather than three times. If the character makes a long jump, the character gains a +2 competence bonus on his or her Jump check.

SHOT ON THE RUN

You are highly trained in skirmish ranged weapon tactics.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Point Blank Shot, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: When using an attack action with a ranged weapon, the character can move both before and after the attack, provided that the character's total distance moved is not greater than his or her speed.

SIMPLE WEAPONS PROFICIENCY

You understand how to use all types of simple weapons in combat.

Benefit: The character makes attack rolls with simple weapons normally.

Normal: A character without this feat takes the -4 nonproficient penalty when making attacks with simple weapons.

SPARK OF GENIUS

You are capable of feats of scientific endeavor which lesser minds cannot comprehend.

Prerequisite: Int 15+

Benefit: You gain 3 Device Points which you may use to craft strange and exotic machines. Because there are elements of mad genius involved here, the normal rules for crafting items do not apply – you simply sit down with your tools and components and assemble your machine in a frenzy of insane creativity. It is quite possible that when the act of construction is done, you are not even completely sure how the device works – but it always does. Rules for devices can be found in Chapter 6.

SPRING ATTACK

You are trained in fast melee attacks and fancy footwork.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When using an attack action with a melee weapon, the character can move both before and after the attack, provided that the total distance moved is not greater than the character's speed.

Moving in this way does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender the character is attacking (though it can provoke attacks of opportunity from others, as normal).

In addition, the attack gains a +2 bonus if using a Finesse weapon (see combat)

STEALTHY

You are particularly good at avoiding notice.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Hide checks and Move Silently checks.

STEELY GAZE

One glance from you is enough to make lesser opponents quail in terror.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 8 ranks, Cha 13.

Benefit: Up to once per round, you may perform the demoralise opponent action (see the Intimidate skill, above) as a free action.

STREETFIGHTING

You know the brutal and effective fighting tactics of the streets, back alleys and gladiator pits.

Prerequisites: Brawl, base attack bonus +2.

Benefit: Once per round, if the character makes a successful melee attack with an unarmed strike or a light weapon, the character deals an extra 1d4 points of damage.

STUDIOUS

You have a knack for research.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Decipher Script checks and Research checks.

SUNDER

You are skilled at hitting an opponents weapon, or other objects, with a melee attack.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Power Attack.

Benefit: When the character strikes an object held or carried by an opponent, such as a weapon, the character does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The character gains a +4 bonus on any attack roll made to attack an object held or carried by another character. The character deals double normal damage to objects, whether they are held or carried or not.

Normal: A character without this feat incurs an attack of opportunity when he or she strikes at an object held or carried by another character.

SURFACE VEHICLE OPERATION

Select a class of surface vehicle (animal powered, wheeled, powered canal boat, unpowered watercraft). The character is proficient at operating that class of vehicle.

Prerequisite: Drive 4 ranks.

Benefit: The character takes no penalty on Drive checks or attack rolls made when operating a surface vehicle of the selected class.

Normal: Characters without this feat take a –4 penalty on Drive checks made to operate a surface vehicle that falls under any of these classes, and to attacks made with vehicle weapons. There is no penalty when you operate a general-purpose surface vehicle.

Special: A character can gain this feat as many as four times. Each time the character takes the feat, he or she selects a different class of surface vehicle.

SURGERY

You are trained to perform surgical procedures to heal wounds.

Prerequisite: Treat Injury 4 ranks.

Benefit: The character can use the Treat Injury skill to perform surgery without penalty. See the Treat Injury skill description.

Normal: Characters without this feat take a –4 penalty on Treat Injury checks made to perform surgery.

SWORD AND BLASTER

You can fight with a melee weapon in one hand and a ranged weapon in the other.

Prerequisite: Dex 15+, Two Weapon Combat Proficiency, BAB +1

Benefit: You can wield a radium pistol or other pistol-sized weapon in one hand while wielding a melee weapon with the other. The pistol is considered a light weapon. It can be wielded in your primary hand if your melee weapon is also light. If you are in melee combat, you may only safely fire your weapon at targets within your threatened squares; if you fire at other targets, you will provoke an Attack of Opportunity from all characters which threaten you.

TOUGHNESS

You are tougher than normal.

Benefit: The character gains +3 hit points.

Special: A character may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

TRACK

You can follow the trails of creatures and character across most types of terrain.

Benefit: To find tracks or follow them for one mile requires a Survival check. The character must make another Survival check every time the tracks become difficult to follow.

The character moves at half his or her normal speed (or at the character's normal speed with a -5 penalty on the check, or at up to twice the character's speed with a -20 penalty on the check). The DC depends on the surface and the prevailing conditions.

Surface	Track DC
Very soft	5
Soft	10
Firm	15
Hard	20

Very Soft: Any surface (fresh snow, thick dust, wet mud) that holds deep, clear impressions of footprints.

Soft: Martian desert sand, or any surface soft enough to yield to pressure, but firmer than wet mud or fresh snow, in which the quarry leaves

frequent but shallow footprints.

Firm: Most normal outdoor or exceptionally soft or dirty indoor surfaces. The quarry might leave some traces of its passage, but only occasional or partial footprints can be found.

Hard: Any surface that doesn't hold footprints at all, such as bare rock, concrete, metal deckings, or indoor floors. The quarry leaves only traces, such as scuff marks.

If the character fails a Survival check, he or she can retry after 1 hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Normal: A character without this feat can use the Survival skill to find tracks, but can only follow tracks if the DC is 10 or less. A character can use the Search skill to find individual footprints, but cannot follow tracks using Search.

Condition	DC Modifier
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Every three targets in the group being tracked	-1
--	----

Size of targets being tracked:

Fine	+8
Diminutive	+4
Tiny	+2
Small	+1
Medium-size	+0
Large	-1
Huge	-2
Gargantuan	-4
Colossal	-8

Every 24 hours since the trail was made	+1
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Windy desert conditions	+4
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Poor visibility	+2 to +6 (GM decides)
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Tracked target hides trail (and moves at half speed)	+5
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TRUSTWORTHY

You have a friendly demeanor.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Gather Information checks.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

You can fight with a weapon in each hand. You can make one extra attack each round with the second weapon.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13.

Benefit: The character's penalties for fighting with two weapons are lessened by 2 for the primary hand and 6 for the off hand.

The weapons used must both be melee weapons or both be ranged weapons (the character can't mix the types). For using ranged weapons with melee weapons, see "Sword on Blaster" on the opposite page.

UNBALANCE OPPONENT

You are skilled at keeping your opponents off balance in close combat.

Prerequisites: Defensive Martial Arts, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: During the character's action, the character designates an opponent no more than one size category larger or smaller than the character. That opponent doesn't get to add his or her Strength modifier to attack rolls when targeting the character. (If the opponent has a Strength penalty, he or she still takes that penalty.)

The opponent's Strength modifier applies to damage, as usual.

The character can select a new opponent on any action.

WEAPON FINESSE

You are especially skilled at using certain melee weapons that can benefit as much from Dexterity as from Strength. Choose any weapon marked as a "finesse weapon" in the equipment section.

Prerequisites: Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: With the selected melee weapon, the character may use his or her Dexterity modifier instead of his or her Strength modifier on attack rolls, and may apply the other benefits of

Finesse (see combat for details).

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the character takes the feat, the character selects a different weapon.

WEAPON FOCUS

Choose a specific weapon. You are especially good at using this weapon (you can choose unarmed strike or grapple as your "weapon" for the purposes of this feat).

Prerequisites: Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: The character gains a +1 bonus on all attack rolls he or she makes using the selected weapon.

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the character takes the feat, the character must select a different weapon.

WEAPON SPECIALIZATION

Choose one type of weapon for which you have already selected the Weapon Focus feat. You can also choose unarmed strike or grapple as your weapon for purposes of this feat. You deal extra damage when using this weapon.

Prerequisites: Proficiency with the selected weapon, Weapon Focus with the selected weapon, BAB +5

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on all damage rolls you make using the selected weapon.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of weapon.

WHIRLWIND ATTACK

You can strike nearby opponents in an amazing spinning melee attack.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Intelligence 13, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When the character performs a full-round action, the character can give up his or her regular attacks and instead make one melee attack at the character's highest base attack bonus against each adjacent opponent.

FOUR: ADVANCED CLASSES



An advanced class represents a focus and a calling for the experienced adventurer. It provides a specialization and a range of power and ability to give a character that something extra to set him or her apart.

Although each advanced class naturally builds from a certain basic class, every advanced class is available to all characters who fulfill the prerequisites of the class, regardless of what basic classes they have gained levels in.

The Gamemaster may add advanced classes specifically suited to his or her campaign. Conversely, the GM can decide that certain advanced classes aren't available in the campaign. Check with your GM before selecting an advanced class.

Some standard d20 Advanced Classes are not presented here, due to incompatibility with a Martian campaign.

QUALIFYING FOR AN ADVANCED CLASS

Advanced classes are like basic classes, except that they have requirements that must be met before a character can attain 1st level in the class.

A character who qualifies can choose an advanced class as an additional class as he or she gains levels, using the multiclassing rules. Some combination of base attack bonus, feats, and skill ranks determines whether a character is eligible to gain a level in an advanced class.

SOLDIER

There are many combat specialists on Mars – it remains a violent, bloody, world.

In **MARS**, many of the soldier's class abilities are available as feats. Soldiers who already have a given class ability as a feat (and who do not wish to apply it to a new weapon), may choose another bonus feat instead.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Soldier, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skill: Knowledge (tactics) 3 ranks.

Feat: Martial Weapons Proficiency.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d10

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Soldier's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history, streetwise, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Soldier advanced class.

Weapon Focus: At 1st level, a Soldier gains the Weapon Focus class feature, providing the benefit of the feat with the same name. The Soldier chooses a specific weapon. The soldier can choose unarmed strike or grapple as the weapon. The soldier must be proficient with the chosen weapon.

The soldier adds +1 to all attack rolls made using the selected weapon.

Weapon Specialization: At 2nd level, a Soldier gains weapon specialization with a specific melee or ranged weapon that he or she also has applied the Weapon Focus feat or class feature to. The soldier gets a +2 bonus on damage rolls with the chosen weapon.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Soldier gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Soldier must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Armor Proficiency, Brawl, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Far Shot, Great Cleave, Greater Sunder, Improved Brawl, Improved Knockout Punch, Improved Sword and Blaster Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Rapid Stab, Sunder, Sword and Blaster.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Weapon Focus	+0	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Weapon Specialization	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+0
4th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Tactical Aid	+3	+3	+0
5th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Improved Critical	+3	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+4	+4	+1
7th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Improved Reaction	+5	+5	+1
8th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Greater Weap. Spec.	+6	+6	+1
9th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+6	+6	+2
10th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Critical Strike	+7	+7	+2

Tactical Aid: As a full-round action, the Soldier provides tactical aid to all of his allies (including himself) within sight and voice range of his position. This use of tactical aid requires an action point.

This aid provides a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls. The bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to one-half of the Soldier's level in the advanced class, rounded down.

Improved Critical: At 5th level, a Soldier gains the Improved Critical class feature, providing the benefit of the feat with the same name. For a weapon the Soldier has proficiency in, the Soldier's threat range increases by one.

Improved Reaction: At 7th level, a Soldier gains a +2 competence bonus on initiative checks.

Greater Weapon Specialization: At 8th level, a Soldier gains greater weapon specialization with the weapon he or she selected at 2nd level. This ability increases the bonus on damage rolls to +4 when using the selected weapon.

Critical Strike: At 10th level, a Soldier gains the ability to automatically confirm a threat as a critical hit when attacking with the weapon he or she has applied weapon specialization to, eliminating the need to make a roll to confirm the critical hit.



MARTIAL ARTIST

Unarmed combat is very advanced on Mars; from the brutal brawlers of the Green Martians to the *ghival-sho* masters of the Red Martians. On a world of scarce resources, turning one's own body into a weapon is often a very wise course of action.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Martial Artist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skill: Jump 3 ranks.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the martial artist attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Martial Artist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history, tactics, theology and philosophy) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (dance) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Martial Artist advanced class.

Living Weapon: The Martial Artist attacks with either fist interchangeably, or even with elbows, knees, and feet. This means that the Martial Artist may even make unarmed strikes when his or her hands are full, and there is no such thing as an off-hand attack for a Martial Artist striking unarmed.

The Martial Artist also deals more damage with unarmed strikes. At 1st level, the martial artist deals 1d6 points of damage with an unarmed strike. At 4th level, damage increases to 1d8. At 8th level, it increases to 1d10.

This is an increase to Combat Martial Arts damage; this has no effect on Brawl.

Flying Kick: Starting at 2nd level, a Martial Artist can use a charge to deliver a devastating flying kick to an opponent. At the end of this charge, the martial artist adds his or her class level as a bonus to the damage he or she deals with an unarmed strike.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Living Weapon 1d6	+0	+0	+0
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Flying Kick	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1	+0
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Living Weapon 1d8	+3	+2	+0
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Iron Fist (one attack)	+3	+2	+1
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+4	+3	+1
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Flurry of Blows	+5	+3	+1
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Living Weapon 1d10	+6	+4	+1
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Bonus Feat	+6	+4	+2
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Iron Fist (all attacks)	+7	+5	+2

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Martial Artist gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Martial Artist must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Acrobatic, Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Circular Combat, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Dodge, Elusive Target, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Mobility, Unbalance Opponent.

Iron Fist: At 5th level, a Martial Artist gains the ability to spend 1 action point to increase the damage he or she deals to a single opponent with a single unarmed strike. The martial artist declares the use of the action point after making a successful unarmed strike. The result of the action point roll is added to the damage roll for that attack.

At 10th level, this ability improves. The Martial Artist now adds the result of the action point roll to all successful attacks he or she makes in a round.

Flurry of Blows: At 7th level, a Martial Artist gains the ability to strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. The Martial Artist must be unarmored to use this talent, and he or she must make unarmed strikes to gain the benefit.

With a flurry of blows, the Martial Artist may make one extra attack in a round at his or her highest base attack bonus. This attack and each other attack made in the round take a –2 penalty. This ability can only be used when taking the full attack action. The penalty applies to all attacks for one full round, including attacks of opportunity.



INFILTRATOR

The Infiltrator is the master of stealth, has connections to the underworld, and knows their way around the seedy parts of the city. Members of this class are found almost entirely among the Red Martians, though some White Apes prefer to advance through subterfuge rather than brute force. Many Infiltrators are Baltanese in origin; the culture there encourages such sneakiness.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Infiltrator, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Infiltrator advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the infiltrator attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Infiltrator's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Investigate (Int),

Jump (Str), Knowledge (art, business, history, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Infiltrator advanced class.

Sweep: An Infiltrator knows how to size up an area and get the lay of the land in a single sweep of his or her eyes. This sweep provides a +4 circumstance bonus on Spot checks and covers an area out to 30 feet away from the Infiltrator. The Infiltrator can use this bonus at the start of an encounter.

Anything not concealed can be spotted in a sweep with a successful check (DC 10). The DC for concealed or less obvious threats is equal to their Hide check result.

Improvised Implements: At 2nd level, an Infiltrator no longer takes a –4 penalty when wielding an improvised weapon. Also, the Infiltrator is able to make do without proper equipment in certain circumstances: the Infiltrator no longer takes a –4 penalty when using the

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Sweep	+0	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Improvised Implements	+1	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Improved Evasion	+3	+2	+2
5th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Skill Mastery	+3	+2	+2
6th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+4	+3	+2
7th	+3	+2	+5	+2	Improvised Weapon Damage	+5	+3	+3
8th	+4	+2	+6	+2	Improved Sweep	+6	+4	+3
9th	+4	+3	+6	+3	Bonus Feat	+6	+4	+3
10th	+5	+3	+7	+3	Without a Trace	+7	+5	+4

Climb and Disable Device skills without the proper tools.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Infiltrator gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Infiltrator must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

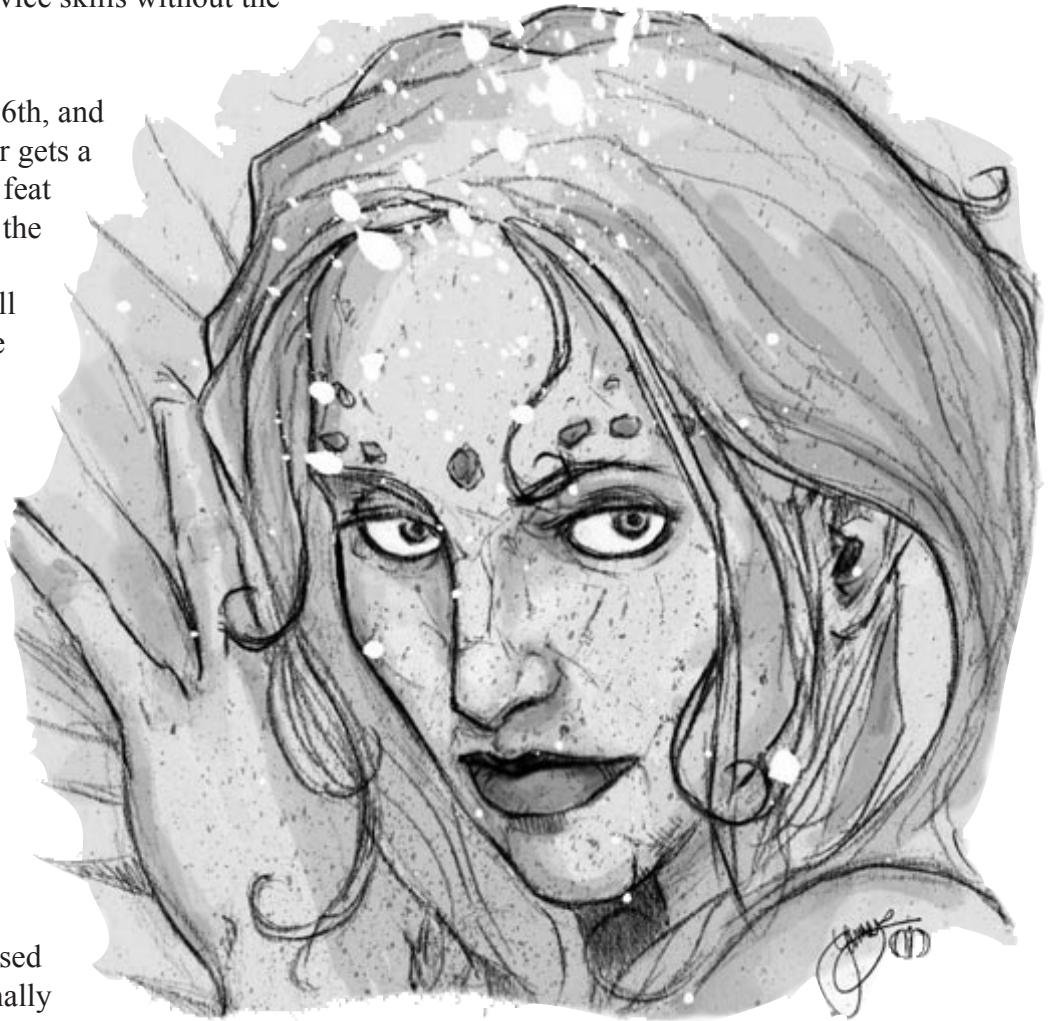
Acrobatic, Alertness, Armor Proficiency, Athletic, Attentive, Brawl, Cautious, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Meticulous, Mobility, Nimble, Renown, Run, Stealthy.

Improved Evasion:

If an Infiltrator of 4th level or higher is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the Infiltrator suffers no damage if he or she makes a successful saving throw and only half damage on a failed save. Improved evasion can only be used when wearing light armor or no armor.

For an Infiltrator who does not have evasion (see the Fast hero class description), improved evasion counts as evasion for the purpose of meeting the prerequisites on the Fast hero's defensive talent tree.

Skill Mastery: At 5th level, an Infiltrator selects a number of skills from his or her class list equal to 3 + his or her Intelligence modifier. When making a check using one of these skills, the Infiltrator may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him or her from doing so.



Improvised Weapon Damage: At 7th level, an Infiltrator's attacks with improvised weapons deal more damage. The Infiltrator treats an improvised weapon as one size category larger than it is for the purpose of determining the damage it deals.

Improved Sweep: At 8th level, an Infiltrator's ability to get the lay of the land improves. Now the Infiltrator not only spots potential perils with a successful check, he or she can determine the relative strength of these dangers. A successful check relates the danger's strength compared to the Infiltrator: stronger (higher level or Hit Dice), on par (same level or HD), or weaker (lower level or HD).

Without a Trace: At 10th level, when an Infiltrator uses any of the following skills: Balance, Climb, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, and Sleight of Hand, those using Investigate, Listen, Search, or Spot to detect the Infiltrator's activity take a -4 penalty.

BODYGUARD

The Bodyguard makes protection his specialty. He knows how to keep someone safe, and knows how to avoid trouble -- and when trouble cannot be avoided, he can protect a client through a variety of other means.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Bodyguard, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Concentrate 6 ranks, Intimidate 6 ranks.

Feat: Martial Weapons Proficiency.

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Bodyguard advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d12

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Bodyguard attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Bodyguard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Concentration (Con), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (civics, history, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Bodyguard advanced class.

Harm's Way: Once per round, if the Bodyguard is adjacent to an ally who is targeted by a direct melee or ranged attack (but not an area effect), the Bodyguard can subject him or herself to the attack in the ally's stead. If the attack hits the Bodyguard, he or her takes damage normally. If it misses, it also misses the ally.

The Bodyguard must declare his or her intention to place him or herself in harm's way before the attack roll is made. The Bodyguard selects his or her ally either prior to combat or immediately after the Bodyguard makes his or her initiative check. The Bodyguard can't change his or her ally for the duration of the combat.

Combat Sense: This ability allows a Bodyguard of 2nd level or higher to designate a single opponent during his or her action and receive a +1 competence bonus on attacks against that opponent. The Bodyguard can select a new opponent on any action.

At 8th level, the competence bonus increases to +2.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+2	+0	Harm's Way	+0	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+3	+0	Combat Sense +1	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+1	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+4	+1	Sudden Action	+2	+3	+1
5th	+3	+3	+4	+1	Improved Charge	+2	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+4	+2
7th	+5	+4	+5	+2	Defensive Strike	+3	+5	+2
8th	+6	+4	+6	+2	Combat Sense +2	+4	+6	+2
9th	+6	+4	+6	+3	Bonus Feat	+4	+6	+3
10th	+7	+5	+7	+3	Blanket Protection	+5	+7	+3

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Bodyguard gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Bodyguard must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Armor Proficiency, Attentive, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Double Tap, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Improved Brawl, Improved Feint, Improved Knockout Punch, Knockout Punch, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Menacing Aura, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Steely Gaze, Streetfighting.

Sudden Action: Once per day, a Bodyguard of 4th level or higher can focus his or her effort to burst into sudden action when the situation calls for it. The Bodyguard can change his or her place in the initiative order, moving higher in the count by a number less than or equal to his or her class level, as the Bodyguard sees fit. The Bodyguard can declare the use of this ability at the start of any round, before anyone else takes an action.

Improved Charge: A Bodyguard of 5th level or higher can make a charge without having to move in a straight line. All other charge rules apply, but the Bodyguard can alter his or her direction when making a charge to avoid obstacles.

Defensive Strike: At 7th level, if an opponent makes a melee attack against the Bodyguard and misses while the Bodyguard is using the total defense option, the Bodyguard can attack that opponent on his or her next turn (as an attack action) with a +4 bonus on his or her attack roll. The Bodyguard gains no bonus against an opponent who doesn't attack the Bodyguard or against an opponent who makes a successful attack.

Blanket Protection: At 10th level, a Bodyguard can use his expertise to provide protection for up to six allies (not including himself) within sight and voice range of his position.

The Bodyguard spends 1 action point and takes a full-round action to issue orders and directions.

Doing this provides the Bodyguard's allies with a +1 insight bonus to Defense for 3 rounds.



FIELD MEDIC

Medical science on Mars ranges from the use of sophisticated instruments and healing rays to shamanic and tribal remedies to the rather brutally effective techniques of Ape ‘Surgeonaries’, whose battlefield operating tools double as effective hand-to-hand weapons. Given the proper training and time, though, a Martian healer is as effective as any on Earth.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Field Medic, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Treat Injury 6 ranks, Spot 6 ranks.

Feat: Surgery.

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Field Medic advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Field Medic attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Field Medic’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (pharmaceutical)

(Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (ancient history, history, earth and life sciences, technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Field Medic advanced class.

Medical Specialist: The Field Medic receives a competence bonus on Treat Injury checks. At 1st level, the bonus is +1. It increases to +2 at 5th level, and to +3 at 8th level.

Expert Healer: At 2nd level and higher, the Field Medic’s ability to restore hit points with a medical kit or surgery kit and a successful use of the Treat Injury skill improves. In addition to the normal hit point recovery rate (1d4 for a medical kit, 1d6 per patient’s character level for surgery), the Field Medic restores 1 hit point for every level he or she has in this advanced class.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+2	+0	+1	Medical Specialist +1	+0	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+2	Expert Healer	+0	+0	+1
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+1
4th	+2	+4	+1	+2	Medical Mastery	+1	+1	+2
5th	+2	+4	+1	+3	Medical Specialist +2	+1	+1	+2
6th	+3	+5	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+2
7th	+3	+5	+2	+4	Minor Medical Miracle	+2	+2	+3
8th	+4	+6	+2	+4	Medical Specialist +3	+3	+3	+3
9th	+4	+6	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+3	+3	+3
10th	+5	+7	+3	+5	Medical Miracle	+3	+3	+4

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Field Medic gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Field Medic must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Armor Proficiency Cautious, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Educated, Improved Initiative, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness.

Medical Mastery: When making a Treat Injury skill check, a Field Medic of 4th level or higher may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him or her from doing so.

Minor Medical Miracle: At 7th level or higher, a Field Medic can save a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Field Medic is able to administer aid within 3 rounds of the character's death, he or she can make a Treat Injury check.

The DC for this check is 30, and the Field Medic can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to stabilize and be restored to 0 hit points.

If the Field Medic fails the skill check or the patient fails the save, the dead character can't be saved.

Medical Miracle: At 10th level, a Field Medic can revive a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Field Medic is able to administer aid within 3 minutes of the character's death, he or she can make a Treat Injury check.

The DC for this check is 40, and the Field Medic can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to stabilize and be restored to 1d6 hit points.

If the Field Medic fails the skill check or the patient fails the Fortitude save, the dead character can't be restored.

NEGOTIATOR

The Negotiator finds a way to mediate the most violent disputes, haggle the best business deal, and reach a compromise with the most dangerous opponent.

The many cultures of Mars are often at war, both with other races and among themselves. Indeed, only the Grey Martians are not rent by internal squabbles. Thus, this class often finds itself with much to do, whether it is brokering a temporary peace between warring Red Martian cities or trying to convince an angry Green Martian chieftain not to eat him.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Negotiator, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks.

Feat: Alertness.

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Negotiator advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the Negotiator attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Negotiator's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (business, civics, history streetwise, tactics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Conceal Motive	+0	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	React first	+0	+0	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+4	Talk down one opponent	+1	+1	+2
5th	+3	+3	+1	+4	No sweat	+1	+1	+2
6th	+4	+3	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+5	Talk down several opponents	+2	+2	+3
8th	+6	+4	+2	+6	Sow Distrust	+3	+3	+3
9th	+6	+4	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+3	+3	+3
10th	+7	+5	+3	+7	Talk down all opponents.	+3	+3	+4

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Negotiator advanced class.

Conceal Motive: A Negotiator gets to add a bonus equal to his or her Negotiator level whenever he or she opposes a Sense Motive check.

React First: Starting at 2nd level, a Negotiator gains the ability to react first when trying to make a deal or mediate a settlement. The Negotiator must make contact and speak to the participants prior to the start of combat. If he or she does this, he or she gains a free readied action that allows the Negotiator to make either a move or attack action if either side in the negotiation (other than the Negotiator) decides to start hostilities. The Negotiator gets to act before any initiative checks are made, in effect giving him or her the benefit of surprise.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Negotiator gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Negotiator must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Armor Proficiency, Attentive, Confident, Dead Aim, Deceptive, Educated, Far Shot, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Trustworthy.

Talk Down: A Negotiator of 4th level or higher can talk his or her way out of trouble. Either prior to the start of hostilities or during combat,

the Negotiator can talk down a single opponent within 15 feet of his or her position or otherwise able to hear the Negotiator's voice. The target must be able to understand the Negotiator. That opponent immediately stops fighting and reverts to an indifferent attitude regarding the Negotiator and the situation in general. Any hostile action by the Negotiator or by one of the Negotiator's allies directed at the opponent allows the opponent to act as he or she sees fit.

To initiate this talent, the Negotiator must spend a full-round action talking to his or her opponent. The opponent makes a Will saving throw. The DC is equal to 10 + Negotiator's class level + Negotiator's Charisma bonus. If the save fails, the opponent stops fighting. If the save succeeds, the opponent continues as normal.

At 7th level, a Negotiator can talk down a number of opponents equal to his or her Charisma bonus within 15 feet of his or her position or otherwise able to hear him. At 10th level, the range extends to 30 feet and covers all opponents who can hear and understand the Negotiator's voice. This is a Mind-Affecting ability.

No Sweat: Starting at 5th level, whenever a Negotiator spends 1 action point to improve the result of a die roll, he or she rolls an additional 1d6. The Negotiator can then select the highest die roll to add to his or her d20 roll.

Sow Distrust: A Negotiator of 8th level or higher can turn one character against another. The Negotiator must spend a full-round action and know the name of the character he or she is attempting to persuade as well as the name of the character toward whom the target's distrust will be directed. The target must be able to hear and understand the Negotiator.

The target makes a Will save. The DC is equal to 10 + Negotiator's class level + Negotiator's Charisma bonus. If the target fails the save, his or her attitude toward the other designated character worsens by one step: helpful turns to friendly, friendly to indifferent, indifferent to unfriendly, unfriendly to hostile (see the Diplomacy skill). The target makes a Will save whenever the Negotiator uses this talent against him or her. As long as the target continues to fail the Will save, the Negotiator can continue taking full-round actions to worsen the target's attitude toward a designated character. When the target's attitude drops to hostile, he or she attacks the designated character.

A successful Will save doesn't restore previous attitude shifts, but it does render the target immune for 24 hours to further attempts by the Negotiator to sow distrust.

The Negotiator can't use this talent on his or her allies.

This is a Mind-Affecting ability.

BRUTE WARRIOR

From the flashing blades of Baltanese fencers to the 'sword and blaster' style favored by the elite warriors of Callor, some would think that all combat on Mars is a dainty, almost, foppish, dance which seems only coincidentally to end with a spray of blood and slumping corpse. This is utterly false. Many on Mars forego such niceties and focus on raw, brute, power. Two races in particular – the Green Men and the White Apes – produce combatants who are short on fancy maneuvers but long on sheer power. The best of these hone their crude talents by becoming Brute Warriors.

Brute Warriors, as their name implies, eschew finesse. While it is not required that they be stupid or cruel, it is a sad truth that many of them do embody both traits, as neither intellect nor ethics is necessary for them to do what they do best.

There are no brute warriors among the Red Martians. While there are many canal-dwellers who are quite strong, they are inculcated practically from birth with a culture which values sophistication and technique over raw force, and so, never really learn to release the pure rage which defines the Brute Warrior.

REQUIREMENTS:

To become a Brute Warrior, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Race: Green or White

Skills: Intimidate 5 Ranks

Feat: Brawl, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush

BAB: +4

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Brute Warrior Advanced Class.

Hit Die: The Brute Warrior gains 1d10 Hit Points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Rage, Unarmed Parry, Intimidating Brutal Blow	+0	+0	+1
2	+2	+3	+0	+0		+0	+1	+1
3	+3	+3	+0	+0	Charge Into Battle, Iron Hide 1/-	+1	+2	+1
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Blood-Soaked Mind	+1	+3	+2
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Rage 2/day	+1	+3	+2
6	+6	+5	+1	+1	Iron Hide 2/-	+2	+4	+2
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Stand Firm	+2	+5	+3
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Numb With Fury	+3	+6	+3
9	+9	+6	+2	+2	Iron Hide 3/-	+3	+6	+3
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Improved Rage, Rage 3/day	+3	+7	+4

Action Points: The Brute Warrior gains a number of action points equal to 6+1/2 the character's level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Brute Warrior's class skills, and the associated attribute, are as follows: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis)

Skill Points at each level: 3+Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Brute Warrior advanced class.

Rage: *(Note to players of other d20 games -- read this description carefully, as it differs from the standard version)* A Brute Warrior can fly into a rage a certain number of times per day. In a rage, a Brute Warrior temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a -2 penalty to his Dodge and Parry bonuses. The increase in Constitution increases the Brute Warrior's hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way

temporary hit points are.) While raging, a Brute Warrior cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities that require patience or concentration. He may also not use any ranged weapon. He can use any feat he has except Combat Expertise.

A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (newly improved) Constitution modifier. A Brute Warrior may attempt to prematurely end his rage as a Free Action – this requires a Will save with a DC of 20-1 for each round the Brute Warrior has already been raging. At the end of the rage, the Brute Warrior loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

A Raging Brute Warrior must attack opponents in melee combat if possible. He will not use ranged weapons and will use all of his abilities to close to melee range and attack. If a Brute Warrior is raging and there are no enemies left within his sight, he will turn on his nearest ally unless he can stop the rage voluntarily. (See above).

Unarmed Parry: A Brute Warrior is capable of using his Parry bonus even while unarmed, by blocking the limb used to wield a weapon rather than the weapon itself.

Intimidating: A Brute Warrior is scary, even when he's not tearing someone in half with his bare hands. He adds 1/2 his class level to any Intimidate checks he makes.

Brutal Blow: The Brute Warrior is skilled at focusing his might into his attacks. He may add 1/2 his class level to his damage bonus when making an unarmed attack, up to a maximum of his Strength bonus. (Thus, a 10th level Brute Warrior with a 16 Strength can add +3 to damage.)

Charge Into Battle: Nothing stands between a Brute Warrior and his enemy – at least not for long. A raging Brute Warrior with this class ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity when overrunning opponents during a charge.

Iron Hide: The Brute Warrior has become so toughened and battle-scarred that his skin can literally turn a blade, granting him a natural DR of 1/-. This stacks with an DR from armor or other sources.

Blood-Soaked Mind: When lost in the fury of battle, nothing can penetrate the single-minded obsession of the Brute Warrior. He may add 1/2 his class level to all Will saves against mind-affecting effects while he is in combat.

Stand Firm: A Brute Warrior simply does not know the meaning of the word “quit”. (Some might comment that most of them know the meanings of very few words in general). When reduced to negative hit points, he may take only a single action each round, but he does not fall unconscious. He may still attempt to stabilize as a free action. If he fails to stabilize or is otherwise reduced to -10 hit points, he still dies.

Numb With Fury: When a Brute Warrior is fighting, he ignores all distractions, including any wounds which are not going to immediately kill him. All non-lethal damage suffered by the Brute

Warrior is halved.

Improved Rage: The character's bonuses to Strength and Constitution increase to +6. Further, the Brutal Warrior is not fatigued following rage.

SPECIAL:

A Brute Warrior may take any of the following feats when he is eligible to take feats. He may take them so long as has one level in the Brute Warrior class, no matter what class his currently gained level is in.

EXTRA RAGE

You may rage more frequently.

Prerequisite: Ability to rage, Con 13+

Benefit: You may rage one additional time per day. All normal rules regarding fatigue, etc, still apply. This feat may be taken twice; the effects stack.

EXTENDED RAGE

Your rage lasts longer.

Prerequisite: Ability to rage, Con 13+

Benefit: When you rage, the rage will last for 5+Constitution bonus rounds. This feat may be taken only once.

SELF-CONTROL

You can end rage at will.

Prerequisite: Ability to rage, Wisdom 13+

Benefit: Rather than needing to roll to end your rage prematurely, you may always end it as a free action.



INVENTOR

“Mad? Mad? They dared to call me mad? Those blind fools never understood my genius! But they’ll see! They’ll all see! I’ll show them all!”

There is, it is said, a fine line between genius and insanity, and the Inventor ran across it long ago. Most inventors are Red Martians or Humans, but a small number of very odd White Apes--and some truly terrifying Grey Martian--also take levels in this class. An Inventor is the master of machines, a crafter of devices which transcend the bounds of physics.

REQUIREMENTS:

To become an Inventor, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Race: Red, White, or Grey

Skills: Craft (Martian Technology, or Chemical) 7 ranks

Feats: Builder, Spark of Genius

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Inventor Advanced Class.

Hit Die: The Inventor gains 1d6Hit Points per level. The character’s Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The Inventor gains a number of action points equal to 6+1/2 the character’s level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Inventor’s class skills, and the associated attribute, are as follows: Computer Use(Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex) Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Treat Injury (Wis)

Skill Points at each level: 7+Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Inventor advanced class. Most of the features deal with the creation of Devices, which is covered further in Chapter Six: Strange Science.

Device Points: Each level, the Inventor gains more Device Points.

Max Device Points: This is the maximum device points which can be spent on any one Device.

Level		Fort	Ref	Will	Special		Dodge	Parry	Rep
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	DP +3, Touch of Madness, Max DP 5		+0	+0	+0
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	DP +2, Fast Disassembly		+0	+0	+0
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	DP +3		+1	+1	+1
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	DP +2, Fast Creation, Max DP 8		+1	+1	+1
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	DP +3, Lesser Servitor		+1	+1	+1
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	DP +2, Ease of Use I		+2	+2	+2
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	DP +3, Max DP 11		+2	+2	+2
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	DP +2, Ease of Use II		+3	+3	+2
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	DP +3, Greater Servitor		+3	+3	+3
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	DP +2, Ease of Use III, Max DP 15		+3	+3	+3

Touch of Madness: The Inventor is always a little on the edge, and this only gets worse as he gains levels in this class. The exact nature of his madness should be determined by the player and Game Master. The character suffers a penalty to all Charisma based skills equal to 1/2 his Inventor class level.

Fast Disassembly: When seeking to recover Device Points from one of his own creations, it take the Inventor only 1 hour to break down the device.

Fast Creation: The Inventor can speed up the building process considerably, taking only half as long to make new devices.

Lesser Servitor:
The Inventor gains an assistant, usually one he built himself. The base Servitor is an Animated Object of Medium size, modified as follows:

- Wisdom is raised to 10.
- It has a +4 racial bonus on any 3 skills the Inventor picks.
- It has DR 2/-

The servitor is programmed with various useful skills and abilities. The Inventor can choose to grant his servitor any two of the following:

Battle Armor: Increase the DR to 5/-

Improved Weapons: The Servitor has a knife-hand, a deadly pincer-arm, or some other powerful natural weapon which does 1d8+1 damage with a threat range of 19-20/x2

Increased Hit Dice: The Servitor is advanced by 1 hit die, with all appropriate benefits. This may be taken twice.

Lab Assistant: The Servitor is programmed with useful skills – up to 20 skill points divided among Craft and Knowledge skills.

Special Talents: The Servitor gains an additional Feat.

Unique Senses: The Servitor gains Darkvision, Low-Light Vision, Tremorsense, or Scent.

Ease of Use: The Inventor has learned to modify his creations so that the simple minds of lesser beings can grasp the principles of their use.

He may designate one device as usable by anyone without the “Creations Of...” proficiency. He may designate 2 such devices at 6th level and 3 such at 10th

level.

Greater Servitor: The Inventor can improve his servant greatly, or gain a second servant. If he chooses the latter, he gains a second lesser servitor, just as if he had earned the class ability a second time.

If he chooses the first, the lesser servitor gains an additional 3 hit dice (with all appropriate increases), and gains any two abilities from those below,



Heavy Armor: Increase the DR to 7/-

Increased Hit Dice: The Servitor is advanced by 1 hit die, with all appropriate benefits. This may be taken twice.

Lab Assistant: The Servitor is programmed with useful skills – up to 20 skill points divided among Craft and Knowledge skills.

Resistance: The Servitor gains 10 points of resistance to the Inventor's choice of Cold, Acid, Electricity, or Fire.

Self-Repair: The Servitor gains Regeneration/1. This may be taken again to gain Regeneration/2.

Special Talents: The Servitor gains an additional Feat.

NOBLE

The Noble is a ruler, either by blood or by right. The Noble class includes those born to power, and those who have earned it or had it granted to them. The noble is skilled at manipulating people, gathering resources, and giving orders in such a way as to have them obeyed.

It should be noted that nobility on Mars is not merely political power – it is a state of mind and of being. A Noble is not merely one who has a slip of paper decreeing their authority. Most of the Noble's class abilities come from their strong sense of power, entitlement, and position, which radiates from them in such a way as those of lesser stature find themselves swept up into it. Whether a steel-eye Ape general surveying his army or a slick Baltanese courtier entering a ball, a noble is born to command and has learned to master that birthright.

Nobles are most commonly found among the Red Martians and the White Apes. Green Martian society tends to be devoid of the concepts of politics and manipulation which underlie the

Noble's class skills – to a Green Martian, anyone who can beat you up deserves some respect, at least until you manage to get the drop on him. Some cynical observers have commented that this system is much less brutal and cruel than the twisted politics of Baltan.

Select this class if your character comes from a wealthy or powerful background and has 'come into their own', or if your character has achieved a position of leadership and wishes to be able to fully exploit it. The fastest path to this class is from the Charismatic Hero.

REQUIREMENTS:

To become a Noble, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Race: Red or White

Skills: Diplomacy 6 Ranks, Intimidate 6 Ranks

Feat: Renown

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Right of Passage	+0	+0	+2
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Investiture	+1	+0	+2
3	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1	+2
4	+2	+1	+3	+3	Bonus Class Skill	+3	+1	+3
5	+2	+1	+3	+3	Retinue	+3	+1	+3
6	+3	+2	+4	+4	Bonus Feat	+4	+2	+3
7	+3	+2	+4	+4	Greater Investiture	+5	+2	+4
8	+4	+2	+4	+4	Bonus Class Skill	+6	+3	+4
9	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus Feat	+6	+3	+4
10	+4	+3	+5	+5	Demand Obedience	+7	+3	+5

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Noble Advanced Class.

Hit Die: The noble gains 1d6 Hit Points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The noble gains a number of action points equal to $6 + \frac{1}{2}$ the character's level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

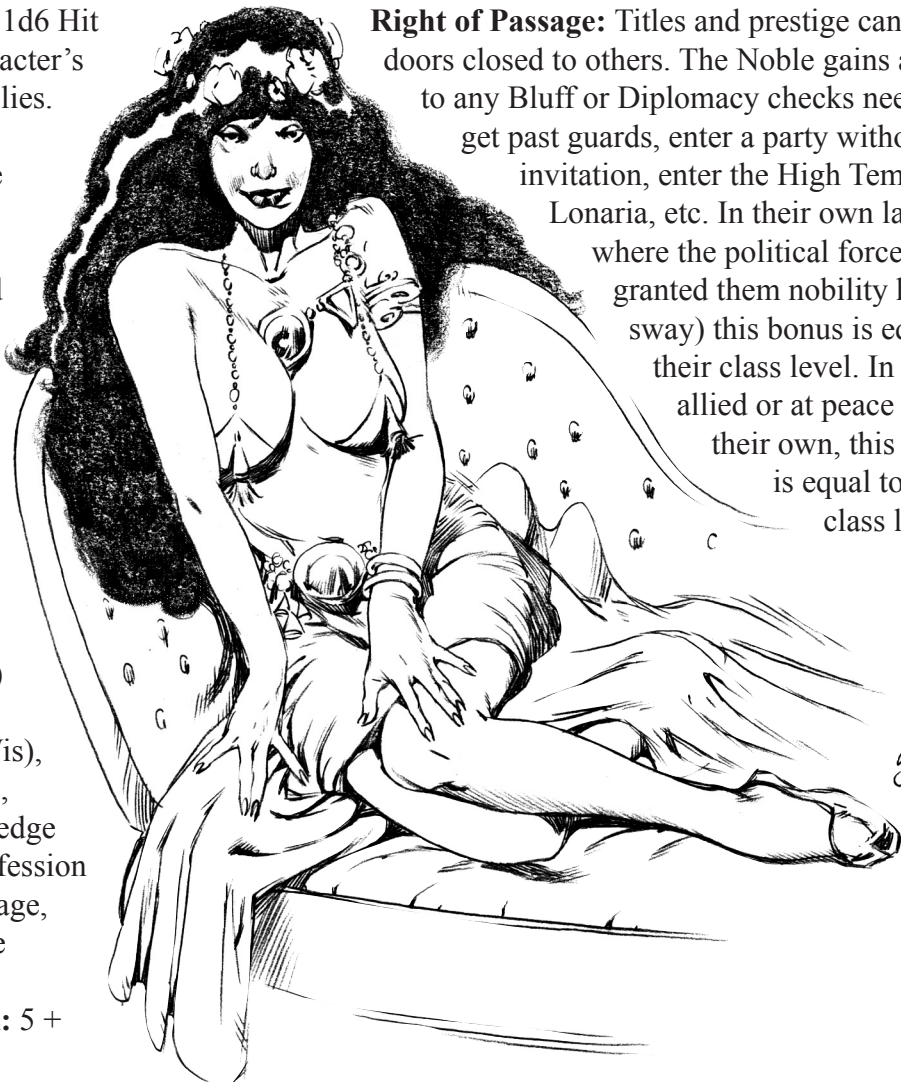
The Noble's class skills, and the associated attribute, are as follows: Concentration (Int), Craft (Visual Art, Writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history, civics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill points at each level: 5 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Noble advanced class.

Right of Passage: Titles and prestige can open doors closed to others. The Noble gains a bonus to any Bluff or Diplomacy checks needed to get past guards, enter a party without an invitation, enter the High Temple in Lonaria, etc. In their own lands (i.e., where the political force which granted them nobility holds sway) this bonus is equal to their class level. In lands allied or at peace with their own, this bonus is equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ their class level.



In lands hostile to their own, or where their own land has never been contacted, this bonus is 0. (For these purposes, 'hostility' means 'open war', not merely a state of tension. Thus, so long as there is *technically* peace between Callor and the Ape Empire, a Callorian noble may gain 1/2 their class level on Bluff and Diplomacy checks as noted above.)

Investiture: The noble is granted a small patch of land with a reasonable dwelling upon it, a radium pistol, a canal-side dwelling in Callor, or the like. This also increases their wealth by +4.

Bonus Feat: The Noble may pick a bonus feat from the following list: Animal Affinity, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, Iron Will, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Renown, Trustworthy.

Bonus Class Skill: The Noble has access to a wide range of teachers, and often has a lot of time to devote to personal hobbies. Thus, the Noble may choose a cross-class skill and make it a class skill.

Retinue: The Noble has acquired, or has been assigned, several devotedly loyal servants. There will be 1+the Noble's Charisma bonus servants, and they will be Ordinaries with a character level equal to the Noble's character level -5.

The exact composition of the Retinue is up to the GM, but consultation with the player of the Noble is recommended. The Retinue should consist of useful, but not extraordinary, characters, and consists of individuals, not mindless drones. Orders to march stupidly into death or to commit gross crimes on the Noble's say-so will likely be met with out-and-out refusal, or a break for freedom at the earliest opportunity (and a report to the Noble's superiors or family).

Greater Investiture: As investiture, except that the grant is considerably more valuable. For example, a large and luxurious powered canal-boat, a villa in the Polar Jungle, or a tower apartment in Baltan. This also increases wealth by an additional +4.

Demand Obedience: The Noble can issue orders in such a way as they are likely to be obeyed, so long as the Noble has any authority in the area at all. The noble must expend an action point to do this.

The target of the order must make a will save at a DC of 10+the Noble's class level+the Noble's Charisma bonus or obey instantly. If the order would result in the immediate death or injury of the target, the target gains a +10 bonus on the save, but if the order will 'merely' result in punishment or execution after the fact, there is no bonus. Thus, an order to 'Attack that charging glashgar!' would likely be resisted, but an order to 'Release those prisoners into my custody, immediately!' would most likely be heeded.



NOMAD

Nomads are wanderers of the wastes of Mars. Many are Green Martians, especially those outcast from their tribes who must survive alone. Others come from the nomadic Red Martians (though not all members of that society take levels in this class – only the most determined and skilled pathfinders have the ‘Nomad’ class), and a few come from the canal-dwellers, wanderers who have left their safe and secure lives either due to an ancient call to seek out the wild places, or fear for their lives if they stay.

Select this class if your character spends a lot of time away from ‘civilization’, or if you wish to be better at dealing with the wilderness and noticing the little details. The fastest path to this class is from the Dedicated Hero.

REQUIREMENTS:

To become a Nomad, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus +2

Skills: Survival 6 Ranks, Treat Injury 6 Ranks

Feats: Track

CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the Nomad advanced class.

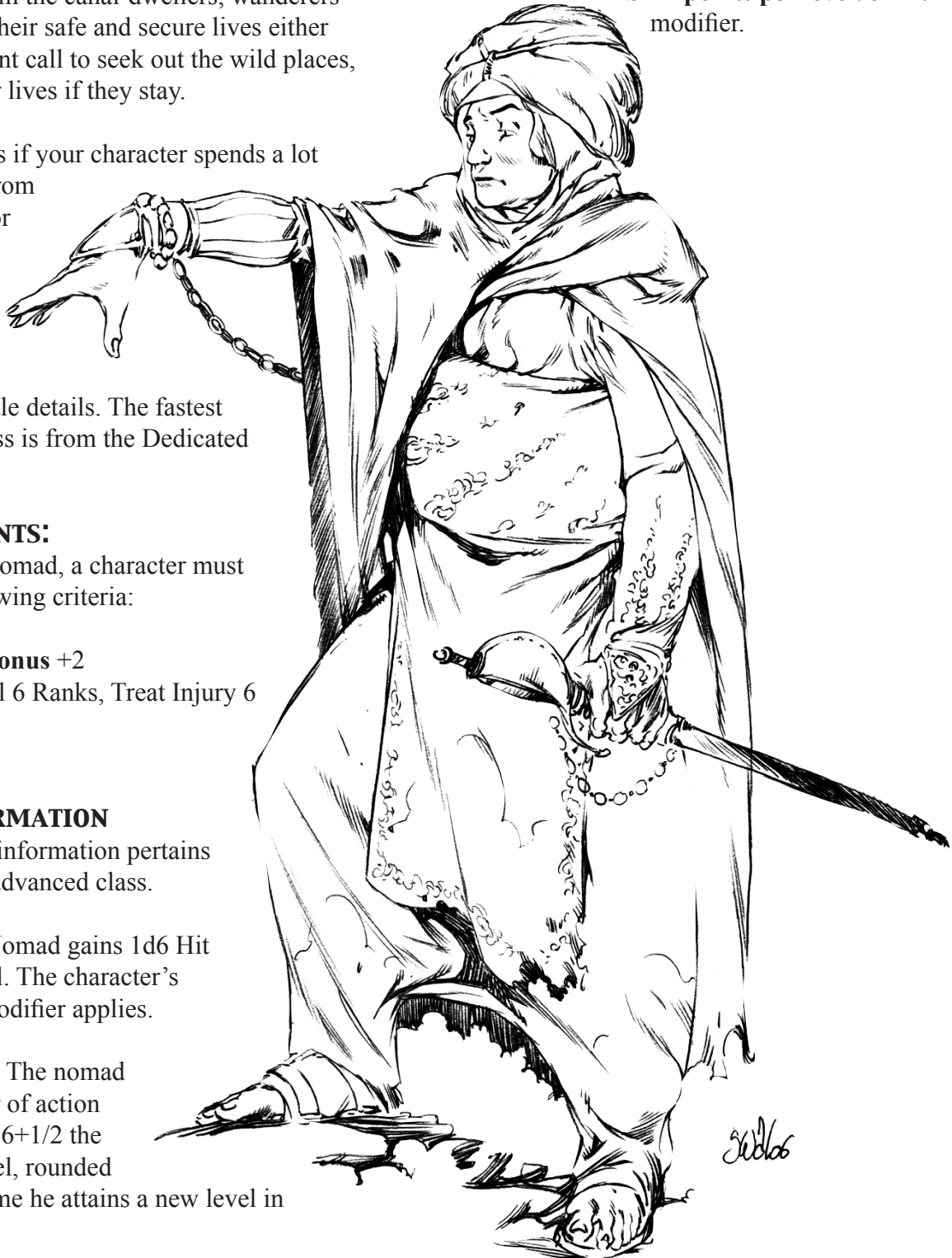
Hit Die: The Nomad gains 1d6 Hit Points per level. The character’s Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The nomad gains a number of action points equal to 6+1/2 the character’s level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Nomad’s class skills, and the associated attribute, are as follows:: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis)

Skill points per level: 5+Int modifier.



CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Nomad advanced class.

Terrain Expert: The Nomad is skilled at moving and acting in variety of terrain types, and has learned to use the natural features of the world around him to his benefit in a variety of ways. The Nomad must choose a ‘favored terrain’ from the following list: Aquatic, Desert, Forest, Hill, Marsh, Mountains, Plains, and Underground. When on his favored terrain, the Nomad gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide, Spot, Listen, and Survival checks. At fifth and tenth levels, the Nomad may choose to either gain an additional favored terrain at +2, or increase his knowledge of his current favored terrain by an additional +2, making it +4. Thus, by tenth level, an Nomad can have three terrains at +2, one at +6, or one at +2 and one at +4.

Master Tracker: When making Track checks, the Nomad may add 1/2 his class levels to his roll as a competence bonus.

Bonus Feat: The Nomad may choose a bonus feat from the following list: Alertness, Athletic, Dodge, Endurance, Focused, Great Fortitude, Guide, Low Profile, Quick Draw, Run, Stealthy)

Survivor: The Nomad is skilled at surviving on limited rations and in harsh conditions. He gains a +4 competence bonus to all checks to avoid the ill effects of starvation, thirst, or extreme heat and

cold. This applies only to ‘environmental’ effects, and not to the effects of direct exposure to fire, cold-based FX abilities, and so on.

Hunter’s Strike: When battling animals (but not intelligent beings) native to his favored terrains, a Hunter can increase his threat range by +1 for each time he has chosen a given terrain. Thus, if a Hunter has a +4 bonus to the appropriate skills when in Hills, he also has a +2 to threat range against creatures with an intelligences of 2 or less (including vermin) native to the hills.

Shelter: By spending an action point and making a DC 15 Survival check, the Nomad can find someplace safe to hole up. This may be an abandoned imperial fortress, a cave whose entrance is hidden from plain view, or the remains of a crashed sky dreadnought covered over with *menglor* vines. Finding the shelter without this ability requires a DC 30 spot check, so those within are reasonably safe from accidental discovery, and can take the time needed to mend wounds, examine artifacts, or otherwise pass a few hours or days in relative safety. The GM should specify the type of shelter found when this ability is used, and it should be appropriate to the terrain and the genre.

Wilderness Guide: The nomad can aid others when in his favored terrain, granting them one-half his bonuses to Hide, Spot, Listen, and Survival.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1	+0	+1	+1	+0	Terrain Expert I	+0	+0	+0
2	+1	+2	+2	+0	Master Tracker	+1	+1	+0
3	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+1
4	+3	+2	+2	+1	Survivor	+2	+2	+1
5	+3	+3	+3	+1	Terrain Expert II, Shelter	+3	+3	+1
6	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+3	+2
7	+5	+4	+4	+2	Wilderness Guide	+4	+4	+2
8	+6	+4	+4	+2	Hunter’s Strike	+4	+4	+2
9	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+5	+3
10	+7	+5	+5	+3	Terrain Expert III	+5	+5	+3

SCHOLAR

The educated on Mars must deal spend each day living with the knowledge that much of their culture and history is forever lost. Everywhere they look, there are testaments to all that has been forgotten. Most simply sigh wistfully at the thought of what has been discarded and get on with rotely learning the few shards of wisdom which remain; a few, however, dare to try to recover that which has been lost. Scholars are not dusty academicians who never leave their cubicles; they seek out traces of ancient lore wherever it might be found, and if that means trekking across a thousand miles of dry seabed or penetrating the Emperor's Palace in the polar jungles, well, so be it.

REQUIREMENTS:

To qualify for the Scholar class, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Race: Red, White, or Grey

Skills: 6 Ranks in Craft (Any) or Decipher Script, plus six ranks in Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Life Sciences), or Knowledge (Technology), plus 6 ranks in Research.

CLASS INFORMATION:

The following information pertains to the Scholar advanced class.

Hit Die: The Scholar gains 1d6 Hit Points per level. The character's constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The Scholar gains a number of action points equal to $6 + 1/2$ character level, rounded down, every time she gains a new level in this class.



Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Lost Knowledge	+0	+0	+0
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Useful Trivia	+0	+0	+0
3	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+1	+1
4	+2	+1	+2	+2	Scientific Improvisation	+1	+1	+1
5	+2	+1	+3	+3	Lost Knowledge II	+1	+1	+1
6	+3	+2	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+2
7	+3	+2	+4	+4	Linguistic Lore	+2	+2	+2
8	+4	+2	+4	+4	Skill Mastery	+3	+3	+2
9	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus Feat	+3	+3	+3
10	+5	+3	+5	+5	Lost Knowledge III	+3	+3	+3

CLASS SKILLS:

The Scholar's class skills are as follows: Craft (Any), Decipher Script(Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (History, Earth and Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Technology) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Languages (None), Research (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Languages (None)

Skill Points at each level: 7+Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES:

The following features pertain to the Scholar advanced class:

Lost Knowledge: The Scholar has discovered some ancient secret which has practical applications. The Scholar may pick one of the following benefits:

- +1 Parry Bonus
- +1 Dodge Bonus
- +1 to all Attack rolls
- +1d6 Hit Points
- +3 Wealth
- +1 Reputation
- Pick an additional skill to be a Class Skill

The character should decide what the secret is, and how knowledge of it grants the chosen benefit -- for example, the character may have learned

of a Green Martian battle technique which dulls pain, granting extra hit points, or may have found a cache of rubies in old city, increasing his wealth.

The Scholar learns additional lost knowledge at 5th and 10th levels.

Useful Trivia: The scholar accumulates a vast catalog of information in her brain, and, every so often, it comes in handy. By spending an action point, a Scholar can 'remember' a bit of data which can grant an ally, or herself, one of the following benefits:

- +5 on a skill check about to be made.
- +2 on the next attack
- +1d6 damage on the next successful hit

As with Lost Knowledge, this should be roleplayed. For example, a scholar might note that "The White Apes are known to have weak jaws... strike there, if you can!", as opposed to simply saying "I spend an action point to give Vothal +1d6 damage to his next attack."

Bonus Feat: At third, sixth, and ninth levels, the scholar may choose a bonus feat from the following list: Attentive, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Creative, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Guide, Low Profile, Renown, Studious.

Scientific Improvisation: At 4th level, the Scholar gains the ability to improvise solutions using common objects and his scientific know-how. This ability lets him create objects in a dramatic situation quickly and cheaply, but that have limited duration.

By spending 1 action point and combining common objects with a Craft check that corresponds to the function desired, the Scholar can build a tool or device to deal with any situation. The DC for the Craft check is equal to 5 + the purchase DC of the object that most closely matches the desired function.

Only objects that can normally be used more than once can be improvised.

Electronic devices, special tools, weapons, mechanical devices, and more can be built with scientific improvisation. It takes a full-round action to make an object with scientific improvisation. The object, when put into use, lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Scholar's class level, or until the end of the current encounter, before it breaks down. It can't be repaired.

Linguistic Lore: The character may instantly learn a language by hearing only a few words of it, by comparing it to a known language and deciphering the changes made from their mutual root. A character may 'learn' a number of languages in this fashion equal to their intelligence bonus. If they later spend a skill point to learn the language properly, this frees up an additional slot. This ability requires the presence of a living speaker of the language to be learned; it cannot be used to read ancient texts. It takes a full minute of conversation for the scholar to fully grasp the language.

Skill Mastery: At 8th level, a Scholar selects a number of skills from his or her class list equal to 3 + his or her Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check using one of these skills, the Scholar may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him or her from doing so.

SKY-CORSAIR

The airships of Mars are one of the most spectacular remnants of the planet's former glory. Soaring the skies between Red Martian cities, the graceful vehicles are an awesome sight to behold.

The airships are crewed by a special breed of Martian. They alone keep the knowledge of operating the vessels alive. The skies call to a hardy, brave sort, more at home above the desert than on the sands -- The Sky Corsairs.

This advanced class represents everything from ruthless sky-pirates, to the rank and file crewmembers and haughty officers of the Callor Aeronavy.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Sky-Corsair, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Balance 2 ranks, Climb 2 ranks, Pilot Airship 3 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Sky Corsair's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance(Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (ancient history, history, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Pilot Airship (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Dodge	Parry	Rep
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Skymanship I	+0	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Mobility	+1	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+2	+0
4th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Skymanship II	+3	+3	+0
5th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Skilled Captain	+3	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+4	+4	+1
7th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Artful Dodger	+5	+5	+1
8th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Sky Master	+6	+6	+1
9th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+6	+6	+2
10th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Master Strategist	+7	+7	+2



CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the sky-corsair advanced class. For more information regarding airships, see Chapter Eight : Airships of Mars.

Skymaster: At first level, sky-corsair gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all Climb, Profession (sky sailor), Balance and Dodge defense as long as he is aboard an airship. This is an extraordinary ability.

This bonus increases to +3 at fourth level, when the sky-corsair gains Skymanship II.

Mobility: At second level, the sky-corsair gains Mobility, as per the feat of the same name. If the character already possesses the feat, then a Bonus Feat may instead be chosen, from the appropriate list.

Bonus Feat: At third, sixth, and ninth levels, the sky-corsair may choose a bonus feat from the following list: Agile Riposte, Alertness, Dodge, Drive-By Attack, Gearhead, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Parry, Perfect Balance, Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Skilled Captain: By 5th level, a sky-corsair usually has command of their own vessel, and gains the following abilities:

Under the sky-corsair's watchful eye and steady leadership, his crew works with increased efficiency. Increase the maneuverability rating of a ship he captains by one class. This effect remains so long as the sky-corsair is aboard the ship and alive.

In addition, any member of the sky-corsair's crew who can draw a clear line of sight to him gains a +4 morale bonus on all saves against fear and fear-based effects.

Artful Dodger: The sky-corsair's combat experience allows him to judge his enemies' attacks and set his crew to making evasive maneuvers. Any ship under the sky-corsair's command gains a +2 dodge bonus to DV so long as it is capable of movement.

Sky Master: The sky-corsair is an expert at judging the wind and positioning his ship. He gains a +4 bonus to initiative when in command of a ship and increases his ship's base speed by 25%.

Master Strategist: At 10th level the sky-corsair is a supreme tactician and commander.

In battle, he may use a standard action to study a single opponent and hold his move action. When that opponent takes his action, the sky captain may then use his move action to maneuver his ship after the opponent declares and targets all of his attacks but before determining damage. Thus, a sky-corsair could move his ship behind cover after his enemy has decided to fire upon him but before making his attack roll.

If, as a result of this move, the sky-corsair's ship gains the benefits of cover or concealment, apply those modifiers to the attacks. If the ship was the target of an area-effect attack but moved out of it, the ship avoids the attack and takes no damage. When using this ability, the sky captain's initiative count does not change.



ECONOMICS ON MARS

While the red Martian nations all have their own currencies, the necessity of trade has resulted in a common standard of coinage which can be used for inter-kingdom trade. There are regular fluctuations in trade rates, but, overall, rates of exchange are relatively stable and no pulp novel was ever titled “The Money-Changes of Mars”, and thus, for game purposes, all red Martians can be assumed to use a single form of currency.

Tradecoins are made of relatively common copper, inlaid with silver designs and trace amounts of rare earths, which are intended to prevent forgery. Tradecoins are issued by local governments and are backed by stockpiles of gold, gems, or radium. They come in a variety of denominations. Value is distinguished by size and shape, as well as the nature of the rare mineral components.

The base unit of exchange is the octagonal *vash*. For purposes of comparison to other D20 games, it can be seen as the equal of a 20th/21st century dollar or a fantasy ‘silver piece’. The square *vashal* is equal in value to 1/10th of a *vash*, and

the triangular *vashka* is equal to 1/100th of a *vash*. The round *alvash* is worth 10 *vash*, and is the largest-value tradecoin in common use. Purchases of bulk goods or high-value items are done using drafts against a bank account.

Because the coins have little intrinsic value, they are not of much use for trade with people outside the red Martian network of canal cities. Nomadic red Martians will sometimes accept them, knowing they can use them when dealing with the city-dwellers. Trade with other cultures is based on either the exchange of precious metals and gems or on pure barter. Of course, there is very little such trade – some of the white apes will engage in commerce, and it is possible, albeit very rare, to negotiate with green tribes on occasion, but most active trade is between the red Martian cities.

The white apes have their own system of coinage, using copper discs of various sizes. The *churg* is the largest coin, and it is roughly equal, in terms of cultural value, to the *vash*. The *grarag* is the next largest, worth 1/5th of a *churg*, and the *kraag* is the smallest, worth 1/10th of a *churg* (or half a *grarag*).

The green Martians forge no coins; they trade shiny things for weapons or tools, or bully weaker tribesmen into working for them.

The grey Martians likewise have no coins; they have no trade with other races and resource allocation within their own culture is done by consensus and debate.

ANCIENT STOCKPILES

During the early days of the Red Martian kingdoms, before the drying, there were many different economic systems, from purely-flat currencies to the use of gold, silver, and platinum in coins. Much of this wealth was poured into the construction of the canals, but some of it remains. Green Martian raiders stole much, then left what they could not easily carry in odd caves and forgotten cities. Abandoned civilizations sometimes contain vaults filled with treasures almost beyond description – precious metals, rare gems, and exotic minerals filled the vaults of the ancient Martian kings. The rumor of such lost storehouses of wealth can send otherwise rational red Martians out into the harsh deserts in a desperate quest for untold wealth.

WEALTH

No system is given within these rules which provide an “exchange rate” between the various forms of Tradecoins and the Wealth system. In fact, Wealth is included as an abstraction for comparison purposes, and for ease of use with other d20 products. The equipment lists provided herein contain no prices, nor Purchase DCs. Beginning characters should pick their starting equipment (with the GM’s approval), and gather equipment, weapons and belongings as needed during the course of play. **MARS** should be about adventure, not shopping.

ARMOR

Armor is not commonly worn on Mars – it is bulky and constraining in most cases, and the added weight is a burden when water must be carefully rationed. Against radium pistols and other modern weapons, it is often useless, and so, it has become of relatively little importance. Primitive warriors, especially green Martians, may wear some plates of metal, but most red Martians will wear light cloth armors at most, preferring freedom of action and movement. In addition, the more skilled a warrior is, the more armor will limit his ability to perform the more delicate maneuvers and feints of combat; thus, it is often the case that ill-trained guardsman will don heavy suits of protective gear, while skilled fighters will wear little or nothing.

In addition, the various races of Mars are shaped very differently from one another. No race can easily wear armor built for a different race. In some cases, if the armor can be used, it is noted in the description. Note that many races use the same materials – for example, red Martians and white apes both use silkweave – but the finished suits are not interchangeable between races.

Bracer Shield: The bracer shield is still in common use today, as it is generally light and works well equally well against melee weapons and radium pistols. It consists of a heavy metal bracer to which is attached a small, reinforced shield. This adds a +1 equipment bonus to Parry Defense, rather than providing Damage Reduction. This stacks with the bonus granted by Jewel armor. However, using a bracer shield prevents any weapon from being used in the off-hand. Further, the bracer shield can be applied against only one opponent per round – this may be changed as a free action.

Ceremonial Plate: This is heavy, full-body armor, rarely worn into actual combat. It is used by the palace guards or the equivalent in most of the Red Martian cultures. Huge, heavy, and overly ornate, it does provide considerable defense but at a grievous cost to mobility and speed. Anyone wearing it has their base speed reduced by 10’/round. Should someone be foolish enough to wear it during wilderness marches, they will suffer a -4

penalty on all Fortitude saves to resist the effects of heat, hunger, and thirst, as well as a -1 morale modifier to *all* skill checks after the first hour of wearing it each day.

Chain Cloak: The chain cloak is not just a cloak, but something more akin to a hooded robe, composed of thousands of strands of clinking, finely-woven chain links fastened to a few key support pieces. In combat, the metal chains help to entangle or dull weapon blows, providing some damage reduction, and the swirling cloud of metal confuses foes, making the wearer slightly more difficult to hit. However, the armor is extremely loud – it is quite impossible to use the Move Silently skill while wearing it. Any attempt suffers a -10 penalty.

Heavy Wire: This is a heavier version of the Wireweave vest, used primarily in those red Martian cities where technology has declined to the point where melee combat among massed troops is common. It also has some ceremonial/ritual uses. It is a full body suit of Wireweave, overlaid with heavy plates on the chest, arms, and legs.

Legionnaire's Armor: This armor, found entirely among the White Apes and not easily worn by anyone other than them, is the heaviest armor in common, regular, use on Mars. It consists of a massively thick breastplate, a helmet, greaves, and leggings. The joints remain exposed, weakening protection but also granting considerable freedom of movement. Because of the many gaps in the armor, it is possible for a careful opponent to strike around the armor with an appropriate weapon. If using a weapon which can do piercing damage, a combatant may take a -4 penalty to his attack roll and a -2 to penalty to his defense in order to 'strike at the gap'. If he hits, the armor is completely ignored.

Due to the shape and size of the armor, red Martians which attempt to wear it suffer a -1 penalty on all attack rolls and a 5 foot reduction in base movement, in addition to the normal penalties associated with the armor.

Jewel Armor: This term is somewhat misleading. This form of 'armor' is so-named because the pieces which compose it are derived from early forms of jewelry, such as bracelets, torcs, and anklets, though the modern form is much heavier and contains (of course) no precious metals or stones. The armor does not protect against damage, but does deflect blows, granting a bonus to Parry rather than providing Damage Reduction. Green, red, and white Martians all produce some form of this armor.

Pilot's Helm: A lightweight metal helmet with a visor of transparent crystal, commonly worn by sky-corsair captains. It provides some modest protection from damage as well and does not hinder mobility in any way.

Silkweave: This armor is formed from chemically treated insect fibers, and is strong and light, so much so that it can easily pass for normal clothing. It is the most common armor in active use among the red Martians. Heavy silkweave has gone through additional treatment to stiffen in. Silkweave can come in almost any color, and is often dyed to match the colors of the wearer's house, clan, nation, regiment, or other group.

Green Martians lack the skill to harvest silkweave, but they can create patchwork suits by scavenging pieces of it from the corpses of red Martians. Such suits, usually made from differently-colored pieces of cloth, present an almost clown-like appearance.

White apes can and do harvest silkweave, though they are one of the few species to prefer heavier armor.

Skull Helm: A crude 'helmet' formed from the skull of a slain beast (or sometimes pieced together from the skulls of tribal enemies), this is worn by Green Martians who have the patience or memory to remember to suit up for battle.

Vronag Hide: The green Martians often skin the vronag vesh and use its hide for armor. By tradition, one cannot wear such armor unless one has killed the beast in single combat – and given the nature of the animal (see bestiary) this is no

mean feat. Because of this fact, a green Martian wearing vronag hide armor gains a +2 bonus on all Intimidate checks against anyone familiar with the culture. (A green Martian seen wearing such armor who shows he could not possibly have ‘earned’ the right to it will be set upon by others of his kind and slaughtered.) The armor is bulky but offers good protection in combat, and green Martians tend not to be too concerned with agility anyway.

Wire Vest: This is a medium armor found primarily among the red Martians. It cannot be manufactured by the white apes, though some individuals have managed to order custom suits made for them during times of peace. It is composed of thin strands of a strong, copper-based alloy, woven into a flexible suit of armor which covers the chest, groin, and shoulders. It is slightly restrictive, but not exceptionally so, and is often worn by elite troops, palace guards, and the like.

TABLE KEY:

Name: The name of the armor

Weight: The weight of the armor.

Max Dex: The maximum Dex bonus usable by someone wearing the armor (including all penalties).

Dex Penalty: The penalty to the Dexterity modifier of anyone wearing the armor.

BAB Cap: The maximum Base Attack Bonus usable by someone wearing the armor.

DR: The armor’s Damage Reduction: This amount is subtracted from the damage of any strike that hits the wearer.

Race/Culture: The people of Mars who use that variety of armor.

Name	Weight	Max Dex	Dex Penalty	BAB Cap	DR	Race/Culture
Chain Cloak**	10 lbs	+4	-4	+10	3	Red
Ceremonial Plate	25 lbs	+3	-5	+10	7	Red
Jewel Armor*	6 lbs	+10	-1	+20	N/A	All
Legionnaires Armor	40 lbs	+4	-5	+8	6	White
Pilot’s Helm	2 lbs	NA	0	+20	1	Red
Silkweave	2 lbs	+8	0	+20	1	Red, White
Silkweave, Heavy	5 lbs	+7	0	+20	2	Red, White
Silkweave, Patch	8 lbs	+7	0	+19	1	Green
Skull Helm	4 lbs	NA	0	+20	1	Green
Vronag Hide	40 lbs	+2	-7	+10	7	Green
Wireweave Vest	12 lbs	+4	-2	+10	5	Red (rarely White)
Wireweave, Heavy	20 lbs	+4	-4	+12	6	Red (rarely White)

*Jewel Armor grants a +1 bonus to Parry.
**Chain Cloak grants a +1 bonus to Dodge.

WEAPONS

Mars remains a world locked in constant struggle, and the various races of Mars have developed many tools which they can use to eliminate enemies (or inconvenient allies, for that matter). The vast spread of technologies on Mars means that weapons range from wooden clubs to city-destroying heat-rays.

Oddly, gunpowder was never developed on Mars – sulfur is fairly rare, and so Martian technology bypassed it, leading to odd developments in the ways of war. Walled cities remained commonplace for protection against green Martian invaders, even after the radium rifle and the sky-corsair were invented. Due to the lack of a powerful, reliable ranged weapon until nearly the beginning of the canal era, primitive weapons have remained commonplace, and in many regions of Mars, are still used in ‘modern’ warfare.

Despite the high levels of technology, much Martian combat still takes place between warriors standing face to face. Part of this is cultural, and part is due to the scarcity of high-tech ranged weapons. Bows and crossbows are also in common use, but in many circumstances they must be supplemented by hand-to-hand weapons.

Over the millennia, Martian cultures have invented weapons roughly equal to nearly all the archaic weapons of Earth. They will have some stylistic variants and different names, but they will be effectively the same. The descriptions of the weapons (including any additional rules for their use) appear below, in the order that they appear on the weapons chart.

Dagger: The dagger is an all-purpose weapon and tool, carried by almost every surface-dwelling Martian. Most daggers have double-edged blades, making them more useful for stabbing than for cutting, but they are still short and handy enough to have many roles outside of combat.

Hatchet: The hatchet is more of a carpenter’s tool than a weapon, though it is often pressed into service in combat.

Club: The simplest of all weapons -- a large bludgeoning implement. Most often used by the Green Martians, although occasionally White Apes use them as well.

Spear: A long staff with a leaf-shaped blade at the end. The spear is a reach weapon -- a character wielding it may attack foes in melee who are 10 feet away, but may not attack adjacent enemies.

Bow: Used around Mars for hunting and combat, in countless cultural and racial variations. Some are longer, with greater ranges, some are shorter and designed to be used while riding a mount, etc.

Axe: The axe is an effective off-hand weapon or backup weapon, effective against armor and can be used to hook enemy weapons (+1 to Parry defense).

Short Sword: The short sword features roughly two-foot-long blade. It is handy, concealable, and can be used as a finesse weapon.

Battleaxe: The battleaxe is a powerful weapon, ideal for dealing out deadly blows while mounted, but also well-balanced enough for melee on foot. It is viciously effective against armor.

Broadsword: This heavy, slightly tapered sword is intended for battle, and is the most commonly encountered Martial Weapon, finding use in the armies of most nations of Mars.

Rapier: A thin-bladed sword, designed and used for finesse combat. The most common weapon used by Red Martians.

Warhammer: A heavy, one-handed hammer which looks a bit like a meat tenderizer -- and which deals devastating, crushing blows in combat.

Pike: Pikes are extremely long spears, used by rank and file soldiers in formation. A pike is a special variety of reach weapon -- a character using a pike can attack opponents who are up to 15 feet away in melee, but cannot attack adjacent

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Finesse	Type	Armor Piercing	Restrictions
Simple Weapons								
Unarmed Attack	1d4	x2	Bludgeoning	-	No	-	0	-
Dagger	1d4	19-20 x2	Piercing	10ft	Yes	Light	1	-
Hatchet	1d6	x3	Slashing	10ft	Yes	Light	1	-
Club	1d8	x2	Bludgeoning	10ft	No	1-Handed	1	-
Spear*	1d8	x2	Piercing	10ft	No	2-handed	1	-
Bow and Arrows	1d8	x2	Piercing	50ft	No	2-handed	1	-
Martial Weapons								
Axe	1d8	x3	Slashing	10ft	Yes	1-handed	1	-
Short Sword	1d8	19-20 x2	Slashing or Piercing	-	Yes	Light	1	-
Battleaxe	1d10	x3	Slashing	-	No	2-handed	4	-
Broadsword	1d10	19-20 x2	Slashing	-	No	1-handed	3	-
Rapier	1d8	18-20 X2	Slashing	-	Yes	1-handed	2	-
Warhammer	1d6	x3	Bludgeoning	-	No	1-handed	7	-
Pike	2d6	x3	Piercing	-	No	2-handed	2	-
War Sword	1d12	19-20 x2	Slashing or Piercing	-	No	2-handed	3	-
War Lance*	1d10	x3	Piercing	-	No	1-handed	3	-
Handbow*	1d8	x2	Piercing	30ft	No	Light	3	-
Handbow, Self-loading*	1d8	x2	Piercing	30ft	No	Light	3	-
Crossbow*	2d6	x2	Piercing	60ft	No	2-handed	4	-
Exotic Weapons								
Baltanese Dueling Blade (Primary)*	1-6	18-20/x2	Slashing or Piercing	NA	Yes	1-Handed	2	-
Baltanese Dueling Blade (Secondary)*	1-4	18-20/x2	Slashing	NA	Yes	Light	2	-
Callorian Longblade*	1-8	20	Slashing	NA	Yes	1-Handed	4	Callorian (4)
Draggar Bone Club*	1-10	20/x3	Crushing	NA	No	2-handed	3	Green (5)
Longsling*	1d6	x2	Crushing	30ft	No	Light	1	Nomadic (4)
Radium Weapons								
Radium Pistol*	1d8	18-20 x3	Energy	40ft	No	Light	5	-
Radium Pistol, holdout*	1d8	18-20 x3	Energy	20ft	No	Light	5	-
Radium Pistol, Double-cell*	1d8	18-20 x3	Energy	30ft	No	Light	5	-
Radium Pistol, Heavy*	1d10	18-20 x3	Energy	30ft	No	Light	6	-
Radium Rifle*	2d8	18-20 x3	Energy	50ft	No	2-handed	7	-
Radium Gun, Mounted*	2d12	18-20 x3	Energy	60ft	No	Mounted	8	Military (6)
Grey Martian Heat Ray*	3d10	x4	Energy	180ft	No	Mounted	10	Grey (10)
* See weapon description for additional rules.								

opponents. Pikes cannot be thrown.

War Sword: The war sword is a massive two-handed weapon -- a relic of the Martian past, rarely seen on the battlefield today.

War Lance: A weapon designed for use from the back of a charging mount. If used during a charge, the War Lance receives a +2 circumstance bonus to Armor Piercing, and does double damage. If used on foot, the weapon is unbalanced, giving the character a -4 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls.

Handbow: A small but useful weapon, the handbow is a one-handed crossbow which can be drawn and fired much like a pistol. The Handbow has a single-shot rate of fire, and can carry a single shot. Traditionally, it is kept loaded, so that a shot can be let loose instantly.

Handbow, Self-loading: Though slightly bulkier than a 'manual' handbow, the self-loading handbow has a built-in quiver of 10 small arrows. It can fire single-shot or semi-auto, peppering the target with small, but sharp, projectiles.

Crossbow: A single-shot weapon which is easier to use than a bow, and so popular with armies where speed of training is critical. It has a single rate of fire and can carry a single loaded shot.

Baltanese Dueling Blades (Primary and Off-Hand): These weapons are rare and expensive. They are made only by the most experienced crafters in Baltan, and each pair is unique. (A Knowledge (History) or Craft (Weaponsmith) check at DC 20 can identify the origin of a given set.) They are specially weighted and balanced to be used in the 2-weapon combat style beloved of the Baltanese nobility. If the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat is known, then, the user's penalty for 2-weapon combat is reduced by 1. The off-hand blade is a light weapon. If only one blade is used, then there is a -1 penalty to all 'to hit' rolls. (The user does not need to make an off-hand attack every time; he must simply wield both weapons to avoid the penalty)

Callorian Longblade: The swordsmen of Callor are well famed for their skill and honor in battle. The Callorian Blade is issued to the greatest warriors of that kingdom, and is never passed on or sold (at least not legitimately). When the wielder dies, the blade is returned to the armory. To be issued a blade once used by a great hero is a tremendous honor. The blade is exceptionally strong, having 10 hit points. In addition, the wielder, if he is rightfully issued the blade, gains a +1 bonus to his Reputation, and a +1 to Intimidate checks against enemies of Callor and a +1 to Diplomacy checks against allies of Callor. (Should the character be using a stolen or 'found' blade, and this is discovered, he will suffer a -4 on all Charisma-based skills when dealing with Callor or its allies.)

Draggar Bone Club: The Green Martians lack much in the way of crafting, but over the ages, they have learned a few tricks and skills which have become rote enough to pass down to the tribe. One such is the making of the draggar bone club. Beginning with the thigh bone of the now extinct draggar, the Green Martians wrap hide and metal fragments around each end, creating a double weapon of impressive weight and lethality. Green Martians can wield the draggar bone club if they are proficient in archaic weapons; non-Green Martians must take an Exotic Weapon Proficiency to learn it properly.

Longsling: This is a weapon commonly used by the nomadic red Martians. They all learn to use it from birth (It is a Simple Weapon for them), but for other Martians, it requires an Exotic Weapon Proficiency. In addition to the devastating sling stones it can hurl with accuracy over surprising distances, it can be used as a sort of flail in melee combat by sealing it shut with a load of rocks inside. It can also be used to grant a +2 bonus on Trip attacks if the user has a BAB of +1 or greater.

As a flail, it does 1d4 points of damage. Sealing the rocks inside the sling is a full round action which provokes an attack of opportunity.

RADIUM WEAPONS

The most important advance in Red Martian weapons technology came roughly a century or so before the building of the canal network – the discovery of how to use radium to create a bolt of powerful destructive force. A small chip of the potent mineral, if subjected to an electric charge and the released energy channeled through an array of crystal lenses, produced a bolt which could travel further than any arrow and tear straight through armor. Inside of a decade, the cultures which had radium technology dominated those which did not – only the scarcity of the mineral and its many other uses kept it from replacing all other weapons. Instead, it was reserved for elite troops or for use on airships.

After the canal building age was done, radium became even rarer, as vast stockpiles were consumed in the construction of the canals and many mine sites were too distant from the water-giving network to be safely or profitably mined. Radium weapons became heirlooms, handed down from parent to child, and the charging capsules which powered them became worth more than diamonds. Today, firing a radium weapon when it is not necessary to do so is considered an act of flagrant waste – the weapons are used only when no other will do, and to be issued one is a sign of great honor. Families have been torn apart over who would inherit them.

Radium weapons cannot be made by hand – the machining required is too fine – but neither are they produced in bulk. Runs of a few dozen to a few thousand are common, and there are some collectors who have tried to catalogue the countless variants. Functionally, most weapons of a given size and general design are identical, but there are any number of armchair weapons fanatics who will argue endlessly about extremely minor differences in accuracy, damage, ease of handling, and so on. For game purposes, only a few broad types are necessary. Players fortunate enough to own a radium weapon should take the opportunity to create some distinguishing features for it, such as:

- How old is it?
- Was it used in any famous battles or owned by any legendary figures?
- Does it have any odd markings or accoutrements?
- What materials is it made of? Is the grip wood or metal? Are jewels or precious metals used in its construction?

Radium Pistol: The most common form of non-military radium pistol, there are hundreds of known models. All have in common the ability to fire single- or multi- shot bursts and a decent, if not spectacular, charge capacity. (ROF: S; Magazine: 10)

Radium Pistol, Holdout: A tiny weapon, very easily concealed. It is designed to drain the charging capsule rapidly, holding but three shots before it is expired – but those shots are surprisingly deadly. Originally, such weapons were the province of spies, but they have since become the favored weapons of courtiers in Baltan and ne'er-do-wells up and down the canals. (ROF: S; Magazine 3)

Radium Pistol, Double-Cell: This is a fairly common variant on the standard radium pistol. It is built to hold two charging capsules. Due to some problems of design inefficiency, this does not give it twice the shots of a standard pistol, but it does provide a larger magazine. (ROF: S; Magazine: 15)

Radium Pistol, Heavy: This sidearm stretches the definition of a 'pistol' considerably. As with the double-cell pistol, it requires two charge capsules, but it combines their energy to produce bolts of considerable power. Due to its size and weight, any user with a Strength of less than 10 will suffer a -2 modifier to Attack rolls when aiming at targets more than 30' distant unless they use both hands to steady the weapon. (ROF: S; Magazine: 10)

Radium Rifle: This is a military weapon, issued to top soldiers. It rarely goes to the frontline fighters in a battle, unless victory is deemed close at hand, but is usually reserved for defense – once an enemy has been weakened by fighting through irregular units and city militia, they will be cut to ribbons by the powerful energy beams of the radium rifle. (ROF: S; Magazine: 15)

Radium Gun, Mounted: The largest ‘man portable’ weapon in the standard Red Martian arsenal, this weapon cannot be fired while being carried, but must be set up. The swivel-mount allows fire in all directions, and the built in targeting gyroscopes improve the user’s aim (+1 to hit). (ROF: S; Magazine: 25)

Green Martian Heat Ray: On the very rare occasions that Grey Martians exist their tripods, they will carry with them a version of their lethal heat ray. While these weapons use radium for power, they process it in a very different way than the radium weapons of the Red Martians do. The heat ray is perhaps the most deadly hand weapon on Mars, and few are the beings who can survive even a single bolt from it. Non-Grey Martians who somehow acquire one must take an Exotic Weapon Proficiency in addition to Personal Firearms Proficiency to use it. (ROF: S or A; Magazine: 100)

Power Cells

Radium power cells are required to use any radium weapons – or, indeed, most advanced technology on Mars. They are valuable and rare, and cannot be recharged. A single cell can power a canal boat for a year or a gun for a few shots – most Martians will consider the latter use far more justifiable and will consider someone “wasting” a power cell on unnecessary combat to be a fool at best.

A typical power cell weighs 1 lb, is of Fine size, and has a purchase DC of 25. Those who have some legitimate use for radium weapons (guards, soldiers sent into a dangerous region, and so on), will normally be issued one, or at most two, such cells.)

VEHICLES

While Mars is somewhat smaller than Earth, it is nonetheless a big place for those who must wander it on foot or on beastback. Over the ages, many forms of mechanized transport have been developed to allow the Martians to traverse their planet rapidly. This section lists some of those still in use.

Information on the Airships of Mars can be found in their own chapter.

Powered Canal Boat, Small: This craft is typical of personal watercraft used by Martians to navigate canals within their home cities. A single radium cell will power it for 250 hours, often enough for six months or so of use by a typical city dweller.

Powered Canal Boat, Traders: This is a large craft used by merchants who roam up and down the canal network, buying goods and hauling them to distant cities. The merchant and his family typically lives on the boat, sleeping in whatever cramped quarters can be found amidst the variety of goods and cargoes typically piled on. Merchants of this sort normally deal in trinkets and gewgaws rather than bulk goods.

Sand Runner: Not all travel is by the canals. Many Martians need to travel across the deserts as well. The Sand Runner is a small, tracked vehicle which can handle itself on almost any terrain. The craft is very well balanced, and the driver gains a +4 on all checks to retain control of the vehicle after a failed maneuver.

Desert Sailer: A more primitive method of travelling across the desert, often used by the Red Martian nomads, the Desert sailer is a large wheeled vehicle -- as large as a Trader’s canal boat -- which is propelled across the desert sands by large sails.

Bulk Wagon: This craft is used to haul bulk goods from city to city. While the canals serve this purpose, it is sometimes better to take goods overland, either because the canal route is



Bulk wagons are slow moving craft, and contain sleeping quarters for the drivers.

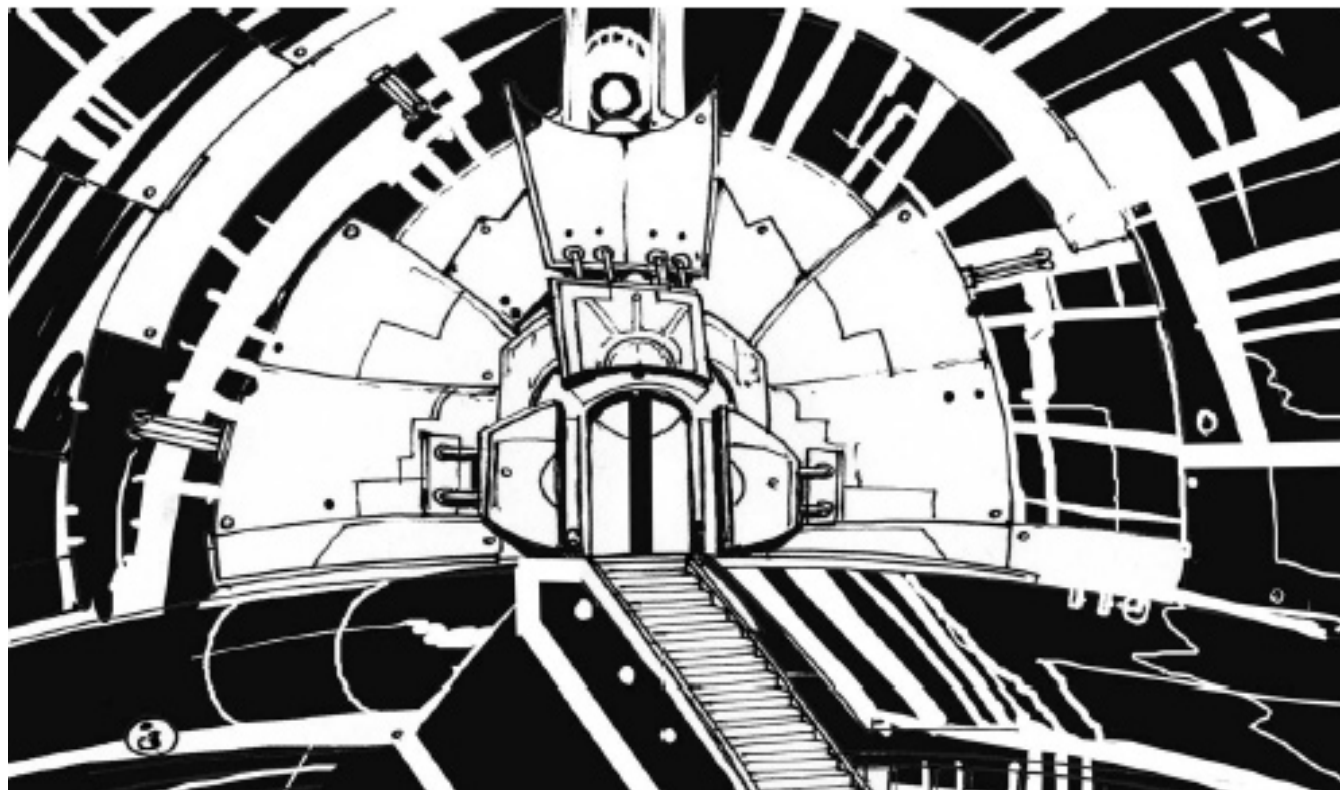
Tripod: This dreaded vehicle is used by the Grey Martians when they walk the surface world. It is a terrifying creation, capable of tremendous destruction and nearly impossible to destroy. It is not possible for anyone but the Grey Martians to pilot one. In the extremely unlikely event one is captured, anyone with the Spark of Genius feat can extract one Device Point per day from it, up to a total of 20 DPs.

Tripods are armed with a heavy heat ray, which can fire in any direction. See the weapons entry for more information regarding the heat ray's damage, range, etc.

While mounted within a Tripod, the heat ray can also be set to fire in a broad beam. This is a cone attack with a length of 100', doing 2d10 points of energy damage to all targets within the cone. A Reflex save (DC 23) may be made for half damage.

circuitous or because the goods themselves are not directly connected to the canals, such as metal from the mines. Bulk Wagons are often the target of Green Martian raiders, who do not usually need what is being hauled but who enjoy disrupting trade.

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hardness	Hit Points	Size	Restriction
Powered Canal Boat, Small	1	4	2000 lbs	-2	-2	80 (8)	8	6	32	H	
Powered Canal Boat, Traders	2	5	25,000 lbs	-3	-3	50 (5)	7	10	50	G	
Sandrunner	1	1	50 lbs	-1	+1	350 (35)	8	4	20	H	
Desert Sailer	2	12	2000lbs	-3	-3	50(5)	7	6	40	G	
Bulk Wagon	3	3	40 tons	-6	-6	40 (4)	6	12	75	C	
Tripod	3	0	2000 lbs	+2	+2	400 (40)	8	25	150	G	Grey Martian (20)



Once, the Red Martians controlled forces and powers almost too fanciful to believe – only the impact which they made upon the planet provides incontrovertible evidence of their existence. They built rays which could freeze the air, paralyze the nerves, or turn rock to vapor. There were servants of metal and crystal and wire to obey their every whim, and even the iron wall of time itself could be penetrated by their power. Then, over the course of millennia, this knowledge was lost, tossed aside in the desperate quest for sheer survival.

On Mars today, there are a handful of brilliant iconoclasts who seek to discover the old ways. Often joined by equally brilliant, and quite mad, visitors from Earth, they piece together bits of the old lore and fragments of forgotten machines to create new inventions of extraordinary power.

These rules cover the creation of esoteric devices, machines which go far beyond what any Craft skill can achieve. These tools and weapons stretch the bounds of physics and probability, to the point where they almost seem to defy logic and common sense. Use them at your peril!

CREATING DEVICES

Characters with levels in the Inventor Advanced Class or who have the Spark of Genius talent (see Smart Hero) have *Device Points*. These can be invested in a number of strange inventions. The maximum device points which can be invested and the maximum number of inventions which can exist at one time are given in the descriptions of the Inventor class and the Spark of Genius talent.

Inventions fall into the following categories:

- **Melee Weapon**
- **Ranged Weapon**
- **Armor**
- **Shield**
- **Tool**

Melee Weapons are handheld inventions which inflict damage, or negative effects, on a target by means of direct contact. Often, such weapons are modifications or enhancements to more common weapons and require no additional proficiency to use; sometimes, though, they are wholly new

creations. See “Special Proficiencies”, below. The default melee weapon is a one-handed martial weapon.

Ranged Weapons are handheld inventions which inflict damage or negative effects at range. Often, such weapons are modifications or enhancements to more common weapons and require no additional proficiency to use; sometimes, though, they are wholly new creations. See “Special Proficiencies”, below. The default ranged weapon is a rifle and has the following statistics:

Damage: 1d4
Critical: 20
Damage Type: Energy
Range Increment: 20ft.
Rate of Fire: 1
Magazine: 10
Size: Large
Weight: 10lbs.

Armor is any device or creation which provides damage reduction. Most armors are bulky and hindering, and can limit movement in many ways. One of the primary goals of scientists is to invent non-hindering armor which provides great protection at little cost. Some armors are enhancements of existing styles; these may be used by anyone with the correct feat. The default armor is a full-body suit with the following statistics:

Weight: 10 lbs.
Max Dex: +4
Dex Penalty: -4
BAB Cap: 10
DR: 1

Shields make an individual hard to hit by deflecting or warding off blows, but do not reduce damage if a blow connects. The default shield is the size of a medium shield.

Tools are any non-combat device, and range from flight-belts to telepathy helmets. They generally do not require a proficiency to use, except for those which provide exotic means of locomotion.

The default tool requires two hands to use effectively and is considered to be of Small size.

CONSTRUCTING DEVICES

In order to construct a device, a character must have time, tools, and equipment. As a general rule, a creator needs 1 day per device point invested in the device to complete construction. Any significant disturbance (such as combat) during that time negates the days work – the character is too flustered to focus on the device. In addition, the character must make a Wealth check at a DC of 15+Device Points in order to scrounge up the necessary materials, items, or assistants.

Sometimes, a device must be built *now* – or reasonably soon. To accomplish this, a creator can enter a mad frenzy, pushing himself almost to the edge of sanity in order to complete the work on time. In such a state, the device can be constructed in 1 hour per device point, but the creator must pay 100 XP * (device points squared) and take 1 point of Wisdom damage per device point. (Wisdom will not be reduced to less than 0). There is a 1% chance that there will be a permanent loss of 1 point of wisdom from this.

The normal Craft skills are not required for device creation; this is a form of creativity which is beyond standard workmanship. However, if there are too many strange gizmos floating around, the Game Master may wish to mandate that a character must have ranks in an appropriate Craft skill equal to 3+Device Points in order to manufacture the device. A Craft check should never be required, however.

DECONSTRUCTING DEVICES

A device ‘holds’ Device Points. At any time, a creator may carefully disassemble the device and regain the DPs – in this case, he is scavenging components and materials for reuse. This normally takes a full day, during which he may not be disturbed. If a device is destroyed, the creator may retrieve 1/2 the device points invested immediately, assuming there is *anything* left of the machine, and an addition 1 DP/day will be gained back as well.

A creator can never gain Device Points from dismantling another creator's work. A few moments of tinkering will show that the devices of his rival creator are deeply flawed works of an inferior and hidebound mind, with nothing of use to teach a truly free intellect and no materials worth salvaging as anything but scrap metal.

DEVICE PROPERTIES

Properties are what a device *does*. Properties may be either enhancements added to existing items or may form the basis of an entirely new item. No existing item may have more than 2 enhancements. An item created by an inventor may have a number of enhancements equal to his Intelligence modifier.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS:

Accurate: The weapon is well-balanced or finely made, making it easier to use in combat. A weapon may have no more than a +5 to accuracy. This is an enhancement bonus.

Damage Reduction: The device grants protection from damaging attacks. This is most often simply armor, but may (with certain modifiers) represent a force-field belt or even a treatment which hardens skin.

Defense: This armor grants a +1 to the users Parry bonus. Up to a maximum of +5 can be added.

Distortion: By cunning use of reflective patterns, holograms, or increasing reaction time,, this armor increases the wearer's dodge bonus. It may be increased by up to +5.

Draining: The device inflicts attribute damage, must like a poison (though it has no secondary damage). The base Fortitude save DC is 10+the creator's Int bonus, and the attack does 1d2 points of attribute damage. The save DC and the damage done may both be increased – see 'modifiers', below.

Energized: In addition to its normal damage, the weapon does an additional 1d6 points of electrical

damage. Normally, this may be applied only to melee weapons.

Enhancing: The device raises the attributes of the wearer. Examples include a 'Magneto-Neural Field Generator' which raises Intelligence or a 'Vitalizing Electro Belt' which can increase Strength.

Entangling: The device projects a sticky goo, or force cage, or other means of holding someone in place. If they fail a Reflex save with a DC of 10+the creator's Intelligence bonus, they will be *entangled* for 1d4 rounds.

Fatiguing: Anyone struck with the weapon must make a Fortitude save at a DC of 10+the creator's Int bonus or be fatigued for 2d4 rounds. The save DC and the time may both be increased – see 'modifiers', below.

Flexible: The armor is very lightweight, well-jointed, or otherwise easy to wear. Each Device Point invested in the ability increases the Max Dex and BAB Cap by 1 and reduces the Dex Penalty by 1.

Flight: This tool, usually in the form of a belt or jetpack or other Small device, allows the user to fly at twice their base movement with Poor skill. Both of these can be improved; see below.

Homing: The weapon can seek out a target, even if he is obscured in some way. Each level of this enhancement reduces cover by 1 step (i.e, nine tenths to three quarters), though it cannot affect someone behind full cover – the target must be at least partially visible. The device may 'be attuned to biometric signatures' or simply be a homing missile of some sort.

Invisibility: This ability, usually added to enhance armor or in the form of a hand-held tool, renders the user invisible, as per the second level Mage spell. The invisibility will normally last for 10 minutes/day, or until the subject attacks a target. Devices or armor with this power can be used multiple times in a day, provided the total time invisible does not exceed 10 minutes. Spending an additional Device Point will extend the period of

Property	Applied To	Type	Device Point Cost
Accurate	Melee, Ranged	Enhancement	1 per +1
Bleeding	Melee	Enhancement	2
Damage Reduction	Armor	Enhancement, Base	1 per point of DR
Damaging	Melee, Ranged	Base	1 for 1d4 damage
Defense	Shield	Enhancement, Base	1 per +1 to Parry Defense
Deflection	Shield	Enhancement, Base	2 per +1 to Defense
Distortion	Shield	Enhancement, Base	1 per +1 to Dodge Defense
Draining	Melee	Base, Enhancement	2 for 1d2 of attribute drain
Energized	Melee	Enhancement	2 per 1d6 of electrical damage
Enhancing	Tool	Base	2 per +2 attribute bonus
Entangling	Melee, Ranged	Base, Enhancement	2
Fatiguing	Melee	Enhancement, Base	1
Flexible	Armor	Enhancement	1
Flight	Tool	Base	See Below
Homing	Ranged	Enhancement	2 to reduce cover by 1 step
Invisibility	Armor, Tool	Enhancement, Base	3
Lethal	Melee, Ranged	Enhancement	2 per doubling of threat range
Nauseating	Melee	Enhancement, Base	1
Paralyzing	Melee	Enhancement, Base	3
Penetrating	Melee	Enhancement	1 per +2 to Armor Piercing
Phantom	Melee, Ranged	Enhancement	4 to ignore Damage Reduction
Powerful	Melee, Ranged	Enhancement	1 per +1
Shrinking	Melee, Tool	Base	2 per size category
Skill	Tool	Base	1 per +2 to skill check
Special Defense	Armor	Base, Enhancement	1 per 2 DR against specific damage type
Telekinetic	Tool	Base	3 for 5 points of Strength, +1 per additional 5 points
Terrifying	Melee	Enhancement, Base	1

invisibility by an additional 10 minutes.

Lethal: The weapon is wickedly sharp or sends particularly tight beams of energy, doubling its threat range. A modified weapon may take this enhancement only once; a scratch-built weapon may take it up to three times. (Giving it a threat range of 15-20)

Nauseating: Anyone struck with the weapon must make a Fortitude save at a DC of 10+the creator's Int bonus or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. The save DC and the time may both be increased – see 'modifiers', below.

Paralyzing: Anyone struck with the weapon must make a Fortitude save at a DC of 10+the creator's Int bonus or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC and the time may both be increased – see 'modifiers', below

Penetrating: The weapon is especially good at bypassing armor – it is unusually sharp, or perhaps its damage dealing properties extend beyond the physical in some way.

Phantom: The item or the energy it produces is somehow 'out of phase' with three-dimensional reality or otherwise can ignore Damage Reduction completely. This may be an 'etheric beam' which flickers in and out of time, or a 'phase blade' which 'vibrates at right angles to reality' or some other such wonderful bit of pseudoscience. A suitably flavorful description must be provided.

Powerful: The weapon has a keen edge or a superior power cell, increasing its damage. A weapon may not have more than a +5 damage bonus. This is an enhancement bonus.

Skill: This is a very broad category, and the exact details of the device and how it works must be discussed with the Game Master. Devices with this property grant an Equipment bonus to skill checks. For example, 'Gravity Gloves' could add to a Climb check, while a 'spectrum analyzer' could add to a Craft (Chemistry) check. "Data Libraries" can add to Knowledge checks, or a "Harmonic Generator" could add to Diplomacy checks. By default, any skill-enhancing device is

a Small piece of equipment which requires two hands to operate (unless doing so would make the device useless, i.e, something which aids Climb or Balance must logically leave the hands free.)

Special Defense: The armor is exceptionally good at resisting one type of damage – Piercing, Slashing, Crushing, or Energy. Each Device Point invested in this ability grants 2 DR against that type of damage.

Telekinetic: The device can manipulate objects at range – this might represent a magnetic beam or a 'force grapple'. This cannot be used to do damage directly, though it can be used to drop objects on people, push buttons, and so on. Attempting to grab a person requires a grapple check, using the Strength modifier of the device, not of the character; attempting to remove a weapon requires a disarm check, likewise using the Strength modifier of the device.

Terrifying: Anyone struck with the weapon must make a Will save at a DC of 10+the creator's Int bonus or be panicked for 1d4 rounds. The save DC and the time may both be increased – see 'modifiers', below.

PROPERTY MODIFIERS:

Inventors are frenetic tinkerers, and often transcend the basic limits of their devices. Almost any of the basic functions of a device can be enhanced for some additional Device Points.

Increased Damage: The base damage of any weapon is 1d4, which is not all that spectacular. By dint of a little work, though, that can be greatly increased. Likewise, devices which Drain attributes can be modified to be far more enervating.

Device Points	Weapon Damage	Drain Damage
2	1d6	1d4
3	1d8 or 2d4	1d6
4	1d10	1d8 or 2d4
5	1d12 or 2d6	1d10
6	2d8	1d12 or 2d6
7	2d10	2d8

Increased Range: For 1 Device Point, the range increment can be increased by 10', up to a maximum of 50' over the original range increment.

Increased Save DC: For 1 device point, the save DC of any effect which offers one can be increased by 2.

Increased Time: Most effects last 1d4 rounds. An additional 1d4 rounds can be added for 1 device point. For an additional 2 device points, the duration of the effect will be 1d4 minutes; for three, it will be 1d4 hours.

Innocuous: For 2 Device Points, the device does not resemble a normal device of its type. For example, a pistol may look like an arm bracer and

be fired by pressing a gemstone, or a device to aid in balance may look like a simple cape. The size of the item is not made smaller by this, but it may be made up to one size category larger.

Magazine: For 1 Device Point, the magazine capacity is increased by 2. This can be taken multiple times. When enhancing an existing piece of equipment, the total magazine size cannot be increased by more than 50%.

Ranged: Many effects, such as paralysis, work only as melee attacks. For an additional 3 Device Points, they can be placed in a ranged weapon, either as a base effect or an enhancement to an existing weapon. Thus, for 6 Device Points, an inventor can create a Paralysis Rifle with the default stats for a range weapon as noted above.

Rate of Fire: A ranged weapon can be made semi-automatic for 2 Device Points.

Size: A ranged weapon, melee weapon, or tool can be decreased by 1 size category for 1 device point or 2 size categories for 3 points.

Touch: Any device which does no hit point damage can be made to work via a touch attack for 2 Device Points.

SAMPLE DEVICES

Enhanced Radium Pistol: Beginning with a typical radium pistol (see equipment) an inventor modifies it with Powerful +2 and Accurate +1. This costs 3 Device Points.

Mechano-Probe: The scholar Julall Carr spent a great deal of time staring frustratedly at locked vaults, until he concocted this. A handheld machine covered with many-jointed mechanical tendrils, it can probe at locking mechanisms with tiny tools, while an inbuilt calculating engine analyzes the results and determines the best way to pick the lock. It is thus a Skill device granting a +6 bonus to Disable Device checks, for 3 Device Points.

Neural Negation Beamer: A unique weapon crafted by Volash Jaal, a sadistic scientist who liked to capture victims alive for vivisection purposes. It has the Paralyzing effect (3 Device Points), Ranged (3 Device Points), and has a +4 to the save DC (2 Device Points), for a total of 8 points.

Radium Absorption Field: This device appears to be nothing more than a fancy belt, but it projects a field which greatly weakens the bolts from radium guns. This is the Special Defense ability (+6 DR against Energy, 3 points), with Flexible (Dex penalty +0, BAB Cap +14, Max Dex +8) (4 Device Points) and Innocuous (2 device points) for a total of 9 Device Points.

SPECIAL PROFICIENCIES

A given creator is always proficient with any weapons or armor he creates.. Further, any devices he makes which merely modify existing weapons or armor can be used by anyone with the appropriate proficiency. However, wholly new weapons and armor require the following feat:

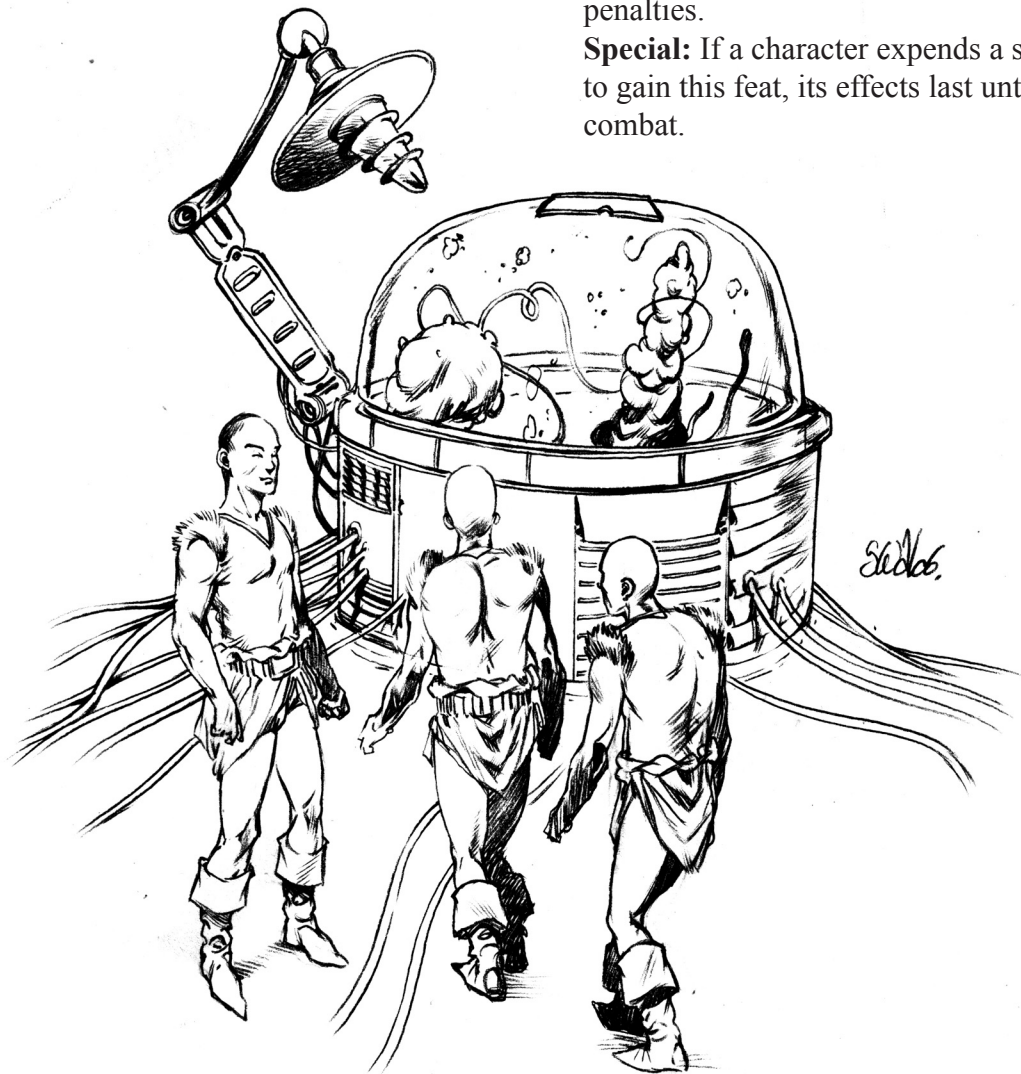
CREATIONS OF (CREATOR'S NAME) PROFICIENCY

You can use the devices made by (Creator's Name).

Benefit: Due to your association with a given inventor or time spent working with his devices, you are capable of using them without difficulty.

Normal: Anyone without this feat who attempts to use (Creator's Name)'s devices is considered non-proficient, with all appropriate penalties.

Special: If a character expends a stunt point to gain this feat, its effects last until the end of combat.



OTHER FX

Magic and psionics are optional in **MARS**. Each can be made to fit into the setting with a little work, but can also serve to undermine the unique ‘feel’ of the world. Game Masters should think carefully about allowing these FX in, and even more carefully about allowing Player Characters access to them. The pulp inspirations of **MARS** often featured strange powers of the mind, or ancient and arcane secrets from beyond time, but they were wielded by the *enemies* of the heroes – the heroes showed their superiority by triumphing over such outré forces with skill, cunning, and might, not by simply being better at wielding them than their enemies.

PSIONICS

Psionic powers fit better with the **MARS** milieu than magical abilities do, and may be permitted to player characters with Game Master approval. All of the races of Mars may manifest such powers and have distinct attitudes towards them.

Red Martians have a longstanding hatred/fear of ‘mind witches’, dating to a period in the distant past when a group of psionically gifted Red Men attempted to carve out a massive empire by means of their psionic might. The resulting way destroyed most of the psionically gifted Red Martians, and over the ensuing ages, those who openly flaunted their abilities were likewise killed. Psionics are thus very rare among the canal dwellers, and there is still tremendous prejudice. The more ‘sophisticated’ kingdoms, such as Callor, will likely not kill a telepath or a wild talent outright as a matter of government policy, but specific individuals dwelling within the kingdom might decide to enact some ‘street justice’. There are persistent rumors that the nobility of Baltan includes many mind-readers among their number.

The nomadic Red Martians have adapted a more pragmatic attitude; if a psionic is born to them, it is considered both a curse and a blessing, and the individual is both revered and feared, leading to him living a lonely, isolated, existence. He is expected to use his powers to aid his clan, but he is otherwise barred from most clan activities.

His spouse and children disown him, he has no say in clan decisions, and so on, but he is also given whatever luxuries the clan can manage to acquire, the finest foods gathered, etc. Many find the mixture of worship and revulsion to be both confusing and depressing, and flee their clan in a desperate search for those who will be more tolerant.

Green Martians are grimly practical. If an ability or gift helps you kill more, fight better, or keep a good mate, it should be used. They are also superstitious, and a physically weak Green Martian who can manifest strange powers might well rise to a shamanic position, using his abilities to bully other, physically stronger, members of his tribe into providing him with food and mates. (Of course, there is no law which mandates psionic and physical might are mutually exclusive, and a Green Martian warrior who can use *concussion* or *greater bioweapon* on his foes will certainly attain high status in the tribe.

White Apes consider psionic individuals to be the property of the Empire and will draft any such into Imperial Service. Those who defy this order or who fail to serve well will be sent to the battle-pits. Those who manage to survive the rough training and sometimes brutal treatment at the hands of jealous or frightened co-conscripts will find that they have many opportunities. Once their position in the Ape Legions is secured, they can use their powers to advance themselves as far as their cunning and courage will take them, even to the throne of the Emperor himself.

Grey Martians only rarely produce the psionically gifted, but those with such powers are lauded. All Grays have a touch of telepathy, part of their racial heritage, and those who can transcend this basic ability with greater skills will quickly take on leadership positions. Player characters who venture into the grim and lightless depths of the Grey Martians will find that the ancient rulers of the shadow cities can see into their very thoughts and tear their souls apart with a whim. Sometimes, these powerful beings will enter into their walking machines and venture to the surface, their three-legged shells designed to allow their powers to work unhindered.

Synthe-men do not have psionic abilities, ever. Attempts to create a synthetic mind which could wield mental powers always ended in tragic failure.

Gamemasters wishing to include Psionics in their **MARS** campaigns can use any of the dozens of varying Psionic systems available for the d20 rules system, all of which are equally compatible with the rules presented in **MARS**.

MAGIC

Magic is even less fitting for a **MARS** campaign than psionics are. Within the 'official' setting, the only possible role for magic is as follows:

It is known that the Grey Martians are ancient almost beyond reckoning, that they walked among the stars when the rest of the Solar System was home to nothing more than squirming worms. During their sojourns, it is whispered, they encountered things even older and more terrible than themselves, and it was such encounters which drove them back to their own small, red, world and then deep underground. Some among the Greys, however, reacted with something other than fear. They sought to placate and then worship these dread elder beings, and from this act, they gained mastery of ancient and terrible powers.

These Grey Martian servants of Darkness may take levels in the Acolyte class from *D20 Modern*, or the Cleric class if using core D20 rules. Further, some of them have managed to infiltrate and subvert Red Martian cultures, creating secretive cults which also worship and draw power from the ancient and forgotten gods of the void. Such cults often seek sacrifices, and, following inscrutable and complex rituals, will seek out specific individuals who appear to meet the requirements of their monstrous overlords.

If this style of magic is added to the campaign, it is recommended that the casters specialize in spells of pain, destruction, fear, and darkness. In addition to the spells in the core D20 rules, there are many spells in supplementary works which will fit the mood well. Magic in **MARS**, if it is

admitted, should not be a comfortable, mechanical thing, but a tampering with the fundamental laws of the universe in a way that is intrinsically alien and horrifying. Those who worship the unnamed eldritch powers which exist outside of our mere four dimensions are touching something which was long ago rightfully exiled from Creation.

Such a campaign may come to resemble a Martian version of a certain popular pulp horror game, and the D20 version of that game may provide, with some slight conversion effort, a variety of monsters which can be added in to the game. Ancient ruined cities, mysterious technology, forbidden knowledge, and dark cults can all be found in various places on Mars.



Mars is a brutal, bloody, place, where life and death are determined by the flash of a blade or the searing flame of a radium pistol. From the terrifying charge of a band of green Martian raiders against a helpless city, to a desperate struggle in a burning sky corsair as it plummets groundward to a duel of blades on the walkways above the canals of Avak Callor, the world of **MARS** is one where battle and struggle are everywhere.

Combat in **MARS** uses the same familiar core rules as any other d20 game, but this section includes modifiers to make the system better reflect high action and adventure, as well as the “loincloth and jewelry” armor styles favored by the protagonists of the source stories. Mars is not a place of clanking humanoid tanks lumbering sluggishly into battle, but of swift movement, vaulting leaps, and naked savagery.

HOW COMBAT WORKS

Combat is cyclical; everybody acts in turn in a regular cycle of rounds. Combat follows this sequence:

- Each combatant starts out flat-footed. Once a combatant acts, he or she is no longer flat-footed.
- Determine which characters are aware of their opponents at the start of the battle. If some but not all of the combatants are aware of their opponents, a surprise round happens before regular rounds of combat begin. The combatants who are aware of the opponents can act in the surprise round, so they roll for Initiative. In initiative order (highest to lowest), combatants who started the battle aware of their opponents each take one action (either a standard action or

a move action) during the surprise round. Combatants who were unaware do not get to act during the surprise round. If no one or everyone starts the battle aware, there is no surprise round.

- Combatants who have not yet rolled initiative do so. All combatants are now ready to begin the first round of combat.
- Combatants act in initiative order (highest to lowest).
- When everyone has had a turn, the combatant with the highest initiative acts again, and the turns repeat until combat ends.

INITIATIVE

On Mars, the fast survive. Anyone who has managed to reach a high level will have become so used to combat that they are more likely to get in the first strike. For this reason, the initiative modifier is determined as follows:

Initiative Check = 1d20 + Reflex save modifier + Dexterity modifier + any relevant feats or other bonuses (Improved Initiative etc.)

DEFENSE VALUE

Characters in **MARS** have a Defense Value which indicates how hard they are to hit. Unlike most d20 games, this value can change from round to round based on the character's chosen combat style – dodging or parrying. In addition, note that armor is *not* added to this value; armor on Mars acts to absorb damage, not deflect it, and it actually increases ones chances of being struck.

Defense Value = 10 + size modifier + either Parry Bonus or Dodge Bonus

Each character must declare whether he is dodging or parrying his enemies. Changing between the two modes of defense is a free action and can be done every time the character is attacked if desired, but must be done before the

opponent makes his attack roll. The Dodging and Parrying sections, below, explain how to calculate Parry Bonus and Dodge Bonus.

A character will lose his Dodge Bonuses or Parry Bonuses to his Defense Value as normal when caught flat-footed or when he is clinging for life on the edge of a mile-high cliff-top. Other modifiers to Dodge and Parry can come from feats, class abilities, or circumstantial modifiers as determined by the Gamemaster.

PARRY OR DODGE?

In **MARS**, every character must decide in combat whether to defend by a Dodge or a Parry. Most characters will have a preferred method of defense, and it is often easiest to assume that said preferred method is in use unless the player specifies otherwise.

It should be noted that the terms 'parry' and 'dodge' are inevitably abstractions. A character who is dodging is more likely to make use of his knowledge of his enemy's reach to stay just out of distance, rather than simply hurling himself to one side. Likewise, though the word 'parry' is used because it is a familiar one, Martian dualists would be more familiar with the idea of 'setting aside' an enemy's weapon – deflecting an attack so as to ensure it just misses, while setting oneself up to deliver a counterattack. Inevitably, the lines between parrying and dodging blur, too, and many techniques will use a little of both.

Thus declaring that one is parrying or dodging is more a reflection of combat style – either fluid and footwork-based, or aggressive and steadfast respectively – than a precise description of one's actions. It can certainly be used as a good basis for such a description, however.

DODGING

A character's Dodge Bonus is calculated by adding together his base Dodge Bonus (derived from his character class), Dexterity bonus, and any other dodge bonuses, such as from the Dodge feat.

A dodging character needs at least one adjacent square either unoccupied, or occupied by friendly creatures, to be able to dodge effectively. He need not necessarily move into the space as part of his dodge, but he does need a certain amount of room to move around in. If he does not have at least one adjacent unoccupied or friendly square, he has a -2 penalty to his Defense Value.

Defense Value when Dodging = 10 + size modifier + Dodge Bonus

PARRYING

A character's Parry Bonus is calculated by adding together his Base Parry Bonus (derived from his character class), Strength bonus, and any other parry bonuses, such as from the Parry feat.

It is not generally possible to parry a ranged weapon attack.

Defense Value when Parrying = 10 + size modifier + Parry Bonus

TOUCH ATTACKS & FLAT-FOOTED DEFENSE VALUES

It is not necessary to calculate separate Defense Values for use against touch attacks or when caught flat-footed. Touch attacks can only be dodged, rather than parried, as a touch which connects with a weapon or shield will deliver the attack. Thus a character's dodge Defense Value is always used against a touch attack.

When characters are caught flat-footed, they lose all dodge and parry bonuses, so their Defense Value will always be the base of 10, assuming their size is Medium. This increases the value of Improved Initiative – whoever strikes the first blow may also be striking the last.

TOTAL DEFENSE

A combatant taking a total defense action does not attack or perform any other activity other than moving at base speed, but he gets a +4 dodge bonus and +4 parry bonus to DV for 1 round. Note that as usual only either the parry bonus or dodge bonus will apply to DV at any one time, depending on whether the combatant is parrying or dodging -- but the character has the option to do either. The combatant's DV improves at the start of this action, so it helps against any attacks of opportunity provoked while moving.

FIGHTING DEFENSIVELY

A combatant can choose to fight defensively when taking the attack action or full attack action. If a combatant does so, the combatant takes a -4 penalty on all attacks in a round to gain a +2 dodge bonus *or* a +2 parry bonus to DV for the same round. Unlike the total defense action, he may not gain both bonuses, so if he has elected to take the parry bonus and finds it necessary to dodge ranged attacks he gains no bonus to do so.

SIZE MODIFIERS TO DEFENSE

Size	Modifier
Colossal	-8
Gargantuan	-4
Huge	-2
Large	-1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

ATTACKS

An attack roll represents your attempt to strike your opponent on your turn in the round. When you make an attack roll, you roll a d20 and add your attack bonus (Other modifiers may also apply to this roll). If your result equals or beats the target's Defense Value, you hit. After hitting your opponent, you then determine whether you have penetrated their armor. If you manage to penetrate, you then deal damage.

Automatic Misses and Hits: A natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1) on an attack roll is always a miss, regardless of modifiers. A natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20) is always a hit, regardless of modifiers. In addition, a natural 20 is also a threat -- a possible critical hit.

Your attack rolls are figured as follows:

Melee Attack rolls = 1d20 + base attack bonus + Strength modifier + size modifier.

Ranged Attack rolls = 1d20 + base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + size modifier + range penalty.

ATTACK ROLL MODIFIERS

The following are examples of modifiers to your attack roll. Additional modifiers may come from feats, class abilities, or circumstantial modifiers as determined by the GM.

Strength Modifier

Strength helps a character swing a weapon harder and faster, so a character's Strength modifier applies to melee attack rolls.

Dexterity Modifier

Dexterity helps a character use a weapon with more precision and finesse, so a character's Dexterity modifier applies to ranged attack rolls. Some characters may prefer to use their Dexterity modifiers in melee combat, rather than their Strength modifiers. The procedure for this is explained in the Finesse section (see p. 178).

Range Penalty

The range penalty for a ranged weapon depends on what weapon the character is using and how far away the target is. All ranged weapons and thrown weapons have a range increment (see the weapons list). Any attack from a distance of less than one range increment is not penalized for range. However, each full range increment causes a cumulative -2 penalty on the attack roll. A thrown weapon has a maximum range of five range increments. Ranged weapons that fire projectiles can shoot up to ten increments.

CRITICAL HITS

When a character makes an attack roll and gets a natural 20 (the d20 shows 20), the character hits regardless of the target's Defense, and the character has scored a threat of a critical hit.

To find out if it is actually a critical hit, the character immediately makes another attack roll with all the same modifiers as the attack roll that scored the threat. If the second roll also results in a hit against the target's Defense, the attack is a critical hit. (The second roll just needs to hit to confirm a critical hit; the character doesn't need to roll a second 20.) If the second roll is a miss, then the attack just deals the damage of a regular hit.

A critical hit multiplies the character's damage. Unless otherwise specified, the multiplier is x2. (It is possible for some weapons to have higher multipliers, doing more damage on a critical hit.) Some weapons have expanded threat ranges, making a critical hit more likely.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

A character who can make more than one attack per round must use the full attack action (see Full-round actions) in order to get more than one attack.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

If a combatant wields a second weapon in the off hand, that combatant can get one extra attack per round with that weapon when he takes a full attack action.

Fighting in this way is very hard, however, and a combatant suffers a -6 penalty to both his main weapon and his off-hand weapon attack rolls.

A combatant can reduce these stiff penalties in two ways:

- If at least one of a combatant's weapons is light, the penalty is reduced to -2. (An unarmed strike is always considered light.)
- The Two-Weapon Combat Proficiency feat reduces the penalties associated with two-weapon fighting by 2. Thus a character with this feat has only a -4 penalty to both attacks if using two one-handed weapons, or no penalty at all if at least one of his weapons is light.
- Characters with the Sword And Blaster Feat may use a pistol-sized energy weapon as their primary weapon if their off-hand weapon is light, or as a light off-hand weapon. See the feats "Sword and Blaster" and "Improved Sword and Blaster" for more details.

For example, a 7th level Fast Hero with Base Attack Bonus of +7/+2 and the Two-Weapon Combat Proficiency feat could make two attacks with his primary weapon, at +7 and +2 respectively. Alternatively, he could make two attacks with his primary weapon at +3 and -2, and one attack with a light secondary weapon at +3. Or, he could make two attacks with his primary weapon at +7/+2, and one attack with a light secondary weapon also at +7.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

Even the best warrior fears being attacked by multiple foes, provided they are at all well-trained. As well as the potential reduction in Defense Value for a character who is crowded in on all sides (see the Parry and Dodge sections, p. 175), there is always a danger that halfway competent foes will attack in concert, making it hard to defend against them all at once.

“Skill” is a relative term. In **MARS**, a “skilled

opponent” is one whose Base Attack Bonus is no more than 3 less than the character they are attacking. Thus, if a character has a BAB of +7, a “skilled opponent” is one whose BAB is +4 or higher.

During each round of combat, if several skilled opponents use melee weapons to attack one enemy in the same round, each of the attackers after the first to attack gains a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus on his attack rolls. These bonuses only ever apply to melee attacks, and only to skilled opponents.

Note that these bonuses are additional to flanking bonuses if applicable. Class features or feats that make characters immune to being flanked do not affect the cumulative +1 circumstance bonus for multiple skilled opponents. (However, see the “Fully Aware” Feat)

For example: Valnosh is a moderately skilled character with a Defense Value of 18 when dodging and a BAB of +5. He is attacked by ten minions who each have a BAB of +3, armed with rapiers and attempting to assassinate him. In the first round, only five of them will reach him to attack – if they survive that long. They each have a +3 base attack bonus and attack once per round.

In the first round, the first attacker rolls d20+3 for his attack, the second d20 +4, the third d20 +5, the fourth d20 +6 and the fifth d20 +7. Valnosh had previously readied his war sword, slaying one of his enemies before the latter had a chance to attack and another two of his foes on his own action, before sidestepping to get his back to the wall.

On the second round, though all his enemies are now close to him only five of them will be able to attack him again, since the wall prevents any more than that from hitting him at once. This time however Valnosh's Defense Value has a -4 circumstance penalty, as he does not have room to properly maneuver. Despite being of higher level than his opponents, he is hit three times this round, but manages to slay another two enemies.

On round 3 he is in the same circumstances, since the remaining two foes close up the gaps, but at least this time he knows that if he can kill one of them he will be able to move away once more and avoid such a severe penalty to DV once he does.

If the attackers had a BAB of +1, they would gain no bonus to hit Valnosh, though he would still suffer a -4 penalty if they surrounded him, due to his lack of maneuverability.

FIGHTING ON THE RUN

When using the attack action with a melee weapon, any character can move both before and after the attack, provided that the character's total distance moved is not greater than the character's speed. Moving in this way provokes attacks of opportunity as normal, however.

MOVEMENT & POSITION

When using a grid to represent character's movement, the standard scale equates 1 inch (or a 1 inch square) to 5 feet in the game world.

- One inch (or one square) = 5 feet
- "Next to" or "adjacent" = 1 inch (5 feet) away (or in adjacent square)
- 30mm figure = A human-size creature
- A human-size creature occupies an area 1 inch (5 feet) across (or one square)
- One round = 6 seconds

Tactical Movement

Where can a character move, how long it takes to get there, and whether he or she is vulnerable to attacks of opportunity while moving are key questions in combat.

How Far Can a Character Move?

Characters in **MARS** have a base speed, which is based on their race. For example, Red Martians and White Apes have a base speed of 30 ft, and Green Martians have a base speed of 40ft.

Movement in Combat

Generally, a character can move his or her speed as a move action. If a character uses his or her attack action as a move action, the character can move again (for a total movement of up to twice the character's normal speed). If the character spends the entire round to run all out, he or she can move up to four times his or her normal speed. If a character does something that requires a full round, he or she can only take a 5-foot step.

Movement in Darkness

If a character moves when he or she can't see, such as in total darkness, his or her speed is limited to one-half normal. The Blind-Fight feat reduces this penalty.

Passing Through

Sometimes a character can pass through an area occupied by another character or creature.

Friendly Character: A character can move through a square occupied by a friendly character.

Unfriendly Character: There are two ways to move through a square occupied by a resisting enemy. The character can attempt an overrun. Or the character can attempt to tumble through a square occupied by an enemy (if the character has ranks in the Tumble skill; see the skill description).

A character can move through a square occupied by an unfriendly character who doesn't resist as if the character was friendly.

Flanking

If a character is making a melee attack against an opponent, and an ally directly opposite the character is threatening the opponent, the character and his or her ally flank the opponent. The character gains a +2 bonus on his or her attack roll. The ally must be on the other side of the opponent so that the opponent is directly between the character and the ally.

A character doesn't gain a bonus for flanking when making a ranged attack.

Provoking an Attack of Opportunity

Two actions can provoke attacks of opportunity: moving out of a threatened square, and performing an action within a threatened square that distracts from defending and lets the character's guard down.

- *Moving out of a Threatened Square:*

When a character moves out of a threatened square, that character generally provokes an attack of opportunity. There are two important exceptions, however. A character doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity if all he or she moves is a 5-foot step, or if the character withdraws.

If the character doesn't start in a threatened square, but moves into one, the character has to stop there, or else he or she provokes an attack of opportunity as he or she leaves that square.

300/06 • *Performing an Action that Distracts the Character:* Some actions, when performed in a threatened square, provoke attacks of opportunity because they make a character divert his or her attention from the fight at hand. Using a ranged weapon, in particular, provokes attacks of opportunity. The Combat Actions table notes many additional actions that provoke attacks of opportunity.

Making an Attack of Opportunity

An attack of opportunity is a single melee attack, and a character can only make one per round. A character does not have to make an attack of opportunity if he or she doesn't want to.

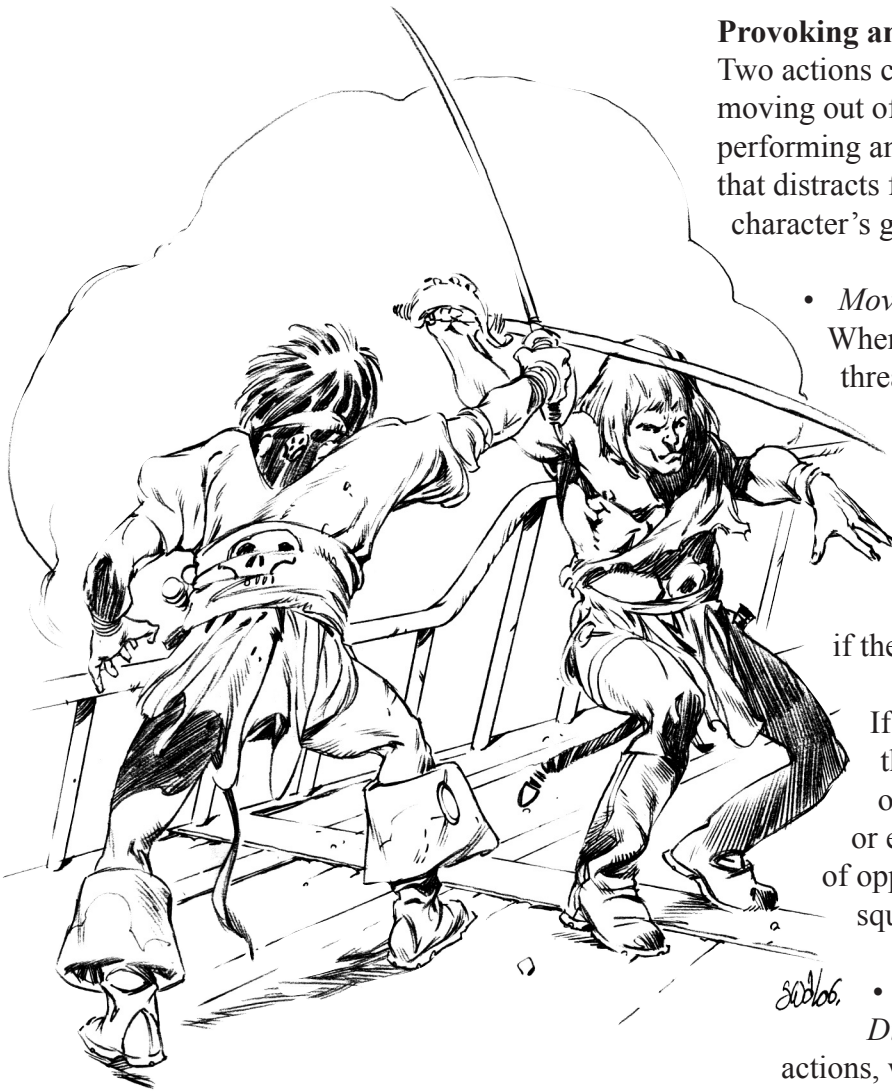
An experienced character gets additional regular melee attacks (by using the full attack action), but at a lower attack bonus. A character makes his or her attack of opportunity, however, at his or her normal attack bonus—even if the character has already attacked in this round.

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Sometimes, due to distraction or taking an action that draws away from their defense, a combatant in a melee lets his or her guard down, and doesn't maintain a defensive posture as usual. In this case, combatants near him or her can take advantage of this lapse in defense to attack for free. These attacks are called attacks of opportunity.

Threatened Squares

A character threatens the squares into which he or she can make a melee attack, even when it is not the character's action. Generally, that's all squares adjacent to the character's position. An enemy that takes certain actions while in a threatened square provokes an attack of opportunity from the character. A character can only make attacks of opportunity with melee weapons, never with ranged weapons.



ZONES OF CONTROL

“You shall not pass!”

One important aspect of combat in **MARS** is controlling the flow of combatants. It is simply wrong for a heroic character to stand idly by while a minion or flunky rushes past him, merely because he has used up all of his attacks of opportunity for the round! The lone hero holding off an onrushing horde is an important part of the genre, as is the hulking thug who hold back the hero while the villain makes good his mad dash to the waiting airship, the unconscious princess clutched in his fiendish arms!

These rules allow for that sort of action.

A character may declare he is Guarding a region. Such a declaration is a free action, but it must be made before any other actions are taken. Once a region is being Guarded, the following rules apply:

The Guarding character may choose to fight defensively or engage in all-out defense only.

The Guarding character may not make more than a 5' step during a round. He may do this only to place someone within his threatened area. He

can, however, make this move during another character's movement, if that character is within 5' of the guarding character's threatened area.

Any time a hostile character enters a square the guarding character threatens, the guarding character may attempt to Intercept him. This is resolved as a contest of Strength or Dexterity, at the Guarding character's choice. If the Guarding character wins, the character attempting to enter the threatened square is returned to the original square and can no longer move, though he may attack if he still has a standard action for the round.

If a character must pass through more than one threatened square, the process is repeated, provided the Guarding character has not used up all of his interceptions for a turn.

A Guarding character may choose not to intercept a specific foe. (i.e, he allows a minor enemy to pass in order to hold the line against a greater threat).

A character who Tumbles through guarded squares does so normally.

A Guarding character can Intercept up to his Dexterity bonus times per round.



ARMOR

Instead of making a character harder to hit, armor in **MARS** absorbs and deflects incoming damage, granting a great deal of protection. However, many weapons, such as the axes of the Green Martians or a radium pistol, are exceptionally powerful and are fully capable of piercing through all but the strongest of protection. Every type of armor in the game, from the silkweave of the canal dwellers to the ceremonial war armor of the Callor Guard, has a Damage Reduction score.

A silkweave vest, for example, has Damage Reduction 1.

DAMAGE REDUCTION

Whenever a character is hit in combat, whether from a melee or ranged weapon, the Damage Reduction (DR) score of any armor he is wearing at the time is deducted from the damage rolled by the weapon.

For example, Gruchag the White Ape Soldier is wearing legionnaire's armor, which grants a DR of 6. He is struck by a Green Martian using a draggar bone club for 12 points of damage. Gruchag takes only 6 points. (He is fortunate that he was struck by a very weak Green Martian with a Strength modifier of only +2. If the Green Martian had a Strength modifier of +3 or more, the total Armor Piercing of the weapon would be 6, which would have halved Gruchag's DR to 3, so he would suffer 9 points of damage – see below.)

ARMOR PIERCING

Powerful weapons have the capability of penetrating through many types of armor in **MARS**, tearing through cloth or smashing through metal. Every type of weapon has an Armor Piercing (AP) score. The character wielding the weapon adds his Strength modifier to this AP score, if he is also able to add his Strength modifier or some multiple of it to his damage roll with the weapon.

Finesse fighters use a different system for attacking armored characters – see the section on Finesse, starting on the next page.

If a character is struck by a weapon whose total Armor Piercing score equals or exceeds the Damage Reduction score of his armor, then the Damage Reduction provided by the armor is halved (rounded down) for purposes of that blow.

If a weapon is listed as having an AP score of 0, it will be fully affected by all Damage Reduction scores. Furthermore, a weapon with an AP of 0 does not benefit from any Strength modifier to its Armor Piercing score – it is simply incapable of completely bypassing armor, however hard you swing it.

MULTIPLE SHOTS AND CRITICAL HITS

If a character is hit several times in a single round from the same weapon, because his enemy can attack more than once, any damage deducted by a suit of armor's Damage Reduction score will apply to each attack.

However, if a critical hit is scored and damage multiplied as a result, any Damage Reduction granted by the armor will apply only once to the total damage rolled. As a rule of thumb, any possible Damage Reduction will apply once to each attack roll made against a target.

It should be noted that all rules concerning Defense Values and Damage Reduction apply equally to monsters and animals.

FINESSE

Certain melee weapons are as well suited to finesse as to brute force. These include all light weapons, and several one-handed or two-handed piercing weapons. These weapons are known as finesse weapons.

Any character who is armed with a finesse weapon and who has the Weapon Finesse feat may use his Dexterity modifier instead of his Strength modifier on attack weapon. A character who known as a finesse fighter.

Note that it is possible for a character to alter his combat technique during a combat, switching from using his Dexterity modifier to using his Strength modifier. Most characters will prefer to use one or the other technique more or less

continuously, but a player may if desired declare which technique he will use at the beginning of each combat round.

Ranged weapons may never be used with finesse combat, as they already rely on Dexterity rather than Strength.

Finesse and Armor

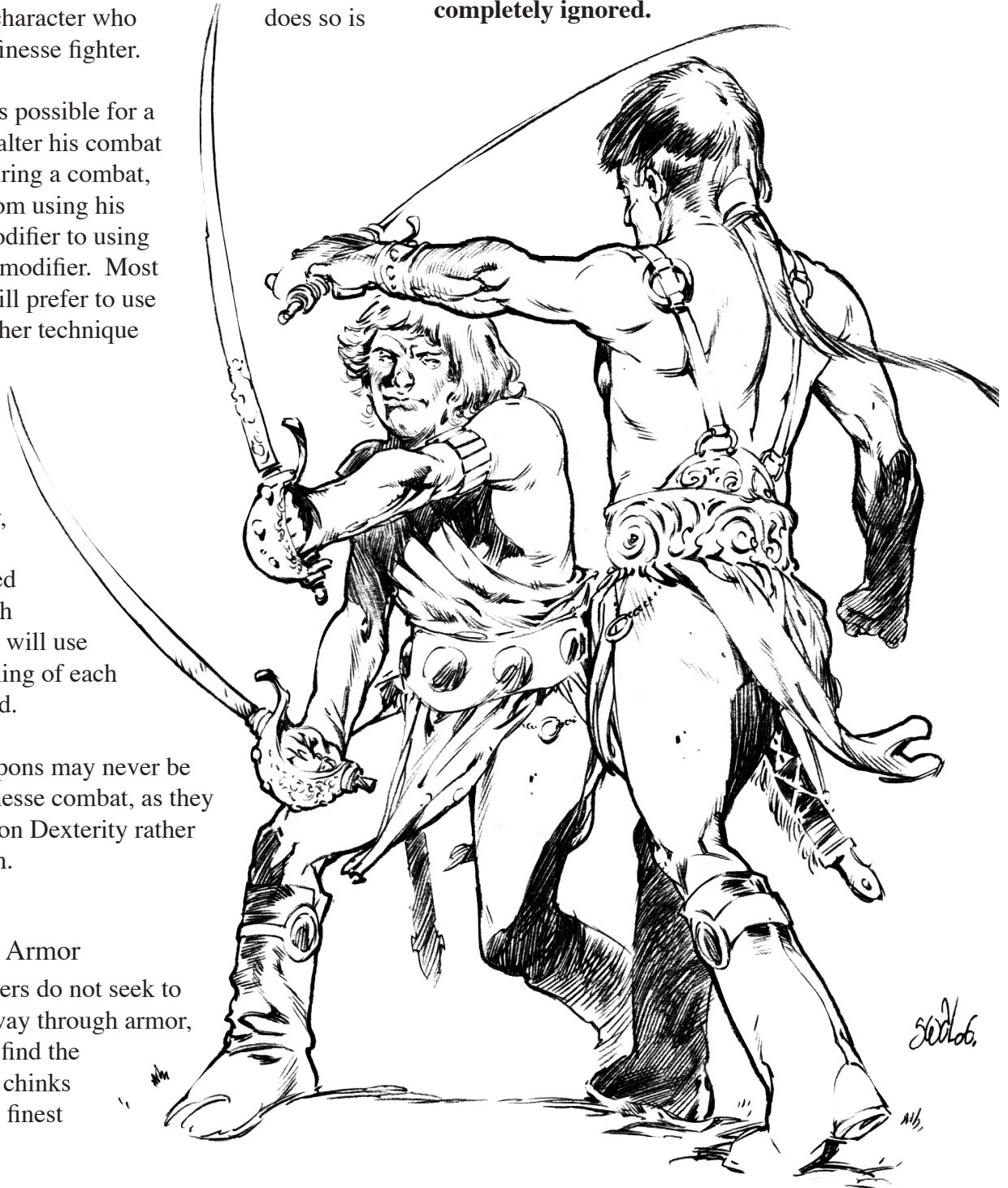
Finesse fighters do not seek to batter their way through armor, but rather to find the crevices and chinks that even the finest

armor must have. For example, a finesse fighter might strike between two sections of ceremonial plate armor, thrusting his weapon up through a joint, or he might simply attack the face of an opponent wearing an open-faced helmet such as a steel cap.

Finesse fighters never add their Strength modifier to the Armor Piercing rating of their weapon.

However, if a finesse fighter's attack roll beats the target's Defense Value by a number equal to at least the DR of the armor, that armor is completely ignored.

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does so is



COMBAT ACTIONS

The fundamental actions of moving and attacking cover most of what a character wants to do in a battle. They appear at the table on the next page, and are described here.

ACTION TYPES

The four types of actions are attack actions, move actions, full-round actions, and free actions. In a normal round, a character can perform an attack action and a move action (or two move actions; a character can always take a move action in place of an attack action), or a character can perform a full-round action. A character can also perform as many free actions as the GM allows.

In some situations (such as in the surprise round) a character may be limited to taking only a single attack or move action.

Attack Action

An attack action allows a character to do something. A character can make an attack, use a skill or a feat (unless the skill or feat requires a full-round action to perform; see below), or perform other similar actions. During a combat round, a character can take an attack action and a move action. A character can take a move action before or after performing an attack action.

Move Action

A move action allows a character to move his or her speed or perform an action that takes a similar amount of time. A character can move his or her speed, climb one-quarter of his or her speed, draw or stow a weapon or other object, stand up, pick up an object, or perform some equivalent action (see Table: Actions in Combat).

A character can take a move action in the place of an attack action.

If a character moves no actual distance in a round, that character can take one 5-foot step before, during, or after the action.

Full-Round Action

A full-round action consumes all a character's

effort during a round. The only movement the character can take during a full-round action is a 5-foot step before, during, or after the action. Some full-round actions do not allow a character to take a 5-foot step. A character can also perform free actions (see below) as the GM allows.

Free Action

Free actions consume a very small amount of time and effort, and over the span of the round, their impact is so minor that they are considered free. A character can perform one or more free actions while taking another action normally. However, the GM puts reasonable limits on what a character can really do for free. For instance, dropping an object, dropping to a prone position, speaking a sentence or two, and ceasing to concentrate on a magic spell (if magic is available in the campaign) are all free actions.

Actions requiring explanation are described below.

ATTACK ACTIONS:

Attack (melee): With a normal melee weapon, a character can strike any enemy within 5 feet. (Enemies within 5 feet are considered adjacent to the character.)

A character capable of making more than one melee attack per round must use the full attack action (see Full-Round Actions, below) in order to make more than one attack.

Fighting Defensively: A character can choose to fight defensively while making a melee attack. See "Fighting Defensively" on page 175.

Attack (ranged): With a ranged weapon, a character can shoot or throw at any target that is within the ranged weapon's maximum range and in line of sight. A target is in line of sight if there are no solid obstructions between the character and the target. As stated earlier, the maximum range for a thrown weapon is five range increments. For weapons that fire projectiles, it is ten range increments.

A character capable of making more than one

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Attack Actions	Attack of Opportunity¹	Full Round Actions	Attack of Opportunity¹
Attack (melee)	No	Bull rush	No
Attack (ranged)	Yes	Charge	No
Attack (unarmed)	Yes	Coup de grace	Yes
Attack (aid another)	No	Full attack	No
Escape a grapple	No	Overrun (charge)	No
Feint	No	Run	Yes
Make a dying character stable	Yes	Withdraw	No
Sunder a weapon	Yes	Extinguish flames	No
Sunder an object	Maybe ²	Use a skill that takes a full round	Usually
Total defense	No		
Skill that takes an attack action	Usually	Free Actions	Attack of Opportunity¹
Start/complete full-round action	Varies	Drop an object	No
		Drop to prone, sitting, or kneeling	No
		Speak	No
Move Actions	Attack of Opportunity¹		
Move your speed	Yes	Misc. Actions	Attack of Opportunity¹
Use a piece of equipment	No	Disarm ⁴	Yes
Climb	No	Grapple ⁴	Yes
Crawl	No	Load a weapon	Yes
Draw a weapon ³	No	Trip an opponent ⁴	No (Yes if unarmed)
Holster a weapon	Yes	Use a feat ⁵	Varies
Move a heavy object	Yes		
Open a door	No	No Action	Attack of Opportunity¹
Pick up an object	Yes	Delay	No
Retrieve a stored object	Yes	5-foot step	No
Stand up	Yes		
Swim	No		
Skill that takes a move action	Usually		

¹ Regardless of the action, if a character moves out of a threatened square, the character usually provokes an attack of opportunity. This column indicates whether the action itself, not moving, provokes an attack of opportunity.

² If the object is being held, carried, or worn by a creature, yes. If not, no.

³ If the character has a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, he or she can combine this action with a regular move. If the character has the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, he or she can draw two light or one-handed weapons in the time it would normally take to draw one.

⁴ These attack forms substitute for a melee attack, not an action. As melee attacks, they can be used once in an attack or charge action, one or more times in a full attack action, or even as an attack of opportunity.

⁵ The description of a feat defines its effect.

ranged attack per round must use the full attack action (see Full-Round Actions, below) in order to make more than one attack.

Shooting or Throwing into a Melee: If a character shoots or throws a ranged weapon at a target that is engaged in melee with an ally, the character takes a –4 penalty on his or her attack roll because the character has to aim carefully to avoid hitting the ally. Two characters are engaged in melee if they are enemies and they are adjacent to one another. (An unconscious or otherwise immobilized character is not considered engaged unless he or she is actually being attacked.)

If the target is so big that part of it is 10 feet or farther from the nearest ally, the character can avoid the –4 penalty, even if it's engaged in melee with an ally.

Fighting Defensively: A character can choose to fight defensively while making a ranged attack. See “Fighting Defensively” on page 175.

Attack (unarmed) Striking for damage with punches, kicks, and head butts is much like attacking with a melee weapon, except that an unarmed attack deals nonlethal damage. Unarmed strikes count as light melee weapons (for purposes of two-weapon attack penalties and so on). The following exceptions to normal melee rules apply to unarmed attacks.

Attacks of Opportunity: Making an unarmed attack against an armed opponent provokes an attack of opportunity from the character attacked. The attack of opportunity comes before the character's attack. An unarmed attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity from other foes, nor does it provoke an attack of opportunity from an unarmed foe.

“Armed” Unarmed Attacks: Sometimes a character or creature attacks unarmed but the attack still counts as armed. A creature with claws, fangs, and similar natural physical weapons, for example, counts as armed. Being armed counts for both offense and defense—not only does a creature not provoke an attack of opportunity when attacking an armed foe, but a character

provokes an attack of opportunity from that creature if the character makes an unarmed attack against it. The Combat Martial Arts feat makes a character's unarmed attacks count as armed.

Unarmed Strike Damage: An unarmed strike from a Medium-size character deals 1d3 points (plus the character's Strength modifier, as normal) of nonlethal damage.

A character can specify that his or her unarmed strike will deal lethal damage before the character makes his or her attack roll, but the character takes a –4 penalty on the attack roll because he or she has to strike a particularly vulnerable spot to deal lethal damage.

Attack (Aid Another): A character can help a friend attack or defend by distracting or interfering with an opponent. If the character is in position to attack an opponent with which a friend of the character is engaged in melee combat, the character can attempt to aid the friend as an attack action. The character makes an attack roll against Defense 10. If the character succeeds, he or she doesn't actually damage the opponent—but the character's friend gains either a +2 circumstance bonus against that opponent or a +2 circumstance bonus to Defense against that opponent (aiding character's choice) on the friend's next turn.

Escape a Grapple: For more information see Grapple, below.

Feint: See the Bluff skill for more information.

Make a Dying Character Stable: For more information see Damage, Healing and Recovery.

Sundering: You can use a melee attack with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon to strike a weapon or object that your opponent is holding.

If you are attempting to sunder a weapon, follow the steps outlined here:

Step 1: Attack of Opportunity. You provoke an attack of opportunity from the target whose weapon you are trying to sunder. (If you have the Improved

Sunder feat, you do not incur an attack of opportunity for making the attempt.)

Step 2: Opposed Rolls. You and the defender make opposed attack rolls with your respective weapons. The wielder of a two-handed weapon on a sunder attempt gets a +4 bonus to this roll, and the wielder of a light weapon takes a -4 penalty. If the combatants are of different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus on the sundering roll of +4 per difference in size category.

Step 3: Consequences. If you beat the defender, roll damage and deal it to the weapon. Martian weapons have a Sundering Save bonus varied by design, quality or materials (see below). The defender rolls 1d20, adds the Sundering Save bonus, and compares that to the damage done. If the save fails, the weapon is sundered -- it breaks and is unusable. A roll of 20 on the save always succeeds, regardless of modifiers.

Sundering an object being carried by an opponent follow the same steps, and provokes an attack of opportunity. Sundering an object on its own, however, does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Description	Sundering Save Bonus
Design:	
Common design	+1
Uncommon design	+2
Rare design	+3
Quality	
Low quality	+1
Average quality	+2
High quality	+3
Masterwork	+4
Materials	
Soft (cloth, plant fiber, etc)	+1
Hard (wood, some stone)	+2
Unyielding (metal, stone)	+3
Lost Technology	+4
Other Modifiers	GM's Discretion (usually between 1 and 5)

Total Defense: Instead of attacking, a character can use his or her attack action simply to defend. This is called a total defense action. For more information see page 175.

Skill that takes an Attack Action: Most uses of skills or talents in a combat situation are attack actions, but some might be move actions or full-round actions. When appropriate, the description of a talent or a skill provides the time required to use it.

Start/Complete Full-Round Action: The “start/complete full-round action” attack action lets a character start undertaking a full-round action (such as those listed on Table: Actions in Combat) at the end of his or her turn, or complete a full-round action by using an attack action at the beginning of his or her turn in the round following the round when the character started the full-round action.

If the character starts a full-round action at the end of his or her turn, the next action that character takes must be to complete the full-round action. Start/complete full-round action cannot be used with a full attack, charge, run, or withdraw action.

MOVE ACTIONS:

With the exception of specific movement-related skills, most move actions don't require a check. In some cases, ability checks might be required.

For more details on Movement in combat, see page 178.

In most cases, moving or manipulating an object is a move action. This includes drawing or holstering a weapon, retrieving or putting away a stored object, picking up an object, moving a heavy object, and opening a door. Some of these provoke attacks of opportunity, and some do not, as detailed on the chart on page 184.

FULL-ROUND ACTIONS:

A full-round action requires an entire round to complete. If it doesn't involve moving any distance, a character can combine it with a 5-foot step.

Bull Rush: A character can attempt a bull rush as an attack action made during his or her move action, or as part of a charge. (In general, a character can't make an attack action during a move action; this is an exception.) In either case, the character doesn't get a 5-foot step before, during, or after the bull rush attempt. When the character bull rushes, he or she attempts to push an opponent straight back instead of attacking the opponent. A character can only bull rush an opponent who is one size category larger than the character, the same size, or smaller.

Initiating a Bull Rush: First, the character moves into the target's square. Moving in this way provokes an attack of opportunity from each foe that threatens the character, probably including the target.

Second, the character and the target make opposed Strength checks. If the character and the target are different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus on the Strength check of +4 per difference in size category. The character gets a +2 bonus if he or she was charging. The target gets a +4 stability bonus if he or she has more than two legs or is otherwise exceptionally stable.

Bull Rush Results: If the character beats the target's Strength check, the character pushes the opponent back 5 feet. The character can push the target back an additional 5 feet for every 5 points by which the character exceeded the target's check result, provided the character moves with the target. A character can't, however, exceed his or her normal movement for that action. (The target provokes attacks of opportunity if moved. So does the character, if he or she moves with the target. The target and the character do not provoke attacks of opportunity from each other as a result of this movement.)

If the character fails to beat the target's Strength check, the character moves 5 feet straight back to where the character was before the character moved into the opponents square. If that square is occupied, the character falls prone in the square.

Charge: Charging is a special full-round action that allows a character to move more than his or her speed and attack during the action. However, there are tight restrictions on how and when a character can charge.

Movement during a Charge: The character must move before his or her attack, not after. The character must move at least 10 feet and may move up to twice his or her speed. All movement must be in a straight line, with no backing up allowed. The character must stop as soon as he or she is within striking range of his or her target (the character can't run past the target and attack from another direction). A character can't take a 5-foot step during the same round as a full charge.

During the surprise round (or any other time a character is limited to taking no more than a single attack action on his or her turn) the character can still use the charge action, but he or she is only allowed to move up to his or her speed (instead of up to twice his or her speed).

Attacking after a Charge: After moving, the character may make a single melee attack. The character gets a +2 bonus on the attack roll. The character also takes a -2 penalty to his or her Defense (dodge and parry) for 1 round (until the beginning of the character's turn in the following round).

Even if the character has extra attacks, such as from having a high enough base attack bonus or from using multiple weapons, a character only gets to make one attack after a charge.

Instead of attacking the target, a character can attempt to push the target back. (See Bull Rush.) Any other Combat Manuever can be used as appropriate.

Coup de Grace: As a full-round action, a character can use a melee weapon to deliver

a coup de grace to a helpless foe. A character can also use a ranged weapon, provided the character is adjacent to the target. The character automatically hits and score a critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he or she still must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die.

Full Attack: If a character gets more than one attack per action because his or her base attack bonus is high enough, because he or she fights with two weapons, because he or she is using a double weapon, or for some special reason, the character must use the full attack action to get his or her additional attacks. The character does not need to specify the targets of his or her attacks ahead of time. The character can see how the earlier attacks turn out before assigning the later ones.

Full attack is a full-round action. Because of this, the only movement a character can take during a full attack is a 5-foot step. The character may take the step before, after, or between the attacks. If a character gets multiple attacks based on his or her base attack bonus, the character must make the attacks in order from highest bonus to lowest. If the character is using two weapons, the character can strike with either weapon first. If the character is using a double weapon, the character can strike with either part of the weapon first.

Committing to a Full Attack Action: A character doesn't have to commit to a full attack until after the first attack. The character can then decide whether to make his or her remaining attacks or to take a move action. Of course, if the character has already taken a 5-foot step, he or she can't use his or her move action to move any distance, but the character could still draw or put away a weapon, for instance (see Move Actions, above).

Fighting Defensively: A character can choose to fight defensively when taking a full attack action. See "Fighting Defensively" on page 175.

Overrun: A character can attempt an overrun as an attack action made during his or her move action, or as part of a charge. (In general, a character cannot make an attack action during a

move action; this is an exception.) In either case, the character doesn't get a 5-foot step before, during, or after the overrun attempt.

With an overrun, the character attempts to move through an opponents area, going past or over the opponent. A character can only overrun an opponent who is one size category larger than the character, the same size, or smaller. A character can make only one overrun attempt per action.

First, the character must move at least 10 feet in a straight line into the target's square (provoking attacks of opportunity normally).

Then the target chooses either to avoid the character or to block the character. If the opponent avoids the character, the character keeps moving. (A character can always move through a square occupied by someone who lets the character by.) If the opponent blocks the character, make a trip attack against the opponent (see Trip). If the character succeeds in tripping his or her opponent, the character can continue his or her movement as normal.

If the character fails and are tripped in turn, the character falls prone in the target's square. If the character fails but are not tripped, the character has to move 5 feet back the way he or she came, ending his or her movement there. If that square is occupied, the character falls prone in the square.

Run: A character can run all out as a full-round action. When a character runs, he or she can move up to four times his or her speed in a straight line. (The character does not get a 5-foot step.) The character loses any Dexterity bonus to Defense since he or she can't avoid attacks. However, the character gets a +2 bonus to Defense against ranged attacks while running.

A character can run for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score, but after that the character must succeed at a Constitution check (DC 10) to continue running. The character must check again each round in which he or she continues to run, and the DC of this check increases by 1 for each check the character makes. When the character fails this check, he or she

must stop running. A character who has run to his or her limit must rest for 1 minute (10 rounds) before running again. During a rest period, a character can move normally, but can't run.

Withdraw: Withdrawing from melee combat is a full-round action. When a character withdraws, he or she can move up to twice his or her speed. (The character doesn't also get a 5-foot step.) The square the character starts from is not considered threatened for purposes of withdrawing, and therefore enemies do not get attacks of opportunity against the character when he or she move from that square.

If while withdrawing, the character moves through another threatened square (other than the one started in) without stopping, enemies get attacks of opportunity as normal.

Some forms of movement (such as climbing and swimming) require skill checks from most creatures. A character may not withdraw using a form of movement for which that character must make a skill check.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS:

Some actions don't fit neatly into the above categories. Some of the options described below are actions that take the place of or are variations on the actions described earlier. For actions not covered in any of this material, the GM determines how long such an action takes to perform and whether doing so provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening enemies.

Use Feat, Skill, or Talent: Certain feats, let a character take special actions in combat. Other feats are not actions in themselves, but they give a character a bonus when attempting something he or she can already do. Some feats aren't meant to be used within the framework of combat. The individual feat descriptions tell a character what he or she needs to know about them.

Most uses of skills or talents in a combat situation are attack actions, but some might be move actions or full-round actions. When appropriate, the description of a talent or a skill provides the time required to use it.



Disarm: As a melee attack, a character may attempt to disarm his or her opponent. If the character does so with a weapon, he or she knocks the opponent's weapon out of his or her hands and to the ground. If the character attempts the disarm while unarmed, the character ends up with the weapon in his or her hand.

If a character is attempting to disarm the wielder of a melee weapon, follow the steps outlined here. Disarming the wielder of a ranged weapon is slightly different; see below.

Step 1: The character provokes an attack of opportunity from the target he or she is trying to disarm.

Step 2: The character and the target make opposed attack rolls with their respective weapons. If the weapons are different sizes, the combatant with the larger weapon gets a bonus on the attack roll of +4 per difference in size category. If the target is using a weapon in two hands, he or she gets an additional +4 bonus. Also, if the combatants are different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus on the attack roll of +4 per difference in size category.

Step 3: If the character beats the target's attack roll, the target is disarmed. If the character attempted the disarm action unarmed, he or she now has the weapon. If the character was armed, the target's weapon is on the ground at the target's feet.

If the character fails the disarm attempt, the target may immediately react and attempt to disarm the character with the same sort of opposed melee attack roll. The opponent's attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the character. If the opponent fails to disarm, the character does not get a free disarm attempt against the opponent.

To disarm an opponent wielding a ranged weapon, the character makes a melee attack or unarmed

attack to strike the weapon in the opponent's hand (see Attack an Object). If the weapon is held in two hands, it gets a +2 bonus to its Defense. If the character's attack succeeds, the ranged weapon falls to the ground or winds up in the character's hands (if the character made the attack unarmed). This kind of disarm attempt provokes an attack of opportunity, but if the character fails, the target does not get to make a disarm attempt against him or her.

Grapple: Grappling means wrestling and struggling hand-to-hand. There are three stages to grappling: grabbing, holding, and pinning.

Grabbing: Normally, a grab is just the first step to starting a grapple. If the character grabs an opponent, but fails to go on to hold him or her, the character doesn't actually start a grapple. However, sometimes all a character wants to do is grab the target.

Holding: Once a character has established a hold, he or she is involved in a grapple. From a hold, a character can attempt a number of actions, including damaging the opponent or pinning the opponent. A character can't get a hold on any creature more than two size categories larger than the character. (However, such a creature can get a hold on the character—so while a character can't initiate a grapple with a creature more than two size categories larger than, a character can still end up in one.)

Pinning: Getting the opponent in a pin is often the goal of a grapple. A pinned character is held immobile.

Grapple Checks: When a character is involved in a grapple, he or she will need to make opposed grapple checks against an opponent—often repeatedly. A grapple check is something like a melee attack roll. A character's attack bonus on a grapple check is:

**Base attack bonus + Strength modifier
+ grapple modifier**

Grapple Modifier: A creature's size works in its favor when grappling, if that creature is Large or

larger in size. Conversely, a creature of Small or smaller size is at a disadvantage because of its size when grappling. Instead of using a creature's size modifier on a grapple check (as would be done for a melee or ranged attack roll), use the appropriate grapple modifier from the following table:

Size (Example)	Modifier
Colossal (blue whale [90 ft. long])	+16
Gargantuan (gray whale [40 ft. long])	+12
Huge (elephant)	+8
Large (Green Martian)	+4
Medium (Red Martian)	+0
Small (Dog)	-4
Tiny (Cat)	-8
Diminutive (rat)	-12
Fine (insect)	-16

To start a grapple, a character first needs to grab and hold his or her target. Attempting to start a grapple is the equivalent of making a melee attack. If the character gets multiple attacks in a round, he or she can attempt to start a grapple multiple times (at successively lower base attack bonuses). Follow these steps.

1. Attack of Opportunity: A character provokes an attack of opportunity from the target he or she is trying to grapple. If the attack of opportunity deals the character damage, the character fails to start the grapple. If the attack of opportunity misses or otherwise fails to deal damage, proceed to step 2.

2. Grab: The character makes a melee touch attack to grab the target. If the character fails to hit the target, the character fails to start the grapple. If the character succeeds, proceed to step 3.

3. Hold: Make an opposed grapple check. (This is a free action.) If the character succeeds, the character has started the grapple, and deals damage to the target as if with an unarmed strike.

If the character loses, he or she fails to start the grapple. The character

automatically loses an attempt to hold if the target is two or more size categories larger than the character is (but the character can still make an attempt to grab such a target, if that's all he or she wants to do).

4. Maintain the Grapple: To maintain the grapple for later rounds, the character must move into the target's square. (This movement is free and doesn't count as part of the character's movement for the round movement.) Moving, as normal, provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening enemies, but not from the target. The character and the target are now grappling.

If the character can't move into the target's square, the character can't maintain the grapple and must immediately let go of the target. To grapple again, the character must begin at step 1.

While a character is grappling, his or her ability to attack others and defend him or herself is limited.

No Threatened Squares: A character doesn't threaten any squares while grappling.

No Dexterity Bonus: A character loses his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense (if the character has one) against opponents the character isn't grappling. (The character can still use it against opponents he or she is grappling.)

No Movement: A character cannot move while held in a grapple.

When a character is grappling (regardless of who started the grapple), he or she can attempt any of several actions on his or her turn. Unless otherwise noted, each of these options is equivalent to an attack. (If the character normally gets more than one attack per attack action, he or she can attempt as many of these options as he or she has attacks available, using his or her successively lower attack bonus for each roll.) The character is limited to these options only; he

or she cannot take any other actions.

Damage the Opponent: Make an opposed grapple check; if the character succeeds, he or she deals damage as with an unarmed strike.

Pin: Make an opposed grapple check; if the character succeeds, he or she holds the opponent immobile for 1 round. The opponent takes a -4 penalty to Defense against all attacks from other people (but not from the character); however, the opponent is not considered helpless.

A character can't use a weapon on a pinned character or attempt to damage or pin a second opponent while holding a pin on the first.

A pinned character can't take any action except to attempt to escape from the pin.

Escape from Grapple: Make an opposed grapple check. If the character succeeds, he or she can escape the grapple. If more than one opponent is grappling the character, the grapple check result has to beat all their check results to escape. (Opponents don't have to try to hold a character if they don't want to.)

Alternatively, the character can make an Escape Artist check opposed by the opponent's grapple check to escape from the grapple. This is an attack action that the character may only attempt once per round, even if the character gets multiple attacks.

If the character has not used his or her move action for the round, the character may do so after escaping the grapple.

Escape from Pin: Make an opposed grapple check. If the character succeeds, he or she can escape from being pinned. (Opponents don't have to try to keep the character pinned if they don't want to.) The character is still being grappled, however.

Alternatively, a character can make an Escape Artist check opposed by the opponent's grapple check to escape from the pin. This is an attack action that the character may only attempt once per round, even if the character gets multiple attacks.

Break Another's Pin: Make an opposed grapple check; if the character succeeds, he or she can break the hold that an opponent has over an ally.

Draw a Light Weapon: A character can draw a light weapon as a move action.

Attack with a Light Weapon: A character can attack with a light weapon while grappling (but not while pinned or pinning). A character can't attack with two weapons while grappling.

If the target is already grappling someone else, a character can use an attack to start a grapple, as above, except that the target doesn't get an attack of opportunity against the character, and the character's grab automatically succeeds. The character still has to make a successful opposed grapple check and move in to be part of the grapple.

If multiple enemies are already involved in the grapple, the character picks one against whom to make the opposed grapple check.

Several combatants can be in a single grapple. Up to four combatants can grapple a single opponent in a given round. Creatures that are one size category smaller than the character count as one-half creature each; creatures that are one size category larger than the character count as two creatures; and creatures two or more size categories larger than the character count as four creatures. When involved in a grapple with multiple opponents, the character chooses one opponent to make an opposed check against. The exception is an attempt to escape from the grapple; to escape, a character's grapple check must beat the check results of all opponents.

Trip: A character can try to trip an opponent, or otherwise knock him or her down, as an unarmed melee attack. A character can only trip an opponent who is one size category larger than the character, the same size, or smaller.

Make an unarmed melee touch attack against the target. Doing this provokes an attack of opportunity from the target as normal for unarmed attacks.

If the attack succeeds, make a Strength check opposed by the target's Dexterity check or Strength check (using whichever ability score has the higher modifier). If the character and the target are different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus on the Strength check of +4 per difference in size category. The target gets a +4 stability bonus on his or her check if he or she has more than two legs or is otherwise exceptionally stable. If the character wins, he or she trips the target. If the character loses, the target may immediately react and make a Strength check opposed by the character's Dexterity check or Strength check to try to trip the character.

A tripped character is prone. Standing up from a prone position is a move action.



COMBAT MANEUVERS

In addition to the standard attack actions, **MARS** offers the following combat maneuvers, which may be freely used, so long as the character meets the prerequisites and the circumstance is appropriate. Note that these are not feats, they are simply standard combat maneuvers that anyone of sufficient skill can perform.

Unless otherwise noted, the following combat maneuvers can only be used in melee combat.

BULL'S CHARGE

A low charge can get you under your enemy's guard to stab deep into his belly. However, doing so renders you very vulnerable to a counterattack.

Prerequisite: Str 13+, Power Attack.

Circumstance: You must be wielding a slashing or piercing weapon, and charging.

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus on your damage roll when charging, but you provoke an attack of opportunity from your target before you can make your attack roll.

CAT'S PARRY

You parry your opponent's wrist, rather than his blade.

Prerequisite: Base parry bonus +1 or higher.

Circumstance: You must be parrying.

Effect: Your attacker gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his attack roll, but if he misses, you may immediately make an attack of opportunity against him.

DECAPITATING SLASH

You take advantage of an opponent's dropped defenses to slice his head clean off. This leaves you open to counterattack and so is usually only done if you are only fighting one opponent.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +10 or higher.

Circumstance: Your opponent provokes an attack of opportunity from you.

Effect: You attempt a particularly devastating attack of opportunity. If you score a critical hit against your opponent, he must make a Fortitude save (DC = 5 + total damage dealt, after taking into account armor) or be instantly killed, his head severed.

You suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to your Defense Value for the one round immediately following your attack of opportunity. This maneuver may be used only against those beings which can be killed by decapitation, of course!

As a general guideline, any being vulnerable to critical hits can be killed in this manner, though some strange and twisted creatures (such as the results of Grey Martian experiments) may be immune.

DESPERATE STAB

You make a stab for the heart or throat before combat has otherwise begun, relying on quickness but desperately gambling that your attack will be sufficient to slay the opponent instantly, since it leaves you wide open to a counterattack from him.

Prerequisite: Improved Initiative, base attack bonus +12 or higher

Circumstance: You must have won initiative, it must be the first round of combat, you must have lost his dodge bonus or parry bonus to Defense Value through being flat-footed, and you must be attacking with finesse.

Effect: As your first attack of the combat, you may attempt to slay your enemy outright, relying on your speed and skill to slay your enemy instantly. You make your attack as normal. If you hit, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC = damage dealt by your attack) or die instantly. If your opponent is still alive, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his attack rolls and damage against you for the remainder of the round.

DEVASTATING SWEEP

You can swing your weapon around, forcing your foes back to clear sufficient space for you to flee.

Prerequisite: Whirlwind Attack

Circumstance: You must be wielding a slashing weapon, either one-handed or two-handed. At least five of the squares adjacent to you must be occupied. You must not be attacking with finesse.

Effect: As a standard action, you may swing your weapon in a sweep around you. Any characters within 5 feet of you have the option of immediately taking a 5-foot step away from you as a free action, so as to be out of range. You gain an attack against any characters who do not choose to move away, at your highest Base Attack Bonus.

FLING ASIDE

If you are sufficiently strong, you can simply pick up your enemy one-handed and hurl him aside.

Prerequisite: Str 15+, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip

Circumstance: You must have one hand free.

Effect: Make a melee touch attack to grab your opponent, then an opposed grapple check, just as though you were starting a grapple. If you win the opposed grapple check, your throw your opponent to the ground. You are not grappling him, but the impact with the ground deals damage to him as though you had hit him with an unarmed strike, and he is prone as though you had tripped him.

FORCE BACK

Your combat skill can push an opponent backwards.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 15+, Base Parry Bonus +1 or higher, Base Dodge Bonus +1 or higher, BAB +6 or higher

Circumstance: You must be armed or have Combat Martial Arts (or Improved Unarmed Strike).

Effect: Force Back is similar to Bull Rush, save that instead of bowling your opponent over with force, you use a dazzling array of feints and strikes to force him to step away from your whirling blade. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the target, though it *does* provoke one from all other skilled combatants who threaten you.

You do not need to make a grapple check. Rather, you must succeed in striking your opponent with the weapon in your hand, though you suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to do so. If the strike hits regardless, your opponent must make a Will save at a DC of $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ your level. If he fails, he moves back 5 feet. If he succeeds, he may choose to either move back five feet or to suffer the effects of a critical hit. (If he is immune to critical hits, he takes maximum normal damage).

If you fail in the attack, you have set yourself up for a return strike. The opponent you were attempting to force back gains a +4 circumstance bonus to hit you if he attacks before your next action.

This maneuver requires a full action.

HOOKEING PARRY

You swing your axe (or similar martial weapon) around the shaft of your enemy's weapon, holding it out of line so it cannot be used.

Prerequisite: Base parry bonus +1 or higher, Dexterity 13+.

Circumstance: You have just used an axe, battleaxe, bill, bardiche or polearm to parry an enemy's reach weapon.

Effect: So long as you do not use the parrying weapon for any other purpose (including making further attacks or parries) your opponent may not use his reach weapon for any purpose either. As a standard action he may make an attack roll with his weapon, opposed to your parry roll with your weapon. If he is successful with this opposed attack roll, or if you move out of range of his reach weapon, he may wield his weapon normally again.

HUMAN SHIELD

You swing your distracted enemy around so as to attempt to parry another enemy's attack with the body.

Prerequisite: Strength 13+.

Circumstance: Earlier this round you have dealt damage to your opponent while grappling him, and are now being attacked by another character while still grappling the first.

Effect: If you succeed in a grapple check, you may use your grappled opponent to parry with, just as though he were a shield. The parry bonus you gain from him is equal to (your Strength bonus -1), with a minimum of +0 and a maximum of +2 – he is large, but is somewhat awkward to move about even when using both hands. If you successfully parry the second opponent's attack, full damage from that attack is dealt to the opponent you are grappling.

LEAPING CHARGE

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6 or higher, Jump skill

Effect: When you make a charge attack, you may make a second attack at your highest Base Attack Bonus, though both attacks are at a -2 circumstance penalty, and the circumstance penalty to your Defense Value for charging is increased from the usual -2 to -4.

PANTHERISH TWIST

When two attackers attempt to flank you, you twist away at the last moment, forcing them to attack one another.

Prerequisite: Improved Uncanny Dodge

Circumstance: Must be dodging.

Effect: If two opponents move into positions which usually would allow them to flank you if you did not have Improved Uncanny Dodge, you can choose to force both of them to make opposed Dexterity checks with you. If one or both of them lose the opposed Dexterity check with you, he or they must attack the other enemy instead of attacking you. However, if one or both of them win the opposed Dexterity check, there is a +2 circumstance bonus on his or their attack and damage rolls against you. These effects only ever apply to the first attack each opponent makes.

SUNDERING PARRY

Rather than simply setting aside your opponent's weapon, you attempt to hack it through with your own.

Prerequisite: Improved Sunder, base parry bonus +1 or higher.

Circumstance: Must be parrying.

Effect: You take a -2 circumstance penalty to your Parry roll. However, if you succeed in parrying the enemy's weapon, you may immediately make a sunder attempt as a free action, with all the usual modifiers (including the +4 bonus for the Improved Sunder feat) and an additional -2 circumstance penalty.

TO THE HILT

You take advantage of your enemy's lack of armor to plunge your sword into his body a little more deeply.

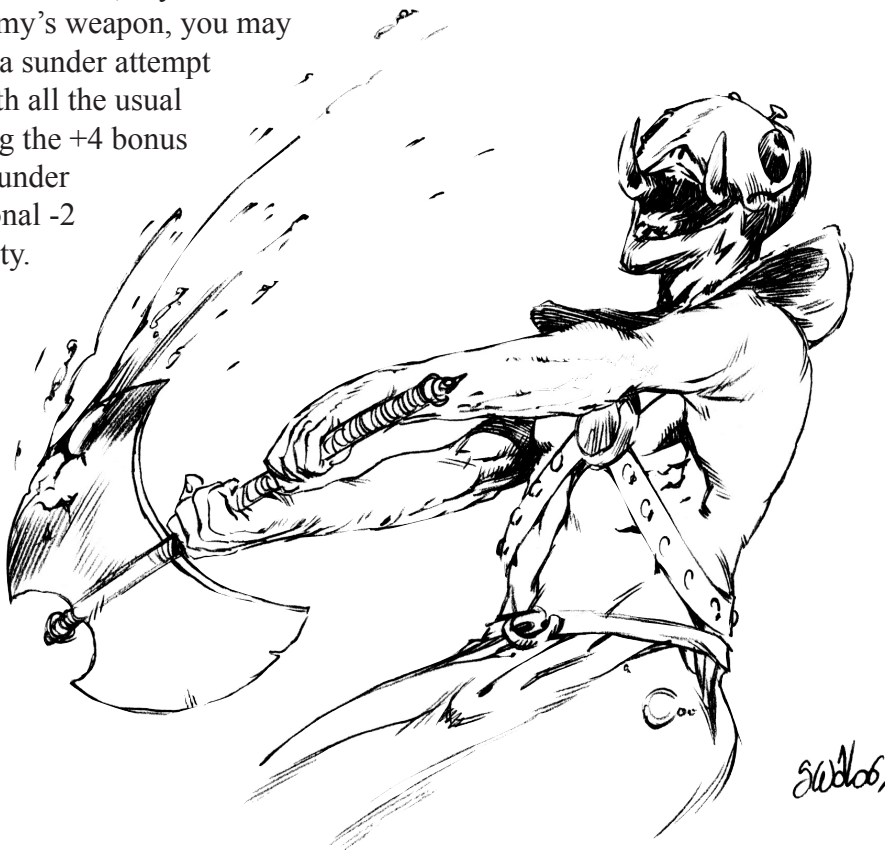
Prerequisite: Power Attack

Circumstance: Must be attacking with a piercing or slashing weapon against an unarmored opponent.

Effect: You gain a +1 circumstance modifier to your damage roll. However, if your damage rolled with the weapon (before any modifiers for Strength, sneak attacks and bonuses of any kind) is higher than your Strength modifier, your weapon sticks into your enemy – whether he is living or dead.

You or another character (including the one with the weapon stuck in him, if still alive) can remove a stuck weapon by taking a full-round action and making a Strength check (DC 10). Often characters will find it easier and quicker to draw or pick up an alternate weapon.

A character with a weapon stuck in him sustains 1d4 damage every time he takes a move, standard, or full-round action.



STUNTS

Combat in d20 games tends to be very much akin to a chess match, with highly-optimized maneuvers and a careful consideration of the odds. Often, a single optimal tactic is used over and over, even when it's boring, because it gets the job done. It's difficult to argue that, even 'in character', a skilled combatant would deliberately choose inferior tactics for the sake of variety – it's akin to stating a modern army ought to use black powder weapons because they're 'cooler'.

However, combat in **MARS** should be exciting, daring, and dramatic – especially during climactic scenes. When confronting the main villain, battling against impossible odds in an arena, or racing to prevent a radium-bomb laden sky-corsair from smashing into the main pumps of the polar station, characters should be able to engage in nigh-impossible actions.

To this end, the Stunt system is introduced.

Whenever a character rolls a natural 20 during normal play, during circumstances where failure has meaningful consequences (GM's discretion – basically, while the situation does not need to be life-threatening, it cannot be a 'practice' session or one where there is little or no consequence of failure.), the player may choose to 'stockpile' that 20. The die is then rerolled, and is treated in all ways as if that had been the original roll, with the following exception: A natural '1' is always a failure, even though this is normally not the case. This creates some risk, however small, when the decision to stockpile that 20 is made. A character may stockpile a number of such rolls equal to 1/2 their character level (Round up). Each such roll 'set aside' is called a Stunt Point.

During a particularly dramatic sequence, a character may 'spend' his Stunt Points. They may be spent on any rolls, including skill checks, saving throws, and to-hit rolls, *provided* that the sequence of action is, in the Game Master's opinion, dramatic, cinematic, or exciting. There is one limit – they may not be spent on attack rolls against the primary villain or villains (GM's

discretion as to who they are). They can be used to bypass or slay guards, avoid traps, or lay waste to henchmen, but when the Big Bad is reached, the fight must be 'fair'. Don't worry, the villains are under the same stricture.

By spending a Stunt Point, the character has a near-guarantee of success, even on skills he has few or no ranks in – he should dramatically tumble past a guard, furiously disarm a bomb, or daringly leap from his own burning airship to the villain's intact one. The GM may insist the stunt include some action or maneuver the character rarely engages in – disarm or sunder, for example.

Stunt points may be spent in other ways:

- a) To gain the use of a Feat for which the character is otherwise qualified for a single round, or, at the Game Master's discretion, for the duration of combat.
- b) To engender an incredibly fortunate, though not physically impossible, circumstance – a fully-charged radium pistol left on a shelf just ten feet away, the sudden conversion of a minor enemy to an ally, an incredibly unlucky break for a foe (such as his sword becoming stuck in a column or the like).
- c) To negate the effects of a single hit or cast off a single effect.
- d) To instantly kill any minor NPC with a single blow – provided the blow is described in a dramatic fashion. ("I spend a stunt point and kill the guard" is not acceptable. "I turn and toss my scimitar at the guard, spinning it in such a way as to slice his head clean off, leaving the blade quivering in the throne behind the Red Lord!", is what we're talking about here.)
- e) To generate two Action Points, which must be used before the end of the current conflict.

NPCs AND STUNTS

Of course, the Bad Guys can sometimes accomplish amazing things, as well – at least the major ones. Traditionally, such feats are used only to either escape from Certain Doom or to perform some plot-important action, such as striking a lethal or near-lethal blow against a beloved NPC.

An NPC may use stunt points to accomplish anything listed above, but they may not do so with the aim of directly harming the PCs. Stunt points, for villains, are means of raising the stakes, not killing one's foes. In addition, a villain can use stunt points to counter any player use of stunt points – again, this must be described. The consequences will not harm the player, but will negate their course of action. The Game Master should fairly adjudicate the consequences.

Allied NPCs do not gain stunt points. They're for Heroes and Villains only. However, a player may grant stunt points to an NPC, a 2-for-1 cost – that is, he must sacrifice 2 points to give a favored NPC 1. This is often done only in desperate but dramatic circumstances – but isn't that the essence of heroism?

A villain can have as many Stunt Points as the Game Master considers "fair", but a good rule is 1 per player character, up to the limit of 1/2 the villain's level.

WOUNDS, HEALING AND RECOVERY

When a character hits with a weapon, he or she deals damage according to the type of weapon. Effects that modify weapon damage also apply to unarmed strikes and the natural physical attack forms of creatures.

Damage is deducted from the target's current hit points. A character's hit points tell how much punishment he or she can take before dropping. Hit points are based on the character's class and level, and the character's Constitution modifier applies.

When a character's hit point total drops to 0, he or she is disabled. When it drops to -1, he or she is dying. When it drops to -10, the character is dead.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

In **MARS**, heroes are expected to keep going, even against severe wounds – this is what makes them heroes! Great villains, too, are capable of continuing their villainy even after suffering damage which would kill lesser mortals, for are they not destined to rule? The masses, however, are not so fortunate, and tend to die in hordes.

For this reason, **MARS** divides characters into Major Characters, Minor Characters, and Flunkies.

Major characters (including ALL Player Characters) never make Massive Damage checks. They keep on going until the last of their hit points expire.

Any time a Minor character takes damage from a single hit that exceeds their current Constitution score, they have taken Massive Damage.

Flunkies have taken Massive Damage after sustaining 10 or more points of damage in a single attack.

When Massive Damage occurs, the NPC makes a Fortitude Save (DC 15). If they fail the save, their

hit point total is immediately reduced to -1. If the save succeeds, no additional effect occurs.

NONLETHAL DAMAGE

Nonlethal damage is dealt by unarmed attackers and some weapons. Melee weapons that deal lethal damage can be wielded so as to deal nonlethal damage, but the attacker takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls for trying to deal nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. A ranged weapon that deals lethal damage can't be made to deal nonlethal damage (unless it is used as an improvised melee weapon).

Nonlethal damage does not affect the target's hit points. Instead, compare the amount of nonlethal damage from an attack to the target's massive damage threshold. If the amount is less than the target's massive damage threshold, the target is unaffected by the attack.

If the damage equals or exceeds the target's massive damage threshold, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If the target succeeds on the save, the target is dazed for 1 round. If the target fails, he or she is knocked unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds.

DISABLED (0 HIT POINTS)

When a character's current hit points drop to exactly 0, the character is disabled. The character is not unconscious, but he or she is close to it. The character can only take a single move or attack action each turn (but not both, nor can the character take full-round actions). The character can take nonstrenuous move actions without further injuring his or herself, but if the character attacks or perform any other action the GM deems as strenuous, the character takes 1 point of damage after completing the act. Unless the activity increased the character's hit points, the character is now at -1 hit points, and is dying. Healing that raises the character above 0 hit points makes him or her fully functional again, just as if the character had never been reduced to 0 or lower.

A character can also become disabled when recovering from dying. In this case, it's a step up along the road to recovery, and the character

can have fewer than 0 hit points (see *Stable Characters and Recovery*).

DYING (-1 TO -9 HIT POINTS)

When a character's current hit points drop below 0, the character is dying. A dying character has a current hit point total between -1 and -9 inclusive. A dying character immediately falls unconscious and can take no actions.

A dying character loses 1 hit point every round. This continues until the character dies or becomes stable naturally or with help (see below).

DEAD (-10 HIT POINTS OR LOWER)

When a character's current hit points drop to -10 or lower, he or she is dead. A character can also die if his or her Constitution is reduced to 0.

STABLE CHARACTERS AND RECOVERY

A dying character (one with -1 to -9 hit points) is unconscious and loses 1 hit point every round until he or she becomes stable or dies.

Recovering without Help: Each round, a dying character makes a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20). If the save fails, the character loses 1 hit point and must make another save on his or her turn the next round.

If the save succeeds, the character becomes stable. A stable character stops losing hit points every round, but remains unconscious.

If no one tends to the stable character (see below), he or she remains unconscious for 1 hour, at which point he or she makes a Fortitude save (DC 20). If the save succeeds, the stable character regains consciousness, becoming disabled (see above). The character's current hit point total remains where it is, however, even though it's negative. If the save fails, the character remains unconscious.

An unaided stable, conscious character who has negative hit points (and is disabled) doesn't heal naturally. Instead, each day the character makes a Fortitude save (DC 20) to start recovering hit points naturally that day; if the save fails, he or she loses 1 hit point.

Once an unaided character starts recovering hit points naturally, the character is no longer in danger of losing additional hit points (even if his or her current hit point total is still negative).

Recovering with Help: A dying character can be made stable by the use of the Treat Injury skill (DC 15).

One hour after a tended, dying character becomes stable, he or she makes a Fortitude save (DC 20) to regain consciousness. If successful, the character becomes disabled (see above). If the character remains unconscious, he or she makes the same Fortitude save every hour until he or she becomes conscious. Even while unconscious, the character recovers hit points naturally, and he or she can return to normal activity when his or her hit points rise to 1 or higher.

HEALING

After taking damage, a character can recover hit points through natural healing (over the course of days) or through medical technology (somewhat faster). A character can't regain hit points past his or her full normal total.

Natural Healing: A character recovers 1 hit point per character level per evening of rest (8 hours of sleep).

A character undergoing complete bed rest (doing nothing for an entire day) recovers 2 hit points per character level.

Healing Ability Damage: Ability damage returns at the rate of 1 point per evening of rest (8 hours of sleep). Complete bed rest (24 hours) restores 2 points per day.

Temporary Hit Points: Certain effects can give a character temporary hit points. When a character gains temporary hit points, make a note of his or her current hit points before adding the temporary hit points. When the temporary hit points go away, the character's hit points drop to that score. If the character's hit points are already below that score at that time, all the temporary hit points have already been lost, and the character's hit point total does not drop.

Increases in Constitution Score and Current Hit Points:

An increase in a character's Constitution score—even a temporary one—can give the character more hit points (an effective hit point increase), but these are not temporary hit points. They can be restored through normal healing. When a character's Constitution drops back down to its previous score after a temporary increase, the character's full normal hit points go down accordingly.

SAVING THROWS

Like an attack roll, a saving throw is a 1d20 roll plus a bonus based on the hero's class and level (the hero's base save bonus) and an ability modifier.

A natural 1 (the d20 comes up 1) on a saving throw is always a failure. A natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20) is always a success.

A character's saving throw bonus is:

Base save bonus + ability modifier

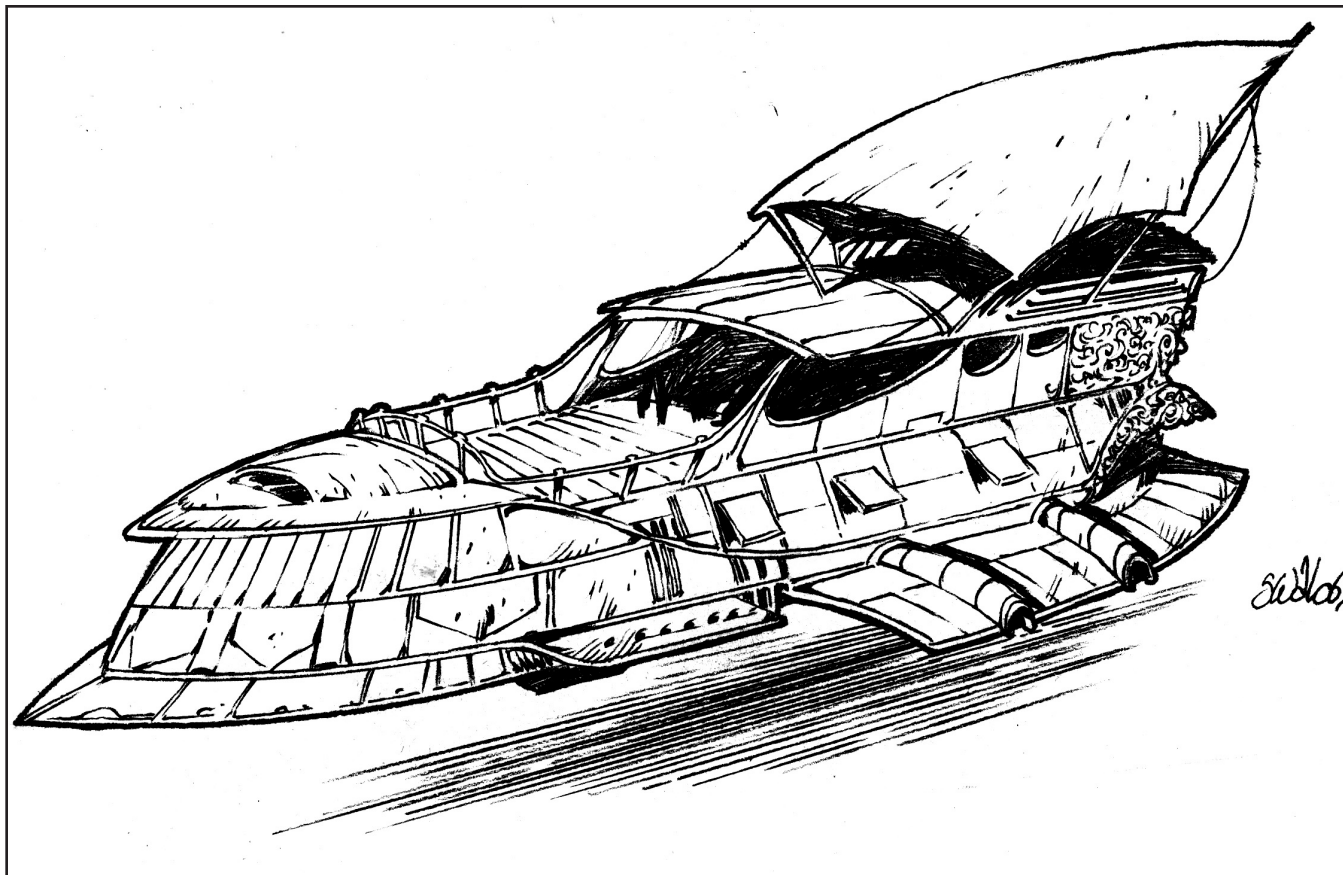
The Difficulty Class for a save is determined by the attack itself.

The three different kinds of saving throws are:

Fortitude: These saves measure the character's ability to stand up to massive physical punishment or attacks against his or her vitality and health such as poison and paralysis. Apply the character's Constitution modifier to his or her Fortitude saving throws.

Reflex: These saves test the character's ability to avoid area attacks such as explosions or airship crashes. (Often, when damage is inevitable, the character gets to make a Reflex save to take only half damage.) Apply the character's Dexterity modifier to his or her Reflex saving throws.

Will: These saves reflect the character's resistance to mental influence and domination as well as to fear effects. Apply the character's Wisdom modifier to his or her Will saving throws.



The airships of Mars are the most valuable remnant of the ancient glories of the red planet. Without them, many Red Martian city-states would lose the ability to import goods from their distant neighbors, or would fall to invasion by Green Martian hordes or other armies. The airships perform a vital role in trade and defense.

For those nations who possess them, the airships of Mars represent power. For those individuals lucky enough to privately own one, they represent more than power. They represent freedom.

No detail is provided to explain the technology behind the airships - how they stay aloft, or what provides their propulsion. These details are best left a mystery -- the Martians themselves have forgotten, after all. Gamemasters are encouraged to come up with their own explanations, the discovery of which can form the basis of entire adventures.

AIRSHIPS

Airships are treated much like a flying monster or other large creature in these rules. They have an defense values, hit points, speed, and maneuverability.

All airships of a given size have roughly the same general stats, as shown in the table on the next page, though individual sky ships may vary from this standard profile.

An airship is described by the following statistics:

DEFENSE VALUE

As with player characters and monsters, a ship's Defense Value represents its level of protection against attacks. Since ships effectively have a Dexterity of 0, they automatically suffer a -5 penalty to DV. In addition, a ship's base size modifies its DV.

Small ships gain a +1 size bonus to DV, Medium

ones a +0 bonus, Large ones a –1 size penalty, Huge ones a –2 size penalty, Gargantuan ones a –4 size penalty, and Colossal ones a –8 size penalty. Add this specific size penalty to a sky ship's inherent –5 penalty to determine its final DV.

For example, a normal Small ship is DV 6. It suffers a –5 penalty for being a ship but gains a +1 size bonus for being Small, for a total –4 penalty to DV.

A ship's DV may never be less than 1. However, if a ship gains the benefits of cover or some sort of protective technology add the full size penalty to its AC before adding any bonuses.

For example, a Colossal ship suffers a –5 DV modifier for being a ship, and a –8 size penalty to DV. Its DV is 1, even though its penalties add up to –13. However, a +3 circumstantial DV bonus does not give it an DV of 4. The total penalties (–13) plus the bonus (+3) total to –10, which means the ship's DV remains at 1.

HIT DICE

Much like monsters and characters, ships have hit dice to represent how much punishment they can absorb before being destroyed. A ship's hit die type is always a d10 and it always gains 5.5 hit points per die. Round down any decimals when determining its final hit points. A ship's hit dice are determined by its size, as per the facing table.

HARDNESS

The material used to construct a ship determines how durable it is. A ship gains a hardness rating equal to the hardness of the material used to build it. The strange metal used to craft airship hulls on Mars has a base hardness of 10. Small ships have thinner hulls, leading to lower hardness. Huge, Gargantuan and Colossal airships have thicker hulls, which leads to a higher hardness rating, as seen below.

AIRSHIP STATISTICS BY SIZE

	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
Hit Dice	1-2	3-8	9-25	26-40	41-60	61+
Hardness	7	10	10	12	15	18
Base Speed	340 ft.	280 ft.	220 ft.	160 ft.	120 ft.	80 ft.
Base Manuever	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy	Clumsy
Hard Points	2	3	5	8	12	16+
Crew	1	6	24	48	100	200+
Cargo	250 lbs.	1000 lbs.	5 tons	25 tons	100 tons	400 tons+
Width	5 ft.	20 ft.	40 ft.	60 ft.	80 ft.	120 ft.+
Length	15 ft.	60 ft.	120 ft.	180 ft.	240 ft.	360 ft. +
Height	Top Deck	2 decks	3 decks	4 decks	5 decks	6 decks +
Base DV	6	5	4	3	2	1

BASE SPEED

A ship's base speed is determined by its size. This speed may be increased by adding to the ship's total value during design (see Designing Airships on page XX). A ship flies 4.5 miles per hour for every 20 feet of its speed.

BASE MANEUVER

Just like flying creatures, ships are rated for their maneuverability in the air. A ship's base maneuver may be altered by increasing the ship's total value during design (see Designing Airships on page XX). For more information on maneuverability, see the section on Aerial Combat later in this chapter.

HARD POINTS

When outfitted for war, a ship can carry a certain number of weapons determined by its size. The hard points listing details the maximum number weapons a ship may carry. Normally, Martian airships carry two sorts of weapons: Mounted Radium Guns, and bomb racks. More information on these can be found in the section on Aerial Combat later in this chapter.

CREW

A ship needs sailors to keep it flying smoothly.

The crew listing details how many sailors a ship needs. An airship may carry a number of non-sailor passengers up to three times the size of its crew. Operating a vessel with less than the crew listing results in penalties on all die rolls for using the ship: Operating with three-quarters to one-half of the crew listing results in a -4 penalty, and operating from one-half to one-quarter of the crew listing results in a -8.

It is impossible to operate an airship with less than one-quarter of its crew listing.

For example: A Medium airship operating with only 4 crew would be at a -4 to all rolls. With only 2 crew, that penalty would be -8. A Medium airship cannot be run by less than 2 people.

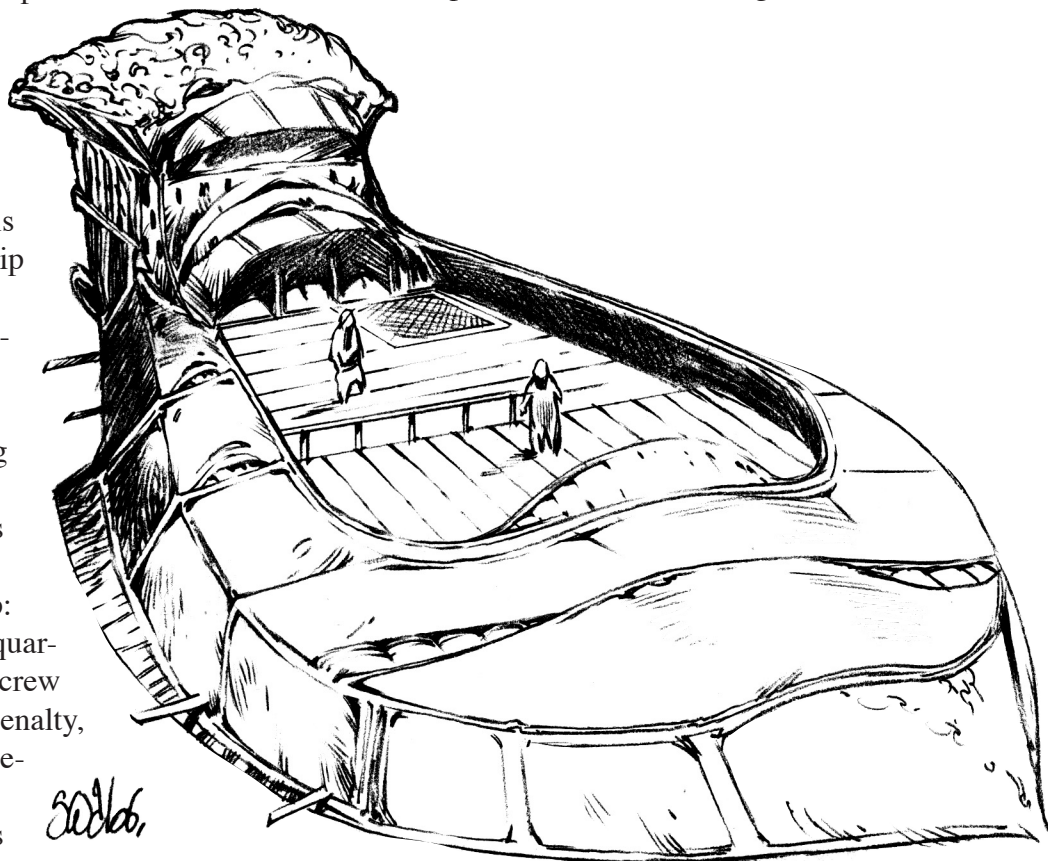
CARGO

Airships must carry their own supplies, and most haul goods between markets. A ship may carry cargo weighing up to the listed value. Additional passengers can be carried instead of cargo at a rate of 1 person per 200 lbs.

ABILITIES

While a ship's ability scores do not normally come into play, you may need to use them when adjudicating the effects of strange science or other events.

An airship's Strength and Constitution equal twice its hit dice. It possesses no Dexterity, Wisdom, Intelligence or Charisma. Use the captain's saving throws. See the section on Aerial Combat for more information on how a captain commands a ship and affects its handling.



AIRSHIP COMBAT

Travel through the aerial realm is a dangerous proposition. Not only does a traveller face the potentially deadly creatures that call the skies of Mars home, but there is the danger of encountering an enemy airship or marauding pirate as well.

Combat in the air is a nasty, brutish, and short affair. One devastating hit can send a combatant tumbling from the sky to meet his end. A blow that would only stagger a warrior on the ground can be the strike that ends an aerial battle.

In battle, one member of the crew must be designated as the captain. The ship moves on the captain's initiative, using his Dexterity modifier. In addition, when the ship must make a saving throw or skill check, it is the Captain's scores which are used.

In addition, Captains who are members of the Sky-Corsair advanced class, have specific abilities which affect their ships in combat.

COMBAT SCALE

If you use miniatures and a combat map to keep track of battles, ships can pose a slight problem in terms of scale. They are generally large enough to take up the entire space represented by a map that uses 5 ft. squares. To counter this, consider scaling the map up so that each square on the mat is 20 ft. across. What you lose in fine detail you gain in usability. When ships close or a melee erupts, use a smaller map with a 5 ft. scale to represent the action or zoom in on one smaller section of the battlefield.

ABSTRACT MOVEMENT

The aerial movement rules work best with miniatures and a battlemat. However, if you prefer to game without these tools you may prefer to use an abstract system of determining each combatants relative position. At the start of each round, each flying creature makes a Dexterity check or its rider makes a Ride check, and the captain of each airship makes a Dexterity check. These checks are modified as per the table below:

Maneuverability	Modifier
Perfect	+8
Good	+4
Average	+0
Poor	-4
Clumsy	-8

Then determine initiative as usual. When a combatant takes its action, it may choose to gain the benefit of attacking from the rear arc of any opponent who rolled lower on its Dexterity or Ride check.

While this rule removes some of the realism and tactical options from aerial combat, it does allow you to quickly resolve combats in the sky without ignoring the rather large advantage a highly agile flyer has over a ponderous opponent.

TACTICAL MOVEMENT

Once movement becomes three-dimensional and involves turning in midair and changing altitude, it gets more complicated. Most flying vehicles and creatures have to slow down at least a little to make a turn, and many creatures must maintain a minimum forward speed (although Martian airships do not -- all are capable of hovering). Everything has a maneuverability, as shown on Table: Maneuverability. The entries on the table are defined below.

Minimum Forward Speed: If a flying creature fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, it falls straight down, descending 150 feet in the first round of falling. If this distance brings it to the ground, it takes falling damage of 1d6 for every 10 feet fallen. If the fall doesn't bring the creature to the ground, it must spend its next turn recovering from the stall. It must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save to recover. Otherwise it falls another 300 feet. If it hits the ground, it takes falling damage. Otherwise, it has another chance to recover on its next turn.

Remember that Martian airships, unlike creatures, do not need to maintain a minimum forward speed.

MANEUVERABILITY

	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Min. Forward Speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Move backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	–5 ft.	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/10 ft.
Turn in place	Any	+90°/–5 ft.	+45°/–5 ft.	No	No
Maximum turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Up angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	45°
Up speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	45°
Down speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between down and up	0	0	5 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.

Hover: The ability to stay in one place while airborne. All Martian airships may hover, regardless of Maneuverability.

Move Backward: The ability to move backward without turning around.

Reverse: A creature with good maneuverability uses up 5 feet of its speed to start flying backward.

Turn: How much the creature can turn after covering the stated distance.

Turn in Place: A creature with good or average maneuverability can use some of its speed to turn in place.

Maximum Turn: How much the creature can turn in any one space.

Up Angle: The angle at which the creature can climb.

Up Speed: How fast the creature can climb.

Down Angle: The angle at which the creature can descend.

Down Speed: A flying creature can fly down at twice its normal flying speed.

Between Down and Up: An average, poor, or

clumsy flier must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any flier can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance of level flight.

ALTITUDE

As combatants swoop and soar in the sky, they change their altitude and attack each other from above and below. Unlike ground battles, air combats are fought in a fully three-dimensional environment. This aspect of battles in the air can cause a lot of headaches for determining ranges between two combatants. As such, these rules largely ignore up and down movement, since the planetary romance genre stories were never concerned with realism during battle scenes.

Simply fight battles on a two-dimensional grid as normal. Allow combatants to fly over each other while moving. If a combatant flies straight up or down, note the distance between the flier and the level plane represented by the combat map. For example, if a combatant flies 50 feet below the battle, note that down. Any combatant shooting at an opponent that has flown up or down uses the greater of the range between the two figures on the flat plane or the distance between the creature and the two-dimensional plane of the battle.

While this is far from realistic, it is a simple way to quickly account for vertical movement.

Gamemasters who wish to figure actual ranges using the Pythagorean theorem are more than welcome to do so.

WEATHER

The weather is an important factor for any sky sailor to consider. Rainstorms are unknown on Mars. Instead, forceful winds are the main concern.

The table on this page lists the effects of wind speed on air ships of various sizes. The effects of high winds are divided into three categories: safe, unsafe, and dangerous.

Safe winds pose no threat to ships of that size.

Unsafe (Uns) winds affect only ships of poor or clumsy maneuverability; the captain of such ships must make a Profession (sky sailor) or Pilot Airship check to avoid crashing whenever the ship makes any movement other than traveling straight forward or simply standing in place. The DC is a reflection of the ship's size and the strength of the winds, as indicated on the table.

Dangerous (Dng) winds require every ship to make a check every round, regardless of movement.

A ship that fails its save starts to crash. The pilot loses control and the ship starts to dive at normal crashing speed (150 feet in the first round, and 300 feet every round thereafter).

The pilot can recover from the crash only by making a Pilot Airship check (DC 20 +1 per round spent falling). Even so, it is quite possible that crew or cargo may be tossed overboard as the ship enters a freefall. (Have exposed crew make Reflex Saves, with a DC set by the GM)

COMBAT ACTIONS

On the captain's initiative, he may use the following actions to command the ship. At least half the crew must be alive and capable of carrying out commands to complete these actions. Otherwise, the ship continues forward at its current forward movement rate.

Movement: As a move action, the captain may move the ship at up to its speed, using its maneuverability to determine how it may move and at what speed. Ships may "run" if they move straight ahead without making any turns. A ship may also take a double move, maneuvering as normal.

WIND EFFECT ON AIRSHIPS									
Wind Force	Wind Speed	Attack Penalty	DC	Wind Effect by Ship Size					
				Sm	Med	Lg	Hg	Gar	Col
Light	0-10	-	-	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe
Moderate	11-20	-	-	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe
Strong	21-30	-	-	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe
Severe	31-50	-	10	Uns	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe	Safe
Windstorm	51-74	-4	15	Uns	Uns	Uns	Safe	Safe	Safe
Hurricane	75-174	-8	20	Dng	Dng	Dng	Uns	Safe	Safe
Tornado	175-300	Impossible	30	Dng	Dng	Dng	Dng	Uns	Uns
Note that Hurricanes and Tornados are seldom encountered above cloud level, although mega-storms of this strength occasionally strike Mars.									

Evasive Maneuvers: If the captain uses a move action to move the ship, he may then use his standard action to attempt to evade enemy attacks.

When the captain takes evasive maneuvers, the crew cannot attack as they execute his orders, but the ship gains an Defense bonus based on its maneuverability:

Maneuverability	DV Bonus
Perfect	+8
Good	+4
Average	+2
Poor	+1
Clumsy	+1

Ramming Attack: To make a ramming strike, the attacking ship must move into a space occupied by the target.

The attacking ship's captain then makes an attack using his full base attack bonus modified by Dexterity against the target's DV. If a ship collides with a solid object at any point during its move, it immediately resolves a ramming attack against whatever it hit.

Damage from a ramming attack is determined by the size of the ramming ship. In addition, when a ship rams a target it also takes damage based on the size of the object it struck. The ship that was rammed takes damage based on the size of the attacking ship, and the attacker takes damage based on the size of the defender.

The base damage by ship size is as follows, with the conditions below modifying the base amount.

Ship Size	Ram Damage
Small	2d8
Medium	4d8
Large	8d8
Huge	16d8
Gargantuan	32d8
Colossal	64d8

Impact Condition

Defender, not moving away
 Defender, moving away from attacker
 Attacker, defender not moving away
 Attacker, defender moving away
 Attacker, head-on collision
 Per full 20 ft. of speed (either ship)

Modifier

Full damage
 1/2 damage
 1/2 damage
 1/4 damage
 Full damage
 +1d8, max 2x

If the ships hit head on, the defending ship deals full rather than half damage. If the attacker and defender are both moving in the same direction and the attacker hits the defender from behind, the defender takes half normal ramming damage and the attacker takes a quarter of the ramming damage dealt by the defender rather than half.

A ship deals an additional 1d8 damage for every full 20 feet of its speed. However, a ship may never more than double the dice it uses for damage due to its speed.

On a missed ram, the defender may opt for the attacker to move either above or below his ship.

On a successful ram, the attacking ship either smashes through its target or becomes caught on it. If the ram attack destroys the defender, the attacker moves straight forward at its normal speed. If the defender survives, the two ships are now tangled together.

Each round, each ship's pilot may attempt to break free by making a successful Pilot Airship check (DC 20). Otherwise, they remain stuck in place. The larger of the two continues to move forward at the minimum forward airspeed based on its maneuverability (even though, technically, Martian airships have NO minimum forward airspeed -- you still use the speed on the chart for post-ram movement), carrying the smaller ship with it. If both are the same size, the ramming ship moves and drags the other.

If a ship breaks free, it may move as normal.

Unless the defender was moving away from the attacker, the attacker suffers an additional d8 damage for every 20 feet of the defender's speed. The defender may never deal more than double its base ramming damage due to speed. This damage is still halved, as normal (and otherwise modified as above).

Attacks: Airships have hardpoints, each of which can be mounted with a single weapon. Each weapon is assigned a firing arc, either rear or forward. The exception to this are bomb racks, which are mounted ventrally, to drop bombs on targets below. Weapons may only fire into the ship's arc to which they're assigned.

Dropped bombs are resolved with a standard attack roll, and can only target objects below the airship. Missed attack rolls result in deviation from the targeted square. Roll a d8, and starting with the square immediately in front of the target square, and proceeding clockwise, determine the direction of the deviation. The distance of the deviation is determined as follows:

Airship current speed + wind speed (in feet), divided by 1d10.

For example, a ship travelling at a speed of 200ft (approximately 45 miles per hour) in a 25-mile an hour wind (approximately 111ft), misses a bombing attack roll. The GM rolls a d8 and gets a 3, indicating the square to the immediate right of the target. The GM rolls a d10 for deviation distance and gets a 6. The bomb falls 52 feet to the right of the target (200 + 111, divided by 6, gives you 51.8).

The captain does not normally control a ship's weapon. Instead, the crew controls and fires them. As the crew takes casualties, the captain may assign sailors to one weapon or another to keep them fully manned.

DESTROYING SHIPS

When a ship is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it immediately begins to break into pieces. Each round, it loses 1 additional hit point. At -10 hit points it crumples apart and is destroyed.

SHIP'S CREW

No airship can cast off from harbor without being well crewed. A good and experienced crew can make all the difference between life and death in combat or when pitted against the most dreadful of storms, regardless of the relative ability of their captain. These may be men who have served their entire life on board an airship in one way or another. However, there are also many unexperienced crews, those comprised of men setting sail for the very first time.

A Crew Roster is used to record the details and abilities of the crew onboard every ship. This shorthand, depicting a crew as a single stat block, allows players and Gamemasters alike to judge the effectiveness of any ship's crew at a glance, and greatly aids combat resolution during the ship-to-ship combat and boarding actions.

Player characters in a crew are not featured on a Crew Roster—and only those NPCs who take actions are part of the mass of crew should be included.

A typical Crew Roster is described by the following entries:

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Finesse	Type	Armor Piercing	Restrictions
Airship Weapons								
Radium Gun, Mounted	2d12	18-20 x3	Energy	60ft	No	Mounted	8	Military (6)
Standard Bomb ¹	4d8	-	Concussion	dropped	No	Large	4	Military (6)
Radium Bomb ²	5d10	-	Energy	dropped	No	Huge	8	Military (6)
¹ Standard Bomb: Burst Radius 50ft, Reflex DC 12. A single hardpoint can hold 4, and drop them 1 at a time or all at once (although that would require a separate attack roll for each).								
² Radium Bomb: Burst Radius 100ft, Reflex DC 20. A single hardpoint can hold only 1. These are incredibly rare weapons.								

Class & Level: Crew class is determined by majority – if a ship has 2 strong heroes, 3 Tough heroes and 1 Fast hero as its crew, then the crew will be noted as Tough heroes. The level of any crew is considered to be formed by the average of every member of that crew, rounded down.

Crew Size: This is simply a record of how many members are in a ship's crew.

Crew Wounds: Crew Wounds are used to measure the damage a crew may sustain in combat before being wiped out. This is determined by combining the Hit Points of every crew member, and then dividing the total by 10.

Attacks, Damage & Defense Value: These are determined by simple majority – the weapons and armor that the majority of the crew are armed with are assumed to be carried by all for the purposes of the Crew Roster. The majority of the crew are also used to determine base attack bonus and any modifiers for Strength for attack and damage, and modifiers for Dexterity with respect to Defense Value.

Saves and Initiative: Once again, the saving throws of the majority of the crew are noted down on the Crew Roster.

Skill: This is the average rank of Profession: (sky-sailor) of the crew. Total the ranks in that skill of every crew member, then divide it by Crew Size, rounded down. This method allows those with greater knowledge of the skies to impart their wisdom to other members far less experienced, even when in the grip of a storm or the heat of battle.

Feats: Feats are only ever listed on the Crew Roster when the majority of the crew possess the same feat or feats.

Crew Quality: This is an overall rating the crew as a whole, used for morale determination, among other things. The quality of the crew is determined by the Skill rating (see above), modified by the abilities of the Captain and command crew, as follows:

Modifiers:

Captain is Sky-corsair of 5th through 7th level: +2
Captain is Sky-corsair of 8th through 10th level: +4
Lax Discipline –1
Firm Discipline +1
Brutal Discipline –1

Adjusted Skill

0-2

3-4

5-8

9-12

13+

Result

Rabble

Poor

Average

Superior

Expert

This Crew Roster is used as a matter of convenience throughout these rules. The Crew Roster is used when large numbers of crew members need to perform one task at the same time.

BOARDING THE ENEMY

Boarding is a special standard action that allows an airship to draw up alongside an enemy vessel and launch a devastating melee attack with its crew. A successful boarding attempt will allow one ship to capture another, perhaps without even damaging it, but ferocious defenders may well be able to turn the tables and launch a strong counterattack.

Movement During Boarding: A ship may move but may not launch any attacks. The ship stops when the target has been reached. The target vessel may immediately make an attack of opportunity. The target vessel must be within two size classes of the ship attempting to board or else the action will be an automatic failure.

Attempting a Boarding: To successfully launch a boarding action, two ships need to be brought alongside each other and secured. If the defender is willing to accept a boarding attempt, this may be considered automatic as the attacker closes range.

However, few crew are willing to accept an attempted boarding action. As the attacker draws close, grappling hooks are thrown, all attempting to snare the defender's ship and draw it close enough for the attacker's men to cross over and begin to board. The defender meanwhile, will

be firing ranged weapons as they try to keep the attacker's head down, all the while severing the ropes and chains that are bringing the two ships together.

If the defender wishes to resist the attempt, both they and the attacker make opposing Profession (sky-sailor) checks. The attacker's check is modified as follows;

Circumstance	Modifier
Vessels two size classes apart	-4
Vessels one size class apart	-2
Attacker's crew size larger than defenders	+2
Defender's vessel is not a warship	+4
Attacker's vessel is a warship	+2
Every additional ship attempting to board defender	+4

If the defender wins the opposing Skill check, the boarding action has been successfully defeated before it began – the ships are not bound together and both may move freely in their next action. If the attacker wins the check, he has ensnared the enemy ship and may now immediately launch a boarding action.

Resolving a Boarding Action: The Crew Roster is used for each ship engaged in a boarding action as the whole crew will be involved in the combat.

Initiative: Just as in melee combat, both sides must make Initiative checks to determine who may act first. You can use either the Initiative of the Crew or the Captain, whichever is higher.

Combat: Combat is resolved between crews in much the same manner as described in Chapter Seven. The winner of the Initiative check makes an attack roll against the enemy crew's Defense Value. If successful, damage is dealt against the enemy's crew wounds. After this has been resolved, the loser of the Initiative check makes an attack roll in the same way.

Attack and damage rolls between crews can be greatly affected if one crew outnumberes the other, as shown on the table at the bottom of the page.

Crew Wounds are. . .	Attack Modifier	Damage Modifier	Morale Modifier
Twice enemy's	+1	x2	+1
Three times enemy's	+2	x3	+2
Five times enemy's	+3	x5	+3
Ten times or more enemy's	+5	x10	+5
50% of enemy's	-1	x1	-1
33% of enemy's	-2	x1	-2
20% of enemy's	-3	x1	-3
10% or less of enemy's	-5	x1/2	-5

Morale: There are very few ship's crews who will truly fight to the death. As the enemy swarms over the railings of the ship, slaying crew mates with abandon, many men may choose to throw down their weapons than risk a cruel death.

Morale checks are made in boarding actions whenever the circumstances listed on the table below are met. The DC required to be rolled for each circumstance is also given.

Morale Circumstance	DC
Crew Wounds reduced to half of original score	15
Crew Wounds reduced to one quarter of original score	20
Crew suffers more damage in a round than enemy	15
Crew is struck by enemy of three times or greater Crew Wounds	15

The Captain's charisma modifier can be used as a morale modifier for his Crew. Crew quality is also a modifier:

Quality	Modifier
Rabble	-4
Poor	-2
Average	0
Superior	+2
Expert	+4

The Morale check is a Willpower saving throw. If a Morale check is failed, the crew surrenders.

Multiple Boardings: It is certainly possible for a ship to face two or more boarding actions in a single turn, particularly if being attacked by smaller vessels. In such cases, the defender's crew must be split into two or more (though this need not be an equal division) with each section defending against one attempted boarding action. In some circumstances, this may have an effect on Crew Rosters in terms of attacks and damage but generally, only Crew Wounds will alter, as most crew will be formed of sky-sailors of very similar skills and strengths.

REPAIRING AIRSHIPS

The strange metal that makes up the hull of a Martian airship is self-repairing, for as long as the airship remains intact. Any vessel that has not been reduced to 0 hit points can be repaired.

For a ship to repair itself, it must be landed and shut down, otherwise no repair occurs. When the ship is shut down, it repairs damage at a rate of 2 hit points per day for each hit die the ship possesses. A 5 HD Medium airship, for example, repairs 10 hit points per day of inactivity.

Sadly, any vessel which suffers damage bringing it to 0 hit points begins to break apart and crash. At this point, no further repair is possible -- the mysterious quality of the strange metal stops working, and another glorious airship is lost forever.



CREATING AIRSHIPS

What follows are the steps for Gamemasters to design airships. Keep in mind that these are not *active* rules -- meaning that no character can decide to build an airship from scratch. The rules are here merely to facilitate the GM's design of existing airships encountered by the PCs.

To design a ship, follow these basic steps.

1. Choose a ship size and hit dice. A ship has 5.5 hit points per hit die, rounded down. A ship's base quality factor equals its normal hit dice.

2. Determine the ship's speed and maneuverability. Look up the design's base speed and maneuverability on the tables on page 202. You may increase a ship's speed by 20 feet or improve its maneuverability by one class by adding its base quality factor to its current quality factor. A ship may not have a speed greater than 500 feet, nor may it improve its maneuverability by more than two categories.

For example, a 10 hit die ship has a base quality factor of 10. For every 20-foot increase added to its base speed, increase its quality factor by 10. For every maneuverability category it improves, its quality factor increases by 10. Thus, a 10 HD ship with 40 added to its base speed has a quality factor of 30 (its base quality factor of 10 plus 10 for the first bonus 20 feet of speed and another 10 for the second 20 feet increase.)

You may opt to reduce a ship's base speed or its maneuverability class. For every 20-foot or one category reduction, reduce the ship's quality factor by one-fifth of its base quality factor. A ship may not reduce its quality factor by more than half of its base quality factor in this manner.

3. Compute the ship's hardness. Airships have hardness based on their size, as per the table on page 202. You can increase (or decrease) the hardness by 1 by adding (or subtracting)

its base quality factor to its current quality factor. This represents alterations in hull thickness. Hardness may be altered by no more than 5 points.

4. Add weapons. A ship may have a number of weapons listed under the hard points for its size. Choosing to leave a hard point unmounted adds 20 to the ship's speed, at no alteration of quality.

5. Add a template, if applicable. Templates will be featured in future **MARS** products.

7. Design a ship layout. A sky ship must have the minimum dimensions listed for its size, and it may be no larger than the next highest size class.

The GM may use the final Quality Factor as a general determination of the worth of that particular airship in comparison with others (useful for determining the strength of opponents facing the PCs, for example).

Remember that airships represent the ultimate treasure for player-characters on Mars. Do not allow them to be acquired lightly, or replaced easily.

SAMPLE AIRSHIP

CALLORIAN AEROPATROL

The common patrol craft used by the Callorian Aeronavy.

Medium Airship (5 HD); **HP:** 55; **DV:** 5;

Hardness: 3; Speed: 300 ft (Good); Crew: 6; Passengers: 18; Cargo: 1000 lbs. Size: 20x60, 2 decks. Weapons: Two Radium Guns (1 forward, 1 rear)

Crew Roster: Quality: Average

Fast Hero 3, Size 6, Wounds 15, Attacks: Rapier +3 (1d8, 18-20 x2); DV: +4 dodge, +3 parry; Initiative +6; Fort +2 Ref +4 Will +2; Skill: +7



BESTIARY

Mars today holds but a fraction of the life forms it once held, but those which have survived are extraordinarily tough. Many have evolved strange defenses and unique abilities which enable them to survive in the harsh environment. Others simply seem to be evolution experimenting desperately, throwing out all manner of freaks and monsters in the hopes of finding the true successors to the dying life forms of the past.

The following creatures represent the more “interesting” life forms of Mars – the more banal creatures are left undocumented. Mars has all manner of small furry herbivores, but adventurers do not need to concern themselves with such.

The general goal of adventuring in **MARS** is *not* to “kill them and take their stuff”. The goal of an adventure may be to rescue a kidnapped princess, discover the secrets of a lost city, prevent a green man horde from swarming over a frontier city, or stop a crazed scientist from unleashing his army of synthe-men on the planet. It is rarely about kicking down the door and killing the monster.

That said, battling strange and powerful creatures is a fundamental part of the genre. Such creatures might be mere brutes looking for a meal, or they may be pets or servants of the opposition. Battles in the arena are also commonplace.

Monsters are best used as follows:

As part of the environment: There are reasons why most Martians stick to the cities – the wilderness is hostile. Anywhere there is enough water for the red men to survive, there are other creatures. The constant threat of attack from Busharbal or Vronag Vesh should remind adventurers that traveling into the wilds is, in fact, an *adventure*.

As guardians: Much of Mars lacks sophisticated technological defenses. There are no remaining electrical locks or security scanners in the ruined cities (well....almost no), but there are often

people living there who have things to guard. Trained animals serve as excellent guardians -
- they can be taught to tell friend from foe, to bellow an alert, and to gut opponents.

As pets/servants: The image is classic – the arch villain, seemingly alone in his throne chamber as the heroes burst in, laughs maniacally, pulls a lever, and unleashes a hideous monster upon the heroes! He will, naturally, stay to watch the slaughter rather than making good his escape while he can.

BUSHARBAL (SANDSQUID)

Huge Beast

Hit Dice: 12d10+36 (102 Hit Points)

Initiative: +4(+4 Dex)

Speed: 15 feet (3 squares), Burrow 40 feet (8 squares)

Defense: 21(-2 Size +4 Dex +9 Dodge) touch 12 flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+26

Attack: +19 melee (bite 2d6+6\19-20 x2) or +13 melee (slam 1d8+6)

Full Attack: +19 melee (Bite 2d6+6\19-20 x2) and 4 x +13 melee (slam 1d8+6)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Swallow Whole

Special Qualities: DR 7/-, Tremorsense

Saves: Fort +11,Ref +12,Will +9

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

Skills: Listen+11, Spot+10,

Feats: Alertness, Improved Grab, Weapon Focus (Bite), Improved Critical (Bite)

Environment: Desert

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: N/A

Advancement: 10-12 Hit Dice (Large), 13-15 Hit Dice (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: NA

The sands are quiet and soft. Suddenly, they explode into a cloud of stinging, blinding, dust. All around, dark shapes writhe and twist, reaching for any moving being and grabbing it. At first, it seems as if many creatures are attacking, but as the sand settles, it becomes apparent it is a single immense creature, it's six tentacles forcing helpless prey into its ravenous maw...

The sandsquid is a classic example of Martian adaptability. As the seas of Mars became lakes and swamps, the ancestors of these predators learned to survive in the thick muck at the bottom; as even this dried, the creature adapted to the fine sands of the ocean beds. Over the millennia, it has learned to move inwards, through the softer silt which surrounds the canals or along the paths of dried rivers. It is a dangerous threat to isolated travelers or even small bands of green or nomadic red Martians. Those which strike at the canal cities are usually killed or driven off by a mix of sheer numbers and powerful radium rays.

The creature somewhat resembles an earthly squid, but there are key differences. Its body is supported by a powerful internal cartilage shell, giving it the strength to move about on land as well as resistance to most melee weapons. It has

six tentacles, all of equal length. The tentacles lack suckers, but are fantastically strong. The creature is usually reddish brown in hue, making it difficult to see in the Martian deserts even when it is not hidden underground.

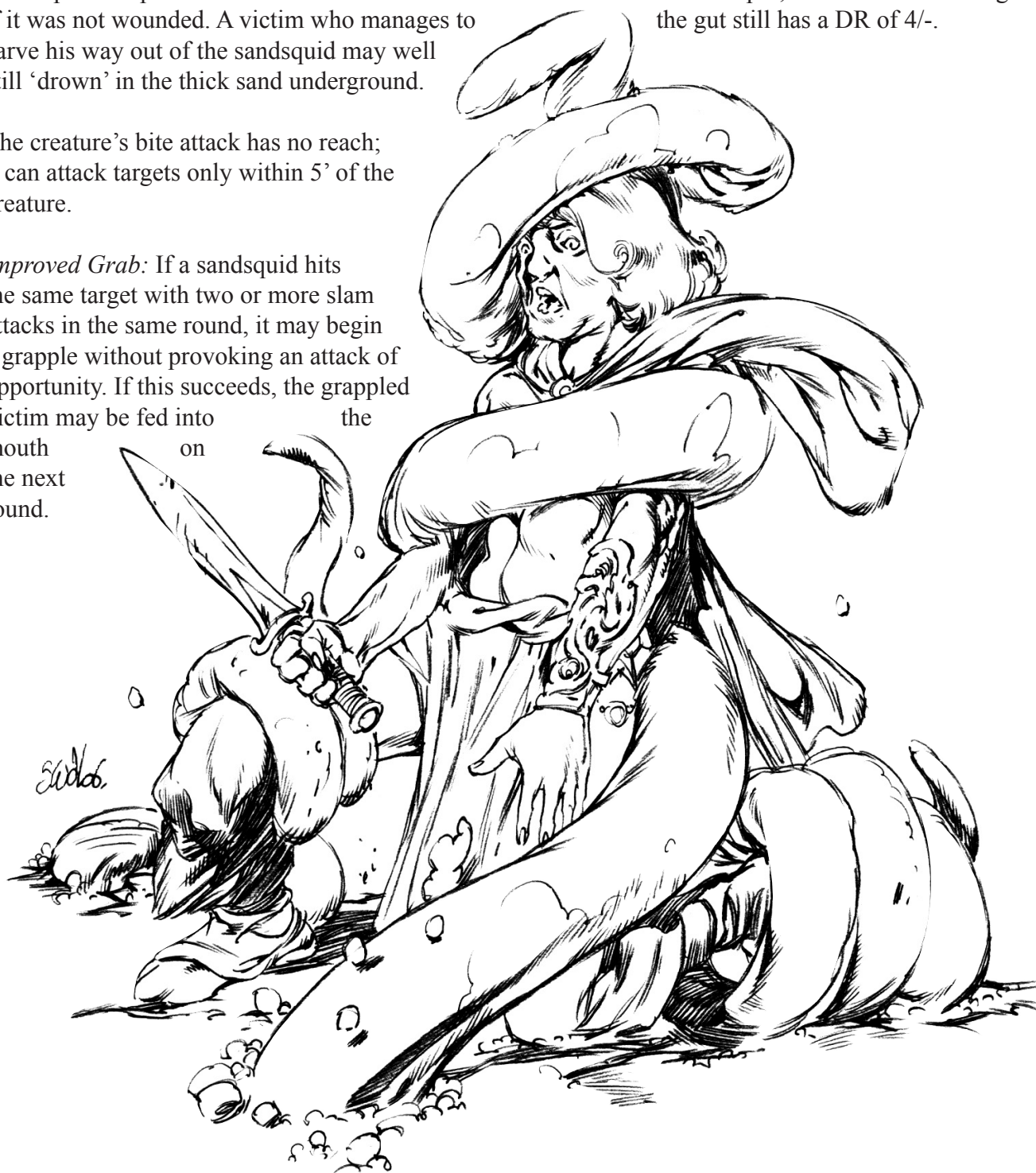
Combat and Tactics

The sandsquid lurks underground, waiting until its tremorsense detects either a single being or, if it is very hungry, a small group. It waits until they are just above it, then attacks. It will try to swallow one victim, then dive underground until it is dead, then repeat the process if there is more food and if it was not wounded. A victim who manages to carve his way out of the sandsquid may well still 'drown' in the thick sand underground.

The creature's bite attack has no reach; it can attack targets only within 5' of the creature.

Improved Grab: If a sandsquid hits the same target with two or more slam attacks in the same round, it may begin a grapple without provoking an attack of opportunity. If this succeeds, the grappled victim may be fed into the mouth on the next round.

Swallow Whole: A grappled being may be fed into the sandsquid's beaked mouth. It automatically takes damage from the creature's bite attack before being swallowed. A sandsquid can hold one medium, two small, four tiny, or eight diminutive or smaller creatures in its gullet. Each round that a swallowed creature remains in the sandsquid's belly, it takes 1d8 points of acid damage. A swallowed creature may escape by doing 15 points of damage to the sandsquid with a slashing or piercing weapon; it must overcome a Defense of only 8 to strike the stomach walls in a sensitive spot, but the interior lining of the gut still has a DR of 4/-.



CHU'GRAHK (NIGHTLEAP)

Large Beast

Hit Dice: 6d10+18 (51 Hit Points)

Initiative: +6(+6 Dex)

Speed: 40 feet (8 squares)

Defense: 19(-1 Size +6 Dex +4 Dodge) touch 15
flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+15

Attack: +11 melee (1d8+5 bite) or +11 melee
(1d6+5 claw)

Full Attack: +11 melee (1d8+5 bite) and +9
melee (2x 1d6+5 claw)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake

Special Qualities: DR 5/-, Shadowblending,
Darkvision

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +8

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 23, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 16,
Cha 12

Skills: Hide +13, Listen +7, Move Silently +17,
Spot +5

Feats: Multiattack, Improved Initiative

Environment: Jungle

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: N/A

Advancement: 7-8 Hit Dice (Large) 9-11 Hit
Dice (Huge)

Level Adjustment: NA

It seems to be nothing more than dappled shadows in the lavender jungle, a trick of light and wind as the distant sun sinks below the horizon. But the light and the wind do not flicker from tree to tree, do not show glints of white fang and yellow eye, do not suddenly burst from the thick undergrowth to rend flesh to ribbons and crush bone to splinters...

The white apes of the northern jungles have many names for this beast – night prowler, shadowed teeth, dark claw. It is feared by any who must travel deep into the twisted woods alone or in small groups.



In form, it is much like a massive six-limbed cat, with a row of small, sharp, horns along its back. Its fur is dappled lavender and purple, with a lighter underbelly of soft pink. Its eyes are solid orbs of yellow, with no pupils.

Combat and Tactics

The nightleap hunts mostly during the evening and night, hence its name. It will follow potential prey for some time, waiting until one victim is alone. It will then pounce, rake, and otherwise try to do maximum damage in the minimum amount of time, and drag the body back to devour at its leisure.

Pounce (Ex): If a nightleap charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +11 melee, damage 1d6+5.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a dire lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Shadowblending (Ex): The nightleap's dark, mottled fur blends perfectly with jungle foliage. So long as it is evening or nighttime, and the creature is in the jungle, it gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks. (This is included in the creature's stat block, above – subtract 8 from its Hide bonus if it does not apply.)

Soft Paws (Ex): The nightleap moves very quietly indeed, giving it a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks. This has been calculated into the stat block, above.

GLASHGAR (HORNED DRINKER)

Large Beast

Hit Dice: 8d10+32 (76 Hit Points)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 feet (8 squares)

Defense: 18 (-1 Size +3 Dex +6 Dodge) touch 18 flat-footed 9

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+17

Attack: +14 melee (1d8+7 19-20/x2 gore)

Full Attack: +13/+8 melee (1d8+7 19-20/x2 gore)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Blood Drain, Egg Implantation

Special Qualities: DR 4/-

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +8

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +6, Move Silently +10,

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Horn), Improved Critical (Horn)

Environment: Wastelands

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Advancement: 9-10 Hit Dice (Large), 11-13 Hit Dice (Huge)

Level Adjustment: NA

It bursts out of cover with considerable speed, its six thin legs a blur as it races across the dusty sands. A pale lavender in color, with fine scales shimmering in the sunlight, it charges towards its prey. As it closes, it lowers its head, so that the three foot long horn upon its head become a deadly spear, aimed at the heart of its prey...

Some might call this beast a “Martian Unicorn”, but it is not a creature of grace and beauty. It is a vicious and cunning predator which relies on speed more than brute force, and which has a unique and somewhat grisly method of feeding. It lacks claws, and its mouth is oddly atrophied, with only vestigial teeth, but it sports a vicious horn. Close examination of the horn shows that it is hollow, though very strong, and contains many fine grooves and holes. Once a living creature has been impaled, the glashgar drinks their blood, draining them through its horn. This process can ultimately leave the prey a desiccated husk.

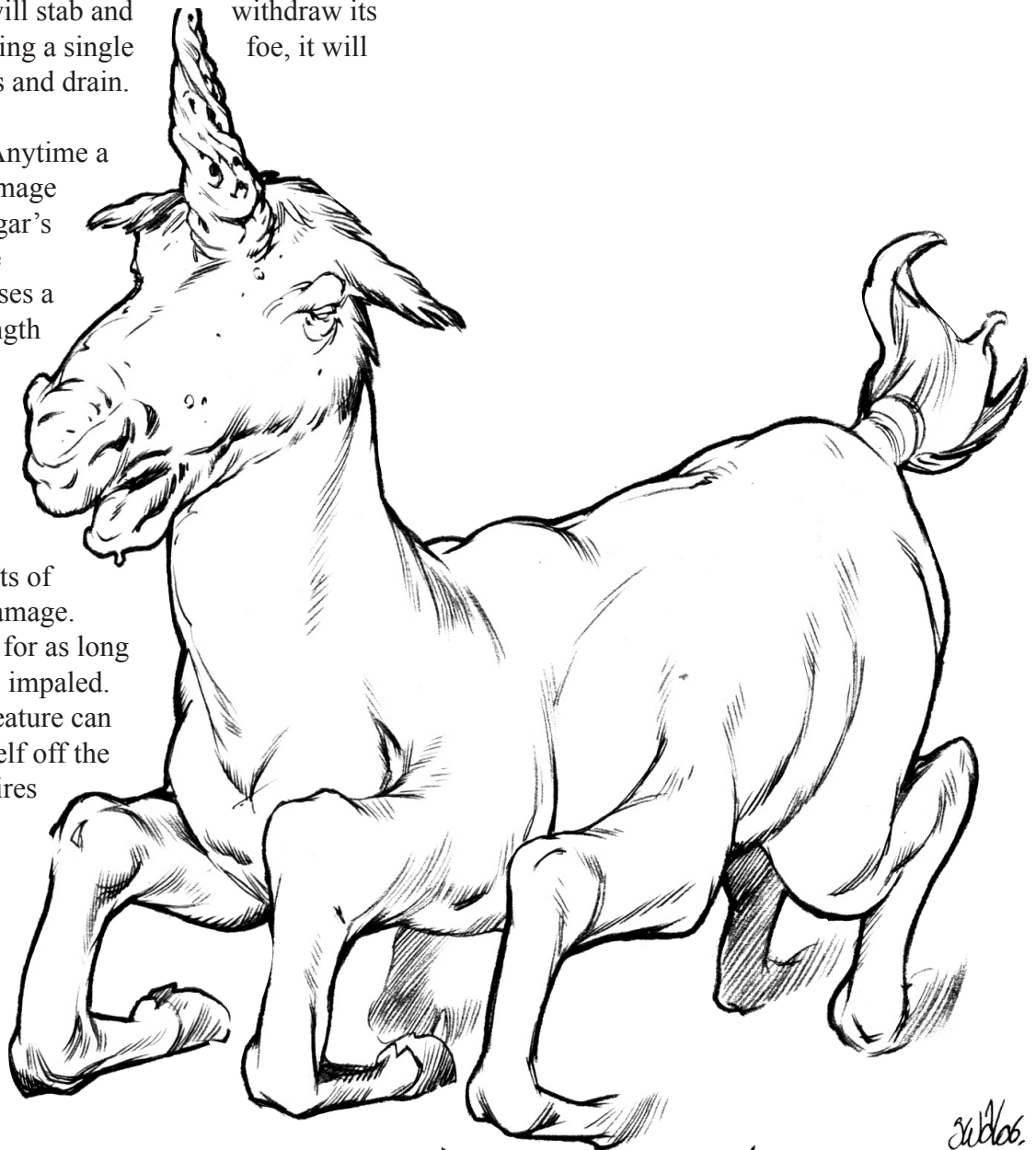
However, at certain times, the glashgar will not completely drink its full. Instead, it will implant an egg within the impaled victim, one which will eventually hatch into a new glashgar. (The beasts meet and mate as is normal for Martian mammals, but the female then holds the fertilized egg in her horn until a suitable host is found.)

Combat and Tactics

The glashgar prefers to attack solitary prey, so it has time to fully feed. While it can feed on freshly-killed corpses, it prefers to drain living beings. It will skulk quietly behind potential food, waiting until one being is alone, and then charge. If attacked by multiple opponents, it will stab and withdraw its horn, but if facing a single foe, it will seek to impale and drain.

Blood Drain: Anytime a target takes damage from the glashgar's horn, it may be impaled if it loses a contest of strength with the creature. If this occurs, on the following turn, the glashgar can cause 1d6 points of Constitution damage. This continues for as long as the victim is impaled. An impaled creature can seek to pull itself off the horn; this requires a Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 20) and also causes 2d6 points of additional damage.

Egg Implantation: A female glashgar may choose to implant an egg in a victim. The target must be impaled, but suffers only 1d2 points of blood drain. The act of implanting the egg causes no additional pain. After 2+1d4 weeks have passed, the glashgar egg will hatch, and the newborn beast will cause 3d6 points of damage as it bursts out of the host. During the time when the egg is being held within the host's body, the host is constantly *fatigued*. Removing the egg requires the Surgery feat and a Treat Injury check (DC 23). Identifying a female glashgar from a male glashgar requires a Survival check (DC 25) or a Knowledge (Biological Sciences) check (DC 15).



MONOLESH

(DREAMLURE)

Large Plant

Hit Dice: 8d8+16 (52 Hit Points)

Initiative: +2(+2 Dex)

Speed: 0 feet (0 squares)

Defense: 14(-1 Size +2 Dex +3 Dodge) touch 11 flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+17

Attack: +13 melee (1d6+7 slam) or +13 melee (1d8+7 bite)

Full Attack: +13 melee (4 x 1d6+7 slam) and +8 melee (1d8+7 bite)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Swallow Whole, Illusion Lure

Special Qualities: DR 6/-

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +7

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 14, Con 14, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: NA

Feats: NA

Environment: Jungle, Oasis

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Alignment: N/A

Advancement: 7-8 Hit Dice (Large) 9-11 Hit Dice (Huge)

Level Adjustment: NA

The image is clear – it is the one you seek, your missing love, the Lady Alashoh. She looks to you pleadingly, her long absence from you making her even more lovely than you had remembered. Eagerly, you run to her, not bothering to wonder how she came to be in this desolate oasis far from the lost city to which you know she had been taken. In the heady warmth of her embrace, you do not notice your skin and flesh being torn away by acid until it is far too late to escape the embrace of the hungry plant...

The dreamlure is a psionic plant creature which dwells in the northern jungles, in oases, and in thornpatches. It is mindless, but it can instinctively probe the minds of passersby, creating an image of the thing they most desire – a lost love, food, a desperately needed weapon

or tool, and so on. Once the victim has been lured close, the creature grabs him with its vines and pulls them into its flower-like central body, where they are digested and eaten.

Combat and Tactics

The dreamlure is non-sentient. It instinctively creates an alluring image and then attacks the first creature to get within range of its vines. Once it has swallowed one being, it will not attempt to swallow another until it has finished digesting the first, but it will kill all other targets in range, in order to eat them later.

Illusion Lure: The dreamlure selects, randomly, a single victim who passes within 60'. It plucks from his mind the image of that which he is currently seeking and then creates that illusion. The target must make a Will save (DC 16) or be compelled to walk towards the lure, utterly convinced it is real and desirable. (The save DC is Charisma based) All others who get within 60' of the plant see the same thing as the chosen victim, but they are not victims of psychic compulsion. Each also gets a Will save at the same DC. If they fail it, they perceive the illusion as real, but they can ponder the logic of it freely. If they succeed, they see a dim shadow of the illusion, and clearly see the dreamlure.

Improved Grab: If the dreamlure succeeds with two of its slam attacks, it may begin a grapple attempt without provoking an Attack of Opportunity.

Swallow Whole: A dreamlure can try to swallow a grabbed Medium or smaller opponent by making a successful grapple check.

A swallowed creature takes 2d8 points of acid damage per round from the dream lure's interior. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 20 points of damage to the petals (Defense 10, DR 3/-). Once the creature exits, oozing sap closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A dreamlure's petals can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

SHALAG (FLYING JAW)

Medium Beast

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (45 Hit Points)

Initiative: +4(+4 Dex)

Speed: 0 feet (0 squares), fly 60 feet (Good)

Defense: 18(+0 Size +4 Dex +4 Dodge) touch 14 flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+8

Attack: +8 melee (1d6+3 Bite)

Full Attack: +8/+3 melee (1d6+3 Bite)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Serrated Jaw

Special Qualities: DR 3/-

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills: Listen+8, Spot+9

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Focus (Bite)

Environment: Any air

Organization: Pack (2-5), Swarm (6-12)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: N/A

Advancement: 7-8 Hit Dice (Medium), 9-12 Hit Dice (Huge)

Level Adjustment: NA

At first, they appear to be dark dots in the sky, barely visible against the distant setting sun. Then, suddenly, they appear, a swarm of serpent-like creatures with outsized heads and hideously sharp, inward-pointing teeth. As the swarm moves among the towers and minarets of the canal city, the red folk rush inside, slamming windows and grabbing for weapons. The slow or the unfortunate who remain outside are doomed...

The shalag is thankfully rare in the modern Martian world. Its eggs are sometimes found in briarpatches, and, when they hatch, a new swarm is born and let loose on the world. Rarely, a swarm will lay eggs in a stable oasis or in the fields around an abandoned canal city – in such a case, the threat becomes perennial to anyone who dwells nearby.

A shalag lives its entire life in the air, flying by means of a subconscious telekinetic power. It

resembles a six foot long, wingless, snake, about four to six inches thick, but its head is grossly outsized for its body – its immense jaws can open to at least eight inches in diameter.

The shalag lifecycle is simple. The beasts hatch from eggs and immediately begin floating along, killing insects and small animals. As they grow, they can soar higher and higher, and form into small hunting packs to take down larger prey. They will roam far in search of food, and are often drawn to canal cities due to the scent of water. After about a year of life, the shalags engage in violent mating dances, during which half the males of any pack are slain battling for the right to reproduce. The pregnant females then seek out any moist soil in which they can burrow, then bury themselves within it. When their body rots away, the eggs (which are never laid) hatch.

Combat

The shalag is a mindless eater. It will flay at a target, tear out a goblet of flesh, and fly on to swallow it before returning for another bite. It will do this until it is sated or until it is driven off. (A shalag will generally flee if it is reduced to 1/4 of its hit points.)

Serrated Teeth: The teeth of the shalag are barbed and curve inwards. When it tears free a chunk of flesh, the wound left behind is especially vicious. Shalag wounds bleed at 1 point per round, or a 2 points per round if a critical hit was scored. This bleeding can be stopped by a Treat Injury check (DC 10), with one such check required per bleeding wound.

VRONAG VESH (BEAST OF TEETH AND ARMOR)

Huge Beast

Hit Dice: 10d10+50 (105 Hit Points)

Initiative: +1(+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 feet (6 squares)

Defense: 16(-2 Size +1 Dex +7 Dodge) touch 16 flat-footed 8

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+25

Attack: +17 melee (2d6+7 Bite) or +17 melee (1d8+7 Claw)

Full Attack: +17/+12 melee (2d6+7 bite) plus +15 melee (1d8+7 2 claws)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Chew, Bellow

Special Qualities: DR 10/-

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +9

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills: Listen+7, Spot+10,

Feats: Multiattack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Grapple

Environment: Wastelands

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Allegiance: N/A

Advancement: 11-13 Hit Dice (Huge), 14-16 Hit Dice (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: NA

There is a bellowing roar which turns your bones to powder and your courage to cold ash. The ground trembles. Briars as thick as a strong man's leg are torn aside like dried reeds as the monstrosity emerges from the thornpatch. It is a nightmare in violet and grey, a four-legged creature covered in folds of skin so thick and hard it might as well be rock. Its teeth are wriggling of their own accord, as if its mouth held an army of warriors waving swords. It rears up, and its forelegs show mighty claws. It charges into the knot of soldiers in front of you, and it begins to cause the sand to grow redder still...

The vronag vesh might not be the single most lethal creature on Mars, but it is deadly enough. It is a carnivore, and always hungry, though it is capable of sustaining itself for a surprisingly long time on a single kill. It is thankfully rare on Mars today. It survives near the few oasis or where thornpatches bloom.

A few have been kept, and bred, at great cost in life and livestock, in some of the red Martian cities. It is also known that a few green Martian tribes have held vronag's captive, where they worship it as a god and feed it prisoners (and the elderly and weak) in the hopes of gaining the blessings of its might.



The hide of the vronag can be used to make heavy armor. Such armor is sometimes worn by the green men as signs of prowess in battle. Red Martians will make such armor as ceremonial garb, but will rarely wear it into battle.

Combat

The vronag vesh is a simple-minded brute with few natural predators. It is used to prey much smaller than itself, as well. It prefers to charge into the thick of its enemies, gnawing on one while it uses its claws and its Cleave feat to decimate the others. It will usually open with a bellow, in order to keep foes from fleeing before it can finish slaughtering them. If grievously wounded, it will flee combat, but it will try to take some morsel with it in its mouth before it does.

Bellow: The vronag vesh can let loose with a bone-melting bellow of noise up to three times per day. This affects all creatures in a 30' radius burst. Anyone who hears the bellow must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be unable to move – they will be rooted to the spot with fear. They suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to Defense and attack rolls. The fear will last 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution based.

Chew: If the vronag hits with its bite attack, it may immediately begin a grapple. So long as the creature remains grappled and is medium or smaller in size, the vronag may tear it apart with its teeth, automatically doing bite damage each turn. The vronag can only chew on one being at a time, but it can continue to bite – it uses the rear rows of teeth to chew and the forward rows to bite.

ADAPTING EXISTING CREATURES

The countless tomes published under the Open Gaming License contain thousands of monsters. Many of these can be adapted for use on Mars, and can provide an endless assortment of creatures to hurl at players. However, the 'feel' of **MARS** differs from that of a typical fantasy game, and care should be taken in selecting creatures which work well within the game. The following are some good criteria:

Few or no magical abilities: A small number of magical powers can be acceptable, if they are given non-magical explanations – for example, illusion-casting powers can be achieved via emitting hallucinogenic vapors, and wingless flight can be explained by gas bladders. The more inherently mystical the creature, though, the less it will fit into the Martian environment.

Not Intelligent: Mars has a plethora of sentient races as it is; adding more complicates the interactions between the established races. The history of Mars is long and well-documented – where did this previously unknown race come from? At most, a new sentient race should be an offshoot of an existing race, perhaps dwelling in an isolated environment. Consider, however, that Mars is a harsh and unforgiving place, and that new races must have some means of survival.

However, the genetic tinkering of the grey Martians or of mad scientists may well have produced 'one off' sentients or even small batches of experimental beings. Such creatures will be hideous in form and deformed in mind – aberrations are likely.

The following are some of the core d20 creatures which can be adapted to life on Mars. It is *strongly* recommended that Game Masters select only a handful of such creatures, especially sentient ones – see above. Otherwise, the game changes considerably in flavor and tone. Too many 'familiar' creatures, even if renamed and recolored, can make it seem like a standard d20 game, only without magic. If the Game Master

wishes to have a wider palette of beasts, they should be separated by distance, with each new 'set' of monsters inhabiting a newly-discovered locale.

Each monster is described as if it does exist on Mars; it is up to the Game Master to determine which beasts truly do. The Game Master should also change the name and some cosmetic details of the monster – the assassin vine becomes the *charagh-ghraw*, or 'Hidden Strangler' in the speech of the white apes, while the ankheg is the *levlavin* to the red men, and is a striated orange in hue.

ABOLETH

This aquatic nightmare might seem wholly out of place on dry Mars, but in the Everdark Sea, far below the planet's surface, such horrors do exist, though their origin is unknown. They may be creations of the grey men or the living brains, or they may be a third player in the power games of the dark underworld.

ANKHEG

These burrowing nightmares still plague the Martian fields. While farmers normally contend only with harmless larvae, every so often, one will grow to adult size and emerge, raging and killing. While a troop of well-trained soldiers with radium rifles can make short work of the beast, there are many places on Mars where neither soldiers nor rifles are available, and the farmers must battle the creature with their sickles – or find heroes to do the job for them.

ASSASSIN VINE

These mobile plants often grow in thornpatches or oases, though sometimes their wind-blown seeds will land in the cultivated regions surrounding a canal city. They are also known to exist in the Polar Jungle, a fact exploited by the White Apes, who will plant them as cheap guardians around remote estates or lead enemies into a patch of them.

BASILISK

The eight-legged horror is symbiotic with a silicon-based virus. It cannot turn anyone into stone with a gaze, but its bite has the same

effect, as the stony virus rapidly transforms the victim. The symbiote it carries allows it to eat rock, which is how the creature survives in the waterless wastelands. However, it needs the chemicals contained in living flesh to trigger its reproductive cycle, so basilisks sometimes prowl close to green man camps or red man border cities in search of meat.

BEHIR

The slithering behir is found primarily in what jungles still remain. It eats exotic minerals in order to fuel the biochemical reaction which produces its legendary breath weapon. Sometimes, ancient and atavistic memories cause the surviving behirs to begin a long, and ultimately fatal, march to the shores of the now-dead seas. In the process of this mass migration, cities or encampments which have the misfortune to be along the behir's route will be overrun.

BULETTE

This fearsome beast dwells in the sandier reaches of Mars, mostly on the dry seabeds, where it is a constant threat to caravans and nomads. It is cunning enough to sense when an individual has wandered away from his fellows and make a sudden attack to pick him off. In some cases, green men who suspect a bullette in the vicinity will tie a rope to a slave or a weak member of the tribe and send him off to see if it attacks him. If it does, they will then storm forward to kill it. Bullette-skull shields are prized among those who wander the ancient oceans.

CLOAKER

Cloakers can be found in the dark caverns below Mars, especially in regions controlled by the grey men, who use them as guardians. Martian cloakers do not have the *shadow shift* ability and consequently have a CR of 4.

DERRO

Derro are the warped and mutated slaves of the grey men, who long ago escaped and now wander the caves, deep canyons (especially in the dry seas) and other dark reaches of Mars. They were red men once, but generations underground have caused their skin to bleach to pale pink. They are hunched and deformed, and desire nothing but

to cause pain to all living things. Green men tell legends of great warriors who wander off alone, only to be dragged to some hidden lair by the derro hordes and slowly tortured to death over weeks.

DESTRACHAN

The Martian destrachan is nothing more than the beast it appears, having no language or intelligence, though it does possess a cruel, instinctive, cunning. It tends to prowl the farmlands near to the desert wastes, but it is also known to lair in abandoned cities, especially those which are near oasis or trade routes.

DIRE ANIMALS

There are no Earth animals on Mars, but the statistics for dire bears and lions make excellent Martian predators, once suitably altered in appearance.

FORMIAN

Some claim the Formians are an ancient race, predating even the grey men, which reappeared as the climate changed. Others claim they are aliens, invaders from another realm (possibly the third planet, long rumored to hold life), which have picked Mars as their base. Either way, they have begun to seize the ruined cities and convert them into hives suitable for their kind. They can live a long time without water and can burrow deep, deep, into the planet's crust to find more.

Martian Formians are not Outsiders, but Aberrations. They have no Spell Resistance. The spell like abilities of all castes but the Myrmarch and Queen remain, though they become (Ex) abilities. The queen loses all spellcasting abilities and all of her spell-like abilities. The Myrmarch will have at least 4 levels in a Hero class (the type depends on its function in the hive). The Queen is reduced to CR 12 due to her lack of casting abilities.

FROST WORM

These creatures were among the most dangerous threats when the great polar pumping engines were being constructed, but the advanced technology of the canal builders kept them at bay. While powerful repulsion fields still protect

the canal pumps, the worms remain a hazard for anyone entering the frozen wastes. During winter, they will often migrate south to the Polar Jungle and harass the white apes.

FUNGUS, SHRIEKER

These fungi are often found in thornpatches or near oases.

GRICK

The Martian grick dwells primarily in the thornpatches or the jungles, rather than underground. It is considered a delicacy by the red men, and preserved grick tentacles are a common trade good.

HOWLER

The Martian howler is an animal, not an intelligent being. Its intelligence is reduced to 2. They are sometimes captured and used as riding beasts by all three of the surface-dwelling races of Mars, but it is the white apes which have truly mastered them, and the "Screaming Legions" of howler-mounted cavalry are terrifying to behold – and even more terrifying to hear!

OTYUGH

The filth-dwelling otyugh can be found in the ruins and outskirts of the canal cities. They supplement their diet of offal with whatever fresh meat they can find, such as exiles or renegades from the city proper. The Martian otyugh is incapable of speech.

PHANTOM FUNGUS

This odd monstrosity lives anywhere there is sufficient moisture for it to form – it often grows in the basements and tunnels beneath red Martian cities, then emerges to prey, leaving countless spores behind to begin the process anew. It is not invisible in the classic sense, but has the (Ex) ability to camouflage itself perfectly, providing the same effect.

PURPLE WORM

The purple worm is feared by the green men as a predator too terrible for even their savage brutality to quell, but there are nomadic sects of red men, long exiled from the canal cities, which

have allegedly learned to communicate with, control, and even ride these dreadful beasts. To encounter such, and live to tell about it, would be a deed worthy of the greatest of heroes.

SHOCKER LIZARD

Given the many strange and varied forms that Martian life has taken, it is not surprising the smaller beings have evolved some useful adaptations of their own. The shocker lizard is a good example of a relatively weak beast which has nonetheless learned to hold its own among the more garish monstrosities which haunt the wastes.

WYVERN

The far-flying Martian wyvern can easily look down on the broad badlands below, spotting easy prey – pack beasts, stragglers, or wounded soldiers are all primary targets, though if it is hungry enough, it will attack stronger-seeming foes. The poison sting of the wyvern is valued by green man shamans, as they know how to brew a powerful antidote from it. Wyvern nests, usually located in mountain caves, often contain a smattering junk cast off from the bodies of its prey. The Martian wyvern is not a thinking being – reduce its intelligence to 2.

ADAPTING DEFENSE

When adapting existing creatures, you should be aware of the difference between “Armor Class” or “Defense” and how Defense Values are figured using **MARS**. Non-humanoid beings who do not use weapons and armor always use a Dodge defense. This is determined as follows:

Hit Dice	Good Dodge Bonus (Animal, Dragon, Air or Fire Elemental, Fey, Humanoid, Magical Beast, Monstrous Humanoid, Outsider)	Poor Dodge Bonus (Aberration, Water or Earth Elemental, Giants, Ooze, Plant, Undead, Vermin)
1	0	0
2	1	0
3	2	1
4	3	1
5	3	1
6	4	2
7	5	2
8	6	3
9	6	3
10	7	3
11	8	4
12	9	4
13	9	5
14	10	5
15	11	5
16	12	6
17	12	6
18	13	7
19	14	7
20	15	7
21	15	8
22	16	8
23	17	9
24	18	9
25	18	9

MAKING IT MARTIAN

Many d20 supplements contain creatures suitable for use on Mars; the problem is that they may be all too recognizable. This can throw some players 'out of genre'. Further, Mars is a world with a full ecosystem (albeit one ravaged by planetary drought), yet filling this book with creatures which are basically normal animals "but *from Mars!*" would be wasteful.

However, with a small bit of work, it is possible to "Marsify" almost any creature. Begin with the guidelines above for which d20 creatures work well in a Martian environment, and then use the "Marsifier" below. In a sense, the "Marsifier" creates a one-of-a-kind template which is then immediately applied to a creature.

Some of the changes will increase a creature's CR. If the total CR increase is less than 1, there is no increase; for values greater than 1, round up if the total is 50% or more to the next highest CR. (A CR bonus of +0.9 equals no change to CR, a CR bonus of 1.5 equals CR+2, and a CR bonus of 1.25 equals CR+1).

To use the "Marsifier":

Step 1: Number of modifications

Roll 1d4+1 for the number of changes to the base creature.

Step 2: Determine modification type

For each modification, roll on the following table to determine the type.

d% Roll	Type
01-05	Base Type Change
06-20	Skin Change
21-35	Movement Change
36-40	Special Ability
41-55	Attack Change
56-60	Size Change
61-00	Cosmetic Change

Step 3: Determine specific modifications

Roll on the appropriate sub-table to determine the specific modification

BASE TYPE CHANGE

The Martian creature's overall type is different from that of the base creature.

2d10 Roll	Result
2-6	Plant
7-12	Elemental (Earth)
13-20	Construct

Plant: The creature's type changes to Plant. Its hit die become D8, and it gains all plant qualities. Do not recalculate base attack, saves, and so on. Remove all existing skills and assign new skills based on (2+Int modifier)*4 skill points for the first hit die and 2+Int modifier skill points for each additional hit die. Such creatures are considered to have a 'cosmetic' modification, so no additional roll is required (though one can be made if desired, of course). Plant creatures may look as follows:

- As the original creature, except composed of a network of vines and brambles.
- As the original creature, but formed of wood, with thick bark and leafy 'fur' or 'hair'.
- As the original creature, but a deep purple or violet. It resembles an animal save for the coloration and the fact it 'bleeds' a thick sap.

Plant creatures are very rare on modern Mars. They will be found only in the North Polar Jungle, or rarely in thornpatches or oases.

Elemental (Earth): The creature is formed of silicon, not carbon. This is a recent evolutionary jump on Mars, made in response to the lack of water. It is possible this is the result of a project begun during the drying days – some scientists, unconvinced of the canal plan, worked in secret to create the beginnings of silicon based life, giving it the capacity to adapt existing carbon-based genetic material for its own use.

The creature's type changes to Elemental, with the Earth subtype. It's hit die changes to d8, but do not recalculate BAB, saves, etc. It gains all Elemental traits, except that it must continue to eat, breathe, and sleep.

It gains a burrow speed equal to its base walking speed.

It gains DR of 1 for every 2 hit dice (or fraction thereof) which it has. If it already had DR, this is added on.

Its attributes are modified as follows: Strength +4, Constitution +4, Dexterity -2. Adjust hit points, attack bonus, defense, and so on as appropriate.

CR Adjustment: +1

Construct: Many Martian civilizations created 'beasts' of metal and gears, powered by radium cells. As the cells died, so did the beasts, but a rare few remain, powered down for millennia and only recently re-awakened. Others use solar panels or stranger means of surviving. Many ancient Martian life-forms are known to day only by their replicas in bronze and crystal.

The creature's type changes to Construct. Its hit dice type becomes d10, it gains all Construct traits, and it gains bonus hit points according to its size, as follows:

Construct Size	Bonus Hit Points	Construct Size	Bonus Hit Points
Fine	—	Large	30
Diminutive	—	Huge	40
Tiny	—	Gargantuan	60
Small	10	Colossal	80
Medium	20		

Do not alter the creature's BAB, saves, and so on.

The creature's Intelligence score becomes non-existent, as does its Constitution score. It loses all skills.

It gains +6 Strength and DR 1/- for every 2 hit dice it possesses. If it already has DR, this is added on.

After a construct is slain, anyone may make a Craft (Martian Technology) check at a DC of 20 to extract the radium power cell from the body. It is considered to have enough power to provide half the normal shots of a radium weapon. Thus, it will provide 5 shots for a heavy radium pistol. If the Craft check is failed by 5 or more, the cell was badly damaged during the removal attempt and will explode, doing 1d6 points of damage per two hit dice of the original creature in a 15' radius, with a Reflex save (DC 10+creature's hit dice) for half damage.

Constructs have a variety of appearances, depending on the culture which created them.

- Creatures seemingly formed of liquid metal, with all mechanical parts hidden.
- Baroque and beautiful constructs of silver, bronze, and quartz, glowing with an internal blue light.
- Lumbering and clunking things of grey metal, with loud grinding gears and the stench of oil and steam.

CR Adjustment: +0.75

CRAFTERS AND CONSTRUCTS

Anyone with the Spark of Genius talent may, with a Craft (Martian Technology) check at a DC equal to 15+1/hit die of the creature, extract 1 device point per 2 hit die from the creature's corpse. This process takes 5 minutes per hit die of the creature.

SKIN CHANGE

The outer surface of the creature is different from that of the base creature.

Roll d%	Result
01-05	Chameleon
06-20	Thick Fur
21-30	Slick
31-45	Scales
46-60	Armor Plates
61-65	Acidic
66-70	Sticky
71-75	Elastic
76-80	Padded
81-90	Luminescent
91-95	Distorting
96-00	Roll twice

Chameleon: The creature's skin shifts in color in order to match the background. It gains a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks, and may hide even if there is no cover or if it is being directly observed.
CR Adjustment: +0.25

Thick Fur: The creature is extremely hairy and well-protected from the cold. This grants it DR 2/- (in addition to any existing DR) and Elemental Resistance (Cold) of 5. Such creatures tend to lair near the polar regions or only come out during the long Martian winters.
CR Adjustment: +0.5

Slick: The creature's skin exudes a slimy mucous which makes it very difficult to grab or hold. All attempts to grapple the creature suffer a -4 circumstance penalty.
CR Adjustment: +0.1.

Scales: The creature is covered with scales, akin to a Terran reptile. This provides it with DR 3/-, in addition to any other DR.
CR Adjustment: +0.6

Armor Plates: The creature has extremely thick and heavy armor plates, like a turtle. It gains DR 6/-, in addition to any existing DR, but it loses 5' of ground movement (Minimum ground movement is 5'). If it flies, its maneuverability decreases by 1 step and its flight speed is reduced by 10'. (Minimum flight speed is 5')
CR Adjustment: +0.75

Acidic: The creature's skin exudes a potent corrosive acid. Any metal weapons which touch it take 2d4 points of damage, ignoring hardness. Any unarmed attack against it results in the attacker taking 2d4 points of acid damage if the attack roll would hit the creature's touch defense (even if it does not overcome the total defense). If the creature is grappled, the grappling character takes 2d6 points of acid damage for each round the acidic creature is held.
CR Adjustment: +1

Sticky: The creature's skin exudes a sap-like substance which can hold weapons fast. If an attack would hit the creature's touch defense (whether or not it does damage), the attacker must make a Strength check (DC of 10 plus the creature's hit dice plus 1/2 the creature's Constitution bonus) to pull the weapon free. Otherwise, it remains stuck to the creature's hide. If the creature is grappled or it grapples a character, a Strength check at the same DC is required to break free or to end the grapple, in addition to the normal grapple checks. Anyone who makes an unarmed attack and is stuck is considered to be grappling the creature.
CR Adjustment: +0.75

Elastic: The hide of the creature is extremely flexible and springy, making it very difficult to cut. Slashing or Piercing weapons do only half damage against it.
CR Adjustment: +0.5

Padded: The creature has a thick layer of fat or muscle or the like underneath its skin. This helps to cushion it against blows, so that crushing weapons do only half damage against it.
CR Adjustment: +0.5

Luminescent: The creature's skin glows brightly, and often produces whorls and vortices of light when it is struck in combat. Such brilliant flares make it difficult to hit, granting it a +2 natural bonus to defense. However, it suffers a -6 racial bonus to Hide checks.
CR Adjustment: +0.25

Distorting: The skin of the creature has some truly exotic properties that warp and refract light. The beast is not always where it seems to be. All attacks against it suffer a 20% miss chance.
CR Adjustment: +0.5

MOVEMENT CHANGE

The creature either gains a new mode of movement or is much faster in one of its old modes of movement.

Roll	Result
01-15	Flight
16-60	Ground
61-80	Burrowing
81-85	Swimming
86-90	Brachiating
91-95	Teleporting
96-00	Speed

Flight: If the creature could not fly, it now can. It gains a flight speed equal to 150% of its fastest other speed, with maneuverability determined as follows:

Size	Maneuverability
Tiny or smaller	Good
Small	Average
Medium	Poor
Large or bigger	Clumsy

If the creature already has flight, its speed increases by 25% (round to the nearest 5 feet) or 10 feet, whichever is greater, and its maneuverability increases by one step, to a maximum of perfect.

The means of flight can be wings, gas bladders, psionic levitation, or anything else which seems appropriate.

CR Adjustment: If the creature lacked flight, +0.5; if it already had flight, +0.25.

Ground: If the creature has no ground movement, it gains it at a base of 10 feet for Medium or smaller creatures, and 20 feet for Huge or larger creatures. If the creature already has ground movement, its ground speed increases by 25% or 10 feet, whichever is greater.

Burrowing: If the creature has no burrowing movement, it gains it at a base of 10 feet for Medium or smaller creatures, and 20 feet for Huge or larger creatures. If the creature already has burrowing movement, its burrowing speed increases by 25% or 10 feet, whichever is greater.

Burrowing can be accomplished by hard ground-digging claws, exuding an acid which dissolves the ground, psionically 'phasing' through the dirt, and so on. Burrowing creatures automatically gain Tremorsense.

CR Adjustment: If the creature lacked burrowing, +0.25; if it already had burrowing +0.1.

Swimming: If the creature has no swimming movement, it gains it at a base of 30 feet for Medium or smaller creatures, and 40 feet for Huge or larger creatures. If the creature already has swimming movement, its swimming speed increases by 25% or 10 feet. In addition, any creature which gains swimming gains the [Aquatic] subtype.

This modifier is very rare on Mars. Creatures with swimming will either be small canal-dwelling creatures, inhabitants of some of the marsh-lakes of the Northern Jungle, or things which dwell in the wet places far below the planets surface.

CR Adjustment: 0

Brachiating: Only creatures which dwell in the Northern Jungle, or in very large oases, will have this modification. Reroll otherwise. This allows the creature to move very rapidly among the treetops, by swinging on large arms, by jumping swiftly from branch to branch, or otherwise using the foliage to propel itself. The creature cannot use this ability if it is on the ground, though it can make a DC 10 jump check to reach low-lying foliage as a standard action and then take a move action through the trees.

If the creature has no brachiating movement, it gains it at a base of 20' for Medium or smaller creatures, and 10 feet for Huge or larger creatures, who must be more cautious as they leap from branch to branch. If the creature already has brachiating movement, its speed increases by 25% or 5', whichever is greater.

CR Adjustment: +0.25

Teleporting: This ability is a consequence of mutation, deliberate modification, or psionic power. The creature can move by blinking from point to point, covering no ground. It can instantly escape from any grapple. It teleports as a free action (though it can take only one per turn) and can act immediately upon completing the teleport. It is considered to flank any creature it threatens in the round after teleporting, due to the suddenness of its appearance. It cannot teleport into an occupied square or to any location it cannot see.

Base teleport distance is 50'. If this modification is rolled again, increase the base distance by 20'.

CR Adjustment: +1. (Remains +1 even if rolled multiple times)

Speed: An existing movement mode is increased by 25% or 10', whichever is greater. The Game Master should pick an appropriate movement mode.

CR Adjustment: +0.25

SPECIAL ABILITY

The creature either gains a new special ability or improves an existing ability in some manner.

The Game Master should choose a special ability possessed by some other creature (there are far too many choices to be able to list them all here), or manifestly improve a special ability already possessed by the creature.

ATTACK CHANGE

The creature either gains a new attack mode or improves an existing attack in some manner.

Roll	Result
01-15	Claws
16-25	Bite
26-35	Slam
36-45	Gore
46-50	Sting
51-55	Tentacle
56-60	Reach
61-80	Poison
81-85	Paralysis
86-90	Penetrating
91-94	Fast
95-00	Wounding

Claw, Bite, Slam, Gore, Sting, or Tentacle: If the creature lacks an attack of this form, it gains one, with appropriate damage for its size. If the creature already has an attack of this form, roll on the following table

Roll	Result
1	The damage for this natural weapon increases by one step, as if the creature's size had increased by one category: 1d2, 1d3, 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 2d6, 3d6, 4d6, 6d6, 8d6, 12d6. A weapon or attack that deals 1d10 points of damage increases as follows: 1d10, 2d8, 3d8, 4d8, 6d8, 8d8, 12d8. CR Adjustment: +0.25
2	The threat range for the weapon doubles. CR Adjustment: +0.25
3	The critical multiplier for the weapon increases by 1. CR Adjustment: +0.25
4	The creature gains an extra instance of the natural weapon (so it would have 2 x gore instead of a single gore attack, for example). Any rolls which increase the effectiveness of the natural weapon increase all instances of it. CR Adjustment: +0.25

Reach: Although the creature's base size does not change, one of its natural weapons becomes a reach weapon. This might indicate that a creature has gained a giraffe-like neck, allowing it to bite targets far away, or extremely long limbs so that it can use its claw attacks against more distant targets. The game master should choose a natural attack which seems appropriate. The reach is increased by 5' over the creature's normal reach, and an additional 5' each time this modification is added.

CR Adjustment: +0.25

Poison: One of the creature's natural attacks (ideally, one which does piercing or slashing damage) gains poison.

Roll on the table below to determine which attribute the poison effects:

Roll	Attribute
1-3	Constitution
4-5	Dexterity
6-7	Strength
8	Intelligence
9	Wisdom
10	Charisma

Poison damage is based on creature size, as follows:

Size	Fortitude DC	Damage
Tiny	12	1
Small	12	1d2
Medium	13	1d3
Large	14	1d4
Huge	18	1d6
Gargantuan	23	1d8
Colossal	33	1d10

If this modification occurs twice, either increase the Save DC by 2 or the damage by 1 step.

CR Adjustment: +0.5

Paralysis: One of the creature's natural attacks inflicts paralysis. The Fortitude save is equal to 10+1/2 the creature's hit dice +the creature's Constitution modifier. The target will be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds.

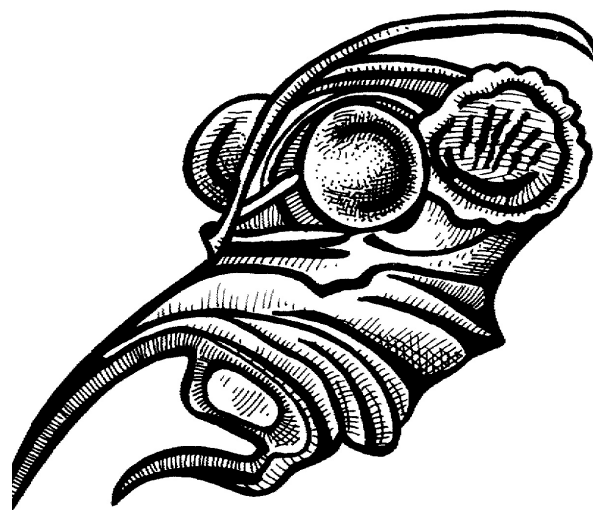
CR: +0.5

Fast: The creature gains the Improved Initiative feat.

CR: +0.1

Wounding: The damage from one of the creature's attacks causes grievous wounding. It will bleed at 1 point per round unless a Treat Injury (DC 10) check is made.

CR: +0.25



SIZE CHANGE

The creature is significantly larger or smaller than the base creature. Roll on the following table. Size cannot drop below Fine or above Colossal.

Roll	Result
01-30	1 step larger
31-50	2 steps larger
51-70	3 steps larger
71-85	1 step smaller
86-95	2 steps smaller
96-00	3 steps smaller

Changing a creature's size affects a creature's ability scores, DV, attack bonuses, and damage values as indicated on the tables below. Repeat the adjustment if the creature moves up more than one size.

Old Size	New Size	Str	Dex	Con	DV	Attack
Fine	Diminutive	Same	-2	Same	Same	-4
Diminutive	Tiny	+2	-2	Same	-2	-2
Tiny	Small	+4	-2	Same	-1	-1
Small	Medium	+4	-2	+2	-1	-1
Medium	Large	+8	-2	+4	+1	-1
Large	Huge	+8	-2	+4	+2	-1
Huge	Gargantuan	+8	Same	+4	+2	-2
Gargantuan	Colossal	+8	Same	+4	+1	-4
Colossal	Gargantuan	-8	Same	-4	-1	+4
Gargantuan	Huge	-8	Same	-4	-2	+4
Huge	Large	-8	+2	-4	-2	+1
Large	Medium	-8	+2	-4	-1	+1
Medium	Small	-4	+2	-2	+1	+1
Small	Tiny	-4	+2	Same	+1	+1
Tiny	Diminutive	-2	+2	Same	+2	+2
Diminutive	Fine	Same	+2	Same	Same	+4

Old Damage (each)	New Damage
1d2	1d3
1d3	1d4
1d4	1d6
1d6	1d8
1d8	2d6
1d10	2d8
2d6	3d6
2d8	3d8
Reverse the steps if creature is being reduced in size.	

COSMETIC CHANGE

The creature changes in appearance from its normal form. Roll on the following table(s):

d% Roll	Result
01-25	Color Change
26-50	Limb Change
51-75	Sensory Change
76-00	New Feature

Color Change: Creatures can gain new colors, new textures, and so on to distinguish them from their Earthly counterparts.

Roll	Color
1	Green
2	Blue
3	Purple
4	Black
5	Light Grey
6	Dark Grey
7	Brown
8	Yellow
9	Red
10	Orange
11	Violet
12	Azure
13	Lemon
14	White
15	Crimson
16	Lavender
17	Tan
18	Spotted (Roll for base color and spot color)
19	Striped (Roll for base color and stripe color)
20	Multi-hued (1d4+2 colors)

Limb Change: The creature gains, or loses, some limbs. These limbs cannot be used for additional attacks, nor do they offer any other mechanistic benefit. They are purely ‘for show’. Limbs gained should be appropriate to the creature – a four legged creature may gain more legs, while a creature which uses grasping hands, like a chimp, might get extra arms. Tails are always appropriate. Loss of limbs likewise causes no impact – a creature may become bipedal due to loss of legs, or even become a ‘roller’. Natural attacks will somehow remain the same – a single limb might

have multiple claws on it, for example. At the Game Master’s discretion, attack types might change – claw attacks become gore attacks if a creature loses its forelimbs, for instance.

Roll	Result
1	Gain 1 arm or leg
2-3	Gain 2 arms or legs
4-8	Gain 1d4+1 arms or legs
	Lose 1 arm or leg
10	Lose 2 arms or legs
11-13	Gain 1d4 tentacles or feelers
14	Gain a second head
15-16	Gain a tail, or existing tail splits into two tails.
17	Limbs gain additional joints.
18-19	Limbs are lengthened
20	Limbs are shortened

Sensory Change: The creatures sensory organs are visibly different. This doesn’t impact its effectiveness in any way. If the creature lacks a specific sensory organ, reroll or adapt as needed.

Roll	Result
1	Compound Eyes
2	Multiple Eyes (1d4 more than standard)
3	Enlarged Ears
4	Smaller Ears
5	Eyes on stalks
6	Multiple mouths (no change in number of bite attacks)
7	Snout/Trunk
8	Shifted senses (Ears on torso, or eyes on tail, for example)
9	No visible nose
10	No visible ears
11	Solid-colored eyes
12	Multi-colored eyes

New Feature: The creature gains some body part or addition which has no direct mechanical effect.

Roll	Result
1	Frill/Sail along back
2	Small spines
3	Bony outcroppings at joints
4	Thick Fur
5	Tail (or loses tail, if it already has one)
6	Second head
7	Elongated tongue
8	Webbing between toes/fingers
9	1d4 horns on head
10	Spiked/clubbed tail
11	Head frill
12	Scaled patches
13	Mane/Beard
14	Wattles
15	Mouth/Nose replaced by beak (or the reverse)
16	Slimy coating
17	Antennae
18	Hooves
19	Protruding fangs or tusks (no effect on any bite attacks)
20	Roll Twice

EXAMPLE

We'll now use the "Marsifier" on a standard d20 creature, the Tyrannosaurus.

Rolling 1d4+1 for number of modifications, we end up with 4 modifications. Rolling for each type we get:

Cosmetic Changes: *New Features: Head Frill.*

Movement Changes: *Flight*

Skin Changes: *Armor*

Attack Changes: *Fast*

This isn't pretty. We now have a frilled, armored Tyrannosaurus, who has lightning reflexes and can fly. Not something any character would enjoy encountering.

The revised stat block for the new creature is:

GHORVAK (SKY HUNTER)

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 18d8+99 (180hp)

Initiative: +5(+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 feet (8 squares), fly 60 feet (Clumsy)

Defense: 13 (+0 Size +1 Dex +5 Dodge) touch 9 flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +13/+30

Attack: +20 melee (3d6+13 Bite)

Full Attack: +20 melee (3d6+13 Bite)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Swallow Hole

Special Qualities: DR 6/-

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +8

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 10

Skills: Hide -2, Listen +14, Spot +14

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (Bte), Run, Toughness (3), Track.

Environment: Temperate Desert

Organization: Solitary or Pair

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: None

Alignment: N/A

Advancement: 19-36 Hit Dice (Huge), 37-54 Hit Dice (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: NA

The lookout on the bow of your airship gives out a cry of alarm: "GHORVAK!" You spot the creature rising from the nearby mountain range, The frill around its massive 6-foot long head splayed in full aggressive display as its powerful wings drive it forward towards its prey -- you.

The Ghorvak is a massive, 6-ton, 30 ft. long flying predator. It hunts anything that wanders into its territory, whether on land or in the air.

Combat

The ghorvak pursues and eats just about anything it sees. Its tactics are simple—charge in and bite.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a ghorvak must hit an opponent of up to one size smaller with its bite attack. It can then attempt to

start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A ghorvak can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes $2d8+8$ points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the ghorvak's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A Huge ghorvaks's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Skills: A ghorvak has a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.





The world of **MARS** should be one of high adventure, pulp action, and endless excitement. While there is ample room for role-playing, this is not a game of delicate and cunning plots slowly woven, nor of intricate personal revelation and self-discovery. This is a game of racing across a burning bridge, sword and blaster in hand, to take down the fiendish Baltannish Duke before he reaches the trigger of his solar bomb!

This section of **MARS** discusses many of the tropes, themes, and concepts of the ‘Planetary Romance’ genre, and the things that a Gamemaster should know.

CHARACTERS

Two words: Broad strokes. While many other RPGs advise, correctly, that characters be well-rounded and deep, with complex motivations and non-stereotypical personalities, **MARS** is founded on strongly archetypal characters. If you cannot define your character in a sentence, preferably a short one, you should trim back some of the fat until you can. Over the course of the game, depth can be added, and the character will develop a rich and colorful cast of friends and enemies, but a starting character should be extremely iconic.

Some typical roles found in the core stories are described below. These archetypes can often be combined and sometimes overlap – Outcast and Companion, for example, are commonly combined, as are Explorer and Adventurer. These are not classes, but mindsets and motivations.

ADVENTURER

You're in it for the glory. You may not deliberately seek out adventure, but it will always seek you out, and, when it does, you will meet it head on. You charge into battle, sometimes with a plan, sometimes with simply a bellow of rage. You are not necessarily stupid or violent, and might well always offer the olive branch first – but if it is rejected, you are well prepared to use it as a club. A true hero of the genre does not like violence, but he is very, very, good at it.

COMPANION

You tend not to be an adventurer in your own right, but you are a friend or a lover (or both) to one, and where they go, you go. Your skills often complement theirs, but tend to be more specialized. You may be a voice of reason against their impetuosity, or you may be the enthusiastic one who needs some gentle restraint lest you charge into a battle you cannot win. It is quite possible you are of a different race than your adventuresome friend – perhaps you saved his life, or he yours, or perhaps you have some other commonality that binds you across cultures.

OUTCAST

You are not the same as your companions, nor are you the same as your own kind. Somehow, you were always different. A green Martian who thinks rather than fights, or a white ape who lacks brutish ambition. Somehow, you found your way into a band of those of another species, who were willing to accept you for what you were, not for what your people were. Always on the outside looking in, you are capable of great insight, as you see things from a unique perspective. This doesn't necessarily make you a navel-gazing philosopher, however – many outcasts are great and mighty warriors, having had to fight all their lives due to the crime of being different.

EXPLORER

The world is a mystery to be solved, and you are the detective. Ancient cities, dark caverns, strange secrets hidden in timelost ruins – you

are driven to see what no one else has seen. You are inherently discontent with stability; too long spent in one place wears down your soul. There is always one more mountain to climb, one more ruin to explore, one more road to walk down. You tend to be proactive, seeking out new places rather than waiting for adventure to come to you.

DEFENDER

There is something near, dear, and valuable to you, and you will guard it against all threats. This may be a loved one, a city, or a principle, but no matter what it is, caring for it is more important than your own life. This desire may often take you far from the thing for which you care – a threat to a city may come from half a world away, for example – but your passion is always central to your motivation. You will see little reason to adventure unless it somehow serves/protects/involves the thing you cherish, but the nature of the genre is such that being a defender is a full-time job; there is always one more enemy waiting for you.

TRICKSTER

Lets face it, a lot of the world goes around with a stick up its collective...well, you know. Even when performing the most outrageous feats of derring-do, many of the people you travel with just take it all so *seriously*. You don't, or, if you do, you never let it show. While everyone else is carefully plotting a complex assault on the ruined city complex which houses the Whispering Lord, you sneak in, find his soaking tub, and fill it with itching powder. You trust to luck more than skill, though you are often very, very, skilled at what you do – so skilled that you can make it *seem* to be mere luck, as no one could be *that* good. You will dare to laugh in the face of the Green Man chieftain even as he sentences you to death by painful torture. You will cut the straps on the armor of the Emperor of the White Apes so that his entire suit falls off while he reviewing the legions. You will not endanger your friends, though, and will often gladly risk yourself for them --- but you'll do it with style and panache, and in a way no one will ever forget.

THEMATIC ELEMENTS

Every genre has certain basic elements which help define it. If you see horses, ten-gallon hats, and six shooters, it's most likely a western. (Or an episode of *Firefly*.) If there's huge space-dreadnoughts, starfaring rogues in battered tramp freighters, and mysterious psychic powers, it's most like a space opera. (Or, er, an episode of *Firefly*.) If there's spandex costumes, dramatic speeches, flowing capes, and laser-beam eyes, it's most likely superheroes (and *not* an episode of *Firefly*). The planetary romance genre also has its own tropes and identifying characteristics, some of which are discussed here:

RUINED CITIES

The world of **MARS** is an ancient one, and it has left behind many forgotten relics. Ruined cities are discussed in some detail on Page 18. This section discusses their thematic use. A ruined city should exist as a reminder of past glories forgotten, or of ancient treasures to be rediscovered. It provides a bridge between past and present, should figure heavily in stories about discovery or exploration.

ROMANCE

The term 'Planetary Romance' is somewhat multi-layered. On the one hand, a 'romance' in the classical, literary, sense does not necessarily mean erotic love; it once simply meant 'novel' or 'story'. 'Romantic' literature is literature about ideals and archetypes, not about mundane realism, and there does not need to be any sort of 'love story' associated with it. To some extent, this is what the term 'romance' means in the genre name. However, the genre is *also* known for romance in the more common usage – a boy, a girl, and a horde of slaving monsters come to kill them all.

In the traditional source works, the female in the romance is often helpless or fawning, and exists solely to be kidnapped/threatened/used as a pawn. This is one of the few areas when an injection of some more modern sensibilities might be in order. If both romantic partners are player characters,

then, the kidnapping, etc, duties should be fairly shared between them. If a romance develops between a PC and an NPC, the NPC might be a bit more of a victim, but should also be someone *worthy* of the efforts and love of the PC.

Romance is a powerful motivator. Once smitten, a hero (or heroine...) in the genre will go to any extreme for their love. Often, a simple glance is enough to send hearts racing and blood boiling and clichés swarming. A hero might catch only a glimpse of a fair maiden as she is hustled into an unmarked sky-corsair by masked strangers, and that single peek will be enough to send him questing half across the planet to rescue her. (She will, in turn, love him. There are few unrequited romances in the genre, at least once derring-do has entered the picture; no one would be willing to reject someone who has just risked their life, often multiple times, for them.) There are, however, sometimes triangles where two prospective lovers will battle together to rescue their mutual love, who must choose only one of them; as a helpful coincidence, the one who is rejected will most likely have met some other partner during the course of the adventure.

WEIRD SCIENCE

Forget all you know...at least, anything from the latter half of the 20th century onwards. Even older knowledge – such as the whole square/cube law which renders giant arthropods untenable – should be cast aside. The fundamental rule of the genre is that almost anything is possible, if a convincing bit of technobabble can be flung out.

Technology tends to develop in isolation. That is, there are flying ships, but most land transport is animal powered. Melee weapons are commonly used, despite the existence of powerful radium guns. There are computers, of a sort, and intra-city communication networks, but no radio or long-range means of fast communication. A lone inventor can create a miraculous device in a few days of work, but he will never mass-produce and sell it.

Very few problems are solved by purely technological means. The proper response to a

giant robot is to shoot it or leap onto its back and drive your sword into its one vulnerable spot, not to attempt to reconfigure the plasma emitter to produce anti-baryon particles. Technology is purely an enabling mechanism, an excuse for strange and interesting effects. It is not an end in itself.

Some specifics:

Evolution happens at fantastic speeds: Not overnight, but in the thousands of years it took for Mars to dry, many species evolved or adapted to the changing conditions, producing such phenomenon as the thornpatches.

Creatures of any size and shape can exist: There is no need to worry about muscle density or how a giant insect breathes. They simply exist, and that's that.

Interbreeding is possible: A human and a Red Martian ought to be unable to produce any offspring – but they can. There is no need for a complex explanation for this – anything which looks humanoid and is sexually attractive can mate with a human.

Primitive styles, advanced results: Robots seemingly made of gears and vacuum tubes can out-perform the best microchipped machines 21st century science and engineering can produce. A radium pistol is far deadlier than any attempts at building a man-portable laser. Martian technology looks clunky and baroque, but is nonetheless extremely advanced.

Limited cultural impact: The science of **MARS** has only a minimal effect on the cultures of the world – just as magic in other d20 games does not fundamentally alter the feudal tropes. Thus, fairly primitive social structures exist side-by-side with flying ships, ray guns, and gargantuan thinking machines.

Lone Genius: There are few think-tanks, research programs, or massive investments in R&D on Mars. Almost all 'new' science is the result of a lone, often mad, genius whose iconoclastic inventions are rarely understandable by anyone else. Even if there is a determined project to produce a specific device, it will require a lead scientist of extraordinary skill to do the actual work – everyone else is basically window dressing. (This often leads to the *kidnapping* of some known genius, which in turn leads to adventure!)

GRAND SCHEMES

Just as the characters are broad, so, too, are the plots. Even if an adventure at first seems to be purely personal (helping a soldier in the guard find out why his fiancée has vanished mere days before they were due to be wed), it will quickly unfold into a planet-spanning epic. (The fiancée is not a Callorian merchant's daughter as she claims, but is the scion of a powerful family in Baltan, who were planning to marry her off to an elderly and cruel (even by Baltan standards) man, and as the players discover this, they will also learn that this man gained his own power by means of ancient devices found in a newly-discovered city far to the south, devices which will allow Baltan to launch a massive assault on Callor itself!)

The goals of villains should be vast, even if they are not evident at first, and the deeds of the heroes should be equally spectacular. Any incident, no matter how seemingly minor, can be a piece in a larger puzzle.

That said, these are not games of tedious deduction and careful plotting. By all means, players should be required to think through puzzles or make leaps of insight, but the main role of such exercises is to lead them, relatively quickly, to the next stage of the adventure. Solving puzzles merely opens the doors; the real 'adventure' is in what is found behind it. Game Masters should bear this in mind, and consider that, in genre, the most ludicrous coincidences can occur. Accidentally overheard conversations, dropped notes, the sighting of a familiar face

among the henchmen of the villain, and so on, are all proper. It may well be that the expenditure of an Action Point to justify such a lucky break is required, or the Game Master might just decide to let the players have one ‘for free’, if it keeps the game moving.

STRANGE VISTAS

Every adventure should have a visit to someplace spectacular and unexpected. The long history of Mars, the endless parade of mad scientists, the strange experiments by the Grey Martians, unusual atmospheric phenomenon, and many other things have left their mark on the planet.

Some examples can include:

Forests of glass or crystal, either living ‘silicon trees’ or ancient woodlands somehow transformed.

Areas where the sand is so fine it is like a liquid, with sailing ships skimming across it.

Cities built of ice blocks on the poles.

Entire Red Martian cities sunken into caverns, the inhabitants unaware that there are any survivors on the surface.

Former deep-sea rifts, now immense canyon systems which are just humid enough to support strange and exotic life.

Boneyards which stretch for miles, filled with the skeletons of immense and extinct beasts.

Relics of the Glory That Was Mars – huge statues which bracket the entrance to a cavern. A relief, carved in stone, which tells the history of a now-vanished Martian kingdom and which stretches for miles along a cliff face. An airship of immense size, many times larger than the grandest aerial dreadnoughts still available, crashed into the desert wastes.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are a selection of adventure possibilities:

THE KIDNAPPING

Capture and ransom are a major part of a Baltanese politics, and many a Callorian has found themselves dragooned off to Baltan, only to be rescued in a suitably dramatic fashion. Now, however, the Baltanese are claiming that the scion of a powerful merchant household was taken by *Callorians*, and they want her back.

PLAGUE

It is one of the greatest fears of all who dwell on the canals – something has gone wrong. The water has gained a greasy, noxious, taint, and all who drink from it are weakened and feverish. No one has died yet, but it is just a matter of time... and plans are being drawn up to go to war over stockpiles of pure water. How did the snythe-men allow this to happen?

THE WELLSPRING

Nomadic Red Martians are telling tales of a spring which has appeared far out in the desert, gushing tremendous amounts of fresh water. At first, this was dismissed as just another oasis, destined to die in a few years, but the size and scope of it are defying all expectations. Now the various nomadic tribes have begun to settle around the spreading new rivers, and warfare is starting to become more commonplace. Green Martians are moving in to attack, as well, and canal dwellers are starting to abandon their cities and move with an almost cult like fascination towards this legendary spot. Is this spring truly a natural phenomenon heralding the rebirth of Mars, or is it something far more sinister?

THE GREEN CRYSTAL

The Lonarian Theocrats have long been stymied in their plans to ‘save’ the rest of the planet by the difficulties in raising a large army and the heavy losses a war of salvation would incur. However, somewhere deep in their archives, an acolyte found plans for a terrifying super-weapon, a radium blaster which could level a city block,

apparently misfiled ages past under “Rites For The Blessing Of Cheese”. Lonaria has – barely – enough radium to make the weapon, but it requires a special lens – an emerald the size of a man’s head, which is rumored to have become a sacred icon for a large Green Martian tribe located in a ruined city on the shores of the dead southern sea. Lonar has dispatched its best to go and fetch this emerald; others have dispatched their best to make sure it never happens. (Or to destroy the plans at their source; either one works...)

HAIL, CE’GRAHG!

Ce’Grahg, the Grahg-gor of a province of the Ape Empire, was always ambitious, but too cunning to risk outright war. Now, that has changed. Armed with powerful weapons and incredible armor, his legions have conquered two nearby provinces and he has made no secret of the fact he plans to march all the way to the capital and seize control of the entire Empire. The weapons his forces use project beams of fearsome energy, utterly unlike radium guns, but very close to the dreaded heat-rays of the Grey Martians. Did he discover a cache of their tools, or are they somehow controlling him for their own purposes?

THE CULT OF THE GREY

The Grey Martians are the past...and perhaps the future. A strange cult has taken hold among the cities of the canal dwellers, one which preaches that the Grey Martians are waking from their long isolation beneath the sands and will soon rise to conquer the entire surface of Mars. They will exterminate all the other races of Mars – save for the few faithful who will become honored servants of the tentacled masters.

THE ALLIANCE

Something unthinkable has happened – Red Martian nomads have, somehow, worked out a treaty with several Green Martian bands, and the combined forces have turned into a devastating raiding army! Something is driving them in a path of destruction that is leaving ruined cities behind them and terrified cities ahead. How did they ever manage to work together? Who is leading them? Do they have a purpose?

THE VANISHED

Every year, the Dry Fang tribe of Green Martians raids the farms of Falish, a small Red Martian city near to the Windplains. This year... they didn’t. Not a one was seen. Scouts who headed to Cruvash Nar, the ancient ruin the Dry Fang’s called home, found a scene of massacre – hundreds of Green Martians slaughtered. They were not merely killed, but horribly mutilated. Most showed signs of having died under prolonged torture. No other tribe of Greens would have done this; nor would Red Nomads, nor even the White Apes. Who did this, why, and will they be coming to Falish next?

DUNGEONS & MARTIANS

It is a little known fact that the first version of the world’s most popular fantasy role-playing game included, among its monster list, an encounter table listing such creatures as red Martians, green Martians, and white apes. The Mars of Burroughs was a primary influence on E. Gary Gygax. Such outré encounters were excised from later editions of the rules, but now, some three decades later, the circle is complete. This section discusses bringing barbarians, wizards, and sorcerers to the red sands of Mars.

The simplest thing to do is to use a dimensional portal, spell, astral voyage, or divine whim to transport a part of fantasy adventurers to the red planet. They will most likely wish to find a way home, but, in the meanwhile, they will explore the dry seabeds, partake of the violent decadence of the ape empire, and see what still lives in the long forgotten cities.

Another method is to simply use the d20 Core fantasy rules with this setting, instead of the rules presented herein. Either way, several things need to be considered.

Firstly, Mars is by nature not a magical place. There are a few places where psionics or magic *might* be squeezed in (see Page 171), but they

should not be common. Purely magical classes such as wizards, clerics, and druids will have a powerful advantage if they are permitted full use of their spells; if, on the other hand, they are barred from using magic, they will be extremely weak and ineffectual.

Secondly, there are few magic *items* on Mars. The power level of characters in Core d20 includes an assumption of a certain amount of magical aid; remove this, especially from high-level characters, and they will be much less effective. This should be kept in mind when evaluating the Challenge Ratings of encounters for characters over 5th level or so. The higher the level, the more the lack of magic items (or some equivalent) will be felt.

BRINGING THE PARTY TO MARS

A Martian sojourn can make an interesting and challenging change of pace for a group of adventurers. The most important decision to make is how to handle casters. In the setting as written, the Martians will be at a disadvantage against magic. They cannot resist scrying (or even suspect it might be used!). No Martian animals have magic resistance. Martian cities are not designed to deal with teleporting or ethereal foes. Healing magic allows fantasy adventurers to recover from their wounds much faster than their enemies can. Divination spells can reveal secrets which no Martian could ever hope to discover. (A *helm of comprehend languages*, for example, can be used to read the most ancient of scrolls or decipher millennia-old puzzles and signs.)

One solution is to make magic less effective, overall. Mars may be wrapped in a field which distorts both divine and arcane powers. This could grant an innate magic resistance to all living beings (perhaps MR 10+1/2 the creature's hit dice), or it could require a spellcraft (DC 15+spell level) check to cast any spell, with a failure resulting in anything from the simple loss of the spell to 1d6 points of non-lethal damage per spell level.

Another solution is to increase the prevalence of *psionics* on Mars. Tattooed Martian mindlords (psions), aided by their psi-knight (psychic

warrior) guardians can provide excellent opponents for magic-wielding characters. Wilders among the white apes or soulknife-wielding assassins stalking the canals can be added with only a minimal disruption of the setting. Psionically-active gems embedded into a radium weapon can create a +2 *pistol*, while a sword hilt composed of translucent purple crystal can create a +1 *flame burst* weapon. This option is especially good if the campaign from which the adventurers come has no psionics to speak of; this also provides an opportunity for the PCs to acquire class levels in a psionic class.

A MARTIAN CAMPAIGN

If the core d20 rules are used as the basis for a Martian campaign, then, it is recommended that most of the magic-using classes be barred. In such a campaign, skills become far more important and high skill levels are valuable. Without *create food and water* or *endure elements*, the Survival skill is far more vital. With no *fly* or *teleport* spells, those with many ranks in Jump, Climb, or Balance gain a significant edge. The lack of magical healing makes the Heal skill important.

Following is a quick overview of the classes recommended for a Martian campaign:

Barbarians: This is obviously *the* class for Green Martians, but it can apply to White Apes (especially those too savage to fit will into the disciplined legions of the Empire) and to nomadic Red Martians as well. The barbarians abilities remain unchanged in a Martian setting.

Bard: All of the major surface cultures of Mars have some cultural traditions. The White Apes and the Red Martians have rich and complex music, literature, and dance. The Green Martians have music and dance which is a savage, animalistic call to bloodshed and rage. Bards in all three cultures tend to serve in battle, raising morale and exhorting their comrades to action.

In a Martian game, Bards will lose their spellcasting abilities, but not their Bardic Music powers. In keeping with their more combat oriented role, they have a D8 for hit points and are

proficient with all simple and martial weapons.

Cleric: It is recommended that Clerics not be part of a Martian campaign.

Druid: It is recommended that Druids not be part of a Martian campaign.

Fighter: This class works perfectly well on Mars. Given the penalties for heavy armor and the preference for mobility and grace in combat, 'optimal' feat selection for a fighter may be somewhat different than for standard D20, but otherwise there is little change.

Monk: Monks are likely to be found only among the civilized Red Martians, but they may not be canal dwellers. The isolated monasteries which produce these masters of the fighting arts are often found deep in the harshest deserts and hidden in isolated cities. They survive on the tiny rivulets of water which can be coaxed from the harsh wilderness or dredged from the deepest wells. An individual who leaves such a community will do so only for the deepest of reasons – a profound personal quest, perhaps, or to flee justice for a terrible crime. The monk's abilities are slightly changed:

Rather than a *ki strike*, the monk gains a point of penetration when using his unarmed attacks every 4 levels. (1 at 1st level, 2 at 4th level, 3 at 8th level, and so on.)

The monk does not gain the empty body, perfect self, or diamond soul abilities. He may choose a bonus feat instead, picking any of the bonus feats available to fighters.

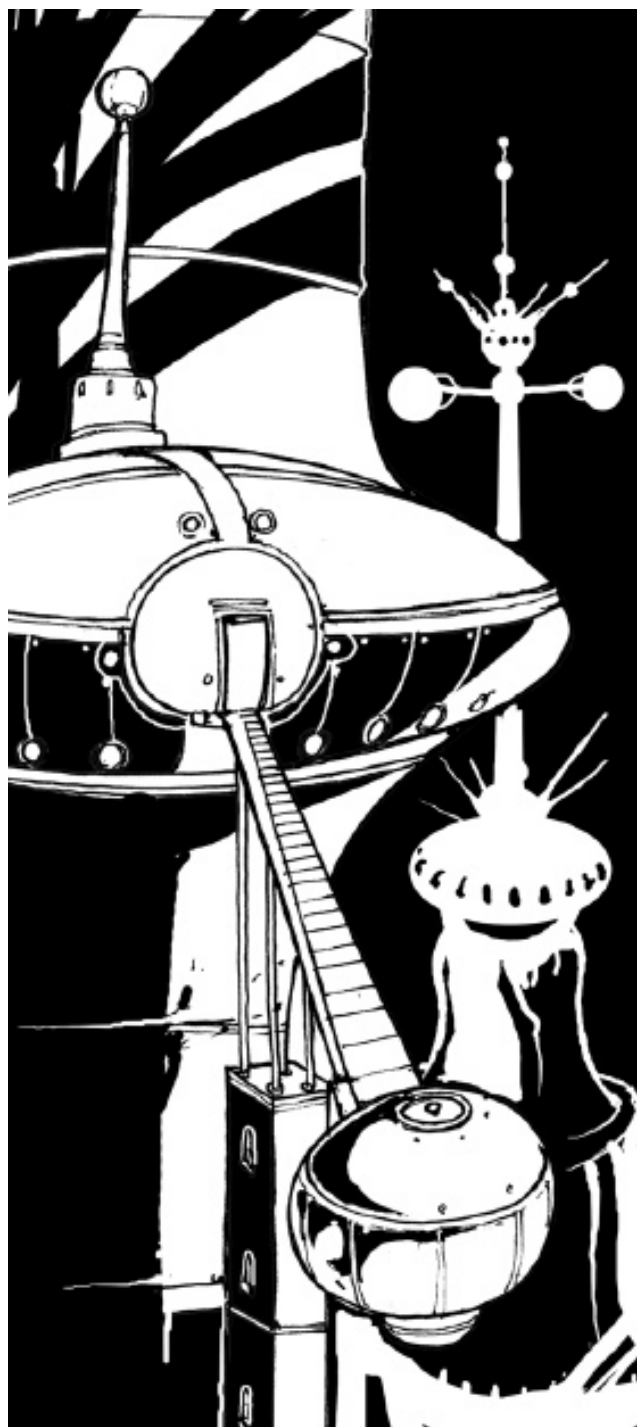
Paladin: It is recommended that paladins not be part of a Martian campaign.

Ranger: Rangers work well in a Martian campaign. They do not gain spells; to compensate for this, they may choose a bonus feat every 5 levels (at 5, 10, 15, and 20), from the same feats available to fighters.

Rogue: Rogues work very well in a Martian campaign, and can be found in all cultures

– even the Grey Martians produce those skilled at skulking and hiding. The rogue's abilities are unchanged.

Sorcerer/Wizard: These classes are not recommended for a Martian campaign. If a more outré or power-filled game is desired, allow the psionic classes (Psion, Psychic Warrior, Soulnife, and Wilder) to be used in their stead.



EXPERIENCE

In **MARS**, there are no instant tables to calculate the amount of experience to give a group of characters upon the completion of an adventure. Instead, the Game Master is encouraged to set up the world of Mars as he or she wishes, allowing the players to make their own decisions as to which foes they think they are capable of dealing with, and which to avoid. There is no absolute way, other than by subjective judgement, to gauge the exact difficulty faced by a party and thus the amount of experience to award. How do you assess the challenge of a mass battle that the characters play only a tiny part in, but that is extraordinarily dangerous even if they may only kill a dozen opponents each? What about an interrogation at the hands (or tentacles, rather) of a Grey Martian vivisectionist?

The best way to award Experience Points is to ensure that the party's level rises slowly but surely. Usually, it should take at least an adventure or two, or perhaps several shorter scenarios, to rise in level. Give out a thousand or two thousand XP for each game session that players participate in, just to keep them growing steadily in power.

This figure is, of course, dependent upon the Game Master's opinion of the level of challenge faced by the players -- paying attention to the player's reactions to events is an excellent way to judge how challenging they found the adventure.

It is good to have characters gain experience quickly initially, and then slow down a bit as they grow more powerful. By the time characters are starting to get to middle-to-high levels (perhaps 10th to 15th level), they should be finding that their Reputations, skills and contacts are often more useful than their weapons -- at that level, the adventures they face are intrigues of planetary scale, with far-reaching consequences beyond that which can be simply defeated by the sword.

As with any other character advancement system, you should always be prepared to reward individual characters with bonus XP for particularly clever plans, lucky escapes, great victories, or just outstanding play within the tropes of the planetary romance genre. These bonuses should not usually amount to any more than 10% of the standard amount of XP being given out to all characters. Conversely, players who contributed little or even actively detracted from the enjoyment of play should be penalized.



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