

# QUICKSTART GUIDE



**ShadowLands** 



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### ShadowLands



A role-playing game based in Terraforming Mars, by Jacob Fryxelius, published by Fryx Games, for the ESTIRPE game system





### **N** THE TERRAFORMING ANNOUNCEMENT

"Since its inception in 2174, the World Government has continually strived for global unity and peace. Our mission is to be humanity's shared tool for shaping a better future. Earth is overpopulated and resources are dwindling. We now face the choice either to recede, or to expand into space to find new homes for humanity. For this reason, we need to turn Mars into a habitable planet.

The terraforming of Mars is an endeavor so great that it will take the united effort of mankind to accomplish. The World Government will therefore inaugurate a Terraforming Committee, and instate a universal tax for this purpose. Any corporation or enterprise contributing to the terraforming process will be generously rewarded by the Committee. We believe that these measures will, eventually, result in a habitable planet for our descendants.

> Thank you for your attention!" Levi Uken, World Government communicator, January 16, 2315 AD.

# WHAT IS TERRAFORMING MARS TTRPG?

► TERRAFORMING MARS - THE OFFICIAL TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING GAME OFFERS YOU AN ULTIMATE SCIENCE FICTION EXPERIENCE IN THE EPIC, RISKY AND CONFRONTATIONAL RACE FOR DOMINANCE IN THE CONQUEST AND TERRAFORMING OF MARS... AND BEYOND! You are the hope of humankind. The expansion and the survival of our species depends on you. Put your name down on human history as a pioneer - one of the first Martians.

Live the greatest feat through stunning standalone adventures or as part of your own incredible generational saga across the terraforming eras of Mars.

#### SHAPE MARS FROM RED DESERT To a new home

Terraforming Mars: the role-playing game, is a science fiction and extreme exploration game based on **Terraforming Mars, the board game by Fryx-Games.** It is set in the thrilling and enormous challenge of human expansion and colonization of the Solar System. Science, technology, diplomacy and survival are pushed to the limit to overcome the risks of the greatest feat in history: transforming Mars from a barren wasteland into a home.

Who do you play in Terraforming Mars, the role-playing game? Players step into the shoes of a multidisciplinary group who seek to leave their mark in the history of the terraforming of Mars and Solar System colonization. Several professional archetypes are available. As scientists, technicians, doctors, researchers, explorers, diplomats and other workers, they coordinate to face unexpected events and the deadly conditions of the Red Planet to achieve the common benefit of a new life on Mars.

Multiple corporations compete within the protocols of the Terraforming Committee created by the World Government since 2315 A.D. But not all of them have compatible ideas and ambitions, leading to tensions as they follow different paths towards the greater good. This necessitates the existence of security and control mechanisms by the Terraforming Committee, which will not hesitate to act to protect the efforts to terraform Mars from the intrigues and mischief of those who divert its path.

Will your characters be a group of colonists exploring the unknown? Part of a research and support group of the Terraforming Committee? An emergency squad investigating a strange condition in a dome? A family that controls or serves a corporation pursuing terraforming through several generations? Experience amazing adventures through your player characters: exploration and survival, solving problems with science and technology in extreme environments, facing unexpected events and threats, defending your company's interests in diplomatic plots, investigating acts of sabotage and maintaining security on Mars. Or a mixture of all of the above, always with the common goal of achieving terraforming.

#### WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

A role-playing game (RPG), such as Terraforming Mars TTRPG, is an immersive exercise in collective imagination. It involves embarking on adventures with companions, collaboratively shaping the narrative through shared decision-making. One participant assumes the role of game master, while the others play as protagonists. When confronted with uncertainty, the roll of dice and the character's Abilities determines the outcome.

The best way to understand how it works is to simply play a game. However, for those who would like to get a better idea beforehand, there are plenty of sample games to watch on Youtube or listen to in your favorite podcasting platform.

#### IN TERRAFORMING MARS TTRPG...

- Is generational sci-fi that lets you experience from first landing to a Green Mars of the far future.
- You are humanity's hope, and your actions will influence terraforming along the Mars eras.
- You work for a corporation in a race to dominate terraforming, evolving with your actions and facing the moves of your competitors.
- A scientifically feasible fiction lore where the characters can make a difference against the perils of Mars and human nature.
- Develop projects that face the tensions of survival, corporate intrigue, and stellar events.
- Your decisions can mean life or death, rise or fall. Work together with your multidisciplinary team to achieve the impossible.
- Experience the expansion and terraforming of a planet firsthand, working for you and for all humankind.



► THE LORE OF THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME WILL INCLUDE A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ERAS AND IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS. THIS IS INTENDED TO OFFER THE GAME DIRECTOR AND PLAYERS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CHALLENGE, RISKS AND CONFLICTS, BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE WHAT BEST SUITS THEIR TASTF.

#### AGE OF PIONEERS

The first generations. The harshest conditions. The most demanding environmental challenges for the first explorers and corporations.

#### AGE OF CORPORATIONS

The next generations achieved the settlement of a larger infrastructure. Small cities that try to grow and maintain themselves on the planet with a delicate balance. Humanity expands into space colonies in the Jovian system and asteroid mining.

#### AGE OF MEGALOPOLISES

The population of Mars has grown, and the more advanced generations enjoy ecological reserves, infrastructure for getting around, improvements in energy technology, alloys, food and water. There are still threats on the planet that can set back the project. Solar system colonization continues.

#### AGE OF GREEN MARS

Terraforming is almost a reality. But there are still problems, like the scramble for resources, tensions between the corporations, the new Martian government and the Earth government, diseases and more.



AGE OF PIONEERS

8







AGE OF MEGALOPOLISES

AGE OF GREEN MARS



## DDD OUCKSTART TO THE GAME SYSTEM

► TERRAFORMING MARS, THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME USES THE ESTIRPE GAME SYSTEM. SHOWN BELOW IS A SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT.

# ABILITIES & SPECIALTIES

► APTITUDES, EXPERIENCE, AND, ULTIMATELY, EVERY-THING CHARACTERS KNOW AND CAN DO – AND HOW WELL THEY DO IT – ARE DETERMINED BY THEIR ABILITIES AND SPECIALTIES.

#### ABILITIES

These are traits that determine characters' areas of expertise, experience, and skill. There are five general Abilities and a separate one for combat. Each Ability has an associated level, expressed by a number, usually between 0 (worst) and 4 (best), with an average score of 2 for a normal person. This score will initially be what determines how many (six-sided) dice players should roll to determine whether they succeed or fail at a task that depends on one of these Abilities.

#### **GENERAL ABILITIES**

SCHOLARSHIP. This refers to both the characters' book smarts and their general cultural knowledge and memory. Computers helps, but it's easier to find what you already know. *Ex: quickly identify the person you are speaking with as the Human Resources Manager for ThorGate Corporation, memorizing the constellations of Mars to find your way when a dust storm kills your navigation computer, recalling the geology of Mons Olympus to find shelter.* 

ANALYSIS. This includes everything requiring perceiving clues in your surroundings, identifying patterns, analyzing documents, understanding data, and drawing conclusions. *Ex: examining the sheer financial data of a Corporation to find who is receiving dirty money from an Earth mafia, investigate a crash site to find the cause of the shuttle accident.* 

#### MEMORANDUM

Terraforming Mars TTRPG Core Rulebook includes list and examples of Specialties associated with each Ability, giving options to associate characters' experience to their profession and personal history. **INTERACTION.** This includes not only a character's charisma and ability to influence others, but also their personality and empathy. *Ex: giving a heartwarming speech to the Terraforming Committee, convincing the reluctant CEO that you're here to help, seeing through the rogue technician's lies and finding out which crane he's sabotaged.* 

TECH. This comprises anything involving technical applications, coordination, and manual dexterity that requires both knowledge and skill. *Ex: Driving a rover, piloting a shuttle, hacking a computer code to learn about that illegal asteroid launching, treating wounds, building a shelter on Mars surface...* 

**BODY.** This refers to getting the most out of your body, in terms of strength, endurance, finesse and reflexes. *Ex: run*ning before the falling dome ceilings crush you, withstanding long walks on your rad suit, silently infiltrating the abandoned algae processing plant turned criminal hideout...

#### CAN I DO WHATEVER I WANT?

You can certainly try. Keep in mind, however, that using the Analysis, Tech, or Scholarship abilities requires knowledge and applied techniques. Often, successfully completing a task in one of these skills requires mastery of both theory and practice. An academic who goes into the field may lack the necessary experience, just as a mechanic who is very good with her hands may not have the knowledge to operate the complex controls of a space shuttle. For this reason, it is important for the GM to take into account the characters' background, experience, and circumstances to determine whether or not they can resolve something with a roll (or whether they should apply penalties or bonuses).

#### **COMBAT ABILITY**

Terraforming Mars is a game that encourages fighting battles with wits, diplomacy, and cunning, but sometimes there's no other choice but to roll up your sleeves and put your fists to work.

Combat: This Ability encompasses all the skills related to violence, with or without weapons, including firearms.

#### **SPECIALTIES**

These are the specific skills a character excels at within an Ability. They reflect what the character

specialized in during their training and where they have gained the most experience. Every PC starts with four Specialties. They are listed in parentheses after the Ability on their Character Sheet.

When attempting a task that falls within one of their specialties, players can reroll any dice that did not result in a success (i.e., any dice that did not roll a 5 or 6, as explained in the next section). This means that the character not only has a greater chance of succeeding, but is also more likely to receive additional benefits due to their greater skill.

# SOLVING TASKS

► WHEN CHARACTERS WANT TO ATTEMPT TASKS WHOSE OUTCOME IS UNCERTAIN OR COULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES (THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME, THERE IS DANGER NEARBY, ETC), THEY ROLL DICE AND TRY THEIR LUCK.

#### THE BASIC ROLL

Roll the same number of six-sided dice (referred to as 'd' from now on) as your level in the Ability related to the task to be performed. Don't add up the results; read each die individually. Each 5 counts as a success, and each 6 counts as two successes. If you have at least one success, you achieve what you set out to do. Each additional success can enhance the result of your action.

Audhild Berg, an engineer working for the United Nations Mars Initiative, feels the ground move beneath her feet as she overlooks the construction of a new wind turbine field. They have unintentionally opened up an underground cavern! Audhuild should roll to avoid a nasty fall. Her Body level is 3, so she throws three dice and gets a 2, a 4, and a 5. That's one success, enough for her to grab the edge of the open pit and desperately pull herself to safety.

#### DIFFICULTIES

If the game master decides that there are external factors that could alter the chances of success, he or she may add or subtract dice from the player's roll. For instance, the game master might take into account factors such as time constraints, the difficulty of the action being attempted, or the attitude of the person the character is dealing with.

Easy task = Roll +1d / +2d Difficult task = Roll -1d / -2d Extremely difficult task = Roll -4d

When the difficulty reduces the number of dice you can roll to 0d or fewer, you can still try, but you're going to need a lot of luck. Roll 2d and keep the worst result.



Was that hidden cavern an unfortunate coincidence? Or is there a whole network of underground tunnels under the new wind farm? To avoid a disaster, Audhild should check the geological reports of the area, but she should do it ASAP to stop the construction before another accident happens. Due to time constraints, she rolls Analysis with a -2d difficulty. She has Analysis 4, so that's 2d for her to roll: 1 and 2. A failure! Fortunately, she has Geology as a Specialty, allowing her to reroll both failed dice. This time she gets a 3 and a 6. Two successes, she finds enough evidence to convince the Terraforming Committee to postpone the work and send a team to map out the underground tunnels.

#### **BENEFITS FOR EXTRA SUCCESSES**

When a character rolls more successes than they need, they can improve the outcome of the task they are performing. Depending on the situation, and always at the discretion of the GM, they may receive one of the following benefits.

- The result is better than expected.
- They do it faster.
- They don't leave any trace.
- They get additional information.
- It changes the attitude of the person they're dealing with.
- It facilitates an immediately following task (adding extra dice).
- Other possible special effects.

In the case of combat, extra successes work slightly differently (see below).

#### TASK CHAINS

There are times when the situation or a character's bravado will cause them to attempt several tasks at once, so that the outcome of the first one will affect the outcome of the next. There are four main cases in which tasks can be linked in this way:

Quality: The successes from the first roll are added as extra dice in the second. You use Analysis to determine how a piece of equipment works and then sabotaging it with Tech, or using Erudition to show off your knowledge after asking a reluctant astrophysicist for a favor with Interaction.

- **Speed**: If a character needs to accomplish multiple tasks in a short amount of time, the success of the first roll determines the maximum number of dice to roll on the second. You roll Body to reach the sabotaged crane as quickly as possible. The success you get is the maximum number of dice you can roll with Tech to prevent it from dropping its heavy load on a group of workers.
- Hindrance: The first roll's successes subtract dice from the second. You madly write code to build firewall software to stop a hacker from getting into your files. Your successes on a Tech roll will hinder the hacker's own Tech roll.
- Help: When one character's success in a task can make another character's subsequent task easier. In this case, the additional successes of the first player's task add dice to the second player's task. You roll Erudition to recall the easier route through the outskirts of Mons Olympus, aiding your fellow explorer with her Body roll to endure the trek.

#### COMPLICATIONS

A roll of a 1 on any die means a complication - not a failure, but a problem for the future. Maybe you dropped your toolkit while navigating that tricky terrain. Maybe you left a clue behind while infiltrating that corporate enclave. In a struggle, complications give bonus Advantage Points to your opponent.

#### FAILING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

If a roll results in a Fail, the task can be resolved in one of two ways:

- If failure doesn't stop the scenario progression, because there are alternatives or another way for the character to get what they want, you can simply assume that they failed to achieve their goal and should find another way.
- If failure would halt the progression, the game master can consider the character to have succeeded, but not without suffering consequences. These consequences may be immediate or delayed in time, and they may be material or narrative (physical damage, loss of resources, leaving traces of their actions, affecting or

breaking something important on stage, losing important equipment, being discovered by someone unwanted, triggering an antagonistic response).

#### MORE EXAMPLES

In the Terraforming Mars TTRPG, the roleplaying game Core Rulebook, you will find more examples of possible consequences of failing rolls.

#### PASSIVE TASKS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

There are times when the game master can measure characters' ability to succeed in an intuitive task or the involuntary use of an Ability. These are called Passive Tasks. For example, a character is reading a routine report on the latest batch of Earth migrants, but one of them is a convicted criminal whose name should ring a bell. Or a rover follows you across the surface of Mars, leaving a cloud of red dust in its wake. In neither case is the character actively using their Abilities. But the GM can decide whether the character finds the criminal (Scolarship) or notices the tail (Analysis), depending on the level of the character's Abilities.

Sometimes it can be risky for the story to ask a player to make a roll, as it can unintentionally give away clues and put players on alert. Therefore, the GM can ask themselves these questions: What makes the most sense for the scenario? What would have a greater dramatic impact or be more interesting for the story?



# ENGINEERING RULES

► THERE WILL BE TIMES IN TERRAFORMING MARS WHEN A CHARACTER DOES NOT HAVE THE PROPER TOOLS, AND MUST IMPROVISE USING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO REPAIR OR BUILD A DEVICE; IT IS IN THESE SITUATIONS THAT THE FOLLOWING ENGINEERING RULES COULD BE USED.

We must be aware that these rules are, of course, an abstraction, and that the game takes place more than 200 years in the future. Therefore, we must be flexible in our idea of what the technology at hand will be like. At that point in the future, even tasks and operations that are considered mundane today will be performed differently and with different technology. For example, if we improvise, it may be that the material of the component used to adjust the frequencies in our radio receiver turns out to be just as useful for triggering the chemical reaction we need in a water filter.

For the sake of simplicity, in the following paragraphs, whatever is being repaired or built will be referred to as a "device," regardless of whether it is a mechanism, a tool, a vehicle, etc.

#### **MINIMUM REQUIRED**

Obviously, the GM is in charge of determining whether the characters have the minimum required elements and materials to even undertake the task of repairing or building something. For example, you can't create a land vehicle without something it can move on (wheels, skis...), you can't start an electrical system without something that generates a first spark... That said, as we mentioned above, the GM should be generous in their criteria and welcome the (good) ideas that the players may have. In any case, the quantity and quality of the resources available will influence the check as modifiers to the roll (as explained below).

#### **TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

Characters who have received practical training in engineering or scientific fields that allow them to repair and manufacture devices must record this on their sheet according to the rules below.

When creating a character, a player may decide to give up one point of any of their Abilities in order to get TEN points to distribute among the Fields of Expertise (FoE). In exceptional cases, the GM may allow a character to sacrifice two points of Abilities (two from the same Ability or one point each from two) and receive TWENTY points to distribute among Fields of Expertise (FoE). When creating a character, the minimum you can assign to each FoE is 0 points, and the maximum is 8. We recommend that you assign at least 6 points to the FoE you consider the character's main one.

#### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE (FOE):

- Electronics and Electricity
- Transportation
- Optics
- Orbital Operations
- Sensors
- Communications
- Mechanical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Microbial Genetics
- Plant Genetics

#### **BUILDING A DEVICE**

The usefulness of a device is determined by the quality of two factors.

The player must make a check by rolling a number of dice equal to their level in the relevant FoE plus/ minus the dice shown on the Circumstances table (see next section). They must then distribute the successes among the various factors, at a rate of one point per Quality level. For example, with three successes, they can create a device that will work for at least a day (Reliability - Quality 2), and whose Power/Range is similar to something a professional could make on their own (Power/Range - Quality 1). That is, they may need, or prefer, a low-power device, but being assured that it will continue to work for at least two weeks... or conversely, they may only need to get it to work once, but to get it to work as well as possible on that sole occasion. If there are zero successes on the dice, the device has both Reliability and Power/Range 0.

**Optional rule:** A roll where all the dice come up 1 results in a completely useless device.

Example: with three successes you can create a device with Reliability 3 and Power/Range 0, or Reliability 2 and Power/Range 1, or Reliability 1 and Power/Range 2, or Reliability 0 and Power/Range 3

	FACTOR	RELIABILITY	POWER/ RANGE	
		(The device is going to fulfill its	(This device has the power/range of)	
		function)		
	QUALITY 0	once	something a hobbyist could make	
-	QUALITY 1	at least 1 hour	something a professional could make on their own	
	QUALITY 2	at least 1 day	an average commercial product	
-	QUALITY 3	at least 2 weeks	a quality commercial product	
-	QUALITY 4	no time limit	a state-of-the art commercial product or a next-generation prototype	



In the rare case where the GM determines that two different FoEs may be relevant to working on a device, they may allow the player to roll as many dice as their highest level among the FoEs in use, and then re-roll as many dice on which they did not obtain successes as their level in the other.

Marina has Orbital Operations 5 and Optics 2. Since she is attempting to build a flying drone that is guided autonomously via a camera, the GM allows her to roll 5d and re-roll up to 2 of the dice on which she had zero successes. (A petty GM or a complex design might have required two different checks, one for the Aeronautics part of the drone, and another one for the Optics.)

Similarly, if it is feasible for multiple characters to work on a single device; use the highest present value for the check, and the second highest to determine how many unsuccessful dice can be re-rolled.

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

In addition to the Reliability and Power or Range of the device being created, we need to consider the starting point of the characters in comparison with what would be the usual situation for manufacturing such a device.

For each of the following circumstances, the GM should determine what level would be the usual one, and modify the roll with +Xd or -Xd depending on how different the character's situation is.

For example, looking at the "Complexity" Circumstance, if the character is working on a device that would normally require a small team in a workshop (level 3), but the PC is alone, albeit in a well-equipped workshop (level 2), the roll is made at -1d. If the workshop was not even well-equipped, the penalty would be -2d.

	<b>COMPLEXITY</b> (Under normal conditions this can be done by)	SPEED (This usually takes)	<b>REPURPOSING</b> (How far from the original purpose of the components you want to go)
LEVEL1	a person in a workshop	a few minutes	They are basically equivalent
LEVEL 2	a person in a well-equipped workshop	hours	They are used for the same thing, but they work differently
LEVEL 3	a small team in a workshop	half a day	The base component is useful, but it has been processed for another function and work needs to be undone
LEVEL 4	a small team in a well- equipped workshop	one day	The base component is useful, but it needs to be processed and prepared for this new purpose
LEVEL 5	a professional team in a company in the corresponding industry	several days	It might work in theory, but it's not certain that there aren't dependencies that would prevent it from working

Laura needs to improvise a receiver to re-establish contact with her corporation's base. Ideally, it should work for at least an hour, and given the complexity of the communication protocols in use, she needs a device that is at least equivalent to a mid-range commercial one.

Her Circumstances are as follows:

- Complexity: This is a device that would normally be built by a small team in a workshop. She is alone, but has a well-equipped workshop. This modifies the check by -1d.
- Speed: It would take a couple of hours to make this, and Laura has more time than that, being able to spend half a day. This modifies the check by +1d.
- Repurposing: Laura has the tracking module from her vehicle and some other mining equipment that she can dismantle and use. The GM determines that what she has is useful, but it has been processed for another function and work needs to be undone. This modifies the check by -2d.

The total sum of the modifiers based on the Circumstances is -2d.

Laura has 5 points in Communications, and 2 in Electricity and Electronics. She rolls 3d (due to the -2d modifier) and can re-roll up to two of them. She rolls the 3d and gets a 2, a 4 and a 5. After rerolling the two failed dice she gets a 1 and a 5. In total she has achieved two successes (one for each 5). She should lower her expectations. Either the device will do what she needs it to do, but won't last long; or she will end with something worse, but that will work for longer, at the risk that it won't be powerful enough...

#### **REPAIRING A DEVICE**

A simple repair can be accomplished with a Tech Ability roll, provided the character's background warrants it. For more complex repairs, you can use the device construction rules described in this section.





# MENTAL STRESS

► THE MENTAL STRESS A CHARACTER ENDURES AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT CAN ALTER THE WAY THEY INTERACT WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS, EITHER TEMPORARILY, IF THEY RECOVER QUICKLY OR, IN THE LONG TERM, IF THE ACCUMULATION OF STRESS IS NOT BEING PROPERLY MANAGED BY THEIR BRAIN AND THEY BEGIN TO LOSE TOUCH WITH REALITY.

Any stressful situation has the potential to cause Mental Stress to a character. Mechanically, this is represented by rolling a certain number of Stress dice, more dice for more stressful situations. Note that if multiple characters are exposed to the same situation, each player must roll the dice separately, i.e. the same situation causes different impacts on different individuals.

#### THE MENTAL STRESS TRACK

The character sheet includes a track to record the current amount of Mental Stress the character has accumulated (this track works similarly to the Vitality one).

This track has four boxes labeled 1-2, 3-4, 5, and 6. Roll the Stress dice and check the boxes corresponding to the results obtained (if they are unchecked). If any re-

David and Arthur head off to check the air recycling system in their habitat. Upon arrival, they find that someone has ripped out the cables. This is (another!) clear evidence of a sabotage, which the GM determines represents a 2d impact to their Mental Stress (How many hours has it been out of order? They could suffocate any minute!). David rolls a 1 and a 5, marking the two corresponding boxes on his sheet. Arthur rolls a 3 and a 4, which means he has to cross out the same box twice. As we have discussed above, checking the same box a second time leads to a loss of control. Arthur could drop to his knees and sob in despair, muttering "we are lost," or he could react by trying, obviously in vain, to reconnect all the cables one by one.



sult rolled matches a box that was already checked (even if it was just checked by the same roll), the character suffers an episode of Loss of Control for a number of minutes equal to the number of duplicated results rolled. Depending on the situation, the GM must decide, or discuss with the player, whether the character spends those minutes incapacitated, screaming or sobbing, running away, or trying to resist or deal with whatever caused the effect. This episode serves as an outlet for the character's brain, so the character can uncheck this box afterwards, leaving it blank.

When the boxes labelled 1-2 and 3-4 are both checked, the character is feeling uneasy and is starting to think about putting some distance between themselves and the situation. If a character with boxes 1-2 and 3-4 already checked is forced to check the box 5 or the box 6 as well, the adrenaline starts to take over and from then on, until they calm down, their Body checks receive a +1d modifier, and all other checks receive a -1d penalty. If at any point all boxes are checked, the modifiers become +2d/-2d. Having all boxes checked does not mean losing control, it means being on edge. Also, when all the boxes become checked, the PC adds one Trauma point. The details are explained a little further down.

The Mental Stress rules are meant to be used for thrilling and pivotal situations, to add a layer of difficulty and uncertainty. Make good use of them, but do not overburden players with stress checks, this isn't a space horror game after all. Both the perils of Mars, menaces (natural or human!), and violence can provoke stress checks. Choose which ones of those are relevant for the flavour you want your game to have, and stick to them as your stress triggers.

#### **STRESS STIMULI**

Some sample situations and their corresponding Mental Stress impact, for you to use as a guide (top right).

#### **PASSING ON YOUR STRESS**

The fact that one member of the group begins to lose control can lead to the rest being affected by

Finding an obviously sabotaged piece of equipment	1d	
Seeing a corpse by surprise	1d	
Finding a charred corpse	1d	
Discovering that a device you rely on has been malfunctioning for some time (for example, your location system has led you to the wrong place)	2d	
Waking up immobilized in an unknown environment	2d	
Being forced to stop helping an innocent colleague, knowing that it will result in their death	3d	_
Anticipating that you will not be able to avoid a potentially deadly threat (for example, when the sun's rays are about to hit you and you have no protection)	3d	

their behaviour, even if they have not been directly exposed to the same stimulus.

Each time a character (either another PC or a friendly NPC that is part of the same group in which the PCs are) suffers an episode of Loss of control, the rest of the members of the group who see them out of control and who have not been exposed themselves to the same stimulus (since those would have already made their own Mental Stress rolls), receive a 1d impact to their Mental Stress.

#### **CALMING DOWN**

When a character is no longer exposed to a stressful situation (the threat has disappeared, the character has left the area, etc.), they can rest and try to calm down. A short rest (at least 1 hour) allows a check to be made with 4d. Each success achieved in this roll allows the character to remove one check from a box on their Mental Stress track (starting with the highest numbers).

#### UNDERLYING AND LONG-TERM TRAUMAS

At the end of each game session, each player must roll as many dice as their character has Trauma points. Count how many dice have rolled failures. Ignore any "5" results (these are successes, meaning the brain is able to deal with the stress). Then, for every "6" (double successes) rolled, remove one failed dice from the count. The number of failed dice remaining is the Severity of the Long-Term Traumasthe PC develops. Delete as many Trauma points from your sheet as dice you failed the roll with (as before, developing this disorder releases stress on the brain).

We suggest a discussion involving both the GM and the impacted player to decide on a disorder that is consistent with the situation suffered and with the character's personality and history. They may simply become wary of having to leave a habitat for the outer Mars, or they may begin to develop their own conspiracy theory ("Now it all makes sense"), or they may become paranoid and start making plans against their fellow characters ("And you knew what was going to happen all along, right?"), for example.

If a character develops a disorder and at a later time acquires another, the second disorder may be an exacerbation of the first or a different one that is suffered in parallel. The GM must decide what is more appropriate. If exacerbating the original disorder is preferred, the new Severity will be equal to the greater of the two (the old or the new) plus one.

#### **SEVERITY OF THE DISORDER**

#### 1SPORADIC>

Avoid windows that overlook the Martian landscape.

#### 2 LIGHT >

You need to place your tools in a specific order before using them. If someone does not respect or alter the order, you must stop and re-arrange them in your own way before continuing work.

#### 3 MILD >

You open and close the door twice every time you leave a room.

#### 4 IMPORTANT >

You may not wear or use any yellow piece of clothing or equipment.

#### 5 SEVERE >

You cannot go outside on Mars.

#### 6 DISABLING >

You cannot lose physical contact with your left boot.





# COMBAT

► THERE ARE TIMES WHEN NEITHER DIPLOMACY NOR WITS CAN PREVENT A CONFRONTATION. WHEN SOMEONE WANT TO HURT YOU PHYSICALLY, THE COMBAT RULES COME INTO PLAY.

#### **COMBAT TURNS**

During a combat, turns become more important. A combat turn usually lasts just a few seconds, with each combatant performing a combat task. Once all the parties involved have acted, a new turn begins and so on until the fight is over.

#### **INITIATIVE TURN**

The combatants act in order, based on their Initiative score.

Initiative is the sum of the Body and Combat scores. If a character is to take an option different than attacking, their Initiative is equal to their Body x2.

Landing the first blow has its perks, and there are situations that help you do so. Characters who have firearms at the ready can add +2 to their Initiative. Conversely, those who fight unarmed or with makeshift weapons (objects that are unbalanced or awkwardly shaped, such as a wrench or a drone axle) must subtract -1 from their Initiative. The chosen maneuver also determines how quickly a character will be able to join the fray. As explained in greater detail below, characters who intend to Damage an opponent add +2 to their Initiative, those hoping to Gain Advantage add +1, and those planning to focus solely on Defending themselves add nothing. In case of a tie, player characters act before NPC.

#### THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

The combat sequence begins when one character decides to attack another. The characters are ranked in order of their Initiative scores (based on what each player states that their character wants to do) to determine who will go first. When it is a character's turn, if they have not yet acted (in response to the attack by another combatant), and depending on what they said they would do when the Initiative was determined, they may:

- Move up to 21 feet and perform one action, which may or may not be a combat maneuver. They may do this in any order they choose: move and then perform the action, perform the action and then move, or move while performing the action.
- Run. The character concentrates their action on moving in order to go farther. Pass a Physical roll to add 12 feet to the initial 20, plus 3 more for each additional success.

If a character is more than 15 feet away from any opponent when it is their Initiative turn, and they can still act, they can choose to launch a Ranged Attack as their combat action.

If a character is within 21 (unobstructed) feet of any opponent when their Initiative turn comes, and they can still act, they may choose to move toward their target and launch a melee attack as their deliberate action.

A character whose Initiative turn has not yet come up who is targeted by an enemy melee attack (see below), must respond to the aggression and remains engaged with their enemy for the rest of the turn, losing their Initiative turn. (In practical terms, the action of a character who is attacked is focused on defending themselves from the melee attacks received.)

A character involved in a fight who chooses to focus on a task other than fighting (pushing a heavy crate on the enemy's head, close the blast door before they area launched to space...) can only respond to melee attacks with the Defend maneuver. Since they are more focused on their task than on defending themselves, they suffer the penalty of not being able to reroll any dice (see below), but they can keep trying to accomplish the task when their Initiative turn comes. This penalty applies to them throughout the turn.

#### RANGED ATTACKS

To determine whether a ranged attack hits, players roll the same number of dice as their Combat score. The difficulty of landing a blow may be subject to penalties depending on the player's movement and the target, the distance, visibility, etc. The details are explained in the complete rulebook, but generally speaking you can apply a bonus of +2d for easy rolls and a penalty of -2d for difficult rolls.

#### **CLOSE COMBAT**

When a character launches a melee attack, he chooses a combat maneuver and engages his target, who picks a combat maneuver in response. The outcome is determined on the spot with an opposed Combat roll, without waiting for other Initiative rolls. In other words, a character with a low Initiative score may have a plan of action, but be unable to execute it because they are attacked by an opponent before they can do so, and can only react.

The combat maneuvers are:

Damage: A character who states that they intend to inflict Damage on an opponent get +2 to Initiative. They must choose a specific target for their attack. If the character who chose Damage has not yet acted on his Initiative turn, he attacks the opponent. The target of the attack must immediately decide what action to take (they can also try to damage their attacker, try to gain an advantage, or try to defend themselves).

If a character succeeds in a Damage maneuver, they may make a Damage roll, adding a number of dice equal to the difference in successes by which he won the opponent's roll.

**Gain Advantage**: Characters who state that they intend to Gain Advantage receive +1 for Initiative. They must choose a specific target to gain advantage over. If, when their Initiative turn comes, the character who has chosen Gain Advantage has not yet acted, they engage with the rival in an opposed Combat roll. If a character succeeds in a Gain Advantage maneuver, they receive a number of Advantage points equal to the difference they got on the opposed roll. The uses of these Advantage points are described below.

Defend: Characters who chooses to Defend themselves receives no Initiative bonus. A character who Defends may reroll (once only) any dice that did not yield a success in the opposed Combat roll.

If a character who has chosen Defend succeeds, he avoids being hit and, therefore, takes no damage.

#### **USE OF ADVANTAGE POINTS**

- Gain the Initiative against the same opponent on the next turn.
- Add 1d to the next opposed Combat roll against the same opponent. This should be declared right before the roll is made.
- Allow an ally to add 1d to their opposed Combat roll, if they are also engaged in a melee fight against the same opponent. This should be declared just before the ally makes the roll.

Once both combatants have chosen their maneuvers, they each roll a number of dice equal to their Combat Ability. If one character has more successes than the other, the result is based on the chosen maneuver, as explained above.

If there is a tie, the combatants block each other and decide what to do next turn.

#### **MULTIPLE OPPONENTS**

A character who has already acted and receives a melee attack can only respond with the Defend maneuver. If this maneuver is their second action of the turn, they receive a penalty of -2d; if it is the third, the penalty is -4d; etc.

#### DAMAGE

There are two tracks for measuring a character's status: Vitality and Incapacitation. When a player makes a damage roll, the result of each die must be read separately to determine whether they need to mark any boxes in either track.



#### **VITALITY TRACK**

This track consists of eight boxes, numbered according to the die result requiring each one to be marked (1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6). Thus, if a damage roll against a character yields a 1, a 3 and a 5, the victim should mark the 1 box, one of the 3 boxes, and the 5 box. If there are no boxes left to mark for a given number, they can disregard the result (the hit causes no further damage to the target; for example, it lands on an arm that had already been immobilized). Penalty for injuries. When characters take damage, it causes them injuries that affect their concentration and physical activity. The highest unmarked number on a character's Vitality Track determines the maximum number of dice they can roll.

Example: Carla has shot Kieran in the leg. Kieran makes a damage roll using three dice and gets the following result: 5, 6, 6. Kieran thus has to cross out the 5 and the 6 on his Vitality Track. He can disregard the second 6, as there is only one 6 box on the Vitality Track. From now on, Kieran will not be able to roll more than four dice at a time (since 4 is the highest remaining unmarked number on his Vitality Track).

#### **INCAPACITATION TRACK**

This track consists of four unnumbered boxes. For each even number in a damage roll, mark off one Incapacitation box, regardless of whether you have also marked a Vitality box. If all the Incapacitation boxes are marked, the character is incapacitated and can no longer participate in the combat. Depending on the story, this could mean they have been knocked out, immobilized, overpowered, etc.

Example: Continuing with the previous example, the damage roll for the bullet was a 5 and two 6s. Kieran has marked a 5 and a 6 on his Vitality Track. He must also mark two boxes on his Incapacitation Track, one for each even result. (In other words, even though he can disregard the second 6 for the purposes of the Vitality Track, he still has to mark an Incapacitation box for it.)

#### WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THE COREBOOK

In this Quick Start Guide we've outlined the basics of Terraforming Mars RPG system. This should be enough for your first games. However, in the Corebook you'll find advanced game mechanics for resolving your Projects and adding new layers to the game, including:

- **Corporation sheets:** Choose one of the corporations from the original board game or create your own, each with its own interests and resources. Each will give the characters benefits and hindrances.
- Projects & Challenges: Full-fledged projects for your characters to overcome, such as the ones you can find on the board game cards, and a guide to creating your own.
- **The everchanging Mars:** Adapt the evolution of the planet to the choices of your gaming group with a system that allows you to represent different environments and biomes.
- **Generational play:** The successes and failures of one generation of player characters will affect those who come after. The future is built on the effort of many.
- Social & technical crisis: Most conflicts in Terraforming Mars will be solved with your wits & mind, not with your fists. The new mechanics will keep this kind of crysis exciting without need for violent exchange.
- **Oxygen consumption:** Add a layer of urgency to the crucial moments, making the oxygen in the radiation suits a valuable resource.

Please feel free to let us know what you would like to see in the game and your experiences if you try this Quickstart. We'd love to hear your thoughts at **info@shadowlandsgames.com**.





+8 +6 +4 +2 0°C -2 -4 -6 +8 -10 -12 -14 -16 -18 -20 -22 -24 -26 -28 -30

### SHAPE MARS FROM RED DESERT TO A NEW HOME







## ONISATION



Terraforming was always the wrong term. Mars could never be another Earth, despite the intentions of those who first came here.

We were Martians now, and with each generation Mars was changing us.

Alyse Kim, Mars University, 2514



"Terraforming was always the wrong term. Mars could never be another Earth, despite the intentions of those who first came here. We were Martians now, and with each generation Mars was changing us." - Alyse Kim, Mars University, 2514

# PRELUDE IN RED



# **PRELUDE IN RED**

► IN THE *TERRAFORMING MARS RPG*, YOU PLAY THROUGH THE FUTURE HISTORY OF MARS FROM SEVERAL DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLONISATION EFFORT TO THE COMPLETION OF A STABLE MARTIAN BIOSPHERE. YOU WON'T HAVE ONE SINGLE PLAYER CHARACTER, BUT SEVERAL OVER THE COURSE OF GENERATIONS. INDIVIDUALS LIVE AND DIE ON THE RED SANDS, CITIES RISE AND FALL, THE WORLD AROUND YOU WILL BE UTTERLY TRANSFORMED – BUT THE CORPORATIONS CONTINUE ON, DOMINATING MARTIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY FOR GENERATIONS. GAMEPLAY IS DIVIDED INTO PROJECTS, GENERATIONS AND AGES.

#### PROJECTS

A **Project** is a large-scale undertaking of some sort. Projects might be assigned to the player characters by their patron corporation, or chosen by the characters from a list of possibilities. A Project consists of several challenges to be overcome by the characters – through roleplaying, through intrigue, through technical ingenuity, or whatever means are necessary. Projects are roughly analogous to an adventure or scenario in other roleplaying games.

In this quickstart, the sample project is the **Hellas Mohole.** Take a look at the project brief on p. 35. It lists four challenges for the player characters. Some can be resolved through a simple die roll – testing the robots, for example, is a Tech test, and can be dealt with quickly (assuming everything goes smoothly!) The challenge of selecting the site, though, requires negotiation with other Corporations, so it involves both rolling and roleplaying.

Sometimes, the players can choose what skills they employ in tackling a challenge; sometimes, it's dictated by circumstances or the whims of the Gamemaster. If the group fails to accumulate the required number of successes in each challenge, then the Project may not work as intended, leading to more problems and consequences in the future.

For example, when negotiating with representatives from Teractor, one of the player characters rolls Interaction and gets only one success. The challenge requires three successes to be successfully completed, so the players are two successes short – but decide to move on anyway instead of looking for another way to rack up the missing successes. At the end of the Project, the GM declares that Teractor's now feuding with ThorGate and there'll be more corporate sabotage and conflict between the two in future...

Completing a challenge often requires more successes than a player character can reasonably generate in a single roll. Encourage the players to come up with task chains that use different Abilities to achieve a goal.

For example, surveying the mohole site is an Analysis task - but the characters could form a task chain using Body to physically explore the site, Tech for drone overflights, or Interaction to befriend some Mining Guild members who know the area well. Build up enough dice, and what seems like an unreachable number of required successes becomes attainable with a bit of luck! Teamwork matters on Mars.

#### GENERATIONS

A **Generation** is the time spent playing a particular set of player characters. In each Generation, your group tackles multiple Projects. Once you've told all the story of one Generation, you move onto the next, creating another set of player characters. These new characters are connected in some way to the previous set – but *how* they're connected is up to you. (A Generation can be, literally, another generation where you're playing the children or grandchildren of previous characters, but it can also be a smaller timeskip to characters linked in another way. Each new Generation builds on the legacy of the previous one, but takes a different perspective or switches style of play.

In this quickstart, all your characters are employees or contracts of ThorGate corporation. In a full game, when you move onto the next generation, the new characters might also be working for ThorGate – or you could switch to a different corporation that's a fierce rival of ThorGate, or off-grid Martians Reds intent on sabotaging ThorGate's terraforming projects.

#### AGES

Finally, the terraforming process as a whole is divided into four **Ages**. Each Age has different environmental conditions, different technologies, and different political pressures. The four Ages are:

- The Age of Colonisation: The early days of the colonisation effort, marked by the transition from the cautious approach of the United Nations Martian Initiative to the 'Mars rush' of the Corporate era. Mars' surface is lifeless and hostile.
- The Age of Corporations: The chaotic, often violent era when rival corporations struggled for control of Mars' natural resources and terraforming credits. The still-hostile surface of Mars reflect the upheaval of this era, with rapidly rising temperatures and melting polar caps transforming the landscape.
- **The Age of Megalopolises:** While the atmosphere was still unbreathable, the population of Mars – both Earther and Marsborn - increased rapidly. Huge domed

cities dominate the landscape; intrigue in the new Martian assembly and the desire for Martian independence dominate the human sphere.

• The Green Age: Green forests and blue seas spread across the red world; with Mars as the gateway to the outer planets, colonies spring up on the moons of Jupiter and beyond. Now that the terraforming of Mars is complete, what's next?

This quickstart is set in the first Age, the Age of Colonisation, in the year 2316.

Up until last year, the terraforming of Mars was under the control of UNMI, the old United Nations Mars Initiative. Impatient to see results – and to relieve population and resource pressures on Earth – the World Government recently changed policy and offered staggering incentives to any corporation that could hasten the terraforming process. Many of UNMI's long-stalled projects have been taken up by corporations – including the Hellas Planitia Mohole.

Presently, the thin atmosphere of Mars is unbreathable, with a surface pressure less than 1% that of Earth; surface temperatures are far below freezing, even at noon. Humans require protective suits to move on the surface; habitats must be buried deep under the surface or protected by domes to reduce radiation risks.

In this Age, Mars is dead. One error, and you might be too.

#### THORGATE

As oil reserves ran out on Earth, Nordic ThorGate emerged as the new world leader in the energy field with their cutting edge technology. Now that the colonies on Mars are growing, ThorGate leads the way in finding viable energy solutions.

The pregenerated player characters are all employees of ThorGate. The local headquarters is in Tharsis City; Hellas Planitia is on the far side of the planet.

The six sample player characters are:

- Helena Voss, roboticist
- Yu Yinoa Wu, corporate intelligence
- Gabi Antall, security
- Wally Marshall, ex-UNMI explorer
- Gina Anker, negotiator
- Harry Shevlenko, areologist

#### PROJECT: HELLAS MOHOLE, PHASE 1

ThorGate's assigned you to the initial excavation of a Mohole in Hellas Planitia. A Mohole is a shaft multiple kilometers deep into the thin planetary crust to release geothermal energy. Even with ThorGate's expertise in automated robotic mining, this excavation will take decades to complete.

#### FIRST PHASE CHALLENGES

- Select Mohole Site. UNMI (the United Nations Mars Initiative) has already conducted a preliminary survey of the Hellas basin and identified three candidate sites (Alpha, Beta, Gamma). Survey these sites and select a preferred location,
- Design & Construct Holehead Base. The Holehead base must be capable of housing the technicians and programmers who will oversee the Mohole excavation.
- Test Automated Robots. The Jotun-class mining robots are en route from Earth, and must be unpacked and tested on site.
- Commence Phase 1 Excavation. Thor-Gate Executive Fran Niemier will attend the ground-breaking ceremony for Mohole commencement. Excavation must commence promptly in order for ThorGate to qualify for full terraforming credit.

#### **OPENING SCENE**

Play begins in the ThorGate corporate offices in Tharsis City. The player characters have been summoned by Fran Niemier, ThorGate's MEO (Mars Executive Officer), himself recently arrived from Earth. Tharsis City is one of the first cities on Mars; most of the city is underground in lava tubes and excavated tunnels, but construction of a shielded dome has begun, and the ThorGate offices are in one of the new surface towers. From Niemier's office, the characters have a staggering view out across the red deserts of Mars.

Show the players the Project briefing. Explain it's up to them how they overcome the various Challenges.







Likely questions from the players:

- What are the differences between the sites? Physically, they're all suitable. Site Alpha's situated at one of the lowest points in the Hellas basin where the crust is thinnest, so it's likely to be the best, but the characters should conduct their own survey – and make sure no other corporations' projects interfere with the Mohole. It's chaotic on Mars right now; there's never been so much space traffic, so many people and so much heavy machinery arriving all at once.
- Who's actually building the base? There's a small construction crew on site already, in temporary habitats. They'll build the base according to the characters' design, then operate and maintain the mining robots during Phase 1 Excavation The construction crew foreman is Dieter Kynes.
- What about the robots? They're en route from Earth; they'll be dropped onsite from orbit shortly.

Hellas Planitia is so far from Tharsis that it would take weeks for a rover to drive there, and the atmosphere's still too thin for conventional aircraft to fly. ThorGate have provided the team with a MEM (Mars Excursion Module), a suborbital 'hopper' that can get them to the dig site and back. Fuel for the MEM is expensive and it's got limited cargo space.

#### **RUNNING THE SCENARIO**

Intertwine the challenges as much as possible. Don't have the players pick the site, then build the base, then set up the robots - have them negotiating with the Miner's Guild while the robot cargo module's landing in the desert and so forth. Look for ways to cascade failure and complexity pushing one Challenge towards a solution should create problems for the others...

#### CHALLENGE: SELECT MOHOLE SITE

The team can travel out to the sites in person (**Body**, to navigate the rough terrain in a Mars suit), study them through remote satellite or drone survey (**Analysis**) or check the existing UNMI survey data (**Scholarship**). The sites are about 400 kilometers away from each other - and the Mars rovers struggle to achieve more than 50KPH, that's at least a eight-hour drive between sites.

#### SITE ALPHA

As Niemier said, it's the deepest of the three sites, and the crust is thinnest here. This was UNMI's preferred site. Digging here means the Mohole should be completed well ahead of schedule (actually completing the Mohole will take decades, but the characters' decisions now will have repercussions for future ThorGate employees.) However, the site was at the bed of an ancient sea during the early Amazonian period of Mars, three billion years ago - if the deep aquifers were pumped out and the atmospheric pressure and temperature rose precipitously, then it's theoretically possible that the Mohole might be drowned before construction is complete. The UNMI survey dismissed this as a possibility, but the UNMI calculations assumed a much, much slower approach to terraforming.

Gathering corporate intelligence through negotiation (Interaction in Tharsis City) or investigating other survey teams (Interaction in the wilds of Hellas or Body/Analysis to spy on them) confirms that Teractor- the largest corporation on Earth – plans to reflood the Hellas basin.

#### TERACTOR

Influence enough to control entire nations, and an army of lawyers and executives have taken Teractor all the way to the top - and now the sky is calling. The strongest corporation on Earth wants to dominate space too...

Teractor's a newcomer to Mars, but it's landed with a bang; the corporation's occupying a massive new corporate block in Tharsis City, twice as big as the ThorGate offices. Most of the block is still unoccupied, endless offices and labs awaiting a host of corporate employees and scientists who are still en route from Earth. Maintenance robots purr through empty offices. However, the company has already begun its grand plans for Mars, and has teams on site in Hellas already.

Teractor intends to pump out a deep-buried aquifer - water locked away in rock formations and create a new Martian sea. As the Hellas basin is the lowest-lying terrain in the planet, any future sea would flood mohole Site Alpha before the mohole was complete.

#### BRENT HERWIG, TERACTOR EXECUTIVE

Few things do more for one's ego than being able to wield the multi-trillion-credit budget of Teractor like a cudgel. Brent only arrived on Mars in the last transfer window, two years ago, and he spent fourteen months up on Phobos, so he's barely got any dust on his suit - but even though he's new to Mars, he thinks of himself as the big man. Until the rest of the Teractor Mars Office arrive, he's going to act like he's in charge.

The characters might run into Brent in Tharsis City, or out in Hellas. Play Brent as brash and egotistical. He's dismissive of the mohole project as typical of old UNMI slow-and-steady thinking; he's convinced Teractor and the other megacorporations are going to kick out more heat with industrial chemistry and asteroid impacts than any big hole in the ground. He suggests that the characters go back to ThorGate and cancel their project. To do otherwise, he insists, would literally just be throwing money down a hole that's going to be at the bottom of the ocean in a few years. If Brent's to be believed, Site Alpha's not viable.

A successful Scholarship test recalls that under the terms of the Terraforming Council agreement, Teractor would face penalties if they knowingly pursued a terraforming project that significantly impacted on an existing project without permission; Brent's trying to bully ThorGate away from Site Alpha.

SCHOLARSHIP	2
ANALYSIS	2
INTERACTION	3 (Intimidation)
TECH	2
BODY	3

Combat Ability: 2

#### SITE BETA

Site Beta's is surrounded by the walls of an impact crater, (Crater Thom, named after a town in Thailand) and situated higher on the Hellas rim than Alpha. It's not going to be endangered by rising seas any time soon – but fragments of the metal-dense asteroid that blasted the crater are buried down there, as are valuable minerals concentrated by the



force and heat of the impact event. The excavation would be significantly slowed any time the robots ran into such a mineral deposit. That said, the fragments are extremely valuable.

So valuable, in fact, that the Martian Mining Guild wants the site. ThorGate has a prior claim through UNMI, but picking Site Beta means picking a fight with the Mining Guild.

#### THE MINING GUILD

The earliest private enterprises on Mars focussed on mining and exporting minerals off the surface. As the megacorporations arrived to terraform, the miners united in the Guild to defend their interests. With their expertise and knowledge of the planet, they're able to contend with the financial and technological resources of the corporations.

Human explorers first landed on Mars in the 2100s; under the auspices of UNMI, more colonists and scientists landed over the next century, as well as miners to exploit Mars' most easily accessible deposits of rare minerals and metals. Now, some of those experienced miners have formed the Martian Mining Guild.

There are rumours, though, that some of the early colonists have vanished into the vast outback of the planet, sustaining themselves with stolen equipment and establishing their own hidden colonies, beyond the reach of Earth or the megacorporations...

#### TAMSIN CARTER, MINING GUILD SCOUT

Tamsin's a second-generation Marsie; she was born here, the child of two miners. To her, the universe divided between the lethal red outer world and the dimly lit tunnels and rover cockpits of the inner, and Earth's just a blue dot in the sky. Terraforming holds little appeal for her; if you want to live on an Earth-like planet, Earth's right there, and anyway, what does it matter what things are like in a dozen generations' time? She's here right now - and she wants to cut a deal.

Play Tamsin as a little over-eager to make a deal with the characters; the Mining Guild's under threat from the sudden influx of corporate money and resources, and they're on edge. If the characters don't cut a deal, they overreact.

The characters encounter Carter's rover when they're near Site Beta. She contacts them over radio, and asks them to meet her on the surface. While outside, she shows the characters a miner hack for using short-range radio instead of the satellite comms common in the newer suits, allowing them to talk privately. Carter explains that the mining guild knows about the areology of Site Beta; their surveys are better than anything UNMI or ThorGate produces. There's a big deposit of dense metals near the surface at Site Beta - the mohole dig is going to run into a lot of trouble blasting through that ground. However - if the characters pick Site Beta, then the Mining Guild would be only too happy to exploit the mohole later on as subcontractors. Basically, the proposal is that ThorGate foot the bill for the hard work of actually digging down to the ore, the Mining Guild swoop in and actually mine the valuable metal, and the player characters get secretly compensated. She wins, the player characters win, the only losers are ThorGate - and they're a big Earther megacorporation. They can swallow the loss.

If the characters don't take the deal, then the Mining Guild attempts to sabotage the mohole during construction (p. 45).

SCHOLARSHIP	1
ANALYSIS	3 (Sensor Operation)
INTERACTION	2
TECH	3 (Rover Operation)
BODY	2

Combat Ability: 2



#### SITE GAMMA

The third site's in the Dao Vallis outflow channel of the massive shield volcano of Hadriacus Mons; the intent is to dig the Mohole at an angle *under* the shield volcano to release trapped heat in deep-buried magma chambers (the magma's long since cooled, but the rocks there retain considerable heat). UNMI dismissed the Site Gamma proposal as overly complex and hard to engineer – but it's above any rising seas, wouldn't require a confrontation with the miners, and should yield a measurable thermal gain several decades ahead of the other sites.

Site Gamma's a harder engineering prospect than the other sites.

Surveying Site Gamma in person (**Body**) or with detailed drone analysis (**Analysis**) discovers a supply cache hidden in a cave. Someone's living out here, off the grid...

#### COMPLETING THE CHALLENGE

To successfully complete this challenge, the characters must:

- Pick one of the three sites.
- Rack up at least three successes on tests related to surveying the physical characteristics of the chosen site (six successes are needed for Site Gamma, due to the difficulty of digging the mohole at an angle.

If the characters have fewer than the required number of successes, pick a consequence:

- The mohole's structurally unsound and there's a risk of cave-in.
- Increase the difficulty of building the Holehead base (-1d per missing success).

#### THE MARTIAN UNDERGROUND

Criminal cartels. Fervent Red anti-terraforming terrorist cells. Secret experiments. Martian cultists. Rogue settlers. Raiding parties, stealing supplies. True, half the wild stories they tell in Tharsis are nonsense aimed at gullible newcomers, but there's something out there. Even in the UNMI days there were reports of missing equipment, anomalous heat sources, personnel vanishing from isolated outposts - and now the corporations are pouring people and resources into Mars, who knows what's slipping through the cracks?

There's a small underground outpost in the the Hadriacus uplands. The outpost is off the grid, and doesn't appear on any maps (although a successful **Analysis** test could find heat traces and locate their current campsite). The renegades believe that the World Government has handed too much influence over the corporations, and that Mars will become a corporate hell unless there's some form of resistance. Dieter Kynes, the foreman at the ThorGate base (p. 41) is an ally of theirs.

#### JUNO ROBINSON, MARTIAN RENEGADE

If the characters track down the renegades (or encounter them in the final Challenge, p. 44), then

the renegade spokesperson is Juno Robinson. She came to Mars as a corporate miner working for IPC, but she was rescued from a mine collapse by some of the first renegades and joined their cause. (Computer files record that she died in the mine collapse.)

She's now a true believer in the dream of a free Mars, a new polity independent of Earth or Corporate control. Juno knows that free Mars is an impossibility for now - human colonies on the planet are still hugely dependent on supplies from Earth - but the foundations for a better world must be laid now.

Juno suspects the Mining Guild had a hand in the mining disaster that nearly killed her, and strongly distrusts them.

SCHOLARSHIP	2	
ANALYSIS	2	
INTERACTION	3	
TECH	2	(MIning Operations)
BODY	2	(Stealth)

**Combat Ability: 2** 



#### **CHALLENGE: BUILDING THE BASE**

While the actual excavation of the mohole will be done by automated robots, they must be supported by roboticists and mechanics, and that support crew need somewhere long-term to live. ThorGate's sending out components for a modular base, which should be constructed somewhere near the chosen mohole dig site, but it's up to the players to decide on the priorities and design of the structure.

The player characters have access to the Mars Excursion Module to swiftly hop from Tharsis City out to the mohole site, but the construction crew who'll actually assemble the base have had to take a different route. For weeks, they've been driving across the face of Mars in big cargo rovers, hauling the habitat modules and other components for the base. The ThorGate rovers are obviously brand-new beneath their fresh coat of red dust; but the lead rover is a much smaller and older vehicle belonging to Dieter Kynes.

Rovers, even big ones, are cramped and have limited facilities. After weeks of travel across rough terrain, the construction crew are all stressed and exhausted even before the task begins.

#### **DIETER KYNES**

Kynes is a Martian veteran; he came over with mining concerns in 2284. Muscle wastage and perchlorate poisoning from the toxic Martian soil means he'll never go back to Earth; Mars is his home. He signed on with ThorGate to get access to advanced corporate medical care, but he mistrusts the new corporate arrivals.

Kynes emerges from the habitat in his battered old Mars suit to greet the player characters. He shows them around the little habitat and introduces them to the work crew - and complains that the workers aren't properly trained in Mars survival techniques and protocols.

If asked, he advocates Site Gamma for the mohole; they can use the lava tubes there for base housing, which would both give the workers more space and allow the base to use fewer supplies.

SCHOLARSHIP	1
ANALYSIS	2
INTERACTION	1
TECH	3 (Rover Operation)
BODY	2
Combat Ability:	2

**Kynes & The Underground:** Secretly, Dieter Kynes is a part of the nascent Martian underground, a loose network of independent colonists, criminals, fringe groups and other factions. In future eras, elements of the underground will oppose the

terraforming project. That's yet to come, but right now, the underground needs supplies; Kynes took the job with ThorGate so he could arrange for the excess supplies and spare parts from the mohole base to be 'borrowed' by his underground contacts near Site Gamma.

#### THE WORK CREW

The Work Crew in the ThorGate rovers are all new to Mars. The spokesperson for the crew is **Unathi Arendese**; she was working on ThorGate's solar farms in Kenya before coming to Mars. She's concerned at the conditions here in the cramped temporary habitat, and wants base construction to begin as quickly as possible.

Play Unathi as confrontational; she's a fierce defender of her work crew, and assumes the player characters are cold corporate executives who see the workers are replaceable cogs. If the characters agree to her requests and make the base more livable, she relents somewhat - but remains suspicious. Use Unathi to distract attention from Kynes.

#### **CHOOSING A LOCATION**

Where are the characters building the HoleHead base? The best place, obviously is near the chosen site of the mohole - but if they haven't picked a mohole site yet, then they must choose whether to stall base construction until they've made that decision, or else build the base roughly equidistant between the candidate sites.

Building the site away from the mohole means more delays and more wear and tear on the robots as they drive back and forth for maintenance; it raises the number of successes needed for successful base completion.

#### **DESIGNING THE BASE**

The prefabricated components and habitats supplied by ThorGate are well suited to this sort of project, so it's easy to come up with a barebones structure (requiring **two** successes for a basic design). The players must still make some decisions, however.

What sort of base? There are four possibilities:

Surface Habitats: Modules deployed right on the Martian surface; just like the current temporary base, only bigger. This is the easiest and cheapest approach; Arendse objects to it on the grounds that the base will be uncomfortably cramped and exposed to high levels of surface radiation. Picking surface habitats requires +0 successes on the base construction test.

- Buried Habitats: The first long-term colonists on Mars buried their homes under a protective layer of regolith. It would take time to dig out holes to bury the habitats, and wouldn't give the work crew any extra living space, just more protection from radiation. Buried habitats require +1 successes on the base construction test.
- Tented Canyon: The base is too small to justify a dome like the one they're building over Tharsis - but recent advances in material science mean the characters could deploy a transparent airtight test over a small canyon and flood it with breathable air. It's a much, much more expensive approach, but would give the crew of the base much more living space and some added radiation shielding. Building a tented canyon requires +2 successes on the base construction test.

As Site Beta's in the middle of an open crater, a tented canyon can't be used at Site Beta.

Lava Tubes: Lava tubes are large linear caves left by flowing rivers of lava billions of years ago. They're underground, so they're shielded; they're big, so there's lots of extra space once made airtight, and they're already there, so they don't make the base construction test any harder. The downside? Site Gamma is the only candidate site near a suitable tube.

What are their added priorities? At minimum, the base needs to keep its crew alive, and provide maintenance and remote operation facilities for the robot diggers. However, if the characters wish, they could go above the required minimums by adding any of the following:

- Budget Reduction: Only possible at Site Gamma; curries favour with ThorGate by coming in under budget. Adds +1 to the number of successes required.
- Redundant Life Support: Improved safety, more backups, more shielding. Adds +1 to the number of successes required.
- Improved Ergonomics: Improved conditions, added living space. Adds +1 to the number of successes required.

Enhanced Security: Security cameras, anti-intruder tripwires, systems hardened against hacking. Adds +1 to the number of successes required.

#### **COMPLETING THE CHALLENGE**

To successfully complete this challenge, the characters must:

- Design their desired base.
- Score up the number of successes needed on a Tech test.

If the characters fail to accumulate the required number of successes, then pick consequences:

- The base is delayed and isn't ready when mohole construction begins.
- The base has a design flaw (see p. 42).

#### CHALLENGE: THE EXCAVATION ROBOTS

They were built in a factory in Norway; loaded onto an orbital shuttle at Baikonur (Kazakhstan) and ferried up to Point Luna, where they joined a flotilla of dozens of other ships waiting for the next Hohmann transfer window to Mars. Nine months' flight from Earth to Mars, a gulf of nearly 200,000,000 kilometers - and it all comes down to the last few metres, the last few seconds. While most cargo bound for Mars goes via the spaceport at Tharsis (a new orbital port's under construction on Phobos), the robots are bound for the wilds of Hellas, so the plan is: drop them.

The cargo pods containing the robots detach during aerobraking. Parachutes stablise their fall through the thin atmosphere, then powerful retrorockets bring the pods to a safe landing. In theory.

The rockets are mostly automated, but if the characters want to bring the robots down near their mohole site, then they'll need to remotely pilot them down with a Tech test. Failure means that one of the cargo containers comes down too quickly and sustains damage.

If the characters don't redirect the robots, they land in the middle of nowhere, and the characters must drive out in a rover to open the containers and recover the robots (which is an excellent opportunity to get into trouble on the Martian surface with either the Mining Guild or the Martian Underground).

Inside the containers are four Jotun-class systems, each one consisting of a giant excavation robot and several Mars-ready automated dump trucks. The containers also hold spare parts and components that can't yet be manufactured on Mars. The robots' metal hulls and other basic parts can be manufactured locally from Martian metals; in time, the material excavated from the mohole can be converted into more mohole-digging robots, so construction speed will accelerate over the generations.

#### **ASSEMBLY & TEST**

Unpacking and assembling the robots is time-consuming but relatively straightforward. Running a diagnostic and basic function test on the Robots requires a Tech roll.

If the robots weren't landed close to the base, then driving them back requires another Tech test to travel through rough terrain - the dump trucks are designed to follow a relatively level trail, while the Jotun mining robots are better at smashing through obstacles than navigating them.

If the characters wish to use the robots to excavate underground chambers for the permanent HoleHead base, that's another Tech test - this one's Difficult (-1d).

#### SABOTAGE!

If any of the player characters involved in assembling or testing the robots has an **Analysis** ability of 3+ (or if a player explicitly checks for sabotage), then they notice that one of the Jotun's external cameras has been disabled.

Another Analysis test discovers it must be deliberate damage, as the alarm signal that should tell the robot that it's missing a camera feed has been bypassed. It's a flank-mounted camera, so the loss of the camera won't affect the robot's functioning, and there are spare parts in the container so it's an easy repair, but it's still troubling.

Information from extra successes:

- The camera was checked when the robot was unpacked, and it was functioning then; this sabotage must have happened *after* landing.
- Disabling this camera wouldn't interfere with the actual mining - but if you wanted to move around the mohole or climb onto the Jotun without being spotted, then creating a blind spot would be a useful first step.

#### WHO SABOTAGED THE CAMERA?

That'll be determined in the final scene! See next.

#### **COMPLETING THE CHALLENGE**

To complete the Challenge, the team need to accumulate **four** Tech successes across all relevant tests. Fewer than four successes means the robots' operating protocols are poorly adapted to the Mars environment, increasing the risk they'll run into trouble or cause accidents while digging.

#### CHALLENGE: GROUNDBREAKING

Once the site for the mohole has been selected, once the maintenance base has been assembled, once the robots are ready - the project can begin. They'll carve a pit so deep in the face of Mars that it touches the lingering heat of the planet's core. For centuries, that heat will radiate out, to be trapped by a new blanket of atmospheric gases, warming the frozen surface and slowly, slowly, nudging Mars to life.

It'll be the work of generations; none of the player characters will ever see the results of the mohole. But it begins here, with them.

The various problems and encounters in this challenge are mostly based on the characters' earlier choices in the scenario; make sure you've resolved the previous challenges fully before running this final sequence.

It's possible, if the players have made clever choices, rolled consistently well and proactively countered threats, that everything goes smoothly and the final groundbreaking goes off without any dramas or disasters. That's fine - have Niemier praise the players for a job well done.

#### WORD FROM ON HIGH

Fran Niemier contacts the team from Tharsis City to confirm that everything's ready for his arrival. He'll be there within a few days, so: crunch time.

#### **ANY SITE: WORKER PROTEST**

If the characters haven't addressed Unathi Arandese's concerns about conditions in the HoleHead base, then she leads the workers on a protest, threatening to stop work until their demands are met - which will delay the completion of the Hole-Heal base. A successful **Interaction** test convinces Unathi to go through proper grievance procedures; two or more successes get her to keep faith that ThorGate will improve conditions given time.

#### SITE ALPHA: TERACTOR EXPLOSIONS

If the characters chose Site Alpha for the mohole, then they're close to the Teractor aquifer site - close enough to spot the occasional rover moving in the distance, or survey drones flitting overhead. The main Teractor base is only twelve kilometres north of the mohole; it's similar to the ThorGate HoleHead base, but they've gone for the buried option - they excavated a big hole, dropped in some habitat modules, then covered the whole site with several metres of regolith. A few satellite dishes, access hatches and other features are still visible on the surface.

Shortly before Niemann's due to arrive, seismic sensors on the *Jotun* platforms detect a nearby Marsquake. Epicentre: the Teractor base.

There's no response by radio, but a drone overflight shows that the base has been buried by a landslide, likely caused by underground test explosions as part of Teractor's aquifer pumping experiments. The landslide's dumped several metres of regolith on top of the base, burying the crew there alive - assuming they survived the initial impact.

- Seismic sensors on the ThorGate survey equipment are sensitive enough to pick up movement beneath the surface. There are still people alive down there but there's no vibrations that would indicate that the base's air recirculation system is working. It's likely their life support has failed; they're running out of air.
- If alerted, Tharsis City can send out a rescue mission - but there's no chance they'll get here in time to do anything other than dig up bodies.

Do the player characters let this disaster put an end to Teractor's plans for the aquifer? Or do they attempt a rescue? If so, how?

They could pile into rovers and drive over to the site with shovels, and physically dig down to rescue the buried Teractor crew. Doing so requires six successes on Body tests across a maximum of six rolls. Complications mean damage to suits, secondary landslides and other minor accidents. Bringing the whole work crew from the ThorGate base along reduces the number of successes needed to 4, but leaves the ThorGate base undefended.

They could drive one or more of the *Jotuns* across country and dig Teractor out using the massive mining robots. This requires two basic Tech tests - one to get the robot there successfully, the other to dig out the base without causing a hull breach and killing any survivors. Complications mean damage to the robots, casualties among the survivors, or other accidents caused by repurposing a giant mining robot as a rescue platform.

If recovered alive, Brent Herwig's considerably less bellicose after his brief entombment.

#### SITE BETA: MINING GUILD SABOTAGE

If the characters *didn't* cut a deal with Tamsin Carter but still picked Site Beta, then the Mining Guild attempt to sabotage the ThorGate mining robots. During the timeslip - the 39-minute gap used to reconcile the 24-hour Earth day with the slightly longer Martian sol - Tamsin and some other Mining Guild operatives attempt to sneak up to one of the *Jotun* robots to alter its programming. As the timeslip's traditionally a time for socialising or other end-of-sol activities, they're gambling the ThorGate team will be off their guard and won't spot the intrusion.

- If the characters don't have any security procedures in place, then roll two dice and take the lower roll to determine if they spot Carter by chance.
- If they're maintaining a security watch on the base, then it's an Analysis roll to spot Carter.

If the Mining Guild saboteurs get in, then when the robots get activated during the groundbreaking ceremony, the hacked robot turns on its neighbours. It batters them with massive digging tools. Unless someone hits the emergency shutdown button - the *physical* emergency shutdown inside the robot, as the hack's disabled the remote override - all the hugely expensive *Jotuns* will be destroyed.

Getting to the emergency override requires at least one success on a Difficult **Body** test (-1d); failure means the unlucky character's smeared across the Martian landscape by an errant robot arm.



#### SITE GAMMA CRISIS: KYNES THEFT

While he thinks the characters are distracted, Dieter Kynes loads supplies and other space parts into his rover. If he was able to disable a security camera on one of the *Jotun* mining robots, he raids that machine for parts. Once he's loaded the rover, he sneaks off to make contact with his underground allies like Juno Robinson (p. 40) in the highlands near Site Gamma.

- If the characters don't have any security procedures in place, then roll two dice and take the lower roll to determine if they spot Kynes by chance.
- If they're maintaining a security watch on the base, then it's an Analysis roll.

#### On a success, Kynes is spotted.

How do the characters resolve the situation? Kynes and his underground contacts argue that if there isn't an alternative out there, another viable option, then Mars will end up in the thrall of the corporations forever. Letting them take - borrow, in their eyes - the supplies now is for the good of humanity in the long run, and you have to take the long view on Mars. The decisions made now will shape the way Martian civilisation evolves. Do they recover the supplies? Arrest the renegades? Let them leave? Cut a deal? (In playtesting, one team employed the Martian underground as deniable saboteurs targeting ThorGate's corporate rivals in Teractor!)

#### **MARS LAW**

In this first era, Mars is still under the jurisdiction of UNMI; there are a handful of UNMI marshals who are the closest thing to police on Mars, but they're thousands of kilometers away in Tharsis City. Right here, there isn't really any authority other than the player characters.

#### **COMPLETING THE CHALLENGE**

Finally, the dig begins.

The mighty robots surge into life, titanic shovels digging into Mars. The first in a long, long chain of automated dump trucks lines up obediently, ready to collect a load of debris and transport away. Over the decades to come, they'll build new mountains on Mars. The robots dig down. And down. And down. In years to come they'll sink a shaft into the crust of Mars, down to the long-buried heat. It's a work of staggering, even hubristic, engineering - and it's just one of many projects starting across the face of the planet.

The new era of terraforming Mars has begun.

But - more importantly - how did the characters do? Have they completed all the challenges adequately? How did the characters deal with the threats to the robots? Are the work crew loyal to the company, or are they just storing up problems for the future? Is the mohole on track to get that vital terraforming rating bonus for ThorGate? And what's next?

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

In a full *Terraforming Mars* campaign, the players might continue with the same set of characters for another Project, like:

- Supplying arms and equipment to the Martian Underground, turning them into corporate raiders
- Testing genetically engineered bacteria in the heated environment of the mohole
- Investigating the Mining Guild and proving that Tamsen Carter sabotaged the *Jotun*
- Establishing a new domed town near the mohole
- Investigating the theft of cargo modules that got hacked and redirected on their way down from orbit

Or, they could skip on a generation and create a new set of characters to explore the terraforming of Mars from another perspective, like:

- Members of the work crew in the HoleHead base
- A hard-bitten mining community based around the Site Beta mohole
- Overworked UNMI marshals investigating corporate malfeasance
- Journalists and reporters working for Interplanetary Cinematic's office in Tharsis City
- A ThorGate black ops team tasked with retaliating against the Mining Guild













# DDD PREGENERATED CHARACTERS

#### HELENA VOSS, ROBOTICIST

#### Personality Tags: Precise, nervous

You never thought you'd be here.

You've always been cautious and precise. A lot of your career was spent programming medical robots, dealing in micrometers and microlitres, making the tiniest of tiny adjustments. You felt trapped, like nothing you did really mattered and it was all futile. You knew, intellectually, that this depression was a chemical reaction in the brain, a few missing dopamine receptors, but you couldn't shake it.

Then, a job offer for work on Mars flashed across your screen, and you were seized with the sudden desire to change everything about your life, to work on a planetary scale instead of the width of a human blood vessel. To take a leap of faith across a few million kilometres, and see a whole new world.

Now you're here.

On Mars.

Here, you're going to do something that matters. Find a new purpose. Time to do something big.



SCHOLARSHIP 2 (Medicine) ANALYSIS 3 (Data Retrieval) INTERACTION 2 TECH 3 (Robotics)

BODY 1 (Endurance) Fields of Expertise: Robotics 6, Chemistry 2, Electronics 2 Combat Ability: 1

#### YU YINOA WU, CORPORATE INTELLIGENCE

#### Personality Tags: Reserved, ruthless

It is instructive to study history. One can discern future patterns by looking at the events of the past.

For example, on the long flight to Mars, you read a lot of histories about the Crusades. About how the pope tried to divert the violent energies of old Europe by launching an expedition to a distant land on a holy mission. The terraforming project strikes you as something similar, diverting the increasingly volatile energies of the corporations away from the fragile World Government and towards a visionary mission on Mars.

You had time to read, because your job only started when you arrived on Mars. You are employed by ThorGate as a corporate intelligence officer; your job is to identify and eliminate threats to the corporation's interests. You perform this task efficiently and dispassionately.

In the Crusades, a lot of knights perished in the desert sands. Some were unwary; some unprepared, some engaged in pointless acts of bravado.

You're not going let that happen to ThorGate.

STATISTICS

SCHOLARSHIP2 (History)ANALYSIS3 (Surveillance)INTERACTION2 (Deception)

TECH 2 BODY 2 (Infiltration) Combat Ability: 2





#### **MARIS VIER, NEGOTIATOR**

#### Personality Tags: Ambitious, charming

Mars is the future. A chance to build a better world - if it's done right.

The World Government's decision has opened the floodgates of corporate money and technology. Everyone's heading for Mars, eager to demonstrate their expertise and get their share of the terraforming fund. Ecoline with their genetically modified bacteria, Helion with their thermal engineering, Cheung Shing's dome architecture - and your employer, ThorGate, the world-renowned experts in energy production and megaconstruction. Humanity's got all the pieces needed to build that better world.

But there's the potential for chaos as well as opportunity - the corps struggling, sabotaging, fighting, bringing the worst of Earth with them. Your job is to help ensure that doesn't happen, to smooth relations between ThorGate and its terraforming partners, to bring about the best possible version of a new world.

Before you left for Mars, you had a private meeting with the ThorGate board of directors. They see great potential in you, just like they see in Mars. The current ThorGate representative on Mars is Fran Niemier, but he's yesterday's man. If you impress the board on this first Martian assignment, you'll be in pole position to take his role ...

STATISTICS

**ANALYSIS** 

SCHOLARSHIP 2 (Corporate Law) 3 (Psychology) **INTERACTION** 3 (Diplomacy, Charm)

TECH 2 BODY 1 Combat Ability: 1



#### HARRY SHEVLENKO, AREOLOGIST

#### Personality Tags: Eager, naive

All your life, you've dreamed of Mars. You've studied the terrain, the soil chemistry. You've taken countless simulator flights over Olympus Mons, rewatched the IPC holodocumentaries of the first landing over and over again until you knew those early explorers better than you knew yourself.

Now, at last, you're on Mars. You've been hired by ThorGate as a specialised areologist. At last, you're here on the red planet, walking in the footsteps of those first explorers. You have to keep pinching yourself through your Mars Suit to remind yourself you're not dreaming.

That said - other things remind you too. In your dreams, Mars is empty and peaceful, a scientific outpost; Tharsis City's loud and crowded, and you suspect many of these people don't really care about areology. Is the Mars of your dreams out there at all?

#### STATISTICS

**ANALYSIS** INTERACTION TECH

SCHOLARSHIP 3 (Areology, Chemistry) 2 (Satellite Imagery) 2 2 (Drone Operations)

BODY 2 Fields of Expertise: Geology 6, Mechanical **Engineering 2, Robotics 2** Combat Ability: 1

#### **GABI ANTALL, SECURITY**

#### Personality Tags: Forceful, spiritual

A new frontier - that's what they call Mars.

You've always loved the great outdoors. Hiking, climbing, spending weeks off the grid. There aren't many places on crowded old Earth where you can get away from everyone, where it's just you surrounded by nature, but you tried to find them.

Now, you're on that new frontier. You're working for ThorGate as corporate security. Back on Earth, you were a peacekeeper in the disputed zones for a few years, so you know your way around a gun or a combat drone, but the danger on Mars is different. It's everywhere, in the dirt and in the sky and in the air (or lack thereof).

But it's the frontier. It's beautiful and empty. Even right now, all red and silent, it's beautiful - and it could be so much more. Close your eyes, and imagine a green Mars under a blue sky.

You're going to help make that happen. Bring what you love to Mars, bring it to life.

#### STATISTICS

ANALYSIS **INTERACTION** 

SCHOLARSHIP 1 2 (Tactics) 2

TECH 2 (Remote Operations) BODY 3 (Strenght, Endurance) Combat Ability: 3

#### WALLY MARSHALL, EX-UNMI SURVEYOR

#### Personality Tags: Caustic, suspicious

You've been here almost since the start; fifth transfer window after first landing. You knew the First Man on Mars, back in the day. You've been here so long that you don't dream of Earth any more. All that time, you were a surveyor for the United Nations Mars Initiative, good old UNMI. You've spent months out in your rover, rolling all over the northern hemisphere on your own. Just the way you like it.

Now, it's all changed. Your UNMI position's gone, and you've been hired by ThorGate, one of the Earth corporations swarming Mars. You're not yet sure how you feel about this - a part of you wants to go crawl into a hole, and you've heard rumours that there are other old-timers like yourself who've done just that, gone underground. But maybe it won't be that different; you can get yourself a shiny new ThorGate rover, bank your salary, and get back out there into the wilds of Mars.

#### STATISTICS

ANALYSIS INTERACTION TECH

SCHOLARSHIP 2

2 (Surveying) 3 (Repair. **Rover Operation**) BODY 3 (Survival) Fields of Expertise: Sensors 4, **Transportation 4, Life Support 2** Combat Ability: 1





# DDD HANDOUTS

#### **PROJECT: HELLAS MOHOLE, PHASE 1**

ThorGate's assigned you to the initial excavation of a Mohole in Hellas Planitia.

A Mohole is a shaft multiple kilometers deep into the thin planetary crust to release geothermal energy. Even with ThorGate's expertise in automated robotic mining, this excavation will take decades to complete.

#### **FIRST PHASE CHALLENGES**

- Select Mohole Site. UNMI (the United Nations Mars Initiative) has already conducted a preliminary survey of the Hellas basin and identified three candidate sites (Alpha, Beta, Gamma). Survey these sites and select a preferred location,
- Design & Construct Holehead Base. The Holehead base must be capable of housing the technicians and programmers who will oversee the Mohole excavation.
- Test Automated Robots. The Jotun-class mining robots are en route from Earth, and must be unpacked and tested on site.
- Commence Phase 1 Excavation. Thor-Gate Executive Fran Niemier will attend the ground-breaking ceremony for Mohole commencement. Excavation must commence promptly in order for ThorGate to qualify for full terraforming credit.





PROJECT: • HELLAS MOHOLE



200 KM

50

100

