

MARS TO STAY

FREDERIK JENSEN

MARS TO STAY

Game design and production: Frederik Jensen

Illustrations: Claudia Cangini

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You dream to go where no human has gone before and do what no human has done before. You pursue an almost impossible dream – to build humanity's first colony on Mars.

You signed a contract with a private company to go to Mars to stay. As part of the first landing team you carve the outline of a new home. When things go wrong, you and your fellow Martians face existential dilemma. Did you truly give up Earth for good?

In Mars to Stay, you and your friends get the tools to create a compelling story about ingenuity and survival in the face of impossible odds. The game provides characters, rules, and scripted story arcs that empower you and up to 5 friends to flesh out a captivating drama on the Red Planet. You need dice, pens, and a timer to play.

3-6 players. 3-6 hours.

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ABOUT MARS

Mars is approximately half the diameter of Earth and the surface area is slightly less than the total area of Earth's dry land. Surface gravity is about 40% of that of Earth. One sol on Mars - the time it takes for Mars to rotate around itself - is about 24 1/2 hours. One Martian year is 668 sols or about 1.9 Earth years.

The main ingredient of Mars' atmosphere is carbon dioxide. The surface pressure is less than 1% of that of Earth. Surface temperature ranges from -143° C to 35° C. The daily temperature swing is large as the heat-holding capacity of the dust that covers most of the surface is low.

The distance to the horizon is shorter than on Earth. There is no moisture, so usually there is a very high visibility. Year-round dust storms can block sunlight for weeks at a time. Mars has two moons - Phobos and Deimos. Both are much smaller than the Moon. Jupiter can be seen with the naked eye. Earth can be seen if you know where to look.

The main surface features on Mars are impact craters, lava flow plains, and volcanoes. The colours range from red-orange, golden, brown, tan and greenish, depending on the minerals present. Olympus Mons is the largest volcano in the solar system and there are still areas with volcanic activity. The Borealis basin that covers 40% of the surface was created by an impact four billion years ago. Dikes are the remains of ancient lava streams and deposit valuable minerals.

The most abundant chemical elements in the Martian crust, besides silicon and oxygen, are iron, magnesium, aluminium, calcium, and potassium. The elements titanium, chromium, manganese, sulphur, phosphorus, sodium, and chlorine are less abundant. Rarer metals are Niobium, Lanthanum, Neodymium, Europium, lead, silver, tin, bismuth, antimony, nickel, copper, platinum, palladium, and chromium. Hydrogen is present as water ice and in hydrated minerals.

The most rare thing on Mars is life.



MARS TO STAY

INTRODUCTION

(the host of the game reads)

Welcome to Mars to Stay, a game about humanity's first colony on Mars. To play the game you need 3-6 players. Each of you will need one die (standard, six sided). One player will track the progress of your projects on Mars. For this a piece of paper and a pencil or a coin is useful. You will also need a timer. Cut out the characters, the colony track, and the return track from the back of the book or download and print the handouts from the Thoughtful Games website.

There is no game master. The story section will guide you through the story. You will take turns setting and narrating scenes.

What you will do

Each of you will take on the role of one character who travels to Mars to build humanity's first colony. Sponsored by a private company, you all have a 20 year contract. You are all smart, competent, and passionate about going to Mars. You are the first team. More colonists will join you later.

At the end of the story, you will decide whether to stay on Mars for good or to return to Earth. Main characters cannot die before the epilogue.

In addition to the main characters there are six supporting characters on Mars. These can be played by any player as needed.

Each main character also has a special connection with a person back on Earth. You will send and receive text and video messages from these. Due to the time delay of sending signals between Mars and Earth, these will take the form of monologues.

This is hard science fiction. Space travel is slow. You will not encounter advanced extraterrestrial life. There is no machinery of gods. Just smart, competent people in an extremely hostile environment.

Choose your characters

Decide on a first player (the person who has travelled furthest from home within the last month). Establish an order of players (as you sit around the table or as you are listed in the video chat).

Choose a main character each in turn. Those not chosen will be supporting characters in this game.

The main characters are:

- ♦ **Alex the Shepherd.** Keeps a caring eye on everyone.
- ♦ **Brice the Explorer.** Goes where no-one has gone before.
- ♦ **Francis the Specialist.** Damn good with complex systems.
- ♦ **Glen the Inventor.** Creator of innovative technical solutions.
- ♦ **Mason the Scientist.** Sees what everyone else overlooks.
- ♦ **Shane the Visionary.** The reason we are all here.

Take the time you need to read your characters. Decide whether a character is female or male when relevant.

(first player continues reading when everyone is ready)

Scenes

The story unfolds in a number of chapters. In each chapter, you take turns in setting scenes.

To set a scene, first choose a story seed from the list in your character booklet. Story seeds help you to make

life on Mars seem real. Then state where the scene takes place, who is present in the scene and what the scene is about. You will play your main character in the scene. You can – and should – invite other players to play other characters in the scene. Not every player needs to play a character in every scene. Players not present in the scene should listen, cheer and offer suggestions.

When ready, start the scene by saying **Action!** Then narrate and play out the scene until it has reached a satisfying conclusion. You play a character in the scene by saying what your character says, what they do, and what happens.

End the scene by saying **Cut!** Help each other keep scenes short and sharp.

Try it out now:

Set a scene where your main character takes leave with their special connection. For what you know, this is the last time you will see each other. The previous player in the player order plays your connection. Choose a story seed, state where the scene takes place and say **Action!**

Current player (*now reading*) goes first. Then continue until everyone has set a scene.

Dice

You will roll one die each at the end of three chapters to determine how successful you are with your projects on Mars. You do not roll dice to resolve tasks, actions, or conflicts between characters.

Roll	Track	Result
1	-1	A mishap, misfortune, or setback
2	0	Not much to show for your efforts
3-5	+1	Your hard work paid off
6	+2	Great progress!

Each main character has a personal issue that you as a player may choose to bring into play: Once per game, after a die roll, you may set a scene where you share what you haven't told anyone yet with another main character. You may re-roll the die and then accept the new result.

Ready!

You are now ready to play! Fill your oxygen tanks, pack your space snacks, and buckle up!

*(next player reads the **prologue**)*

