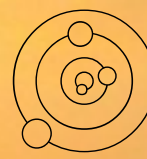
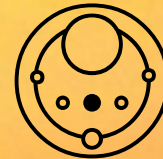
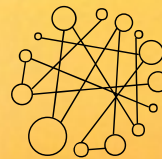
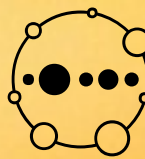


# Wardens of Mars

A one-page setting by Dan Suptic ©2012

For use with S John Ross' *Risus: The Anything RPG*



**Mars, the red planet**, 4<sup>th</sup> from the sun, *should* be a peaceful world. The intelligent race that inhabits the planet is a simple group of people. Tall and thin, hairless with dark red skin, the Martians are a very community-driven people; each gifted with a strong but incomplete magical power, they work together to form beautiful hive-structures, create food and drink of many varied styles, and mold the basic rocks and sand of their planet into works of art.

Sadly, Mars also hosts an odd phenomenon. Periodically, breaches in reality open, and inhabitants and landscape from other dimensions begin to encroach upon the face of Mars. It has been a long time since anyone has attempted peaceful communication with these outsiders, since the different alien's intentions have been universally hostile. A new class of citizen grew, the wardens, tasked with using their powers to create weapons and destructive magical spells to fight off the invading forces that visit the world.

**The PCs** in Wardens of Mars are a group of wardens, tasked with eliminating breaches. These breaches are usually the size of a large city block, and finding the focal point of the breach requires fighting several monstrous aliens and exploring alien architecture that has overtaken the area.

PCs are made with 10 dice, with advanced options up to the GM. Aside from their magical cliché (explained below), warden's clichés almost always include a combat cliché or two (using anything from a staff or spear, to crafted weapons that shoot beams of energy). Other clichés range from explorative clichés, to social or occupational clichés from their former life.

Every character (and indeed, every Martian) is gifted with one (and only one) magic power. No single Martian can perform magic on their own though - a Martian needs at least one other Martian's power combined with theirs to make an effect. At the very least, each magical effect requires an action-type and a focus-type of power combined. So, to create some water, one Martian would need to use Create magic, while another would need to use Water magic. More complex magic may require more abilities - creating a stone golem from thin air would require the Create and Animate action-type abilities, and the Stone and Body focus-type abilities.

**Magic clichés** are listed as *Gift of Phobos* (for action-type magic) or *Gift of Deimos* (for focus-type magic), and are then followed by the specific flavor of magic. So, someone who has Fire focus magic at 3 dice would list it as *Gift of Deimos - Fire* (3). When casting magic, all Martians involved roll their magic cliché, and the highest rolled total is the result of the attempt. Magic used in combat works the same, but if the highest rolled result still fails the combat roll, whoever rolled the *lowest* result takes the die of damage to their magic cliché.

**Common magical abilities** are listed below - these lists are not meant to be all-inclusive, and players can take any magic ability they like, with GM approval.

## Common Gifts of Phobos (action-type abilities) include:

- *Create* - Make something from nothing.
- *Destroy* - Eliminate a quantity of something.
- *Animate* - Cause something to move on its own for a while.
- *Shape* - Change the shape of something.
- *Alter* - Usually needs 2 focus-types, change something to something else.
- *Strike* - Launch a bolt made out of something as an attack.
- *Move* - Move a quantity of something from point A to point B.

## Common Gifts of Deimos (focus-type abilities) include:

- *Stone* - Rocks, boulders and most walls.
- *Sand* - From fine sand to piles of pebbles.
- *Metal* - Hard iron and steel.
- *Air* - Breathable, nitrogen rich air.
- *Water* - Rarely found naturally, but useful for many things.
- *Fire* - Burning flames.
- *Body* - Martians and anything Martian-shaped.
- *Mind* - Thoughts, feeling and memories.
- *Energy* - Lightning, laser and plasma.

**Closing breaches** requires wardens to first travel to the breach, possibly encountering alien scouts on the way. Once there, they need to investigate the alien structures to find the breach's focal point (which manifests as a swirling orb of energy that gives off a low hum). Other alien hazards besides inhabitants and structures can hinder the PCs - environmental effects are commonly encountered as well, like extreme temperatures and harsh weather. Once the focal point is found, one of the wardens must spend a few minutes dispelling it. Any warden (and indeed, any Martian) has this ability to dispel focal points, but once the process starts, it will send out a silent call to alien inhabitants in the area - the other wardens will need to guard the one dispelling the focal point.

Once dispelled, the breach will quickly melt away. Any aliens and alien environment will disappear within seconds, leaving the normal Martian landscape. The wardens can now return home and enjoy a nice break before the next breach appears.

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