

Introduction to the Universe of *Space: 1889*

History

Until the year 1870, the history of our world is identical to that of the universe of *Space: 1889*. That year, however, inventor Thomas Edison succeeds in developing the Ether propeller which makes space travel possible. Accompanied by Scottish adventurer Jack Armstrong, he launches the first expedition to Mars, resulting in a crash landing that leaves the ether ship severely damaged. Their way back home seems to be obstructed forever.

But, shortly after, the two adventurers discover Mars is already inhabited by intelligent lifeforms, who in the distant, legendary past, have built a gigantic network of canals on Mars, to channel the precious water of the poles to the desiccated regions along the equator, for Mars is a dying world that is slowly running out of water.

Initially, the two Earthmen are held captive by the wary Martians, but they slowly learn their language and finally gain their leader's trust. They learn about the existence of the so-called liftwood that possesses the peculiar capacity/quality of shielding gravitational forces or generating an opposing gravitational field. Using this liftwood, the two men manage to lift their ether flyer to the necessary altitude to make their way back home to Earth.

Almost 20 years later: The European colonial powers are racing for profitable trading posts and colonies on the inner planets of the Solar System. Brits, Germans, French, Russians, Americans, and even the Japanese have long since staked their claims on the surface of the distant planets. England is governing the crown colony of 'Syrtis Major' on Mars, and has already fought some skirmishes and even some real wars with the neighboring realms of Martian canal princes. The Germans, accompanied by their chemical industry, have taken the lead in the exploration and colonization of the swamps and jungles of Venus, occupying a

strategically important position with their capital of 'Venusstadt' in the high plateau of the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains. The Germans have had a head start since the unusual magnetic field of Venus defies the special qualities of liftwood and even destroys it entirely after a few days' time. The German ether ships are based on Zeppelin designs and thus are superior to the British liftwood flyers under Venusian constraints.

Technology

In the universe of *Space: 1889*, ether ships cross the inner solar system, powered by steam engines that drive the ether propellers – these steam engines, however, are not fueled by fire (this would result in high oxygen consumption which cannot be provided by the greenhouses aboard), but by huge concave mirrors which absorb the sunlight and focus it on the water boiler. This is why common ether flyers can only reach as far as the asteroid belt, for beyond that rim the Sun's rays are too weak. But there are rumors about an experimental ship equipped with a new technology that is said to be able to overcome this barrier...

Extraterrestrial Life

The main focus of this game is clearly set on Mars. Three closely related intelligent species dwell on the red planet: 1) the wild High Martians, who are able to fly (well, glide) and zealously watch over their liftwood plantations, 2) the nomadic Hill Martians, who roam the wide steppes with their herds, and 3) the civilized Canal Martians, who – as their name suggests – live along the canals of Mars and in the vast cities at the canal junctions in particular. One thing they all have in common: They have long passed their cultural zenith. The technology that let them build the marvel of the canals thousands of years ago has been lost in time and forgotten. Today they struggle to maintain only the most vital canals navigable.

On Venus, an intelligent race of Lizardmen roams the jungles, but they are still in a very primitive stage of development.

The Twilight zone of Mercury – a small, habitable strip of land in the eternal twilight zone of the planet – did not bring forth an intelligent creature, at least not that anyone would know of. But even here primitive life has evolved that reminds one of the early history of the Earth.

And then there is the mysterious asteroid belt with its suspected thousands of dwarf planets, only a few hundreds of which have been catalogued so far. There are more and more tales by ether captains who swear they have found evidence of an ancient civilization on some of the asteroids. Artifacts, ruins, and inscriptions indicate that the asteroids must be in fact the remnants of a destroyed, but formerly inhabited planet. But what happened to these people? They must have been technologically advanced beyond imagination...

There are also rumors that Luna, the Earth's moon, is in its core not as lifeless and desolate as is generally believed, although this hypothesis has not been verified yet. But there are stories about a strange glow on the backside of the Moon. Wouldn't that be a formidable challenge for daring adventurers in the name of her Majesty?

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The Rules

Welcome! *Monastery of Tasharvan* is a free standalone adventure to introduce you to the universe of *Space: 1889*. In this booklet, you will find all the rules needed to play a short *Space: 1889* adventure. Naturally, the rules presented below only represent a small excerpt of the complete Ubiquity Roleplaying System. If you would like to play more adventures or campaigns in the universe of *Space: 1889* you will need the ***Space: 1889* Core Rules**. To get you started, however, these Quickstarter Rules are all you and your players need to experience exciting adventures, fighting against nasty Martians and other hostile creatures of Mars, right in the middle of what is left of a perished high culture.

Character Sheet

Four sample characters are provided at the end of this booklet so that you can get started right away. Feel free to copy these character pages or tear them out of the book so that players can choose the one they want to play.

For more variety, additional sample characters appear in the *Space: 1889* Core Rules as well as the *Venus* and *Mercury* (upcoming) Sourcebooks. All the published sample characters, as well as plain character sheets, are available as a free download at Clockwork Publishing's website (www.clockwork-publishing.com).

Archetypes

Every character is associated with an Archetype. A character's Archetype is a one to two word summation of the character's concept, but has no actual significance in rule terms. Typically, characters in *Space: 1889* will be Adventurers, Explorers, Scientists, and other similar types, but the list is not finite. You are free to make up Archetypes as you see fit; the ones we provide in the *Space: 1889* Sourcebooks are simply a starting point.

Motivation

A character's Motivation is the main driving force behind the things a character does. Does your character seek out adventure because of a sense of duty to their country, or do they travel to the ends of the Earth or even other planets in search of fame and glory? Each character may only have a single Motivation, so it is wise to pick the one you think best suits your character and your play style.

When your character acts according to their Motivation, the Gamemaster may reward you with a Style point. Style points will be covered in more detail later, but first, here are a few examples of how they can be earned:



Duty: You earn a Style point whenever your character acts responsibly or convinces someone to keep their word.

Fame: You earn a Style point whenever your character does something noteworthy or enhances their reputation.

Greed: You earn a Style point whenever your character gets their hands on something particularly valuable or makes a lot of money.

Truth: You earn a Style Point whenever your character makes a discovery or persuades someone to share a secret.

Style

Each character begins the game with three Style points. These points can be used to influence dice rolls during game play. A list of things Style points can be spent on can be found on the reverse of the sample character sheets.

Primary Attributes

Each character has six primary attributes which form the basis of their abilities and competencies. For human characters, primary attributes range in value from one (poor) to five (excellent), with the “average” person having a value of two in all categories. Exceptional characters might also exceed this range.

Here is how each primary attribute influences a character:

Body represents a character’s constitution and toughness. Characters with high Body ratings can take more damage, are more resistant to disease, and can go for longer periods without food and water.

Dexterity represents a character’s speed, coordination, and agility. Characters with high Dexterity ratings are better with firearms, better at avoiding damage, and will react faster in combat.

Strength represents a character’s vigor and muscle power. Characters with high Strength ratings deal more damage, are more effective in hand-to-hand combat, and are able to carry more.

Charisma represents a character’s confidence and personality. Characters with a high Charisma rating are good at social interaction and considered more attractive.

Intelligence represents a character’s reason and intellect. Characters with high Intelligence are better with knowledge and craft skills. They are also more observant and quicker to react in combat.

Willpower represents a character’s courage and resolve. Characters with high Willpower are less likely to run from frightening situations. They are also able to take more damage and are more resilient to manipulation by others.

Secondary Attributes

Secondary attributes represent a character’s size, movement, speed, perception, and combat abilities. Each secondary attribute (with the exception of Size and Stun) is derived by combining two primary attributes. These attributes influence a character as follows:

Size is a representation of physical height and weight. For example, average humans are Size 0, a small monkey is Size -2, and a fully grown Ruumet Breehr is Size 2.

Move (Strength + Dexterity) represents how quickly a character can move. Each point of Move is worth 5 ft. or 1.5 m of walking movement every turn.

Perception (Intelligence + Willpower) represents a character’s ability to notice what is going on in their surroundings, as well as their ability to notice enemies hiding with the Stealth skill.

Initiative (Dexterity + Intelligence) represents the reaction speed in both dangerous and combat situations.

Defense (Body + Dexterity – Size) represents the ability to absorb or avoid damage. As you can see from the Attribute combination, large characters are easier targets than small ones.

Stun (Body) represents the ability to avoid the effects of taking damage in combat. A character who takes more damage than their Stun rating in a single blow is stunned and loses their next action. A character who takes more than twice their Stun rating is knocked out for a number of minutes equal to the additional damage they took.

Health (Body + Willpower + Size) represents how much Lethal and Nonlethal damage a character can take in combat. Once a character’s Health drops below zero they go unconscious, and once it reaches -5 they die.

Skills

Players are able to choose a selection of Skills to help further define their character’s competencies. Each Skill is linked to a Primary Attribute, which combines with the skill Level to give the total Skill rating. Skills all have a number of specializations that represent topics with which a character may be especially familiar. Purchasing these specializations grants characters an additional bonus to the associated Skill.

A Skill’s Base is derived from the Primary Attribute associated with the Skill. Level is the number of points purchased during character creation to improve the Skill.

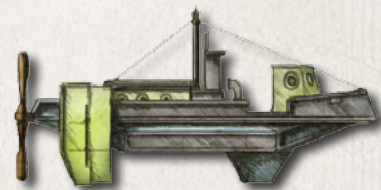
Rating is a character’s total ability in the Skill, and **Average** is half of the Rating score.

Talents

Talents grant special abilities and tricks that help set characters apart. Some grant special Skill bonuses, while others allow the use of special actions. Benefits granted by Talents are listed on the sample character sheets.

Resources

Resources help define characters in ways that are not covered by Talents. Resources can grant loyal allies, additional money, or even a secret lair.



Flaws

Not everyone is perfect, and Flaws are used to help represent this. These shortcomings affect a character's ability in a certain area, at the same time awarding Style points when they come into play.

Weapons

Men and women cannot fight only with their fists. Weapons are often needed to take down tougher foes. Each weapon enhances one of your character's Combat Skills (Brawl, Firearms or Melee).

Rating is the bonus the weapon grants to the appropriate Combat Skill. **Size** confers a penalty to Combat Skill equal to your rating if you are Size 1 or larger, while granting a bonus equal to your Size if you are Size -1 or smaller. **Attack** is the Combat Skill rating after the bonuses and penalties have been calculated in, and **Average** is half of your weapon's total Attack.

Rules

Space: 1889 uses *Ubiquity*, a roleplaying system designed for fast, cinematic play. While only the basic rules are included in this booklet, you will have everything you need to run this adventure. For easy reference, a list of combat actions and Style point costs has been included on the back of the sample character sheets.

Dice

The first thing you need to know about the *Ubiquity* system is how to throw the dice. Unlike most other roleplaying games, *Ubiquity* does not use a specific type of dice. Any die will work, as long as it has an even number of sides. When making an Attribute or Skill check, roll a number of dice equal to the dice pool (see below) and count up the number of even numbers used. This total is the number of successes rolled. Odd numbers do not subtract from the number of successes.

Example: Rolling seven twelve-sided dice gives a result of 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 8, and 11. Add up the even numbers (4, 8, and 8) for a result of three successes.

Dice Rolls

Dice rolls are made by rolling a number of dice equal to the appropriate Skill or Attribute rating (this is the *dice pool*) and counting the successes. If the player gets successes equal to or more than the Difficulty rating of the task, they succeed. Weapon,

equipment, and situational modifiers may increase or decrease the number of dice rolled.

Taking the Average

If a character's Average Skill rating is greater than or equal to the Difficulty rating, the player may choose not to roll the dice and automatically succeed instead. Players may not Take the Average during combat, or in stressful situations (as determined by the Gamemaster). On the other hand, the Gamemaster may choose to Take the Average for non-player characters' dice rolls in order to speed up combat.

Combat Rules

Initiative: Each player rolls a number of dice equal to their Initiative rating and counts their successes. The Gamemaster does the same for each of the non-player character (NPC) groups. For example, if the players were fighting a band of High Martians, the Gamemaster would roll once for the entire group's Initiative. The player or NPC group with the highest number of successes acts first. If there is a tie, the tied player (or NPC) with the highest Initiative rating acts first. If there is still a tie, the tied player with the highest Dexterity rating acts first.

Actions: On each turn, a player may make a single Attack action, a single Move action, and as many Defense actions as are required. Refer to the charts on the back of the character sheets for a list of Attack actions. Each player must make their Attack and Move actions on their turn. Players may move up to the distance allowed by their Move rating (Move multiplied by 5 ft. or 1.5 m).

Attacking: When attacking, a player selects one of the weapons listed on the character sheet (for this purpose, natural attacks such as Punch and Bite are considered weapons) and rolls a number of dice equal to the Attack's rating. For simplicity, the appropriate weapon and equipment modifiers have already been included in the weapon's Attack rating.

Defending: The defender rolls a number of dice equal to his Defense rating (again, adding or subtracting any appropriate modifiers) and counts the number of successes. If the attacker scores more successes than the defender, the defender takes a number of points of damage equal to the difference. If the attacker scores less than or equal to the defender's number of successes, the attack misses, or hits and does no damage.

Damage: There are two types of damage: Lethal (L) and Nonlethal (N). If a character suffers enough Lethal or Nonlethal damage for their Health to fall below 0, they are knocked unconscious. If they take enough Lethal damage for their Health to fall to -5, they are dead. For ease of play in this adventure, any NPC reduced to 0 Health is considered out of combat and effectively dead.

Healing: First Aid (through use of the Medicine Skill) removes one point of Nonlethal damage for each success rolled. Once the Nonlethal damage has been healed, further successes will convert one point of Lethal damage into Nonlethal damage.

Monastery of Tasharvan

The following adventure will let you and your fellow players discover the *Space: 1889* roleplaying game as well as the Ubiquity rule system. You can use the Sample Characters in this Quickstarter booklet (starting p. 15) or create your own characters.

Adventure Summary

The characters accompany an expedition to the ancient abandoned monastery of a technology cult on Mars that has been the object of superstitious ghost stories for centuries. While leading archaeologist Prof. Dyer catalogues the findings and surveys the monastery, the characters discover traces of combat of the past. The cause for all this is 'The Thing', a horrible creature, once created by the scholars of Tasharvan in an attempt to make artificial life, that now kills everything and everyone entering the monastery and that cannot be harmed by common weaponry. When leading explorer Jack Slade enters the lower levels of the monastery looking for treasure, the characters go after him and meet the creature which they have to fight with the means available to them within the monastery.

Recruitment

The player characters are recruited on Mars by renowned archaeologist *Professor Charles Dyer*. He organizes an expedition to explore the abandoned monastery of Tasharvan that stands between Dioscuria and Cydonia. Dyer has heard of the characters and knows that they are experienced explorers and adventurers. The University of Cambridge is willing to pay a daily fee of £1 and to cover all expenses. The recruitment can take place in any Martian city with human presence. Dioscuria would be a natural choice, but British dominated Syrtis Major is also possible. The adventure starts on the way between Dioscuria (Ismenilus, to be exact) and the monastery.

• **0-1 success:** The monastery of Tasharvan once belonged to a technology cult from the age of the Seldon emperors that was devoted to the preservation and gain of scientific knowledge. About 2000 years ago, the scholars vanished without a trace. All chronicles end abruptly with this event and rumors and stories circulate saying that no one who has visited the monastery since has ever returned.

• **2 successes or more:** The order already existed before the Seldonian 'technology wars' (before 1500 BC) and continued afterwards. After his father's death, the madman Seldon XXXI had all technology and manuscripts banished as the devil's work, leading to centuries of decline of technological knowledge, and the cult was persecuted and had to go underground. There is some controversy whether they actually used harmful technology and did dangerous research, or whether they were just victims of the circumstances.

The Expedition

Professor Dyer (p. 13) is not a mere treasure-hunter. He plans to systematically survey the whole monastery. He will lead this work himself, but has hired an experienced big game hunter and explorer, the Australian Jack Slade (p. 13), to lead the expedition. Alongside the player characters, he also hired some Martian workers.

Equipment

The small steam-powered air flyer *SS Aetheria*, donated by the *Royal Martian Geographic Society*, transports the expedition crew and their equipment. It is equipped with:

- Complete camping gear with tents, sleeping bags, small stoves, and so on
- Enough canned food and water for two months
- Surveying apparatus, digging tools, shovels, pickaxes, crow-bars for on-site work
- Four cameras and hundreds of photographic plates to document the finds
- A pair of binoculars, several miner's lamps, and first aid kits
- Four pocket revolvers, two Lee-Netford rifles, two Martini-Henry breechloading rifles, a buffalo rifle, and two 12-gauge shotguns, to defend against High Martians and desert nomads
- A five-barrel Nordenfelt machinegun mounted on the flyer

The characters can bring their own gear and weapons on board. If the adventurers do not start in Dioscuria, the journey to this

Research

A research on the monastery in old Martian libraries beforehand can deliver the following information, depending on the number of successes on an *Academics* (History) roll:

Weapon	Dmg	Range	Wght	Skill
Pocket Revolver	2 L	50 ft. / 15 m	1 lb. / 0.45 kg	Firearms (Pistol)
Lee-Netford Rifle	3 L	100 ft. / 30 m	9 lbs. / 4 kg	Firearms (Rifle)
Martini-Henry Rifle	3 L	75 ft. / 20 m	8.5 lbs. / 3.8 kg	Firearms (Rifle)
Buffalo Rifle	4 L	100 ft. / 30 m	24 lbs. / 10.9 kg	Firearms (Rifle)
Shotgun, 12 Gauge	3 L	25 ft. / 7.5 m	8 lbs. / 3.6 kg	Firearms (Shotgun)
Nordenfelt Gun (5 Barrels)*	5 L	1000 ft. / 300 m	530 lbs. / 240 kg	Gunnery (Machinegun)

*The weapon is mounted on the aerial flyer.

city goes without any incident. From Syrtis Major, the small flyer will travel along the canals to Coloe in the north, then head west to Dioscuria where it takes on extra supplies and water.

Arrival at the Monastery

The monastery of Tasharvan stands along the dead canal bed between Ismenilus and Cydonia (400 miles, or 650 km, west of Ismenilus). The region is an arid steppe, the border between the polar tundra and the vast deserts to the south. The monastery is a looming complex, heavily fortified, carved from a granite outcrop overlooking the canal. The facility has suffered from the ravages of time, many of the structures on top of the rock having collapsed. The main entrance at ground level is blocked by a mass of rubble from a fallen tower, so the only way in is from the top.

Description of Tasharvan

Entry Level

The buildings atop the monastery complex have suffered from 2000 years of exposure to the elements. What scavengers have not stolen, the wind has reduced to dust. All rooms are empty.

There are traces of plunderers and treasure-hunters of the past which can be identified as Martian on a successful *Survival* skill roll (Difficulty 2), with 3 successes it is even possible to detect the traces of three different Martian people. They all are several years old.

Courtyard: The flyer is moored in this large open area.

Camp: Dyer will make camp atop the monastery, sheltered in one of the time-worn buildings just off the courtyard. The location affords protection from desert animals and nomads.

Auditorium: This large, domed building is an auditorium or temple, with fascinating and beautiful murals portraying allegorical figures or gods representing the Martian arts and sciences. Dyer sets up his working materials in this room, photographing, cataloging, and packing up items for transport.

Clues: Examining the murals will reveal that they show 11 gods which can be identified as the *Eleven Universal Gods* on an *Academics (Theology or History)*, Difficulty 3) roll. This very old religion is known on the whole planet in different forms and shapes. In this place, they each represent one of the important technologies, arts, and sciences. On the left side of the entrance, starting with the Donor of Water for the life-giving canal building technology and the pumping stations, followed by diverse gods like the Master of the Winds for liftwood construction and aerodynamics and the Swift Moon for poetry, and finally the God of the Dead on the right side of the entrance. The last one closes the cycle of gods and appears to stand for biology, medicine, and unknown technologies that are related to healing and the prolongation, evolution and maybe even creation of life. Most of the technological allusions are incomprehensible to the characters. He wears symbols of a spiraling double helix.

Lower Levels

The lower levels of the monastery are well preserved. Except for the rooms exposed to the fierce winds, most of the chambers are perfectly intact. Those with noteworthy contents are described below.

Third Floor

This floor was once established for guests and contacts to the outside world. Several years ago it saw a fight between warriors of a Hill Martian nomad tribe and the Thing. They intruded to scavenge the monastery but were ambushed by the Thing. They managed to barricade themselves in two rooms, but the Thing nevertheless stormed one of these rooms and killed the nomads, who died screaming and in agony. When the warriors in the other room heard them, they committed suicide. The characters can find traces of the Thing but no information on how to defeat it.

Refuge (1): The small room is barricaded shut from the inside. It can be opened with *Larceny (Lockpicking, Difficulty 2)*, *Strength x2*, or *Athletics (Difficulty 4)* using a crowbar. Inside lie the dried bodies of six Hill Martian nomads.

Clues: With a *Perception* roll (Difficulty 3) it is possible to recognize that the Martians probably died of suicide by strange-looking muzzle-loaders fired from a very short distance as well as spears rammed into their breasts (characters that have 2 ranks in *Medicine* only roll against Difficulty 1).

Useful finds: The characters can find two still-usable muzzle-loaders (blunderbusses) and six spears with the bodies.

Refuge (2): This room, too, was barricaded but the entrance is burst open. It contains four more skeletons of Hill Martians. Their clothes and equipment are similar to those of the six Martians in the barricaded Refuge (1) but they did not commit suicide, they died from blunt violence, broken bones and bruises, as a *Perception* roll (Difficulty 2) will reveal.

Note: The Hill Martians had made a find in the monastery that is still with them: The shards of a fist-sized, cloudy crystal. These are the remnants of an ancient Martian artifact, a so-called *photo crystal*. It can preserve translucent color images if someone breathes on it. Such an image was recorded shortly before the death of the Martians in the middle of combat, which can be discovered by examining the shards and making a *Perception* roll (Difficulty 2). But even assembling all detectable shards will only allow the characters to see an odd and chaotic image of the room, the fighting Hill Martians, and a disturbingly deformed shadow without any details.

Useful finds: four spears, one blunderbuss.

Weapon	Dmg	Range	Wght	Skill
Blunderbuss	4 L	25 ft./7.5 m	6 lbs./2.7 kg	Firearms (Pistol)
Spear	3 L	-	9 lbs./4 kg	Melee (Spears)

Bathing Chamber (3): This room served the monks for their purification rituals. It still holds water – apparently the bath is spring-fed – and would make an ideal water supply for the expedition.