

While meeting to discuss a new invention, the explorers find their Explorers' Society contact being kidnapped by Martian insurgents!

## MESSAGES FROM AN OLD FRIEND

While in Syrtis Major (the primary British city on Mars), the explorers receive a telegram from one of their old friends, Dr. Thaddeus Birmingham, a noted but elderly inventor. Birmingham exhorts the adventurers to visit him at his laboratory across the city. Supposedly, Birmingham has stumbled across a new innovation the explorers absolutely must see—a prototype for a miniaturized lightning cannon!

As the heroes make their way to Birmingham's laboratory across the city, they see numerous Martians and Brits going about their daily lives... as well as an elderly man screaming out into the street after a group of Canal Martians (one per hero), who are fleeing over a footbridge. One of the Canal Martians has a sizable messenger bag slung over his shoulder, which he clutches as if his life depended on it. Any character viewing this scene immediately identifies the old man as Dr. Birmingham. The inventor spots his friends and calls out to them, "Stop them! They stole my prototype! My designs!"

## THE CHASE IS ON!

The explorers must immediately leap into action to catch up to the fleeing Canal Martians. A standard (five round) chase scene begins, following the rules for **Chases** in *Savage Worlds*. During the chase, use the following table for Complications:

- **Disaster:** The character slips while crossing one of the many canal bridges and must pass an Agility (-4) check or fall into the water below. A character who falls into a canal is out of the chase.
- **Major Obstacle:** The character takes a wrong turn and ends up in the middle of a crowded marketplace teeming with humans, Martians, and

huge reptilian gashants. The character must pass an Agility (-2) check or take a Fatigue level (Bumps and Bruises).

- **Minor Obstacle:** The bridge on the character's chosen path is out, requiring the pursuer to leap the gap or find another way around. The extra effort means the leaper must pass a Vigor check or take a Fatigue level (Bumps and Bruises).

- **Distraction:** The character loses sight of his opponents as a caravan of gashants and their drivers cross their path. He cannot attack or interact with his opponents during this round.

## TO CATCH A MARTIAN "PATRIOT"

If the Explorers succeed at catching up with the Canal Martians, they find themselves outside a large warehouse in the docks district of Syrtis Major. The Canal Martians create a defensive ring around the entrance of the warehouse to hold off the explorers, while their leader, Cheelnek, dashes inside the building with the messenger bag.

If the explorers failed to follow Cheelnek and his minions during the chase, the heroes may wish to explore alternative means to track down the Martian. A successful Streetwise or Persuasion (-2) check may convince some of the local dockhands to provide tips, while a hero skilled in Tracking (-2) can roll to pick up the trail.

Cheelnek does his best to attempt to escape into the depths of the warehouse, using Stealth to get The Drop on any explorers following him. Cheelnek has no compunctions about using Dr. Birmingham's prototype against his pursuers, though the stacks of boxes throughout the warehouse provide medium cover to both the party and Cheelnek (see below for information on the prototype).

If Cheelnek is able to make his way across the warehouse undetected, he escapes out of a far exit, back into the bustling city of Syrtis Major. The explorers may be able to follow him



through the city using Streetwise checks. Should he escape, the pursuit of Cheelnek could take up its own adventure!

However, if the heroes manage to subdue or incapacitate him, the explorers may wish to interrogate Cheelnek. The Martian starts any social interaction as Uncooperative; as a member of the Ground Cleansers, he believes the Earthling interlopers are poisoning Mars and should be removed entirely. Some responses to common questions follow:

- *Who are you?* "My name is Cheelnek. I am a patriot for Mars! You red devils have done enough damage to our planet!"
- *What did you take from Dr. Birmingham?* "Designs and a prototype for a weapon. I was hired to steal them."
- *Where did you get your crew?* "They're brother members of the Ground Cleansers! We will wipe you red devils from the face of Mars!"
- *Who hired you?* "I don't know him! He contacted me!" If the explorers persist, ask for an additional Intimidation or Persuasion (-2) check. On a success, Cheelnek confesses, "I don't know! I do work for him sometimes, no questions asked. He signs his missives as 'Crius'!"

If the party searches Cheelnek's messenger bag, they find not only Dr. Birmingham's designs and the missing prototype, but also a letter detailing Cheelnek's task, signed "Crius". A successful Knowledge (Archaeology) or (Journalism) check shows that the type of paper used for the letter comes from a type of tree native to Venus.

## MOVING ON

The explorers will undoubtedly want to return Dr. Birmingham's notes and prototype, as well as ensure that Cheelnek meets the proper authorities. In further adventures, the team may wish to make their way to Venus to track down the enigmatic Crius and find out what his true motive is.

## NPCS

### CHEELNEK'S MARTIAN THUGS:

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Gunnery) d4, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d4, Throwing d4.

**Cha:** 0; **Status:** 1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Obligations (Minor, Ground Cleansers)

**Edges:** Steady Hands

**Languages:** Koline, English

**Gear:** Black powder pistol (2d6+1, 5/10/20, single shot, 2 actions to reload), cutlass (Str+d6).

### DR. THADDEUS BIRMINGHAM

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Guts d6, Knowledge (Engineering, Mechanics, Science) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Repair d10, Piloting d6, Fighting d6, Shooting d6, Riding d6, Throwing d6, Investigation d8

**Cha:** 0; **Status:** 4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Curious, Overconfident, Elderly

**Edges:** Mr. Fix-It, McGyver

**Languages:** English, Koline, Latin, Russian, German, Italian

**Gear:** Tool Kit, lab coat.

### CHEELNEK

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d10, Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Local—Syrtis Major) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d4.

**Cha:** 0; **Status:** 2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Obligations (Major, Ground Cleansers)

**Edges:** Command, Hold the Line!, Level Headed, Steady Hands, Marksman, Steady Hands

**Languages:** Koline, English

**Gear:** Two black powder pistols (2d6+1, 5/10/20, single shot: 2 actions to reload), cutlass (Str+d6), Leather cuirass (Armor +1 to torso), Messenger bag with lightning pistol design plans.

## THE LIGHTNING PISTOL

Cheelnek also has Dr. Thaddeus Birmingham's lightning-pistol prototype, a brass and wood pistol-like weapon which hums audibly and crackles with sparking electricity when switched on. The prototype has the following stats: Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d8, RoF 1. It weighs 5 lb, has 12 shots, and has a minimum Strength of d4. If the user rolls a 1 on her Trait die while using the lightning-pistol prototype, it explodes for 4d6 damage to all creatures within a Small Burst Template.