

THARSIS[•]

A TURN-BASED, PERMA-DEATH, REALISTIC SPACE STRATEGY GAME. WITH DICE. AND CANNIBALISM.



RULES AND GAME HELP

1 Player

Ages 17+ (Language and Violent themes)

Play time: 60 - 90 minutes



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Goal	3
Setup	3
Gameplay Overview	3
Crew Selection	3
Phases	3
New Event Phase	4
Deployment Phase	4
Damage Phase	5
Side Project Phase	6
Distribute Food Phase	7
Modules	8
Module Usage	8
Module Details	8
Crew	11
Crew Stats	11
Crew Roster	12
Events	14
Repairs	14
Hazards	14
Damage	15
Research Projects	15
Placing Dice	15
Spending Dice	15
Strategies	17
Crew	17
Cannibalism	17
End Game	17
Ship Damage	17
Assist	17
Research	17
Injury	17
Stress	17

INTRODUCTION

Tharsis places you in command of a crew of astronauts during the first mission to Mars. Part way through the journey the ship, the Iktomi, faces a sudden catastrophe. You must do what it takes to finish the mission.

GOAL

The objective is to reach Mars, but that soon becomes more difficult than expected. Try to last ten turns and then place as many remaining crew as possible in the Flight Control module. The game ends if you run out of Ship Hull or if all crew die.

SETUP

The first time playing the game, a tutorial will guide you through the basics; those mechanics will be explained in more detail later in this document. The starting loadout is as follows:

- 4 Crew
- 7 Modules
- 1 Assist
- * Food
- * Ship
- * Health
- * Dice

* The number of Food, Ship, Health and Dice are randomized at the start of the game, but are weighted to produce a fair balance.

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

Crew are used to increase resources and fix Events. To perform any action you must first roll Dice to see what tasks are possible. Small strategies are needed to allocate Dice in the most useful manner, and large scale planning is crucial for keeping your ship in one piece.

Survival is your main focus, but you must also plan for later. Harvesting Food so that the crew have stamina to do repairs, healing in the Med Bay, and reducing Stress in the Operations module are some things that will allow your crew to work more effectively. The same applies to the Iktomi. You should repair the Ship so that it is not on the verge of destruction every turn and remove Events that are blocking crew and causing damage. Juggling all of these necessities is where the challenge lies.

CREW SELECTION

The first time playing the game, you will be assigned the standard crew. On subsequent games you can choose which crew you will use; but some must be unlocked before they are available.

The full list of crew, and their unlock criteria, are covered in the Crew section.

PHASES

New problems, or Events, will appear on the Iktomi, then you'll use your crew to do work towards fixing these Events. Events that were not fixed will disrupt your mission. You then get to choose a side project for your crew to work on and also who gets food.

All of this takes place over the course of a week (Earth time) as the ship hurtles towards Mars.

NEW EVENT PHASE

New Events appear every turn. These will cause harm to the ship or the crew. When Events are fully Repaired, they no longer cause damage. The exact Events that appear are randomized, so do not expect to run into the same problems each time.

Further information about the types and characteristics can be found in the Events section.

DEPLOYMENT PHASE

This is when most of the player interaction takes place. You choose which crew you want to use and where they should go on the ship. Dice are rolled and used to fix Events or allocated toward special abilities or Research projects.

1. Select a Crew Member
2. Select a Module
3. Roll Dice
4. Assign Dice
5. Re-roll as needed
6. Finish Deployment
7. Repeat until all Crew are used

MOVEMENT DAMAGE

A crew member will lose Health if they leave a module containing an Event. This includes if they move through a module with an Event, since they are leaving that module as they pass by. When a crew member is selected, the modules are color coded to indicate a loss of Health.

- White - Where the crew member is located
- No color - Safe movement
- Red - Loss of Health
- Blue - Selected destination



In this case, Allison is selected. The “Battery Unstable” Event is in her way, so all modules past the Event are marked with Red. She can move into the module with the Event without any harm, but trying to go past the Event is when damage will occur. The Deploy button will indicate how much Health is lost if moved to the selected location.

Moving Allison past the Battery Unstable Event would cause a loss of one Health.

Also, notice that Pacal has only one Health. He is unable to move out of the module because leaving would cause him to lose his last Health, so this is not allowed.

DAMAGE PHASE

After all crew have been used on a turn, the remaining Events apply their damage. Damage varies per Event, so take note of the red text or red bars above the Event name.

DAMAGE TYPES

- Ship (Red Bars) - Takes away the number of Ship shown on the Event
- System Fail (Sys Fail) - Module abilities cannot be used until the Event is fixed
- Health (-1 Health All) - All crew lose the indicated amount of Health
- Dice (-1 Dice All) - All crew get Dice taken away
- Food (-1 Food) - Lose that amount of Food, if available



Meteoroid Strike does two damage to the Ship

CPBF Damaged takes away one Die from all crew



IMPENDING DAMAGE INDICATOR

The total amount of all possible Ship damage is shown below your Ship gauge.

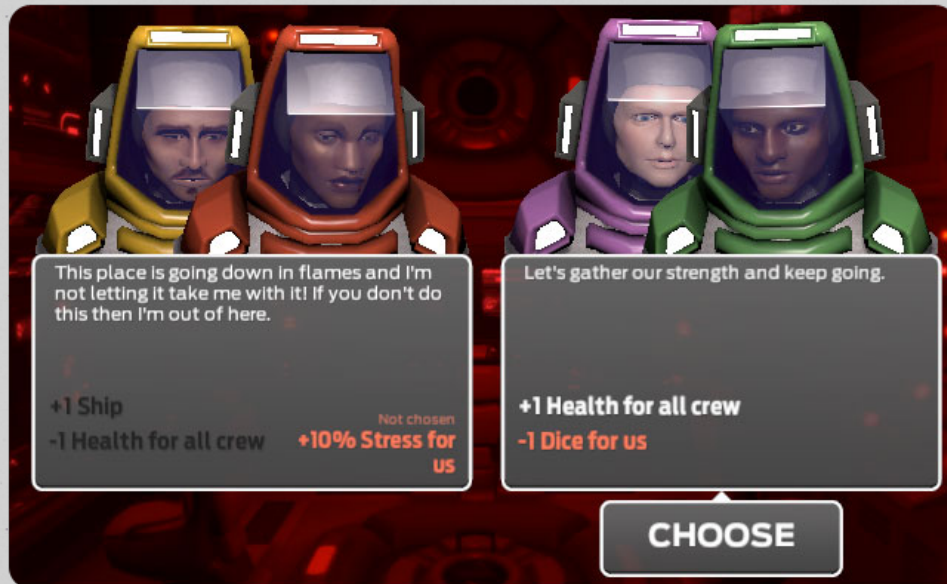


Each red bar represents Ship that will be taken away. Fixing an Event will update the indicator to show the new total. If the impending damage is greater or equal to your Ship, that means you will end up at zero Ship at the end of the turn, causing a Game Over. Fix Events or increase your Ship in the Maintenance module to prevent destruction.

SIDE PROJECT PHASE

After the crew has accomplished all of the duties you have given them, they share their own feelings about what is important for the mission and suggest side projects. This extra work often comes at a cost, as the crew's actions will also have a negative effect on another resource.

You get to choose which plan is carried out, but do not get to choose which plans are included.



Crew present their plan, which has a positive (bold white text) and a negative (red text below). If crew are highly stressed, they may be upset when their plan is not chosen; this appears as red text on the unchosen plan, indicating that this negative effect will be applied as well.

STRESS

The greatest influence on the plans presented by the crew is how much Stress they have. Crew with low Stress will suggest a plan that has minimal repercussions. As Stress goes up, the crew begin to suggest more dangerous actions. Be careful, if a crew member maxes out their Stress meter, they will present plans that can be very harmful—even fatal. Keep crew low on Stress by using the Operations Module.

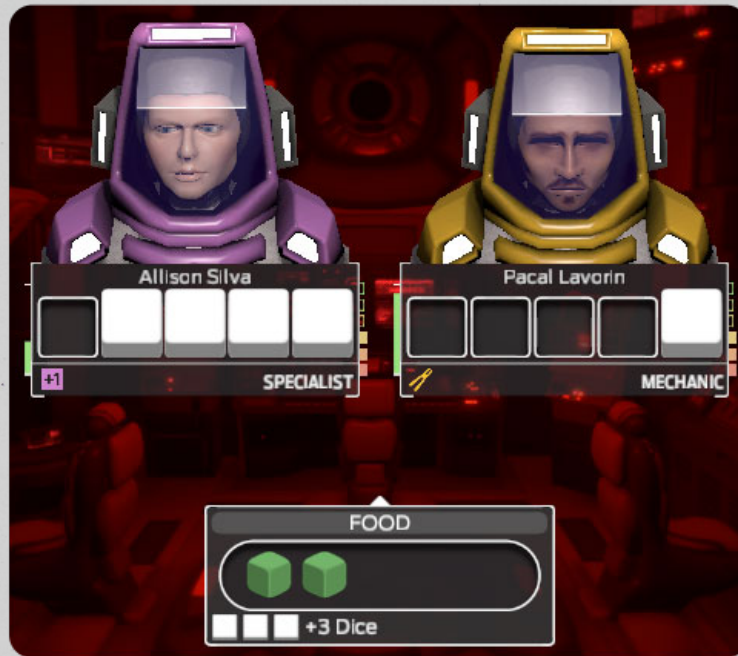
TEAMWORK

When crew work in the same module they will build up a hidden teamwork rating. This influences who they will pair with during the Choice phase. If a crew member has maximum Stress, no other crew member will want to pair up with them. More choices can also mean multiple downsides occurring when the other choices are not picked.

DISTRIBUTE FOOD PHASE

The crew get more tired with each turn, so you must reinvigorate them. Specifically, crew lose one Die every time they work. Dice can be replenished by giving the crew Food during the Distribute Food phase.

Other options become available as the game progresses.



FOOD

Giving a crew member Food will refill three Dice. Crew have a maximum of five Dice, so giving them Food when they are almost full may not be the best decision. Gain more Food by using the Greenhouse module.

CANNIBALISM

The crew will realize that there is not enough Food to go around, so other options must be explored. Cannibalizing the already dead crew member aboard will provide some sustenance, but it will also reduce the maximum Health of the crew that eat those supplies. As expected, eating your fellow crew also causes a large increase in Stress.

As your crew die, the benefit from Cannibalism is increased. The starting value is two Dice, but each dead crew adds another Die. With two dead crew, Cannibalism is worth four Dice per supply. It is possible to get by without Cannibalism, but it can also aid you in a time of need.

KILL

Cannibalism supplies are limited, and when they run out, there is only one way to get more...

You can purposefully choose to Kill a crew member to gain access to more Cannibalism right away. If the crew die by other causes, the gain in Cannibalism supplies is the same.

Sometimes *accidents* do happen.

MODULES

Each module on the ship has a particular function, and you must learn to use each to stand a chance at reaching Mars.

MODULE USAGE

Each module has rules that restrict which Dice can be placed:

5↑ 5 or Higher
= Matching Dice

- 5 or Higher - You must place a Die with a five or six face value.
- Matching Dice - The first Die can be any value, but the following Dice must match the first.



The top area explains what the module does and the bottom section is where Dice are placed. The rule for the Dice is on the left side. In this case it requires Matching Dice. Below is how much is earned from each slot. For the Greenhouse, the first slot gains no Food. When a second Die is placed, that matches the first, then one Food is earned.

MODULE DETAILS

Understanding each of your 7 module abilities is crucial for mission success. Below are descriptions of each module.



FLIGHT CONTROL

No Movement Damage

Crew can move through modules freely for one turn.

Exiting or passing through a module with an Event normally causes a loss of Health, and this ability prevents this penalty.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.



GREENHOUSE

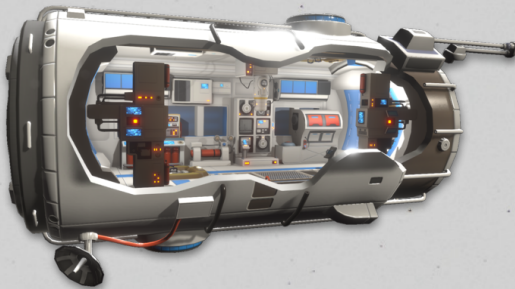
Harvest Food

Up to two Food can be harvested per turn.

Food is later used in the Provision phase to replenish Dice to the crew.

Usage Requirement:

All Dice placed must be the same number. The first Die slot produces no Food, but the second and third slot create one Food each.



LIFE SUPPORT

Regain Dice

Directly regain Dice for the active crew member.

Provides an alternate way to get Dice besides Food.

Usage Requirement:

All Dice placed must be the same number. Each Die placed will give that crew two Dice for use next turn.



OPERATIONS

Reduce Stress

Using the module decreases the Stress for the active crew member.

Crew gain Stress when they are affected by Stasis, Void or Injury while rolling. Cannibalizing causes a large spike in Stress as well.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.



LABORATORY

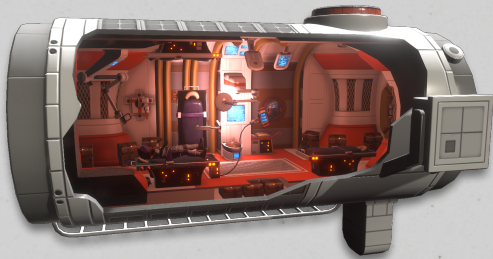
Increase Assist

Replenishes all Assist.

Each Assist automatically prevents a single Die from receiving a negative effect. The effects, known as Hazards, are Stasis, Void and Injury.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.



MEDICAL BAY

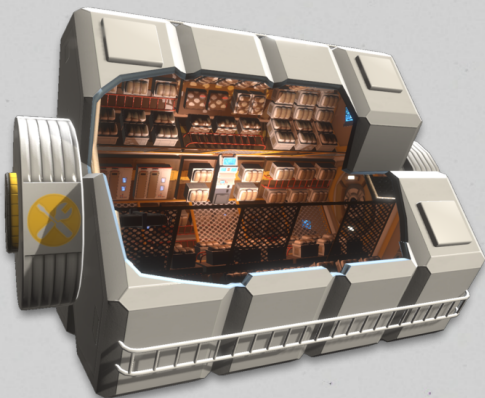
Health Recovery

Replenishes all Health of the active crew member.

Since there is a single slot, only one crew can use this ability per turn. Using this ability will not regain the maximum Health lost due to Cannibalism.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.



MAINTENANCE

Ship Repair

Recover damage to your Ship caused by Events and the Choice phase.

If your Ship is reduced to zero, the game will end.

Usage Requirement:

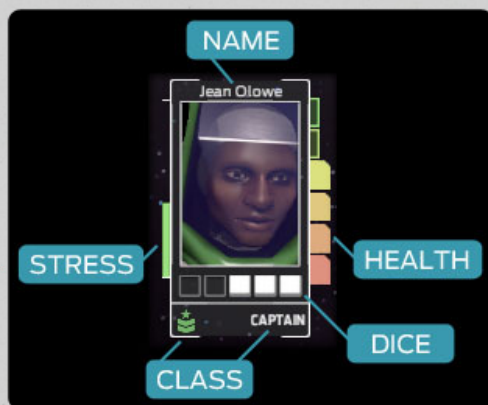
All Dice placed must be the same number. The first slot gives nothing, but the next slot fixes two Ship. The following slot fixes an additional one Ship. The Ship value is reduced by Events with red bar indicators.

CREW

The crew are the primary way that you will get things done on the ship, so make sure to take care of them. Additional crew with unique abilities can be unlocked by meeting certain criteria.

CREW STATS

Keep an eye on each crew member as you won't want them to go mad, underperform or die.



HEALTH

All crew have a maximum of six Health. In the above example, Jean has four Health out of six. If a crew member's Health falls to zero, they are dead and can no longer be used in the current game. Use the Medical Bay to regain Health. If a crew member Cannibalizes, their maximum Health drops by one each time. Lost maximum Health cannot be regained.

DICE

Crew have a maximum of five Dice. The example shows that Jean has three Dice. The number of Dice indicates how many actual Dice will be rolled in a module. Each turn the crew lose one Die, but they can gain more Dice during the Distribute Food phase or by using the Life Support module.

Dice are meant to represent the stamina of the crew. Feeding the crew allows them to work at a greater capacity, although they do tire when doing work.

STRESS

The level of Stress is shown as the bar to the left of the crew portrait, with the bottom signifying no Stress and top being maximum Stress. The Stress level influences the quality of plans presented during the Side Project phase. Low stress generally means that the plans will be more helpful to the ship and crew, but sacrifices may still be required. High Stress means that plans will have greater repercussions, or be more selfish. If Stress is maxed out, then the plan can be very detrimental. Use the Operations module to lower Stress.

CLASS

Each crew member has a different Class that allows them to perform a particular ability. Each Class is explained below in the Crew Roster.

CREW ROSTER

DOCTOR KAYLA JONES



+1 Health to Crew in Module

Using this ability gives all current crew in the module one Health, including the Doctor herself. Crew that enter this module later in the turn do not receive the Health benefit, only those in the module when the ability is used.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

SPECIALIST ALLISON SILVA



+1 Re-roll

The Specialist always gets one more roll than the other crew. This can be used to increase the odds of rolling a particular number or to help roll as high as possible.

Usage Requirement:

This ability is always active and does not require Dice.

MECHANIC PACAL LAVORIN



+1 Ship

Increases the Ship by one to help prevent destruction.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

CAPTAIN JEAN OLOWE



+1 Die to Crew in Module

Using this ability gives all current crew in the module one Die, including the Captain himself. Crew that enter this module later in the turn do not receive the Dice benefit, only those in the module when the ability is used.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

PSYCHOLOGIST JOHN PARK



-20% Stress to Crew in Module

Using this ability reduces the Stress of all current crew in the module, including the Psychologist himself. Crew that enter this module later in the turn do not receive the Stress reduction, only those in the module when the ability is used.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

COMMANDER NIKI KARAM



-4 Repair

Any Die placed in the Class Ability slot will reduce the Repair value of an Event by four. Has no effect when used in a module without an Event.

Usage Requirement:

Any Die activates this ability.

PILOT YURI NOVAK



Ignore Movement Damage

The Pilot can move through any module without taking a Health penalty. Normally, crew lose one Health for passing through each module with an Event.

Usage Requirement:

This ability is always active and does not require Dice.

TECHNICIAN JOY LEE



+2 Assist

Gains two Assist, which are used to prevent Hazards from affecting any crew. A maximum of three Assist can be kept at one time.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

CANNIBAL SOFIA DIAZ



+1 Food, -1 Health Max

Using the ability will reduce the Cannibal's maximum Health by one and produce a single Food to be used by anyone.

Usage Requirement:

A Die with a value of five or higher activates this ability.

EVENTS

New problems occur every turn, and the crew must fix them to stand a chance at reaching Mars. The strategy comes from which Events you prioritize and which crew you use to fix them. While Events are important, it is also crucial to maintain other resources such as Ship, Dice and Health.



REPAIRS

In order to remove an Event from the ship, the Repair value must be reduced to zero. A single Event can be Repaired by multiple crew in the same turn. Repairs are made by going into the module where the Event is located and using Dice to reduce the Repair value. Dice do Repairs equal to their face value, so six is the most you can reduce with a single Die. Consider that the average roll of a single Die is 3.5, two Dice is 7, three Dice is 10.5, four Dice is 14 and five Dice is 17.5. Just don't get too hung up on probability.

HAZARDS

When working on an Event the crew have to face complications and distractions that can mar their performance. There are three types of Hazards in the game: Stasis, Injury and Void. Hazards are triggered when the rolled Dice match the number indicated on a Hazard. If there is Assist available, the effects of a Hazard are nullified, but the Assist is used up in the process.

STASIS

Shown as a blue Die, Stasis locks a matching Die in place. A Die with Stasis cannot be re-rolled. Stasis represents when the crew has a mental block or becomes tired and cannot perform optimally.

INJURY

Shown as an orange Die, Injury causes crew to lose Health. Dice that roll Injury can be re-rolled. Each Die that rolls an Injury Hazard will take away one Health.

Two Injury Hazards with the same number (as seen on the right) will cause double Injury for each Die that matches. For example, if you roll three "4's", then your crew member will lose six Health. A single Assist can protect a Die from all Hazards, so with two Assist the example roll would only lose two Health.



VOID

Shown as a purple Die, Void completely removes matching Dice from being used. Void does not affect the number of Dice the crew member has in their status window. Void represents a mistake by the crew member that causes them to lose work.

DAMAGE

After all crew have been used on a turn, the remaining Events apply their damage. Damage varies per Event, so take note of the red text or red bars above the Event name.

DAMAGE TYPES

- Ship (Red Bars) - Takes away the number of Ship shown on the Event
- System Fail (Sys Fail) - Module cannot be used until the Event is fixed
- Health (-1 Health All) - All crew lose the indicated amount of Health
- Dice (-1 Dice All) - All crew get Dice taken away
- Food (-1 Food) - Lose that amount of Food, if available

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research is an essential part of a successful trip to Mars, and can save your butt when in a tight spot. The basic concept is that you place Dice in the Dice slots to earn Research points which can be used to purchase projects.



PLACING DICE

While inside a module, Dice can be placed in the six Dice slots. Only one Die can be placed for each number (one "1" Die, one "2" Die, etc). Each Die in the slot counts as one Research point, and the total is shown in the flask to the right. The maximum number of Research points is therefore six. In the example above, the "2" and "6" count as one point each, and another "2" or "6" cannot be placed. When viewing the ship, the Dice slots are not shown because you cannot place Dice during this time.

SPENDING DICE

Below the Dice slots are three Research projects which are randomly selected from a pool of 27 projects. Each project has an effect as well as a cost, which are applied immediately. In the example shown above, the player can select the "Hack" project and use one of their two Research points to gain one Assist. The player could not use the "Suppression" or "Disaster Reduce" projects because the cost is higher than their Research points. When using Research points, Dice are removed from the Dice slots from lowest to highest. So, using "Hack" would mean that the "2" slot is cleared out, but now that slot can be used again. The used project will then be replaced by a different project selected at random.

SHUFFLE

Since the Research projects are selected randomly, you may desire different options. Shuffle costs one Research point and is used to replace all three projects at once with three more random projects. All three projects are changed when shuffling, so there is no way to keep any of the current projects.

RESEARCH DETAILS

The colors above the projects show what kind of effect they have (red=Repairs, green=Food, yellow=Ship, grey=Dice, brown=Stress, blue=Assist, orange=Health, light blue=Stasis, purple=Void, pink=Movement).

The single and multiple person icons on the top right side of the project represents who it will affect. The single icon only affects one crew and can be used inside or outside of a module. To utilize during Ship View, select a crew member and use the project. The multiple icon projects can be used at any time and affect all crew or the ship. Note: Projects that perform Repairs must be used in a module and that crew member cannot back out of deployment at that point.

STRATEGIES

CREW

The crew aboard your ship are your most valuable asset, so try to avoid losing anyone for as long as possible.

CANNIBALISM

The Cannibalism supplies may be tempting, but it can also lead to heightened Stress. Try not to succumb to Cannibalism until you have to.

END GAME

Near the end of the game, take stock of your resources and the Events present. Sometimes you may want to avoid fixing an Event so that you can build up Ship or Food. Then try to get at least one crew to Flight Control to activate the module ability. Also try to find Research projects that will help in a pinch, such as increasing Ship.

SHIP DAMAGE

Fixing your Ship in the Maintenance module is helpful, but don't let Events build up too much. More Events will keep coming, so it is important to stay on top of repairing what you can. Don't just slap on more bandages, fix the root of the problem if possible.

ASSIST

Understanding and properly utilizing Assist is important to stay alive. One Assist is gained each turn, but more can be obtained from the Laboratory module. With Assist built up, it is best to work on Events with Injury and Void, as Stasis is less harmful but will use up your Assist. Use crew with low Health first so they can be protected with Assist while heartier crew can come in later that can absorb the Injury if necessary.

RESEARCH

Don't forget about Research, it can save you when all else looks grim. Going into a module without an Event and building up Research, as well as using the module, can sometimes be your best option.

INJURY

If an Event has one Injury Hazard, it is possible for a crew member to lose as much Health as the number of Dice that they roll. Assist protects from this. With five Dice, three Health and three Assist, it is not possible for that crew to die. But if the Injury Dice are doubled ("2" and a "2"), death is a possibility.

STRESS

Stress can be fairly important, even when things are falling apart around you. Reducing Stress improves the plans presented in the Side Project phase, which can be helpful, but also prevents poor plans that drag you down further.