

Based on discussion in this thread and elsewhere, I've put together a biomorph that can comfortably fly in the "modern" Martian conditions, and who will have an easier time of it still as the terraforming continues. They can also comfortably handle Earth, though that may be inadvisable for other obvious reasons...

He's been referred to as "The Red Dragon" and "The Dragon of Olympus Mons", as I decided it's more comfortable on the far side of the Uncanny Valley than trying to cling to the sheer rock face that is *this* side of it. There's a good deal of otter and fruit bat in his gene stock, and in my game, it grew out of an old collaboration that yielded the Ripwing. MIT's version took longer, but possesses fewer compromises - no need for a cyberbrain, for one; a more mammalian face and slightly better flexibility leading to somewhat more comfortable terrestrial locomotion - while comfortably bipedal at a walk, when a red dragon wants to really hoof it for whatever reason, they tend to run on all fours with a catlike gait. They're also outright biomorphs - while pod versions are certainly possible, Red Dragons are interfertile and new morphs can be produced through, ah, "conventional means".

The creator is pretty pissed off, and has been rendered homeless several times - first, he was on a slow boat to Mars during the Fall itself. Second, to the Titan Quarantine Zone. Rumors that he salvaged his home and studio are as yet unsubstantiated. Third, he was carving an eyrie into a particularly dramatic rock face of Olympus Mons when Olympus declared a renewed quarantine for fear of a local zombie apocalypse. (When he came back later, someone had finished carving it out and it now served as an admin office for the High Pools, (Farcast, entry 089) downslope of the pools themselves. Fourth, his home was recently flattened by a terraformer's comet strike, this time taking with it most of his remaining mementoes of Earth and his family. As this was a recent event, he's sleeping in a doggie bed concealed under his desk in his office at the local MIT campus. (If you hear someone knocking on the door from the inside, don't open it without knocking first - he's probably amusing himself by taking potshots at a photo of an asteroid tug with his shard pistol! In his defense, there *is* a five centimeter thick slab of polyethylene hung on the door, and he's using cream-puff ammo, but it'll still put an eye out)

I'm also kicking around the idea of correspondence with old colleagues now on Fortean reminding himself of the legend of Jason and the golden fleece, and hacking together a machine for making "Dragons' teeth" - a tricorder-sized fabber that makes specialized hives that make proteans; when buried under about six inches of Martian regolith, it will assemble a combination healing vat and ego bridge (a "wet" ego bridge") capable of working as an autonomous resleeving station, albeit locked into producing only his favorite kind of biomorph (which, in his defense, is extremely reliable and low-maintenance compared to most Rusters and Alpiners, (No planned obsolescence, expensive feedstocks, or specialist maintenance required, in game terms) and very nearly on par with an average Crasher, albeit lacking some of the more expensive features. In addition, this hard-coding was intended to resist any subtle tampering, or at least make such tampering evident.)

While he had time to get used to the form while developing it, (self-experimentation for the win!) he recognizes that not everyone is going to be so keen on it, at least at first. Each station features a modest simulspace server with an extremely helpful VI assistant and some well-written training software designed to ease the shock of transitioning into an exotic form. The personality overlays developed for the Red Dragon are also exceptionally well written, with the goal of familiarizing new users with the morph before resleeving them, at least enough to offset what will probably be a radically different body plan. A nonsentient automated psychotherapy and psychosurgery system named Eliza (treated here as a combination device AI and muse with skill points in Psychosurgery (Memory Manipulation and Psychotherapy), Medicine (psychiatry), and Medicine (Exotic Biomorphs)) will, at clients request, blunt the memories of death, or anxieties of one not remembered, ask the obvious questions, and mediate discussions between clients waiting in simulspace in a form of group therapy. At last resort, she can simply track down a transhuman expert to assist when she recognizes her abilities are inadequate to the task. (I shall reinforce that Eliza applies a very light touch with memory modification - dialing down the emotional impact of unpleasant last moments, ensuring they're remembered without any actual pain and with considerable emotional distance, like something seen on TV, instead of something experienced firsthand.)

It remains a matter of speculation as to what happens to an injured biomorph that crawls into a Tooth's elevator. Nobody wants to try it voluntarily, and nobody's yet been desperate enough to try it under duress. Further, nobody's tried tossing a cortical stack into the hatch either.

Whether this project bootstraps a robust public resleeving network on Mars, or results in a nightmare of hacked security, deleted (or worse...) infugees, and commandeered healing vats is also a matter for speculation.

The timescale I'm assuming for nanofabrication of a complete body is based upon healing vats' claimed times: "Restoring recently dead character who is placed in medical stasis to avoid death, and who is missing most of their body. ... 3 days per wound"

With a death rating of 53, I shall assume that this feat of nanoassembly is equivalent to five wounds. Thus, one can assemble a new body in fifteen days, or from nine to twelve for children being resleeved in such a fashion.

Therefore, assuming that a constant supply of infugees flow into the simulspace server and a constant flow of raw materials can be maintained (REP favors from the recently instantiated, on top of what the root system can extract from the regolith) one can reasonably assume that each Tooth's Eliza will maintain a continuous culture of new bodies at the maximum possible rate of production. Personalizations such as default resting skin color, eye color, and small personal touches like matching distinctive freckles and birthmarks so as to help convey continuity are listed as taking only an hour, so therefore can be applied essentially only once a client is comfortable with attempting to resleeve, as downloading an infomorph into a meatbrain *also* takes an hour. More involved changes (height and weight) take about 12 hours, and are typically performed in anticipation of a client's readiness. On the other wing,

Eliza will take steps to preserve one's preferred self-image, reinterpreted in the context of a Red Dragon. Unless you specifically request otherwise, if you were skinny going in, you'll be skinny when you wake up in the vat and pull the air hose out of your windpipe. This extends to build - though applied on a logarithmic scale; you're guaranteed to end up with a healthy body-mass index conducive to flight - complexion, eye color (and even corneal details), scars (if Eliza believes they're relevant to a person's self-image, though they will be shallow affairs that don't effect layers below the dermis), and general details of proportion, albeit with a generous amount of interpretation.

Matching the original sex of the client is simplified by a strong androgyny of Red Dragons, as dictated by aerodynamics; further, all are originally produced as fertile hermaphrodites capable of serving both parental roles. The relative simplicity of simply resorbing one set of reproductive organs cuts down on the time required to change a morph's sex in this way, and the healing vat can apply either nanomachine-based resorption of the structures in question (slower, but less prone to causing squirming) or nanomachine-facilitated surgical excision (much faster, but liable to cause a generous dose of squick, if anyone is in a position to watch). Eliza prefers to not make an issue of this, relying on the standard personality patch to ease the practice of a standard gender role with nonstandard anatomy, to ease the client's transition to an intersex gender role, or a slightly more intensive personality template offered only upon request to acclimate a patient immediately to hermaphroditism. Usually, subtle biasing of a new body's endocrine system is enough to maintain someone with a gender they're comfortable with in their old state of mind; in most cases out of sight is out of mind (thanks to the morph's unavoidable androgyny) and an imitation of secondary sexual characteristics can be extracted from an ego's residual self-image and applied to the body during resleeving, and subtle pheromonal changes resulting from the deliberate hormonal imbalance are easily detected by anyone with an enhanced olfactory sense. A significant motivation leading to this is a potential theoretical doubling of the effective population size, in deference to [the 50/500 rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_colonization#Population_size), reducing the number of Dragons in any given area required to maintain a healthy population in the long term even in the absence of genefixing. As all clients that do not insist on hardware modification are capable of breeding, this is intended to partially offset the harsh reality that the 50/500 rule represents a number of very optimistic assumptions - chief among them the birth control function built into the basic biomods of (nearly) every biomorph in the solar system.

(It may be obvious that I have a background in biology at this point. It may also be said that doing ecosystem engineering on the backs of infugees is rather harsh, but allow me to play Devil's advocate for a moment - Red Dragons find Martian climate shirtsleeve weather, and unlike many other morphs can thrive in these conditions with no protective equipment and only the most rudimentary of shelter. If another Fall comes and knocks Martian civilization back to the stone age, you'll probably see a lot of people who *are* desperate enough to see what happens if you crawl into a Tooth-a-vator, and not just the occasional Alpiners caught unawares by fulminating tumors caused by delayed genetic service packs who can't make it back to civilization in time to *not die horribly* in a place where the windstorms will

bury their cortical stack, never to be seen again. Second, in a surprising lack of hypocrisy, he did it to himself first despite having no desire to change sex, with the same ruthless reasoning written of here. Third, he found it surprisingly easy to adapt to. Fourth, you should remember what the *other guy* is going to stick your new morph with, if you go with a more mainstream low-cost resleeving option. Lastly, when the sociology department found out what he planned, they pushed it through the MIT ethics committee, and are desperate to see what happens as a result.)

[quote]The classical legends of Cadmus and Jason have given rise to the phrase "to sow dragon's teeth." This is used as a [metaphor](#) to refer to doing something that has the effect of fomenting disputes.[/quote]

Boy howdy.

Game Mechanics

Aptitudes	Cognition	Coordination	Intuition	Reflex	Savvy	Somatics	Willpower
Ego	20	10	10	10	20	15	20
Morph	0	5	5	5	0	0	0
Total	20	15	15	15	20	15	20

The aptitudes chosen reflect both weaknesses that the dragons' creator felt he needed to address in himself, and areas upon which significant demands will be placed during flight.

Maximum Aptitudes: Not yet selected; should be better than Ruster or Alpiners. Ultimately, this 1.0 release is a shot across the bow of those who maintain the Remade's template - he's ultimately trying to surpass *that* morph, not just Alpiners and Rusters.

Morph Traits

- Striking Looks
- Rapid Healer
- Limber

The armor used during his semi-famous "naked" reentry skydive; while chameleonic, it appears fluid metallic silver when fully hardened against heat.

SmartSkin	8/2	\$250
	Lotus Coat	\$50
	Chameleonic	\$50
	Fireproof	\$50
	Refractive Glazing	\$250

And the associated goggles - also appearing seamless and metallic; further, a specially textured rim seals with properly programmed SmartSkin.

X-Ray-dar Specs	\$750	Contain X-ray, T-ray, microwave and RADAR emitters, plus UV, IR, and visible sources; sensors as normal specs.
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Default traits

- Access jacks
- Basic biomods
- Basic mesh inserts
- Chameleon skin
- Cortical stack
- Enhanced Vision
- Direction Sense

- Enhanced Ears
- Enhanced Nose
- Echolocation
- Mnemonic Augmentation
- Prehensile Feet
- Wings
- Respirocytes
- claws
- clean metabolism
- prehensile tail
- Temperature tolerance (imp. cold)
- Enhanced respiration
- grip pads
- Low Pressure Tolerance

Recommended, but not included in the Mk.1 release; these should be ready in time for a 2.0 patch:

- Medichines
- Light Bioweave
- Hardened Skeleton
- Muscle Augmentation
- Oxygen Storage
- Toxin Filters
- Nanophages

Price: Free, if you know where to look.

Value: Credit price on the secondhand market is TBD.