



The Martians

Kim Stanley Robinson

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Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy is one of science fiction's most honored series, with **Red Mars** winning the distinguished Nebula Award, and both **Green Mars** and **Blue Mars** honored with the Hugo. A modern-day classic of the genre, this epic saga deftly portrays the human stories behind Earth's most ambitious project yet: the terraforming of Mars.

Now, following the publication of his acclaimed adventure novel, **Antarctica**, Robinson returns to the realm he has made his own, in a work that brilliantly weaves together a futuristic setting with a poetic vision of the human spirit engaged in a drama as ancient as mankind itself.

From a training mission in Antarctica to blistering sandstorms sweeping through labyrinths of barren canyons, the interwoven stories of **The Martians** set in motion a sprawling cast of characters upon the surface of Mars. As the planet is transformed from an unexplored and forbidding terrain to a troubled image of a re-created Earth, we meet men and women who are bound together by their experiences on Mars and with each other.

Among them are Michel, a French psychologist dazzled by the beauty around him; Maya, a woman whose ill-fated love affairs lead to her first voyage to Mars; and Roger, a tall Martian-born guide who lacks social skills but has the courage to survive on the planet's dangerous yet strangely compelling surface.

Beginning with the First Hundred explorers, generations of friends, enemies, and lovers are swept up in the drama that is Earth's tenuous toehold on Mars. International exploration turns into world building; world building degenerates into political conflict, revolution, and war.

Following the strands of these lives and events, in an age when human life has been extended for decades, **The Martians** becomes the story of generations lived on the edge of the ultimate frontier, in a landscape of constant man-made and natural transformation.

This new masterpiece by Kim Stanley Robinson is a story of hope and disappointment, of fierce physical and psychological struggles. Both deeply human and scientifically cutting edge, **The Martians** is the epic chronicle of a planet that represents one of humanity's most glorious possibilities.

A Letter from Kim Stanley Robinson:

"When I finished **Blue Mars**, I realized I wasn't done with Mars yet. There were things I still wanted to say about the place, and about my characters from the trilogy, and there were a number of sidebar stories and characters that had found no place in the trilogy's structure. I also had a couple of precursor Mars stories that did not fit the trilogy's history--'Exploring Fossil Canyon' and 'Green Mars'--and I had held these out of my earlier story collections thinking they belonged with the Mars group."

So all this material was there, and as I wrote **Antarctica**, I found myself drawn back into the matter of Mars repeatedly, by the discovery of possible life in meteorite AHL8004 and by the Pathfinder landing. I decided to make a collection of Martian tales, and as I put them in roughly chronological order, I saw that they seemed to be adding up to their own larger story, functioning as the trilogy's 'unconscious' or 'secret history'.

Using all kinds of modes, from folk tales to scientific articles, from personal accounts to the full text of a constitution, I arranged things so that the book altogether tells the story of an underground and hard-to-see resistance to the terraforming described in the trilogy proper. I had a great time doing these stories, and hope they add up to my own version of a **Martian Chronicles**."

The Martians Details

Date : Published October 3rd 2000 by Spectra Books (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780553574012

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Format : Paperback 434 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Short Stories

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From Reader Review The Martians for online ebook

Jon Sayer says

This book was a slog... KSR doesn't write plots, as anyone who got through the Mars Trilogy knows. He does characters. He does description. He does ideas. And that's all this book is, too. Sure, there're some fascinating things to read, like the ascent of Olympus Mons and the constitution of Mars. But too much of this book is just descriptions of completely fictional hiking paths, or are about minor characters from the trilogy that are quickly forgotten.

One can compare this book to the Years of Rice and Salt in that it a series of short stories taking place over hundreds of years. Some of the stories are good, some suck.

Courage Knight says

This book was fantastic! I thought it might be a bit boring, since the guy is marooned on the planet alone! He has no one to talk to. But it is action packed, full of emotion. He is understandably depressed at times, but mostly he is just focused on surviving. He is very creative, very knowledgeable, and the entire story comes across as believable. I won't spoil the ending, but if you enjoy science fiction, you should love this book.

People may notice that I give a lot of five star reviews. That's because I usually only review the books I loved. Sometimes I'll write a bad review if the book was really a waste of time. But the 2, 3, and 4 star books I just don't usually bother reviewing.

Mitchell says

Any book of short stories naturally has its strengths and weaknesses. "The Martians" is no different, except that it has far more misses than hits.

There are some great stories in here, as good as the original trilogy. The first one, "Michel in Antarctica," had a brilliant twist ending that made me actually say "wow" and had me determined to read the rest of the book, no matter how bad the subsequent stories might be. There were a few more good ones in there - the full text of the Martian constitution was in there, with notes on its genesis, and the short stories "Coyote Makes Trouble" and "Odessa" were also quite good.

The rest, unfortunately, are nowhere near up to scratch. One story in particular - the novella "Green Mars," written long before the actual trilogy - concerns a mountain-climbing expedition that stretches across an agonisingly tedious eighty pages.

If you absolutely loved the Mars trilogy, then of course you should read this (and no bad review will stop you). But if, like me, you thought the Mars trilogy was a decent series of books with some great features, but also a lot of boring, pointless or badly written features, then give it a miss.

If you read the entire trilogy, though, you really must read "Michel in Antarctica." Not a great story in itself

but the twist ending is amazing, provided you've read the original trilogy.

Gonzalo Rodriguez Garcia says

To say Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy is a monumental work is hardly an exaggeration. It is big both in size and in scope, a very positive but not too idealistic vision of what could be, at least from a social point of view. Lack of scientific literacy forbids me from saying how plausible it is in that regard.

The fact publishers include "The Martians" among his other books, and not as part of the trilogy worried me. Was it going to be a collection of leftovers, suitable only for hardcore fans? I did not feel that way (and I am not sure I am a hardcore fan yet). Yes, it is a collection of vignettes you will probably not enjoy fully if you have not read the trilogy, but it is a great collection. There are alternative stories, poems and a few hints at Stanley Robinson's writing process. It was also interesting to see hidden relationships between some of the main characters. Hidden in as much as they seem to fit perfectly inside the trilogy, and yet we did not see it there. Still, among the best for me are the "Martian Romance" stories, particularly the "Green Mars" story: 100 pages on climbing Olympus Mons was not something I was expecting (or expecting to enjoy).

If you are looking for something to read after Green Mars, look no further.

Samuel says

Robinson re-visits the world he created in his Mars trilogy, with a collection of vignettes about the people who are linked to the Red planet. Some stories are even from alternate histories of Mars, "what-if" stories. Yet the focus is not so much Mars as it is the Martians, the people who dream, work, play and love on Mars.

Robert says

I tell people that short story collections aren't novels. This, you might think, is obvious. Yet many people insist upon reading them as if they were novels; start at page one and carry on until page the last. I think this might be why some people end up not liking the short story form: they think the way to read them is 10 - 20 at a time by one author, one shortly after the other. This may not be the best way. I encourage people to think of each story as the basic element, not each volume. Read them in any order you like, read only one then put it back on the shelf, if you want. They are almost always published individually in magazines prior to collection in paperback volumes. Treat them that way and they might appear in a new light.

If my theory were a submarine, this book is the depth charge that sinks it: not only is it necessary to read the stories in order for it all to make sense, it is best read whilst the details of KSR's Mars trilogy are still fresh in the mind (which wasn't the case for me), because we're back on Mars with the First Hundred and others for some stories that didn't quite fit in the novels and they are told in chronological order...except when we aren't, that is. You need to keep your wits about you: some of the stories aren't set on Mars - some are set in an alternative timeline from that set out in the novels. Many assume you know the characters and plot of the novels. Some of the newer characters recurr so that later stories will make much more sense if you've read the earlier ones.

The alternative timeline isn't the only experimental aspect of the collection. Some of the pieces are just documents, e.g. a series of abstracts from scientific papers debating the origin of nanobacteria - native Martian or Earth contaminent? The Martian Constitution in full and a commentary on it. And there's more: a story about KSR finishing writing the Mars novels, a small collection of "poems" - see later.

The quality of the stories varies, some of the experiments are successes, others failures. The best are truely excellent and sometimes shocking. The worst are miserable creatures, not fit for the light of day. I don't like sports stories generally. Baseball stories are the worst of a dire genre. So a "baseball on Mars" story is just awful...the "poems" lack all merit. How many writers have been successful novelists and poets? Scott and Hardy. Can you name another? KSR's verses here don't really seem to demonstrate a grasp of what a poem is, let alone act as exemplars of the form.

But the best stories are great and usually heavily informed by both character and landscape (which will be no surprise to KSR fans). KSR's ability to write about landscape is in fact comparable to Thomas Hardy's. They both make you see it as if you've been there, which makes sense with Hardy's Wessex and KSR's California because they respectively lived in those places. But KSR can make you see the Dry Valleys of Antarctica just as well - OK, he's been there for a few days. But Mars? He makes me see Mars just as well. This is the basis of my theory that KSR is an alien in disguise: he can describe Mars just as well as he can describe the Californian coastline - because he's been there, too!

So that feat never ceases to amaze me and KSR has another talent that is rare - he can write excellently about mountaineering - which is just as well as one of the stories, the longest in fact, is about climbing the solar system's largest mountain, Olympus Mons. The story is thematically like the Mars Trilogy in miniature at least in respect of the whole Red-Green debate. I'm a Red. In fact my Redness is so saturated it is almost black. So I sympathise with that story's main protagonist. (Don't read that story whilst depressed, however - you may not survive to finish it.)

So I rate this volume at three stars - but that is like the mean of the temperature across a year in New York: not much different from that of, say London, but the extremes are much greater. In fact all fans of the Mars Trilogy should read this book remember its triumphs and forget its failures. Kudos to KSR for taking all the risks he did in this book, the ones that pay off are jackpot winners.

Christopher says

The Martians is a short story collection that expands things from the previous book in the series through the use of stories and pseudo reports and commentaries on the Mars colonisation! :D Thrown in on top of this is a number of what if stories as well! :D

The stories throughout are very varied with the read following a host of different characters from all over Mars such as Roger and Eileen and how they connect over time and over many different stories and there eventual meet up again years later when Mars has yet again changed dramatically! :D The plot with Eileen and Roger being a Red is in many way a reverse of the situation between Sax and Ann from the main books! :D This works really well as over time Eileen forgots him due to the lack of longevity treatments at the time the stories are intitaillyy set in but Roger still has almost perfect recall so this allows them to play through their scenes with a lot of nostalgia until Eileen get her marbles back and this of course puts a spin of their relationship again which puts the stories into sharp focus which really helps the narrative! :D The backdrop of their adventures is brilliantly portrayed and you are bound to learn a lot about mountain climbing

throughout and this works brilliantly as part of the story as they are put through challenges and given the nature of the stories you really do end up cheering for them at the top! :D

The other stories throughout are brilliant as well we get to see what the original hundred went through in Antarctica and how they started to bond together into their groups before they set off as well, which of course has major consequences once they actually get to Mars, as seeing the scene with Sax and Anne that set off what in the end would be the formation of modern Mars which will have you grinning at all the foretelling of what is going to be happen! :D This provides a great look at all the characters before it all happened and uses Michel as the narrative voice while adding a more to Maya and his adventures! :D

The characters of Maya and Michel also take front and centre in the alternate stories that we see as well showing that they eventual end up paired but at the same time can she hold a grudge which adds a lot of humour to the story as he braces himself for her righteous fury and to be honest Michel has it coming! :D But another brilliant story that really proves an intriguing look at what could have happened and how a lot of their later actions and desires were influenced by Mars and their experiences there! :D

In addition their are also a host of documents and appendixes throughout the book with the Mars constitution laid out and explained in later parts point-by-point which is a brilliant touch! :D As Constitutions go it is really good and could do with being adopted by a number of countries! :D The later appendixes ostensibly written by Charlotte with input from Art is brilliant the clause banning wars and and people's reaction will have you in stitches! :D This helps though to provide a great back drop to the the previous books and provides a lot of context to the other stories! :D

Throughout the stories there are cameo's from Jackie, Sax and Coyote as well the will put another spin on their character and helps to explain a lot of their motivations and origins and motivations and adds more layers to the stories as well plus you will be laughing at Maya and what she gets up to as ever and her actions hiding Coyote will have you laughing away! :D Hehe it is brillaint though in the way that the previous envents are still referenced and given new spin which I am sure will have looking at events that you have read previously in a whole new light! :D Not to mention the mysteries involving Hiroko's antics are still very much a mystery througout and certainly have not been expalined other than through Sax who may have been a little oxygen deprived at the time the jury is still very much out! :D

The Martians is extremely clever but you have to read the previous books to understand the context of the stories but is a brilliant pick up of events from the previous books and propels things beyond the previous events brilliantly with pace and unexpected events and is bound to leave a lump in throat from all the character moments and heroics on display as well catching up with everyone! :D Brilliant and highly Recommended! :D

Adam McPhee says

The best of Robinson's short story collections, or at least tied with the book actually titled Best of Kim Stanley Robinson. No, I think I like this better. Outtakes from the Mars trilogy, essentially.

Juan Raffo says

Es un apéndice a su Trilogía de Marte y ese es el problema; después de tantos años no tengo ni idea de quien es Maya o Sax o Coyote, de como fue la revolución ni de quien es quien en unos libros en los que pasaron muchas cosas.

Me salté poemas (nada, definitivamente me es imposible leer un poema que no rima) y los dos artículos acerca de la constitución marciana (igual que antes, hay que tener la trilogía fresca para leerlos).

El cuento acerca del baseball marciano es un caso aparte: si el traductor no sabe nada del deporte (que por supuesto nadie está obligado) debieron buscar un corrector o asesor específico que ayudase pero ya es problema de la edición.

Las historias de Roger e Eileen son interesantes y fueron lo que más disfruté, supongo que por ser las más independientes de los libros originales.

Mi recomendación: leer justo después de la Trilogía de Marte, no hacer lo que yo hice.

Liz says

DNF- After reading a story or 2, I decided I needed to read the original series again.

The first chapter seemed quite slow and since I have not read the books for 20 years, I felt a bit lost, like missing some pieces..

Bruce McNair says

This is a collection of short stories and poems based on the universe portrayed in Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy: Red Mars, Green Mars, and Blue Mars. These stories complement the novels. But they are uneven, some are good and expand on the backstory behind the original novels, others are padding that could have been left out. This collection does not rise to the heights of the original trilogy, and is probably meaningless to those who have not read the original books.

1. Michel in Antarctica - A group of people build and live in a settlement in one of the dry Antarctic valleys as a precursor to settling on Mars. But not all of them would make it to Mars. And it was Michel's job, as one of four psychologists, to evaluate the suitability of the candidates for life on Mars. He studied the individuals and the group dynamics, trying to stay detached while attracted to the women and admiring the men. He worried that the group were all going insane slowly in the sunless winter, and thus would never survive on Mars. So he had misgivings about the planned Mars project.
2. Exploring Fossil Canyon - Follows a group of amateur hikers exploring a canyon complex that has had little human presence, even though humans had been living on Mars for several generations. They endure a sandstorm that results in the group becoming dangerously dispersed. Before the storm, one of the group found a canyon with stones that looked like fossil sea shells.
3. The Archaea Plot - A supposed plot by ancient native lifeforms to reclaim Mars from the human invaders.
4. The Way The Land Spoke To Us - A description of some of the Martian terrain, and what this means for people traversing it.
5. Maya and Desmond - One woman's search for a stowaway, Desmond, on board the spaceship carrying the first 100 settlers to Mars, and, once found, the assistance she gives him. Subsequently it follows Maya and

her occasional encounters with Desmond.

6. Four Telelogical Trails - Wrong way: a hiker discovers a blazed trail in Crommelin Crater and follows it. Mistakes Can Be Good: a son takes his parents on a taxing trail with a rewarding end. You Can't Lose the Trail: rediscovering the lost trails in Crommelin Crater. The Natural Genius: a hiker has fun following bits of old trails, finding the next one, and questioning whether the trail he thought he saw was actually there.

7. Coyote Makes Trouble - the radical reds plan to sabotage the terraforming. But Coyote has his own plan for a visible protest.

8. Michel in Provence - almost a hundred years after the first Martian settlement, Michel is back on Earth, in particular His home in Provence. He reflects on life on Mars. He meets Maya at a space habitation conference in Nice, and their relationship is rekindled for a few days. But each is stuck in their own world.

9. Green Mars - a group of people prepare to climb an escarpment on Olympus Mons. Roger Clayborne is a last minute addition to the party after resigning his position as Minister of the Interior. For him, this climb is an epiphany.

10. Arthur Sternbach Brings the Curveball to Mars - baseball on Mars is different: the outfield is bigger, and getting batters out is harder. But an American teaches a native-born Martian how to throw a curve ball.

11. Salt and Fresh - suggests that Mars was inhabited by single-celled creatures called Archaea, which are plotting to reclaim Mars, or at least some of them might be.

12. The Constitution of Mars - a proposal for a legal constitution that describes how Mars is to be governed.

13. Some Worknotes and Commentary on the Constitution - some comments on the Mars Constitution based on experience.

14. Jackie on Zo - a mother's recollection of giving birth and raising a child on Mars.

15. Keeping the Flame - Nirgal encounters a strange Greek-style monument. While there, two of the first hundred arrive. They tell him that the monument is a memorial to Phyllis Boyle, who was their colleague. And they reminisce about the past.

16. Saving Noctis Dam - the dam was built in the Noctis Canyon, but it was botched having been built in part on sandstone. And the first severe rainstorms had a devastating effect on the dam, which was on the verge of collapse.

17. Big Man in Love - a myth about a demi-god called Big Man and his supposed relationship with a cloned descendant of John Boone, the first man on Mars.

18. An Argument for the Deployment of All Safe Terraforming Technologies - the landscape of Mars undergoes continual change as the water flows. But during the 2210s decade, the climate started to cool. As a result, lots of methods were proposed to stop this trend. One group surfs the big waves.

19. Selected Abstracts from the Journal of Areological Studies - several extracts debate the possibility of ancient life forms on Mars.

20. Odessa - memories of time spent in the town of Odessa.
21. Sexual Dimorphism - one man investigates the adaptation of various cetaceans to a changing environment. He feels marginalised as his research appears to be increasingly unimportant. He also feels that the relationship with his partner is cooling.
22. Enough is as Good as a Feast - a description of the settlement of craters, which developed into towns. A man remembers life in a agricultural commune.
23. What Matters - after breaking up with his partner, Peter Clayborne decides to take a long walk along the rims of some canyons. He meets Roger Clayborne at a Swiss restaurant. As they enjoy dinner, large groups of people arrive to celebrate Fassnacht.
24. Coyote Remembers - Coyote reminisces about past relationships.
25. Sax Moments - various moments in Sax's life during his recovery from a stroke, from absurd science to considering the science of memory.
26. A Martian Romance - the relationship between Eileen Monday and Roger Clayborne following their expedition climbing Olympus Mons. Mars is cooling, and the introduced animal and plant life is going through a mass extinction. The group goes on an ice sailing trip.
27. If Wang Lei Lived on Mars and other poems - a series of poems about imagining life on Mars.
28. Purple Mars - the author's day is he finishes his novel about Mars.

John says

I thoroughly enjoyed Robinson's Mars trilogy - it stands alongside some of the best epic SF IMHO - so when I heard there was a book of short stories dealing with the same universe, I got my hands on it as soon as I could, hoping it would answer some lingering questions left unanswered at the conclusion of 'Blue Mars'. So did it? Well, maybe for a couple questions - though I didn't necessarily like the answers that seemed to be presented. And I can't help but wonder whether Robinson's attitude or viewpoint had changed noticeably since his completion of the trilogy and the writing of a few of these stories.

The stories for me were a little uneven. Having said that, the stories I enjoyed, I really enjoyed. And maybe part of my lack of enjoyment with some of the others is my indifference to mountain climbing (there's a lot of mountain climbing in these stories, litteral and detailed designed to serve as metaphor no doubt).

Robinson also works in some stories and poems that show a peek behind the curtain while he's working on the Mars trilogy - these are fun to read and as evokative in miniature as the Mars books themselves.

All in all, if you enjoyed the Mars trilogy, you'll probably like at least some portion of "The Martians" if not in fact the whole - just be prepared to encounter something of a different Mars than the one that the curtain closes on in 'Blue Mars'.

Kyle says

I waltzed into The Martians expecting a mediocre "bonus features" DVD of the original trilogy, but I was pleasantly surprised by the quality and depth of these Kim Stanley Robinson addenda.

Claudia says

A collection of relatively short stories related to the first one hundred colonists (prior and after colonization) and also about the next generations on R/G/B Mars.

The main series I found to be amazing, however, I perceived this volume as a big spoiler on characters' most inner thoughts and conduct and that's the reason for my skimming through them. The mystery around some of the characters' behavior in the trilogy was far more interesting.

But they are high quality stories and worthy to be read. Most likely I will return to read them properly at some point in the future, when my feelings on the mother-story will fade away :)

Ian says

This has been sat on my bookshelves since it was originally published in 1999, and I've been meaning to read it for years. But with one thing then another, and other books, it seemed to get shuffled further down the TBR. But since I needed to read up on Mars for Apollo Quartet 2, I took the opportunity of finally reading it. And I'm glad I did. The centre of the book is the novella, 'Green Mars', which was originally published in Asimov's in 1985 but which I'd read in the early 1909s as one half of a Tor double (with Clarke's 'A Meeting with Medusa'). 'Green Mars' is about an expedition to climb the 22,000 ft escarpment which surrounds Mons Olympus (the diagram prefacing the novella, incidentally, has the distances all wrong). It's basically a climbing story, and while Robinson succeeds in getting across the strangeness of the environment he curiously fails to mention the low gravity except in passing. Other stories in The Martians describe encounters between the two main characters of 'Green Mars'. Some stories are alternate takes on the Mars trilogy - including one, in fact, in which the First Hundred were never sent. Some pieces read like deleted scenes from the Mars trilogy; others read like a working-out of scenes which did appear. As a companion volume to Red Mars, Green Mars and Blue Mars, The Martians does the job interestingly and well, without reading like some sort of horrible RPG supplement.
