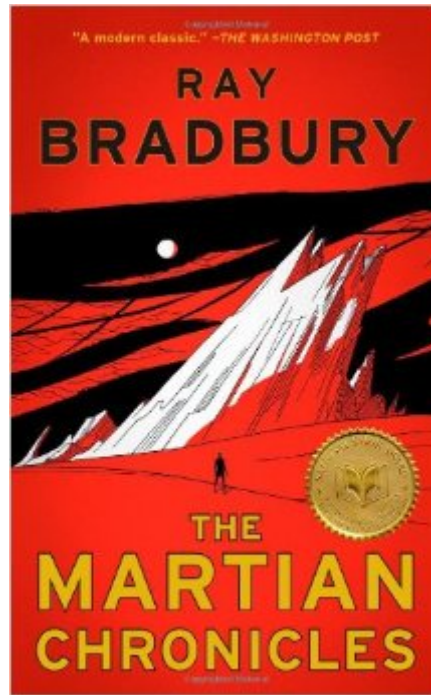


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The Martian Chronicles



Synopsis

À The Martian Chronicles, a seminal work in Ray Bradbury's career, whose extraordinary power and imagination remain undimmed by time's passage, is available from Simon & Schuster for the first time. In The Martian Chronicles, Ray Bradbury, America's preeminent storyteller, imagines a place of hope, dreams, and metaphor " of crystal pillars and fossil seas " where a fine dust settles on the great empty cities of a vanished, devastated civilization. Earthmen conquer Mars and then are conquered by it, lulled by dangerous lies of comfort and familiarity, and enchanted by the lingering glamour of an ancient, mysterious native race. In this classic work of fiction, Bradbury exposes our ambitions, weaknesses, and ignorance in a strange and breathtaking world where man does not belong.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars À À See all reviews À (805 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This book clearly deserves more than five stars. It is one of the most moving and important set of observations about our human issues ever written in either science fiction or science fantasy form. Ray Bradbury wrote these short stories in the late 1940s at a time when we knew almost nothing about Mars. Some scientists even thought there were probably canals and the remnants of a dead or dying Martian civilization on Mars. Written as science fiction originally by Mr. Bradbury, our growing knowledge of Mars makes these assumptions science fantasy today. But don't let that shift rob these stories of their power over you. But Mars was just the setting for a more serious set of questions. Mr. Bradbury was concerned that the world was too full of hate, war, short-sightedness,

and greed to amount to much. He despaired as to whether humans would survive the discovery of the atomic bomb. From this raw material of human excess, he stitched together a powerful vision of our choices -- to operate at our best . . . or our worst. He appeals to our better selves in a vivid way that will be unforgettable to you, if you are like me. The development of the book has an interesting history. Mr. Bradbury was in his late twenties, and had written quite a few short stories. While visiting New York, he showed his short stories to publishers who liked them. The publishers advised him that there was a market for novels, but not much of one for books of short stories. Then one night it hit him, he had the raw material for a novel about Mars if he simply wrote a few transition stories to fit with ones he had already written. He sat up late that night writing the book proposal, and sold it the next day. That concept became *The Martian Chronicles*. Mr. Bradbury had recently read *Winesburg, Ohio* and was impressed by that book with the potential to use a series of stories as a way to tell a community's history. It seemed natural to use that structure for his Martian book. The book covers a time period from 1999 through 2026, starting with the first manned expedition to Mars from Earth. The American astronauts do find Martians. The complications of the first four expeditions come from the interactions between humans and Martians, and are unexpected and intriguing. The stories explore the implications of a race being telepathic in very revealing ways. Much of the human colonization of Mars in the book pits those who want to recreate Earth against those who appreciate what is special about Mars. So exploitation versus conservation is one theme in the book. As a backdrop for the stories, you will read about all of the themes of the Westward migration in the United States from the eradication of the native peoples and culture, to excess exploitation of natural resources, to the desire to be free of "civilized" society. There are wonderful stories in here against racism, censorship of books (which became the basis of Mr. Bradbury's later book, *Fahrenheit 451*), and war. Towards the end of the book is a lovely sequence of three stories about the various meanings of loneliness. I particularly recommend them. The first looks at men and women seeking each other out when there is no other company. The second considers the loss of a family and how to cope with that. The third looks ruefully at the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust. The last story in *The Martian Chronicles*, "The Million-Year Picnic," causes me to shiver and moves me almost to tears every time I think about it. From that story, you will be able to answer the famous question in the book, "Who are the Martians?" By the way, the book is much better than the movie. If you think you know the story from the movie, I suggest you read the book. If you have a choice of one or the other, I definitely suggest the book. By the way, years later Mr. Bradbury reviewed this book and commented that the world had turned out much better than he had hoped. He said that would have written a different kind of book on the same subject in the 1970s,

but he still had great respect for what the young man he was in his twenties who had written The Martian Chronicles. The manned exploration of Mars is probably our greatest and most important challenge as a species. Yet, we pay little attention to the question now. I suggest that you use your reading of The Martian Chronicles to help reignite a discussion with those you know of what our goals and methods should be concerning Mars. Reach for the stars . . . to create the fullest human potential and accomplishments -- morally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

This book has been extensively altered from the original and classic Martian Chronicles. All of the dates Bradbury used in the chapter headings have been changed, rendering the Cold War/Atomic Age context of the book meaningless. One of the most important chapters "Way in the Middle of the Air", which establishes the violence and hatred endemic in the American culture which invades Mars has been completely removed from the book. An additional, inferior chapter, "The Fire Balloons" which was never part of the original book, has been put in its place. Don't buy this re-hash, find an older version and buy that.

I love The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury. It's a Five Star book however due to censorship I give it a one star. It has great short stories and make your think about things, especially for the time period it was written. It's a quick and easy read. With that said, my issue with this version is the publishers have censored it taking out one of the chapters due to racism, usage of the "N" word. I'm very much against book censorship and would want them to update it to leave the book to it's original intent or for the readers not get this version. Please look for the book in its intentional form.

The William Morrow Hardcover Edition (February 1, 1997) appears to be missing a story: " Way in the Middle of the Air "Mr. Bradbury wrote a story where all of the black people get fed up with the south, and the way they are treated, load up the rocket and leave all of the bigots behind. Incredibly some paper pushing editor must have thought this story would offend our sensitivities, and took it upon him or herself to remove it from the chronicles. Strange that the work of Mr. Bradbury, a champion of free speech, is being edited. Do not get this version! (I got hosed, but vowed to save my fellow readers from the same fate)!

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