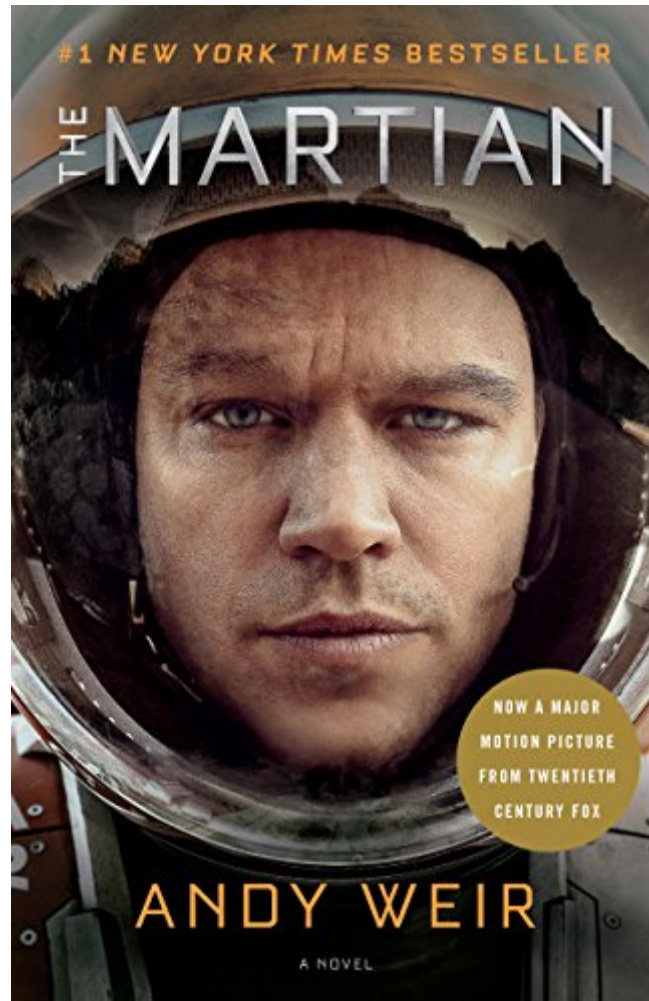




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The Martian: A Novel



Synopsis

Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive—and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive. Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills—and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit—he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

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Customer Reviews

I'm a hard-science science fiction fan and would rather read hard sc-fi than almost anything. I love stories and movies about Mars, and I'm a fan of survival, castaway, and man-against-the elements

stories. I loved Robinson Crusoe, so it should not surprise you that I loved the movie, Robinson Crusoe on Mars. I realize it's not Academy Award material, but to me, it's everything I want it to be, as was this book, The Martian. The main character, Watney, presumed dead, is accidentally left by his crew mates when an intense Martian dust storm forces them to abort their mission. What follows for part of the book is a logbook style narrative that describes in great technical detail Watney's efforts to extend his life until the next scheduled mission arrives in 4 years. After reading just the first 20% of the book (my Kindle has no page numbers) one can't help but be impressed by the author's depth of knowledge in this regard. In fact, the entire book is an astronaut's primer on extraterrestrial and deep space survival and rescue. The Martian isn't without its typos and editorial glitches, and I'm not sure if this was a result of a bad Kindle conversion or just a shortsighted editor. For me, though, typos and editing issues paled in comparison to the snowballing storyline, which I gladly admit is not for everyone. This is not a touchy-feely book about love, romance or relationships. There is no overpowering angle between characters. No good guys in white hats and bad guys in black hats. There's no room for cliches. It's all very business like and scientific. So, if you're looking for Twilight in Space. Or Fifty Shades of Mars. Or Tom Hanks making himself a friend by drawing a face on a soccer ball, you'll probably want to skip this one. This book is simply about the mission, and the cold reality of working hard to turn a wrong into a right. Another thing you won't find in this book is a lot of heartfelt reminiscing or reflection. There are no flashbacks of our main character fishing with Dad at the old water hole, or him riding his first bicycle without training wheels. This is a book about a guy with a keen intellect surviving on a hostile planet and doing so by making the most out of a given set of resources. About a third of the way through the book, the author adds third person narratives from mission control and the Hermes space craft, the latter manned by the crew that left our hero behind -- and make no mistake, hero is the operative word. Again, we don't follow our mission control cast of characters back too their respective homes and meet their wives and husbands and get served up cliché insights into their innermost thoughts. Blech! I hate those stories! Which doesn't mean these characters are cookie cutter or superficial. On the contrary, I found the characters sufficiently individuated and interesting. I highly recommend this book to people who are into reading hard sci-fi of the not-too-distant future, sci-fi without blasters and ray guns or 9' tall aliens that bleed acid. (Btw, I like those stories, too, but good ones are hard to find.) Somebody did their homework on this one -- and that's what stands out above all else.

One of the best books I've ever read -- and I read a LOT of books! It is completely and utterly gripping from the first line. You are immediately in the middle of the story, in the middle of

the action, and author Andy Weir does a SUPERB job of giving you a setting and a scene with a minimum of sentences. A freak accident causes Mark Watney's crewmates to think he had been killed, leading to him being left unconscious on Mars, while the rest of the crew leaves as scheduled. He wakes to realize that he is alone with no way to communicate with Earth or anyone. The bright note is that he has access to a Hab that is designed to last for 31 days, on a planet that no one is scheduled to return to for FOUR YEARS. In his words, he realizes the only way to survive is to "science the shit out of it." Mark has MacGuyver-like fixing and modification abilities, the ability to think out of the box and to create new ways to use things that NASA never thought of (or even actively tried to prevent!). While obviously we don't have all the technology yet that is present in this book, all of the theories and space program information and the science and technology ALL seems to be realistic, with sound reasoning behind it. Literal rocket scientists AND NASA have gone through and claimed that it could be real. While when reading any fiction book we have to make a leap of faith and believe that what we are being told is true for the purpose of getting lost in the story. When reading Harry Potter we have to believe that "Yer a Wizard, Harry!", when reading Hunger Games we have to believe that the government selects tributes to fight to the death, when reading Lee Child we have to believe that Jack Reacher just wants to mind his own business and hitchhike across the country but people always interfere. When reading The Martian, it is incredibly easy to believe that it could happen because the science is so real and accurate. Each time Mark comes with a way to rig something, or a dangerous plan to save himself, he explains it in a way that makes sense to non-science nerds. Of course, some of the time he makes mistakes because he's dealing with things that NO ONE has ever had to (neither in the world of the book nor in actual reality!). And some of those mistakes almost kill him – which makes it that much more realistic! And other things happen that are unrelated to his solutions, but just things that fail, or things that succeed beyond what he guessed. This book was incredibly suspenseful and tension-filled. The author did a fantastic job of ratcheting up and up and UP the tension level – I literally would have to put the book down and pace around to relieve the tension and anxiety that I felt for Mark Watney! And then Mark would deliver some of his sarcastic humor and a laugh would burst out of me. Mark is a very funny character anyway, but he deals with stress by making jokes and mocking himself. The phrase "page turner" is an understatement for this book – even when I reread it I cannot put it down!!

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