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The Martian



Synopsis

2015 Audie Award WINNER, Science Fiction 2015 Audie Award Finalist, Solo Narration: Male
2014 Voice Arts Award Finalist, Science Fiction

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 53 minutes

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

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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 to 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.

"I'm stranded on Mars. I have no way to communicate with Hermes or Earth. Everyone thinks I'm dead. I'm in a Hab designed to last 31 days. If the Oxygenator breaks down, I'll suffocate. If the Water Reclaimer breaks down, I'll die of thirst. If the Hab breaches, I'll just kind of explode. If none of those things happen, I'll eventually run out of food and starve to death. So yeah. I'm f---d." - Mark Watney

As the two-hundred thirty-fourth reader to review *THE MARTIAN* by Andy Weir, I have no illusion that I can add anything substantive to the plaudits already heaped on this intelligent work of space sci-fi. Simply put, it's a nail-biter that'll trim your finger nail plates down even with the nail beds. My reading tastes usually don't encompass space fiction because the vast majority of it seems to fall within the realm of extreme fantasy with worlds and ETs of the most fantastical sorts. I prefer my off-Earth stories to have some plausible connection with realistic, albeit extrapolated, technology and situations, and the one book that remains embedded in my memory as simply terrific is from all the way back in 1975 when I was much younger and perhaps more impressionable - Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama*. With films, I'm the same way; *Outland* and *Silent Running* come to mind. *THE MARTIAN* is my kind of SF. In Mars mission engineer-botanist Mark Watney we have a thinking man's hero for the ages, and *THE MARTIAN* is a story that cries out to

be serialized for television. THE MARTIAN would be ideal for a lengthy trans-ocean plane flight. If you start the book on take-off, you'll likely finish on landing and not even be aware of the hours that passed or the screaming kid a couple of rows back. You owe yourself this novel. Trust me.

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