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Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles: A Radio Dramatization



Synopsis

The people of Earth are preparing for war - a war that could potentially destroy the planet. Explorers are sent to Mars to find a new place for humans to colonize. Bradbury's Mars is 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 silently destroyed civilization. It is here the invaders have come to despoil and commercialize, to grow and to learn - first a trickle, then a torrent, rushing from a world with no future toward a promise of tomorrow. The Earthman conquers Mars... and then is conquered by it, lulled by dangerous lies of comfort and familiarity, and enchanted by the lingering glamour of an ancient, mysterious native race. The Martian Chronicles is presented here as a full-cast audio production with an original music score and thousands of sound effects by the award winning Colonial Radio Theatre on the Air. It marks their fourth collaboration with one of the most celebrated fiction writers of our time: Ray Bradbury.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 5 hours and 34 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Original recording

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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.

There are some books that defy classification -- they slip from the clenched fists of genre's restrictive grasps, and seem almost above critique. Their sums are greater and longer lasting, more impactful than their parts. They represent some of the best of what the human mind can create, and remain strangely timeless despite the fact that science or culture may surpass their literal truths. *The Martian Chronicles* is one such book. Famously referred to by author Ray Bradbury as "a book of stories pretending to be a novel", the disparate parts somehow come together to form something more than a novel. Like Tolkien's war of the ring, this story of the settlement of Mars and its aftermath transcends genre-fiction and somehow becomes more like fictional history -- or, in this case, a cautionary fable. Throughout these stories, the reader encounters themes of xenophobia, imperialism, censorship, war, and racism (though the story dealing with this most directly, "Way in the Middle of the Air", where, back on Earth, all black people decide to emigrate to Mars, is stupidly cut from many of the later editions). Although Bradbury tends to stick to these broad strokes throughout, rather than focusing on individual characters, there are also stories that chronicle the more personal struggles of violence, fear, loneliness, and isolation. Yet somehow it never manages to get mired down in its own bleak moralizing. Bradbury knows when to apply a light touch, and it never feels as if he is lecturing or proselytizing.

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