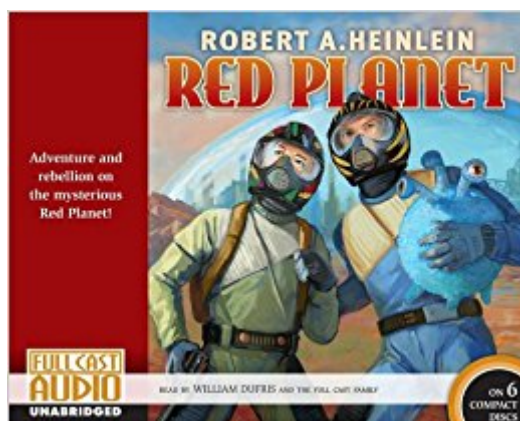


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The Red Planet



Synopsis

Jim Marlowe's Martian pet, Willis, seems like nothing more than an adorable ball of fur with an uncanny ability to imitate the human voice. But Jim's devotion to the little creature will soon lead Jim and his pal Frank into a death-defying trek across Mars. Their journey of wonders—including an encounter with the mysterious ancients of Mars—ends when they are plunged into the midst of a dangerous rebellion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Review of book: "A fascinating story of Earth-humans on Mars . . . the most thrilling and tingling kind of science fiction story by an experienced hand." --Kirkus
Review of book: "Readers young and old will enjoy this fastmoving adventure novel." --Chicago Tribune

Like many people, I go way, way back with Heinlein. My very favorite book (and one that stands out in my mind--and with much affection--to this day) is Tunnel in the Sky. I really, really wanted to go off to explore new worlds with a covered wagon and horses, like the hero does at the very end of the book. But one of the nice things about Robert Heinlein is that he's got something for everyone. One of my best friends has a different favorite: Podkayne of Mars. Go figure.

--Shelly Shapiro, Executive Editor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Absolutely one of my favourite Heinlein books. I've read almost all of Heinlein and this is one of the classics, a must read. Simpler, more linear and obvious than, say, *Stranger in a Strange Land* or *Moon is a Harsh Mistress* but one of his best juveniles and right up there w/ his best works. Additional thought: For those who've read *Podkayne*, *Stranger in a Strange Land* and any other Heinlein w/ martians featuring, this probably has the most detailed first hand descriptions of martian behavior and culture in his oeuvre. Worth picking it up just for that really.

Some of Heinlein's best work was done for a juvenile (today we would say YA) audience. These novels hold up better than most of the adult novels he would write later. Perhaps he had a good editor for these. In any case, even though the books were written in the 1950's they are still worth reading today, even for adults. *Red Planet* is the first one I read, back in the seventh grade. I gave this book and some other Heinlein juveniles to a friend's son last year.

Jim Marlowe is a resident of South Colony on Mars and he has made friends with a very peculiar and special martian called a Bouncer, his name is Willis and it's bigger than a Basketball and as furry as a stuffed animal, with little nubs for getting around and eyes that protrude like stalks. Jim's best human friend, Frank Sutton and him are now off to school on Mars and Jim wants desperately for Willis to come along with them. Thus, the adventure begins. 'Red Planet' was published in 1949 and is the third book of his 'Juvenile' series. Without giving any plot away I will say this-the first three quarters of this book is amazing, with a great adventure of Jim, Frank and Willis across the desert lands of Mars, outsmarting and chased by the Colonial Administrator and his forces. Then the last quarter of the book seemed to be about politics and a revolt, where Jim and Frank, the two boys are hardly included in the finale. This is a fine book and worth reading if your a big fan, but don't start your Heilein journey with 'Red Planet'. Again, not a bad book, just to me it lacked a satisfied ending.

I was amazed to find that the "Red Planet" I had read as a child had been heavily edited. I was excited to be able to read Heinlein's original version. I'm giving this to my grandson for his 12th birthday along with a list of Heinlein's other science fiction novels for young people. Of course, the planet Mars in the book does not correspond to what we know about Mars now, but "Red Planet" is still an exciting adventure by one of the grand masters of the Golden Age of Science Fiction. The book contains elements that will upset both Left and Right: The boys are armed, and the villains are corrupt businessmen. The end of the book has a facsimile of the editing of the original manuscript. Other newly printed Heinlein books include a section that shows how accurate Heinlein was in his

predictions.

Jim Marlowe lives with his sister and parents on Mars. Jim's life inside the colony and his Martian adventures beyond its borders are the subject of Robert Heinlein's *Red Planet*. The 1949 novel is vintage Heinlein. Characters rant about bureaucracy, regulations, and limitations on personal freedom (the unfettered right to bear arms is sacred), themes that reappear often in Heinlein's later work. Although *Red Planet* is characterized as a "juvenile"--and although I was thoroughly entertained by it when I read it as a teenager--the story retains enormous appeal for adult fans of science fiction. While lacking the complexity of Heinlein's later work, the novel showcases Heinlein's vivid imagination and his stalwart belief in the ability of individuals to meet challenges posed both by hostile environments and by muddle-headed humans. It has aged well. I would give it 4 1/2 stars if offered that option.

I'm not sure that this is still a great book for kids, but as a 1950s kid, I had a great time rereading it. The Mars portrayed in this book is based on information available in the 1940s. Everyone agreed Mars had ice caps and a pair of moons, but given the telescopes of that time, nothing else was certain. Many astronomers thought they could see seasonal changes that might be due to plant growth. One authority, Percival Lowell, thought he could see a network of canals, and he described a dying planet, inhabited by an ancient race of intelligent beings. Heinlein bases his world on a combination of the speculations but pays meticulous attention to what was actually known. For example, his plot is synchronized to the rising and setting of the two moons. He imagines a Martain race that is still fascinating, and in Willis, the hero's Martain companion, he creates an unforgettable character, better than "ET." It was a great Mars. Too bad it never existed!

This is one of Heinlein's great juvenile science fiction stories. It showcases the world view that people are in charge of their own fates. Basically the story is about a group of pioneering colonists on Mars refusing to accept the decisions of absentee executives on their lives and taking action to insure their own free future.

After I had read all the Trixie Belden mysteries currently available, I was in the second grade, I found this book. From that moment on, I read everything I could find by Heinlein. I sampled other science-fiction books and found many of them to my liking but none ever had the impact of this book. It's fun, great characters, amazing stories. You just have to overlook the fact that our planet

Mars is not the planet Mars in the story. Great read for all ages.

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