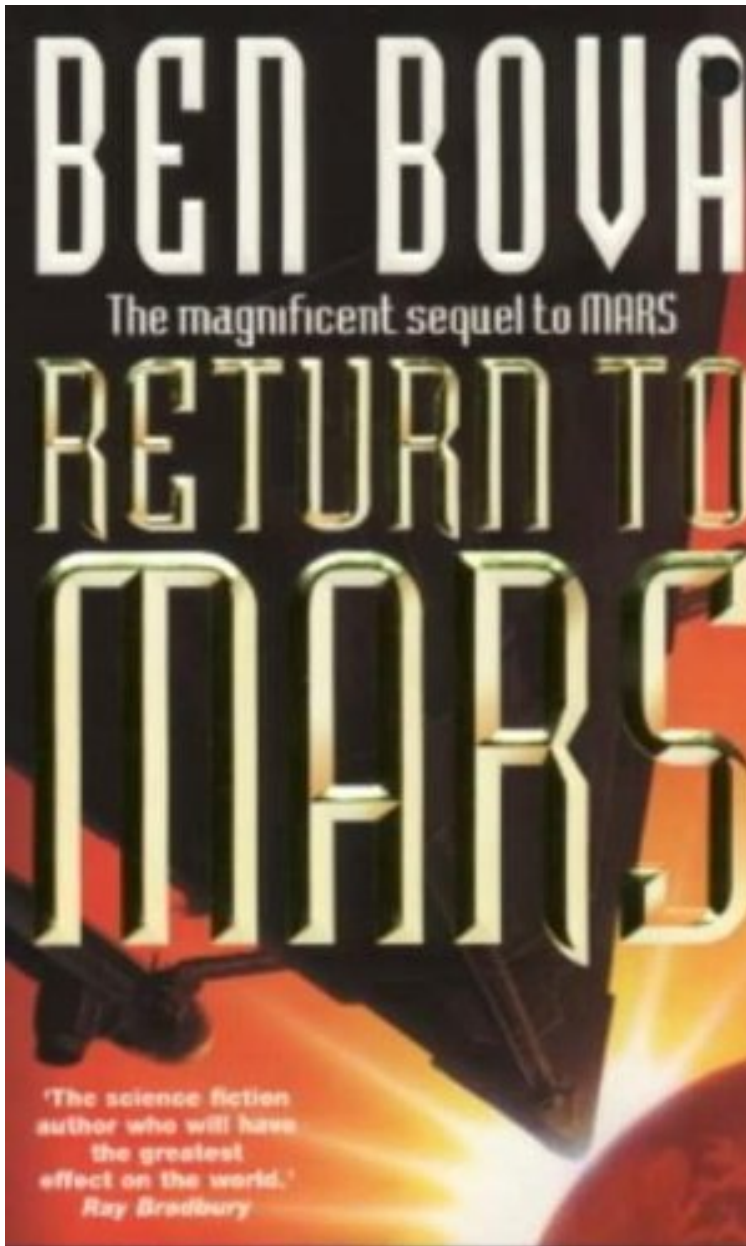


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Return to Mars (English Edition)



Par Ben Bova
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAn epic space novel by the acclaimed science-fiction writer, this is the story his readers have been waiting for...Published in 1992, MARS was the story of the thrilling first manned journey to the mysterious planet which has fascinated astronomers since the dawn of time. Arthur C. Clarke called it 'a splendid book'; it was a bestseller throughout the world.Now, in RETURN TO MARS, a carefully picked international crew of astronauts, engineers and scientists is on its way back. Leading them is Jamie Waterman, the man who defied the accepted wisdom of the scientific community - and the direct orders of

his superiors - to discover life on the planet. But there are those who still resent his success; others who have their own reasons to ensure that Waterman, with his almost mystic idealism, does not make the final decisions about Second Mars Expedition. And among the crew is someone whose mental instability could lead to catastrophe for them all.

In Ben Bova's 1992 bestselling book *Mars*, geologist Jamie Waterman and his crewmates discovered the existence of primitive lichen on the floor of the great Martian canyon known as the Valles Marineris. In *Return to Mars*, Waterman is headed back to the Red Planet, this time in charge of an expedition that hopes not only to study Martian life but also to prove that exploring Mars can be profitable. Waterman also wants to revisit a part of the canyon where he thought he spotted a primitive cliff dwelling during the first Martian mission. The second voyage to Mars runs into trouble right away, however, as Waterman clashes with Dex Trumball, the son of a billionaire who's backing the expedition. Dex wants to turn Mars into a tourist attraction, while Waterman wants to preserve the planet for scientific research. Both men are also attracted to the expedition's beautiful psychologist, Vijay Shekhar, who can't seem to decide which of the two she likes best. As if that weren't enough, one of the Mars team may be trying to sabotage the mission, while back home the elder Trumball is pulling strings in order to force Waterman to step down as the expedition's leader. Like Jamie Waterman, Bova takes on a lot of responsibility in this second Mars book. He's trying to create a complex story that relies equally on science, characterization, and politics, mixed in with a healthy dose of mystery and a dash of thriller. As usual, Bova nails the science but fares less well--though by no means poorly--with his characters. He pulls off the politics with confidence, but the thriller subplot seems forced. Finally, the mysteries (there are several) all succeed reasonably well, though some are more compelling than others. The whole makes up a thoroughly enjoyable novel both about what life might be like on an expedition to Mars and what Martian life might be like. It's a better book than its predecessor, and it can be read entirely on its own thanks to Bova's carefully interwoven details about the back story that took place in Mars. --Craig E. Engler

From Publishers Weekly

The sequel to Bova's popular *Mars* (1992) returns Navajo Jamie Waterman to the Red Planet as the mission director in tenuous command of a crew of scientists and astronauts jockeying for political power, romantic liaisons and scientific renown. And as anonymous journal entries also indicate, one of the explorers is seriously deranged. Waterman's chief rival on the mission is C. Dexter Trumball, the heir of the man who substantially funded the flight. Trumball has promised his wealthy father that the mission will make money, and he is determined to win his father's love and respect, even if it means turning Mars into a tourist attraction. For ideological reasons, Waterman is equally bent on keeping Mars free of tourists, especially his beloved "cliff dwellings" Aa nearly inaccessible structural anomaly that he believes will prove there was once intelligent life on the planet. Waterman must struggle to find the Navajo way of negotiating the crew's various desires and manias. He must also contend with the powers-that-be back on Earth to ensure that scientific concerns continue to supersede crass commercial interests. Bova makes the speculative hard science aspects of this novel vivid and appealing. His characters, however, are less enchanting, and the inclusion of a saboteur seems like overkill, since the environment he describes is more than capable of destroying anyone for simple carelessness. The novel ends with plenty of room for a sequel to pick up and continue the saga. (June) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.