

The Martian

Ch. 1-3

Discussion Question 1

How was Mark Watney injured when the Ares 3 was rushing to the MAV for take-off? Why did the crew leave him behind?

Discussion Question 2

What calculations does Mark make about his food? What food was provided to the crew and what plan does he have for supplementing his food supply?

Discussion Question 3

What does Mark need more than drinking water for himself? What is Mark's unusual plan to make more water? Why is it dangerous?

Vocabulary

ion, argon, reactant, sandblasted, copious, toxicity, tertiary, redundancy, prolifically, annihilates
ingress

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Ch. 4-6

Discussion Question 1

Describe the process that Mark devises to make more water. What goes wrong with his plans?

Discussion Question 2

What is Mindy Park's title at NASA and what is she responsible for? What surprises her about the images she sees from Ares 3? What does she discover about Mark Watney?

Discussion Question 3

Why doesn't Teddy want the Ares 3 crew told that Mark is still alive? Why does Teddy dread telling Mark's parents that he's still alive?

Vocabulary

exothermic fluctuation, empirical, probes, satellites, swaggering, simultaneously

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Ch. 7-9

Discussion Question 1

What is a MAV and what is a MDV? What is a RTG and why does Mark want to retrieve the RTG that the crew left behind? What was it buried?

Discussion Question 2

What did the psychologist who tested the Ares 3 crew have to say about Mark and his ability to survive? Why does she mention that the medical supplies includes a large dose of morphine?

Discussion Question 3

What historic significance does Mark recognize about his situation? What is the Pathfinder and Sojourner and why was it important that Mark found them?

Vocabulary

proactive, blight, plutonium, isotope, radioactive, deftly, orbital, trajectories, commemorative, discernible, centrifuge

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Ch. 10-12

Discussion Question 1

Why does Mark decide to communicate using ASCII code? What plan does Jack Trevor come up with to improve communications with Mark?

Discussion Question 2

What instructions did Commander Lewis give the crew when she went to look for Mark? What danger did the storm hold for the MAV and what would have been the repercussions?

Discussion Question 3

How far away is the next scheduled mission to Mars? What does NASA plan to send to Mark to keep him alive? How did the crew find out that Mark was alive?

Vocabulary

atmospheric, telemetry, panorama, bandwidth, hallucinogenic, undulated, cacophony, proximity

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Ch. 12-15

Discussion Question 1

What are the signs that Mark has become a celebrity? How does NASA plan for Mark to get from Ares 3 to Ares 4? How far away is Ares 4 from Ares 3?

Discussion Question 2

While Mark is still in the Hab, what happens when there is a sandstorm at Ares 3? What are the dangers of leaks after the incident and how does he fix them?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Mark have to spell out messages in rocks? How long will the trip with the pre-supply take to get to Mars? How long will it take the JPL crew to make the probe?

Vocabulary

micromanage, schlep, propagated, binary, anticlimactic, astrodynamacist, makeshift, jettisoned

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Ch. 16-18

Discussion Question 1

Why doesn't NASA know about the Chinese booster? What advantage do the Chinese see in helping the U.S. rescue Mark? What do they want out of it?

Discussion Question 2

What is Rich Purnell's job at NASA? What is his plan for rescuing Mark? Why does Teddy Sanders opt to go with Iris 2 instead?

Discussion Question 3

How does the Ares 3 crew find out about Rich Purnell's plan? What risks for the crew are inherent in Purnell's plan? How do they defy NASA?

Vocabulary

pulverized, connotation, redundant, inertia, tenacious, counterintuitive, depressurized, consumption

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Ch. 19-21

Discussion Question 1

Why does Mark have last minute conflicts about leaving the Hab? What does Mark plan to eat for “special occasions” on the road? What will he eat otherwise?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the modifications that Mark has to make to the rover? What photo does Mindy show Venk and what new job does he give her?

Discussion Question 3

What bad news does the NASA meteorologist have about Mark’s trip to Ares 4? What dangers do sandstorms present to Mark and his effort to get to Ares 4 on time?

Vocabulary

abject, theoretically, ballast, homage, dissipation, imagery

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Ch. 22-24

Discussion Question 1

What three sources of navigation does Mark use on his journey? What is unique about the terrain of Mars and what must Mark look out for and avoid?

Discussion Question 2

Why doesn't Mark know he's in a sandstorm? How does he finally discover that he is? Describe the process he uses to figure out the shape, size and direction of the sandstorm.

Discussion Question 3

What causes Mark to have an accident when he drives down the slope into the Schiaparelli crater? How does he recover and survive? What compels him to keep going?

Vocabulary

panorama, symmetry, ambient, furl, interplanetary, voyeur, ominous, conical

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Ch. 25-26

Discussion Question 1

After Mark arrives at the MAV, what instructions does NASA send him? Why must Mark “gut” the MAV after arriving at Ares 4?

Discussion Question 2

What roles do Martinez and Beck play in Mark’s rescue? Why does Commander Lewis direct Vogel to make a small bomb? What common substance does he use to make it?

Discussion Question 3

How much time is remaining when Beck calls out that he has “contact” with Watney and is bringing him in? What is the velocity when Watney is pulled in?

Vocabulary

copious, pristine, velocity, improvising, latency, vector, conflagration