

Martian Frontiers

By Nicholas Leva & Jonah Bender



Introduction

In a future where corporate sponsorship fuels space exploration and a space station has been established half way between Earth and Mars, *Martian Frontiers* offers a thrilling glimpse into humanity's first crewed journey to Mars. Led by Commander Calvin Callow, this gripping story intertwines scientific discovery with great adventure, showcasing the complexities of human relationships and the challenges posed by our inherent human weaknesses.

Join the Starship crew as they navigate deep space, facing both the wonders and perils of the final frontier. Welcome to *Martian Frontiers* by Nicholas Leva and Jonah Bender —where the promise of discovery meets the future realities of deep space travel.

Bruce Callow

Calgary Alberta

April 204

Chapter One

Mars Mission Sponsorship

NASA has run short of funds and now uses corporate sponsors to finance its missions.

A base on the Moon has already been established sponsored by Cheetos (PepsiCo).

Cheetos flashes spotlights from the Moon beamed to Earth with popular ads saying “Best Snacks In The Universe.”

Cheetos and Oreo Cookies (Mondelez International) competed to get the sponsorship contract for the Mars mission and fought in courts for months but in the end Cheetos (PepsiCo) won the contract. The value of the contract was more than 2.2 billion dollars.

The proposed date of the launch is December 21, 2042 and the spaceship is an updated version of SpaceX’s Starship. The planned duration of the mission is two years.



Chapter Two

Meet The Crew

“Hello and welcome to the 2042 Mars launch briefing with the five astronauts, Calvin Callow, Chloe Callow, Camila Dilullo, Randal Randoon and Mei Nakumura. We’ll announce the astronauts at 7pm Eastern time. Tune in to meet the astronauts who will compete in something that has never been accomplished before.”

At 7pm the announcement was made of the five astronauts making up the crew.

“We are proud to officially present the five astronauts that will make up the first crewed mission to Mars.”

“Please welcome Calvin Callow, Commander/Pilot from Houston, USA. He is 32 years old and is brave, responsible and somewhat impatient. Calvin studied at Caltech. 32 year old Co-pilot Chloe Callow is the 1st Officer and is from Vancouver, Canada. She is neat and wise and studied at M.I.T. Science Officer Camila Dilullo is a 39 year old botanist and chef from Italy. She's calm and courageous and studied at Stanford University. Chief Engineer Randal Randoon is from Perth, Australia and studied at the University of Iceland. Randal has a very creative mind and has wanted to travel to Mars since he was very young. Medical Officer/Psychologist/Trainer Mei Nakumura is from Tokyo, Japan and likes sewing and knitting and she works very well under pressure.”

Chapter Three

From the Inside

Here we are live on NASA TV in the starship that might change everyone's life on Earth. If this mission is successful it will prove humans will be able to live on other planets in our solar system. This spacecraft has been designed to withstand extreme asteroid impacts and other space hazards. It will make a stop on the way to Mars at the new space station called the Mars Way Station (MWS).

A year before the mission the MWS was constructed and stationed half way between the moon and Mars. This allows our spaceships to carry out their missions twice as fast. This also allows our ships to leave and return from missions more efficiently and with less weight and expense. Up to ten astronauts can be aboard the MWS and the starship at the same time. The number of astronauts on the MWS and starship was limited for safety and efficiency.

Chapter Four

Show Time

“Welcome to the March 22, 2043 rocket launch. This is the most unique rocket launch ever with the new sponsorships and the MWS halfway point station. This might be revolutionary because if successful, all trips to Mars will be significantly shorter.”

“10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1!!!” And there we go.... We’ll see you in two years. This doesn’t feel real after all the time anticipating this launch. I’m not sure if my body is shaking from the power of the launch or just with excitement. Perhaps, it's a little bit of both.

“Whooooooo! Yeah! We're in space, this is so cool!”, said Calvin.
“The ride has been so smooth but I'm still trembling,” Chloe stammered.

“What are we going to do first? There are so many options,” said Randal.

Mei replied, “This feels weird and awesome at the same time.”

“I’ll get straight to planting the garden and making the meals,” yelled Camila.

But they didn’t know yet the struggles that would lie ahead.

Chapter Five

Staring into Space

“Three hours till landing!” shouted Calvin.

“Get yourselves ready because we’ll be living on Mars for a while,” Chloe called out.

“Food’s ready. It’s bad enough. Don’t let it get cold,” said Camila.

“Give me a minute!” shouted a few members of the crew.

Everyone besides Chloe responded. They found her at the table staring into space.

“Hello Chloe,” said Calvin.

No response.

“HeeeeiIIIIIIIIlooooo!”

No Response

“DO YOU SEE ANY MARTIANS OUT THERE?????!!”

“What?” Chloe distractedly replied.

“Yeah hello.”

“Hi,” said Chloe.

Chloe responded, “I have this strange feeling that things are going to get challenging.”

“Get in your space suits, 30 minutes inbound to Mars.”

The landing took place without incident near the Gale crater. Life on Mars is so different from Earth. The colors, the sounds, the sensations. It’s out of this world. Normally you wouldn’t think about that and it’s a big change from living on Earth.

The first crewed mission to Mars achieved its objectives by sending astronauts to explore the Martian surface, study rocks, and search for running water and plant life. Scientists back on Earth analyzed data sent by the astronauts to learn more about Mars. This mission also inspired people all over the world, especially kids, who dreamed of becoming astronauts themselves one day. To make sure the astronauts stayed safe on their long journey, scientists developed special equipment and programs to protect them from things like muscle atrophy and feeling lonely in space.



Chapter Six

Problems

Two weeks after departing from Mars, Randal started having problems with Co-captain Chloe Callow. But he knew he could not tell Captain Calvin Callow because Calvin would get angry at him for holding a grudge against Calvin's wife. You did not want to mess with Calvin. Life on a long space mission is so hard,

especially with Chloe. Randal enjoyed drawing creative art such as dragons and castles, but Randal's favorite of all was drawing space images. In fact he had made thousands of drawings on what he thought Mars would look like.

“Hey Randal,” said Mei. “I have been having problems with Chloe.” Randal almost could not believe his ears, this coming from Mei, the captain of calm. “Me too,” Randal replied calmly. “Should we do something?” asked Mei. “I don’t know, I have been trying to wait it out but I think something has to be done.” Randal said.

“But isn't Calvin going to be on Chloe’s side?” asked Mei.

“Exactly,” agreed Randal. “Maybe if we get the majority of the crew to sign a petition?”

“That sounds like a great idea.” agreed Mei.



Chapter Seven

The Petition

“All done,” said Randal. “Time to see what the others think.” They approached Camila.

“I must agree,” Camila sighed as she signed the petition. “Okay, it is a date,” Mei huddled with the two other conspirators. “Tonight we will talk to Calvin.

“Then back to studying water and life samples,” Randal replied.

Later that night.....

“So how was everyone’s day?” asked Calvin.

“Umm... about that,” said Randal.

“Yeah Calvin, um we wanted to talk to you,” Mei said nervously.

Mei only hoped that Calvin would do something and by looking at Randall and Camila’s expressions that they were thinking the same thing.

“What? Anything, we are family now.” said Calvin. Camila slowly slid the petition over to Calvin. “Can we eat yet!” demanded Chloe.

“In a second, sweetie,” said Calvin.

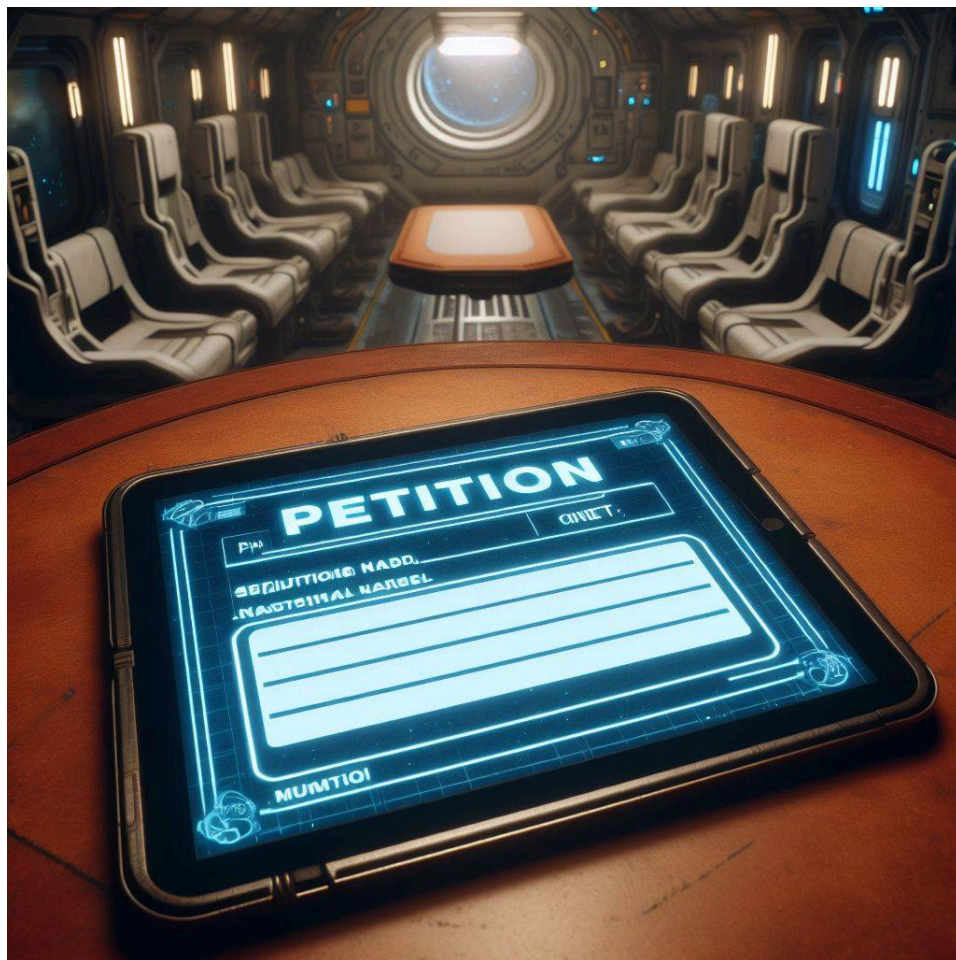
“What does that say?” Chloe asked.

“Oh dear” Calvin said as he read the petition, “May I talk to you?” he gestured to Chloe.

“Yeah sure, whatever,” said Chloe as she walked into the other room.

“Chloe, it has come to my attention that you have been rude to the other crewmates,” Calvin frowned.

Suddenly Chloe broke into sobs. "I am so sorry," she cried emotionally. "I just want to get off the ship, I hate it up here." "It's okay," Calvin promised. "How about you relax in your bunk." Calvin walked back into the dining room and gave everyone a thumbs up gesture. "All good." Everyone continued eating their meals, unaware of what had just occurred in the other room.



Chapter Eight

Flight back and MWS Visit

“Bring, Bring!” sounded the alarm.

“Oh come on,” groaned the entire crew in unison.

“Okay” said Calvin, already wide awake. “Let's hit the gym, followed by a thorough breakfast, then back to the gym.”

“Why do we always have to work out?” moaned Choe who was still half asleep.

“Yes,” agreed Mei. “We get 3 hours of sleep, there is terrible packaged food, and we have to work out 8 hours a day.”

“Now guys,” said Calvin reassuringly. “We all know the sacrifices we must make in order to accomplish something like this.”

“I want to see my family,” whined Randall.

“That's enough, we are going to the gym,” said Calvin.

“Beeeeep, beeeeeep, beep” sang mission control.

“Oh it's NASA,” said Calvin and ran to answer.

Three minutes later Calvin returned.

“Good news everyone.” Calvin said with a big smile.

“Let me guess,” groaned Chloe. “Three extra hours at the gym.”

“No,” said Calvin. “Tomorrow we will reach the MWS.”

The next day everyone woke up with a little jump and excitement.

“We're here, come on, we only have 12 hours,” sang Calvin.

You see, the MWS was not as good as home and not much fun at all, but it was an improvement to the starship.

“Time to go,” said Calvin.

“Aw man,” said Randall,” I was finally able to sleep normally, eat and drink normal food, and I got to move around a bit more.”

Chloe stuffed one more handful of fried rice in her mouth before returning to the fully charged starship now packed with food, drinks, and everyone got a new oxygen supply.

“Off we go,” said Calvin, “Now let's hit the gym.

Everyone groaned again.



Chapter Nine

Dramatic Return Home

The mission to Mars had gone well but on the landing back on Earth the parachute jammed and everybody was surprised and panicked. At this point surviving was a long shot. But Randal did not care, he felt as if his mission in life had been completed. Camila for the first time in her life felt scared, and she could see in Chloe's eyes she thought the same thing. Chloe was panicked, when she got back to Earth she and Calvin were expected to have kids and live a normal life. Although being in space before having a kid is probably not the best idea, she would love to have a child.

Calvin was full of hope, he knew he could do this. So far in his life he had gone on the most expensive spaceship, and was the first human to set foot on Mars. He could still remember planting the U.S flag on the surface of Mars, taking test samples for life and water, and of course the sensation of touching the soil on Mars for the first time. He felt an amazing chill that he'd never felt before and at this point Calvin thought that almost anything is possible.

Mei was determined, she knew she had to put every ounce of her strength to survive, and she would do just that.

The crew decided to attempt to make a parachute from leftover scraps of the ship because today they would be landing. "Hurry!" Calvin screamed although everyone was in the same room as him. "We are entering the atmosphere in 2 minutes!"

“Got it,” Mei said. Mei was very relieved she had built a parachute out of scraps. She was determined to live to fight and fly another day.

“We have entered the atmosphere,” Calvin screamed. “Releasing engines.”

“Yes!” exclaimed Randal. He had gotten it, now he would make it out of here.

“1 minute until we must jump,” said Calvin, sweat rolled down his cheek as he furiously worked on his parachute.

“Thank goodness,” said Chloe. As she finished her parachute.

“30 seconds to go,” screamed Calvin.

“I got it now,” said Camila as she hoisted up her parachute.

“Done,” said Calvin. “get ready to jump.” As they stood over the crashing rocket they all held hands. It had only been two years, but it felt like everyone here was family.

“Open the door,” said Calvin.

“On it,” said Mei as she opened the ten feet long, 9 feet wide door.

“5” said Calvin. Mei could hear her own heartbeat.

“4” said Calvin. Chloe swallowed one more time, possibly the last.

“3 ,2,” said Calvin. Randall took one more breath.

“1,” said Calvin, his voice raising. Calvin was excited. He knew that he was crazy for wanting to jump into the Long Island Sound, but this was when he was at his best, when the stakes were highest.

“Jump,” screamed Calvin. They all released each other's hands. The fall was only about 5 seconds but to Randall it felt like an eternity. So many emotions went through him. Hopelessness,

hope, excitement, depression, nausea, and then hopelessness again.

“Weeeeeee” thought Chloe, this is the best roller coaster ever. This was awesome. Mia was feeling better than ever, as they approached the ground she could see millions of people, but the ones that stood out were her family, watching in horror. She wished she could scream to them that she was ok, but they were too far away. Camila was scared out of her mind “I’m going to die, I’m going to die,” she thought repeatedly. Calvin thought of nothing, he just held on tight.

BOOM crashed the ship into the Atlantic where ships were already leaving the harbor to bring the wreckage to shore..

“Oww man,” said Chloe as she landed in the Long Island Sound. “That ride was so fun.” Then suddenly relief flushed over her, she had done it and she had gone to Mars. Mia was so close she could practically touch the Long Island Sound. SPLASH as Mei rose from the water and spit out the water, she immediately started swimming towards shore. However, Calvin was not so lucky. He landed on a belly flop and if it wasn't for the parachute he could have gotten really hurt. Camila, ironically, was the last to hit the Long Island Sound.

When the group reached the shore, they said goodbye to each other and parted ways. Except for Calvin and Chloe, who were expecting a baby soon. This would be a moment in history forever remembered. Maybe in 1,000 years there will be civilizations on Mars. Maybe even one day we will grow plants and trees on Mars. However it ends. It all started here.

The End

