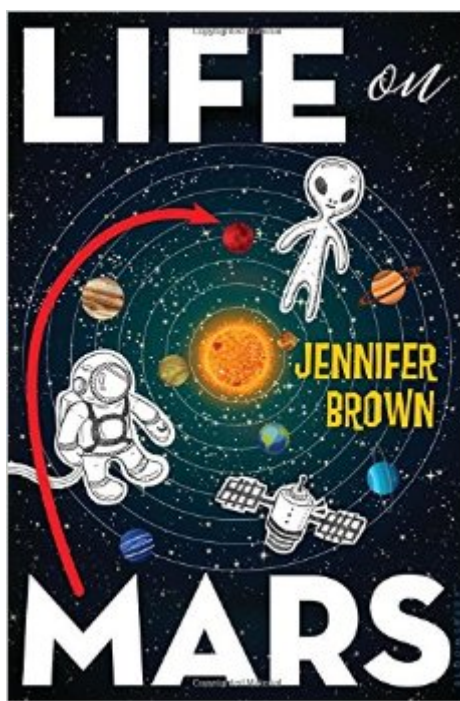


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# Life On Mars



## Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Arcturus Betelgeuse Chambers comes from a family of stargazers and his quest to find life on other planets is unstoppable. But when Arty's family announces they're moving to Las Vegas, the City of Lights threatens to put an end to his stargazing dreams forever—especially when he has to stay with his scary next door neighbor while his parents look for a house. As it turns out, "Mr. Death" isn't terrifying at all—he's actually Cash Maddox, a bonafide astronaut! But when Cash falls ill, will Arty find the courage to complete his mission by himself? And might he actually prove, once and for all, that there is life on Mars? For fans of Frank Cottrell Boyce's *Cosmic* and Jack Gantos's *Dead End in Norvelt* comes a heartwarming story of true friendship—earthly or otherwise.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury USA Childrens (August 5, 2014)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #187,878 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #118 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving](#) #635 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents](#) #2997 in [Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

## Customer Reviews

Brown delivers a fun, informative book that is also heartwarming and poignant. It is especially appealing to boys, with its bodily function humor and its disdain for shallow teenage "girliness". Brown maintains a perfect dichotomy between boyhood humor of zombies eating faces off and dealing with the loss of friends. Young teens are treated to a book that is chockfull of information on outer space, Mars, and stars, but all the while keeping it light and fun. Making learning fun is what makes this book excellent. Doing that, while teaching us something deeper about our humanity and our resolve, makes this book exceptional.

Jennifer Brown's first book for middle-graders! Such a wonderful book, I read it in one day. First, don't let the title or cover fool you this isn't science fiction; no, Ms. Brown brings us what she does best, realistic fiction. This is about a boy who loves space, astronomy and to be specific, Mars. It's a story of friendship, all different kinds. A story of moving, of life's dreams, of family sacrifices for the sake of family. A story of death and birth. There are so many layers to this story that it is very deep when looking back upon it, but Brown has kept the story light and funny with just slight touches of pathos. A lot of issues are touched upon briefly in the story, but it isn't a book about issues; it is a story of friendship and one summer of big change in the life of a boy who is growing up and turning the corner that leaves childhood behind. A sequel has come out recently and I'm looking forward to reading it.

Artey Betelgeuse is obsessed with space. His family always has been. His father is an astronomer and everyone in his family is named after stars. Artey is even determined to contact Mars through light by signaling them nightly for the past two years. But his life gets turned upside down when his father loses his job and the family must move to Las Vegas. This is like death to an astronomer. The bright lights would ruin any view of the stars. Another wrench gets thrown into the works when he is thrust on a crabby old neighbor next door whom Artey is convinced is a zombie or alien. But when Artey finds out his neighbor's secret, Artey finds a friend, mentor, and lifeline. This book was touching in a surprising way. When I think of a science obsessed kid's book, I don't often think of a book with such heart. While I am not entirely convinced the author was able to inhabit the voice of Artey - especially when reading the 'Fun Facts About Mars' - I enjoyed the book. I think it is the perfect addition to a school library. Boys and girls would love the characters in this book. I can see a lot of applications when using the book in the classroom - Astronomy, Mars, space, Morse Code, Samuel Morse himself, etc. with the obvious application being to build your own HUEY (Artey's transmitter to Mars) and/or testing it out. I would love to see what students come up with!

\*\*\*\*Spoiler alert!\*\*\*\*This review is from my eight year old daughter:Arty is a guy that loves space, but he's moving to Vegas! (Good spoiler): This is a very funny book until his friend dies. I thought it was really sad that his friend dies, and it was a really good book until then. \*\*\*\*Four stars for space.

I enjoyed this story and the multiple themes running through the story. I suspected early on what Trip was mysteriously doing and was not surprised that it worked for him.

Perfectly suited to my third grade son. He reads something from each page out loud to me, laughing. That's pretty much all I'm looking for. Very creative and enjoyable.

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