



## Red Planet Blues

*Robert J. Sawyer*

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## **Red Planet Blues** Robert J. Sawyer

Narrator Alex Lomax, the only private eye on Mars, tracks guilty among failed prospectors, corrupt cops, and rich *transfers* who upload their minds into immortal android bodies. Clues and a journal lead to murders of Simon Weingarten and Denny O'Reilly, founders of the Great Martian Fossil Rush, and their treasure. Expanded "Identity Theft".

## **Red Planet Blues Details**

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Author : Robert J. Sawyer

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Genre : Science Fiction, Mystery, Fiction, Noir, Audiobook

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## From Reader Review Red Planet Blues for online ebook

### Ryandake says

i wish Goodreads had a star for "i liked it, but...".

this book is a gentle satire of noir, sf, and all things covered in red dust. it is stuffed full of atrocious puns--real groaners--that you just have to laugh at, else you'd toss the book into the nearest incinerator. it also has a zillion interesting and wonderful ideas, many thoughts on identity, interplanetary travel, and frontier life. it's well-plotted and the characters, if not particularly deep (it is satire), are at least consistent in themselves. full of twists, backstabbing, double- and triple-crosses, it should have been an unmitigated delight, in a campy, lightweight way.

but.

it's the women.

there are a couple of good villainesses and women are not at all portrayed in stereotypically weak and fluttery ways.

but every woman in the book is assessed for attractiveness to the protagonist, generally beginning below her neck and ending above her navel. oh! the breasts! one poor barmaid in the book is not even permitted a shirt. one lady villain is caught having just dumped all her clothes to get in the shower, and the scene plays out with the wisecracking protag commenting endlessly on her body, and how hard it is to aim your weapon when your gun just wants those breasts, breasts, breasts. the protag ends up doing about half the women in the book... etc etc etc. you get the picture.

sf, will you PLEASE GROW UP!!!!!! you are my favorite genre because you show me not what life is, but what life could be, and i love you for that. but this sort of egregious male-gaze sexism shit is like the gnarly old relation who just wants you to sit on his lap while he paws you uncomfortably and breathes whiskey across your cheek.

it's disgusting, ok? how many times must it be said? HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO GET TO THE FUTURE IF YOU INSIST ON LIVING IN THE PAST?

sigh. another potential keeper into the sell-to-the-used-bookstore pile. and sorry, Sawyer, but that's the last of yours i'll ever buy.

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### P.A. Baines says

I really, really wanted to like this book. The premise was intriguing and the idea of combining an old-school detective story with sci-fi sounded like fun. Sadly, I was reminded why it is I don't read much sci-fi. There were a few laughs, but not enough to keep my interest. By the end, I felt as if I had just wasted a week. A very disappointing effort from an award-winning novelist. I was expecting a lot more.

What I liked:

- The humour was terrific in places, helped by the laconic drawl of the narrator who captured the mood perfectly. I laughed out loud a couple of times.

- The premise intrigued me, which is why I bought the book.

What I didn't like:

- The writing was generally good, but the author almost exclusively resorted to swearing to depict emotion. Anger and frustration were shown by a swear or blaspheme. This started to annoy me after a while because this doesn't work. The author might as well have a character say: "I'm really upset right now. Feel empathy for me."
- There was almost no pacing at all. It was like being on a roller coaster that only goes downhill. The initial excitement was soon replaced by a sense of tedium.
- The characters were not drawn out enough. Too many names were thrown about and I soon lost track because there was no attention to detail. All the women were supermodel clones. While this stays true to the P.I. theme, it soon lost its humorous impact and became dull.
- There was no tension in the action scenes. It was like listening to a series of stage instructions. "He moved to the piano. She fell to the floor. The blonde reached for the gun and took aim..." I lost interest.
- A major problem for me was the handling of "transfers" which gives people a perfect body and virtual immortality. This is described as being little more than an advantage for fossil-hunting!! The author missed the mark here. This is a major plot point treated as an aside. If he wanted to incorporate something as desirable as immortality, he should have included some serious disadvantages, otherwise it just does not ring true.

Overall:

I was very disappointed. Judging from the other reviews, most people really like this book. I just didn't enjoy it at all. Some of the jokes were great, but the book as whole did not work for me.

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## David says

Classic Science Fiction with a touch of a private eye novel slammed together--- filled with clever Science Fiction ideas (Why do people want to go to Mars? For the fossils, of course... None of this mining for minerals-- but ancient Martian fauna fossils are worth megabucks on Earth) People transferring to new robotic bodies that don't need to breathe or eat, but have superhuman strength! The big red dome...

On top of that-- enough dead bodies to fill a Humphrey Bogart movie... a Private Eye (the only one on Mars) who constantly tips an imaginary hat, has connections everywhere... Clever at quips and gags... A semi-adversarial relationship with the local desk sergeant.. A machine that shuts down robotic bodies, thereby ending the hope of eternity... Enough chicks and romantic entanglements..

The first part of this novel was obviously a novella, as our hero solves a complex murder mystery and then watches it lead to a number of killings, etc.

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## Lianne Burwell says

I managed to get a hold of one of the ARCs of Red Planet Blues that were handed out at the World Fantasy Convention in Toronto this year (part of the big bag-o-books that every attendee received), and had to read it

almost immediately.

Robert Sawyer is pretty much \*the\* name in Canadian SF these days. Red Planet Blues (originally titled The Great Martian Fossil Race) takes a previously published story (Identity Theft) as the first quarter of the book, and then continues the story.

The story in question is set on Mars (duh), and follows an amoral private eye named Alex Lomax on the mean streets of Mars, where almost everyone is hunting for fossils of ancient martian life. The motherlode would be the Alpha Site, discovered by a pair of explorers decades ago, which holds the largest, most complete fossils seen.

In the original story, a gorgeous woman walks into his office, asking him to find her missing husband. Her husband runs the NewYou franchise, which lets people transfer their minds into perfect android bodies (which is why she is drop-dead gorgeous). He quickly finds her husband, who has managed to find a way of committing suicide, even if he is an almost indestructible android.

Of course, nothing is ever so simple. It also ties back to a scientist who has found the Alpha Site, and who is pretty much the only person who doesn't want to get rich off of it. And in the extension, you throw in a writer from Earth, a punk kid, the grand-daughter of one of the two men who found the alpha site and has his diary of clues, the sexy waitress, the man who got filthy rich buying and selling fossils, the scientist, and others. There is also the truth of what happened to the two explorers (neither died for the expected reasons). In fact, by the end things got so complicated that I was really having trouble keeping things straight.

There's also a lot of consideration of souls. If you transfer your mind to an android body (your flesh body is destroyed immediately), what about your soul? What happens if your body is transferred to more than one android body? Which one is 'real'?

While this isn't my favorite of Mr. Sawyer's books, especially with the spaghetti strands of plot at the end, I still found it an enjoyable read, and I look forward to reading his next book.

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## **Nikita says**

I just won this book in a Goodreads giveaway. I'm quite excited and will hopefully receive the book in a few weeks.

I'm actually a huge fan of Robert J. Sawyer. Several years ago, I switched from reading mostly fantasy, to mostly Science Fiction. Part of that reason was Robert J. Sawyer. I ended up picking up Illegal Alien and I was hooked immediately. After finishing it, I went out and found as many of his books as I could. Since then, I've been trying to find more and more Sci-Fi that questions the universe in a similar way.

I can't wait to start reading this book and plan on adding to my review once I finish it.

So, I'm a few chapters in, and I'm pretty sure I've read the original novella this book started out as. Fortunately, it was long enough ago, that although the books is familiar when I read it, it's still foggy enough, that I don't really remember everything. That and the book expands on the novella, so I'm looking forward to reading the new parts.

Finished. Overall, an enjoyable book. It was definitely more mystery than SF and not the typical read for a Sawyer novel. I much prefer his speculative fiction though. I want to read a book that asks questions about

god and fate and humanity and this book was seriously lacking in that aspect. Take out Mars and the transfers and we have an ordinary detective story.

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### **[Name Redacted] says**

A fun, solid sci-fi detective novel set in a future in which fossils have been discovered on Mars and human consciousnesses can be transplanted into immortal machines. It feels a bit cluttered and haphazard, what with the fusion of classic noir, Canadian gold rush, paleontology and Asimovian sci-fi elements, but that odd, incongruous melange is also what makes it so engaging. The protagonist is definitely not a GOOD man, but he's got a sense of honor and obligation to his clients which makes him worth following throughout the story.

This is my second Robert J. Sawyer novel in as many weeks, and I think I'm picking up on a few constants which take me out of his stories. This man LOVES paleontology (which I can respect), but is also a passionate proponent of his native Canada (which gets a bit silly). I enjoy his novels, but we'll see how long I can stand his repeated contentions that Canada is (and will be!) far more important and influential than it really is... It's one thing to love your homeland and sing its praises, but there's such a thing as going too far.

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### **Mona says**

#### **Silly Parody of a Detective Noir, Except it Takes Place on Mars**

This seems to be a (partially) tongue-in-cheek sendup of the classic noir detective novel, like *The Big Sleep*.

Except that it takes place on Mars, so there are some (equally uninspiring) SF elements. Like people transferring to bionic bodies to live forever. Yawn. Nothing new here.

Some of this is mildly funny...

People are competing to find a cache of valuable Martian fossils. The women are all drop dead gorgeous. The men are all macho dorks. Lots of shooting and chasing ensue. Yawn again.

There are some updates to let us know it's a little more contemporary. For example, some of the characters are gay or bisexual. There is also a cursory attempt at some ethnic diversity, with an Indian woman as one of the main characters.

The main character is a typical hard-boiled womanizing private eye named Alex Lomax. There is the usual assortment of corrupt and indifferent cops, cheesy villains, computer geek geniuses, etc. etc. Everything is so predictable. I'll bet this will be (or has been) a B grade Hollywood movie.

I suppose this might be ok for light beach reading. I did need a break from all the heavy stuff I've been reading lately and I got it.

I really much prefer Sawyer's WWW series. That doesn't blow me away either, but it's better than this.

Wasn't wild about Christian Rummel's audio reading either.

If you need some mindless beach reading, this could work. Otherwise, pass on it.

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## Jennifer says

*Red Planet Blues* was entertaining enough, and a quick read, but it never really excelled at anything, and therefore never came to life for me. It also didn't end up being enough of a rip-roaring fun space adventure to make me overlook its mediocrity and enjoy the ride. In the end, it felt like a long string of action scenes that weren't keeping my attention, and I just wanted to finish the book and move on to something else. I think that *Red Planet Blues* might make an entertaining B-movie, but in general, I wouldn't recommend it.

The book tried to be a throwback to 1920s noir private investigator books/movies, but it fell flat. It wasn't as fun or exciting as those books/movies that it was trying to emulate, and the 1920s PI bent just ended up doing like an excuse to have big-boobed attractive women, camp and overly-convenient character appearances and plot twists. It also provided opportunities for the author to make old movie and music references in a self-satisfied manner.

People laud Robert Sawyer for his hard science fiction, and I appreciated the scientific believability of his setting and story, but I wasn't overly impressed by his knowledge or imagination about the future. Any space enthusiast would be aware of Mars's reduced gravity and diminished atmosphere (or could Google it or look it up on Wikipedia), and by extrapolation should understand, at least after the first explanation in the story, about some of the effects Sawyer feels the need to describe repeatedly.

The third thing that *Red Planet Blues* fails to excel at is raising complex, thought-provoking questions about what it means to be human in a time when the ability to transfer human minds into virtually indestructible bodies. While the issues are in *Red Planet Blues*, they're superficial, and the inclusion of androids is used more to make ridiculous fights, returns from the dead, and plot coincidences more plausible.

P.S. The author's bio makes him sound full-of-himself. I hope that his editor wanted him to make it like that, or that he was stuck in CV-writing mode, not that he just likes bragging about himself.

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## Cathy says

This was a shockingly bad book. It didn't work on any level and I'm really appalled that his editors let it go out like this. The story is super weak, it read like bad fanfic, and the level of sexism in this book is simply off the charts.

Look, I admit it didn't start off good for me. This guy is so full of himself, he had me completely irritated before I even started the book. As usual, he went on and on about all of the awards he's won in his acknowledgements and in his bio at the end of the book. The bio is two pages of patting himself on the back because he's "just plain powerful." Robert Silverberg has a Nebula, a couple of Hugos, is a SFWA Grand Master, but he doesn't go on and on about it in every book. Most terrific authors let their work speak for itself, or at least have a sense of humor about listing their accolades. This guy comes off as such a prick (sorry, but he does!) every time that I want to throw the book across the room without reading it. I really almost just returned it unread because he seemed so unlikable. But I honestly put that aside before I started the book because I've liked several of his other books, including his WWW series, which is really quite good. And about a very empowered teenage girl, by the way. So what the heck happened???

The first thing the character does is, "let his eyes rove up and down her body." I get that he's making a point that everyone who can transfers (into perfect android bodies), but really? This sent my eyebrow up, it seemed inappropriate, but I shrugged, it was only the first page. If this was the way the author wanted to set his noir tone, with the rough PI in his office ogling his new client, it seemed very cliché, but OK, I thought. Maybe I was just being little sensitive to this because he mentioned Mike Resnick in his intro and he was at the center of the current SFWA controversy over sexism in that organization. And then on page 15 he was at it again. "What I wanted to see was under that beige suit..." Her husband is missing and she's your client and you're wondering what's under her suit? What a pig. Page 24, both waitresses were topless - why? What did being topless waitresses add to the story except lewdness? Page 102, the minor character's wife answers the door, has been transferred to a new body with big breasts, and wants to test out her, "It's like I'm a virgin again," body. They did acrobatics that put Earth-based p-orn stars to shame with the handles mounted on the ceiling over the bed. Then she disappears from the book after he listens in on a call from her hubby and goes off to intercept him. Because Lomax figured he shouldn't question him in the same place where he just banged his wife. Was this book written by a teenage boy? What was the point of the p-orno sex? Is this book being marketed to teenage boys?

And why would using the word gonsel in the way that Hammett used it in the Maltese Falcon, implying that he's gay, be a terrible insult? This author has no idea how consistently insulting he is in every way when it comes to sexuality.

Then, the absolutely most insulting thing of all, the writer in residence isn't a mousy guy, it's a gorgeous, statuesque woman with flawless chestnut skin, sexy brown eyes, and lovely breasts, of course. So she wasn't "remotely writerly". Seriously?!? Beautiful women aren't "writerly?" What do writers look like? Writers must look like unattractive men to be taken seriously? This is the center of every problem the SFWA controversy was calling attention to. Add this man to the list of men who at his core apparently doesn't think women are real writers. It's right here in black and white. Because he knows what writers look like.

One more example, near the end a woman comes running toward them and her large breasts were bouncing delightfully - how does that add to the moment of anxiety of them being at the mercy of being at gunpoint and not knowing if the people rushing toward them are friend or foe? Were her bouncing breasts really an important part of that scene description?

This is the most sexist writer I've ever encountered, it's like he was trying to illustrate every problem the recent SFWA blow-up was debating. Except he wasn't doing it ironically (and this came out well before the blow-up), he just is that deeply prejudiced and sexist and doesn't even realize it. I am not normally sensitive to these things. I don't go into books looking to see if the women have substantial roles independent from the men or if they're being sexualized, but when it hits me over the head like a ton of bricks over and over again, starting on page one and continuing throughout the book, it's just ridiculous. If the author can't describe any women in the book in any scene without telling me how big her breasts are or if her cleavage is showing them off nicely, there's a problem. That this book could be published by a major author in 2013 and not 1953 is just appalling.

OK, focusing more on the actual story, I really just didn't get the premise. He was trying to do this "noir" mystery in the future on Mars, but he didn't set up any reason for why this old fashioned tone makes sense. This is the future, full of advanced technology on another planet, so why does an old-fashioned guy using old lingo work? You have to have a premise other than implying that it's because the name of the town is New Klondike and this is like a new version of the gold rush. OK, fine, I get your analogy, but the people are still in the future. Was there a reason old slang became popular? He never gave a set-up. The whole tone just felt false, not charming to me. And the story was just haphazard and shallow. It wasn't at all what I expected from him. Usually he has cool ideas that I can grasp onto, really think about. He'll annoy me with his preaching about little things throughout other books, using his platform for little rants about his political positions (many of which I agree with), but only because he doesn't do a good job of working them into the

story, they feel more like blogs or op-eds than natural parts of the story. But I admire him for doing it, for having strong points of view and for wanting to get them across. Where was all of that in this book? There wasn't any heart to the story there, must less additional rants or platforms. The idea of self when it comes to the transfers and androids was barely considered, very shallowly handled, and has been covered so extensively by other authors that he didn't add anything at all to the discussion. And that was the only concept that he intended to insert into the book. The sexism issue was clearly unintentional, though I think it's the true legacy of this book.

And what was with tipping his nonexistent hat so many times? Once, twice, three times is cute. Eight times by one-third of the way through the book is affected and obnoxious. Did anyone edit this book for him? Is his just "so powerful" according to his own bio that no one will call him out on anything? Clearly he didn't have any women beta test the book for him, but come on, did no one think that was annoying after the eighth time?

I know you'll think it's because I started out annoyed with him, but I was actually prepared to like the story, I've always liked his books before. I certainly didn't expect the sexism at all. I was impressed that he wrote such a great teenage girl character for his WWW series, I liked Flashforward and don't remember having any concerns about the balance between male and female characters. And not only that, but this book felt quite amateur, like he didn't put any effort into it. It felt like someone copying what Asimov did in Caves of Steel way back in 1954. Timothy Zahn did a great job in his Quadrail series without the gimmicky attempt to be old-fashioned, he makes me feel like the books are set far in the future while maintaining a cool classic noir mystery feel to the tales. Or if you want to read a really great mystery about people transferring minds and that actually got into the implications of it, read Richard Morgan's Altered Carbon. This just felt awkward and lacking depth. It felt like really shallow fanfic, to be honest. Clearly I'm not having a hard time being honest here. But it is hard. I don't give many bad reviews, I don't recall ever giving one this specifically harsh. It's not fun. This isn't one of those snarky reviews where the writer has fun writing and posting it. I'm disappointed. I kept reading the book because I was sure I must be missing something, that he would pull it together for me and that something would happen that would make it all make more sense. But it didn't. He was very consistent this time out. Unfortunately, it was consistently bad.

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## Allen Adams says

<http://www.themaineedge.com/buzz/mars...>

There's a wonderful Raymond Chandler-meets-Ray Bradbury vibe that permeates "Red Planet Blues." Sawyer's Mars is as realistically realized as his settings always are; no one creates a plausible near-future quite like he does. There's a richness of detail – particularly in the descriptions of New Klondike – that is particularly engaging. From the shady dive bars to the spaceships to the sweeping Martian plains, Sawyer paints a vivid picture.

It's a genre mash-up that might have felt gimmicky in less capable hands; however, with Sawyer at the helm, it succeeds beautifully. A hard-boiled noir detective on Mars – the sort of character a guy like Sawyer was born to write.

"Red Planet Blues" is a fine example of what makes Sawyer such an enjoyable read. Alex Lomax is the good-naturedly tarnished soul of the story while the scientific detail that marks Sawyer's work is undeniably present. That science might not be as prominently front and center as it has been in some of his previous works, but the balance being struck here is just right.

## **Kurt Springs says**

This review was first published on Kurt's Frontier.

Synopsis:

Alex Lomax is the only private eye on Mars. A fan of old private eye films, he tracks the guilty among Mars's inhabitants: failed prospectors, corrupt cops, and rich transfers. People with enough money can transfer their conscious minds into an immortal, android bodies. This is an age where anything can be replicated. Much that was once valuable is now worthless. Then Simon Weingarten and Denny O'Reilly began the Great Mars Fossil Rush. Their site has been lost for decades.

Alex is a biological: someone who has not gone the android route. He fled Earth to escape justice. When a transfer client comes to his office looking for her husband, he finds for himself just how far some people will go to locate Weingarten and O'Reilly's Alpha site or protect its secrets.

Review:

Robert J. Sawyer has written a science fiction detective novel in the same vein as *The Maltese Falcon* or *The Big Sleep*. The action is suspenseful, and some of the concepts are interesting. The background is based on some of the theories of Mars's past. It once had liquid water and an atmosphere to support it. It may once have been home to primitive life. Evolution on Mars came to an end billions of years ago. What if fossils of that life remained? What would they be worth to researchers and collectors?

What if a mind could be copied onto computer chips? Would the android be the same person as the original? Then add in the fact that the body is destroyed afterward.

The background is interesting on the technical and scientific level. However, like many detective noir stories, the characters are formulaic and two-dimensional. This can either make the story boring or make it fun. There is suspense, where anything can be waiting around the corner. There is action. While it was hard to get into, the story proved to be a fun read.

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## **Sooz says**

i am a big Sawyer fan. let's get that straight right from the get-go. he is my guilty pleasure .... you know how some people say they can't eat just one chip? well i can never just read a page or two -or even a chapter- if i have a Sawyer novel on the go it's an all-out binge reading session until i have consumed the wh000000le thing.

given how many sci-fi novels he has written, it was definitely time for him to shake it up a bit, so i thought it was smart of him to take on the noir gumshoe detective genre. his previous books all have very unique ideas and plot, but the delivery is very very similar .... so yeah, it was smart of him to shake things up. AND, i suspect he had a lot of fun doing so. the *Red Planet Blues* author's pic shows him in a dark stairwell wearing a fedora and casting an even darker shadow on the wall behind him. very noir.

the main character Alex is a little shady, and while he may not exactly a womanizer, he is close enough to

remind me of the original detectives of the genre and the little nods to the genre and references to old movies are definitely fun to read.

so there's the 'pro' side. on the other hand, the plot itself relies on a lot of twists and turns and coincidences that result in holes or -at the very least- thin spots in the plot.

and there are none of the philosophical discussions, and exploration of ideas that are so much a part of his other novels. i get why. that doesn't belong in this story ... and i just said i admired his choice to do something different with Red Planet Blues.

i think of WAKE WATCH WONDER (still think that is the most clever title ever for this trilogy) and how much i learned .... not just about the 'neuro pathways' of the internet and the possibility of the much-talked-about singularity, but about Autism, about zero sum game theory, the Monty Hall dilemma and the moral arrow evolution theory. i LOVE his social commentary and philosophical debates ... so while i get why they couldn't be part of a noir detective story, their absence leaves me feeling a little dissatisfied with this novel.

zero sum game theory ... one side's win is directly related to another's loss.

can't win them all.

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## **Wanda says**

A very enjoyable read. Please see my review at my blog, The Next Fifty, at:

<http://wanda-thenextfifty.blogspot.ca...>

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## **Vincent Stoessel says**

I totally get it. It's a mashup of 2 genres I love, Noir detective and Science Fiction... on Mars!  
I had every expectation that I was going to love this book. Maybe they were a bit too high, dreams of a Martian Blade Runner type of experience perhaps but this was definitely not the case. As a pure crime/detective thriller it barely holds itself together. By the end I was forcing myself to suspend disbelief just so I could get to the end. As a SciFI novel it does OK. I won't give out spoilers about what the Mars of tomorrow is like but I'll just say: Meh. I like Robert J. Sawyer but this one kind of left me for dead on the cold Martial sand.

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## **Banner says**

Bottom line, this is a solid average work for Sawyer. Don't mean that as an insult, just an informed opinion. I recommend this as a fun, quick read; however, you will not find the depth and characterization that we come to expect from Mr Sawyer. This reads a little bit like a average Larry Niven story.

A common theme is present, consciousness. The ideas presented are interesting, but they are not as integral as I would have liked.

The "gumshoe" aspect of the character was charming. Imagine Philip Marlowe on Mars.

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## Ernest says

**Red Planet Blues:** Take equal parts Raymond Chandler's noir detective novels, Robert Service's poetry of the Yukon gold rush, and Philip K. Dick's **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep**, add a generous splash of **The Road to Utopia**, shake it all up in Rob Sawyer's noggin and chill in the Yukon for a few months. Decant onto pulp paper, and knock the concoction back like cold Sarsaparilla in a dirty glass.

I'll have a full review of Red Planet Blues in SFRevu's April issue (<http://www.sfrevu.com/php/Review-id.p...>) in a few days, but the bottom line is that while I suppose this was fun for Rob to write, if you're looking for slapstick noir comedy set more or less on Mars, it's only OK.

The problem for me is that there's really nothing Martian about it. It's clearly a cross between the Klondike and Treasure of the Sierra Madre, but putting a falling down prospecting town under a dome doesn't add much to it.

Really, the story is more about uploading into android bodies than anything else, and there's no real there, there.

It's a read, but the author has done much better work, like the WWW trilogy, or those books about Neanderthals, or (my favorites) The Quintaglio Ascension.

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## Letya says

Új kedvencet avattam!

Egy igazi noir hangulatú marsi krimi, ami a története mellett a humorával emeli a színvonalat. Egyszer?en beszippantja az olvasót és lehetetlen letenni a könyvet, hiszen minden egyes cselekmény egy másik eseményt indít el. A kezdeti megbízást nyomozónk egy-kett?re elvégzi, azonban az eredmény újabb kérdéseket vet fel és ez így megy a regény végéig. Ezért is izgalmas, hiszen mindig változik egy kicsit a szituáció és nem ununk bele. A csavaroknál viszont néha kicsit túl van kombinálva, így kb. a háromnegyedénél egy csöppnyi csalódás ért. De a folytatás kárpótolt érte.

A búra alatti város, a fosszíliaások és az áthelyezettek egy igazán érdekes történet épít?elemei.

Magánnyomozónk ironikus humora pedig egyedülálló.

Aki szereti a sci-fit és a krimi, annak kit?n? választás ez a regény.

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## Michelle says

I was so excited when I got my advanced proof of this book in the mail, courtesy of a goodreads firstreads giveaway, I took a picture of it and posted it on Facebook. Unfortunately my excitement didn't last long after I started reading it. I admit that it took me somewhere between 150 and 200 pages to finally realize I was approaching the book all wrong. I'm in the middle of Orson Scott Card's Ender's Saga, and this is a very

different type of science fiction. Basically it's like Dirk Gently on Mars, but not as clever as a Douglas Adams book.

I've read quite a few of Sawyer's novels, and he has a very simple writing style in terms of sentence structure and--necessary science jargon notwithstanding--vocabulary. His characters are equally uncomplicated, which is a mild way of saying they often feel to me like hollow stereotypes. What saves Sawyer's stories for me has always been his speculative ideas: what if everybody in the world simultaneously experienced a few minutes of their own future (Flashforward)? What if the Internet became sentient (WWW trilogy)? What if we could visit a parallel universe where Neanderthals survived instead of Homo Sapiens (Neanderthal Parallax)? The speculative idea in this book was: what if the discovery of fossils on Mars led to a gold-rush-type scenario? In comparison, this idea just didn't cut the mustard with me. Sure, people could also transfer their consciousnesses into android bodies, but that's a pretty well-used idea. Sawyer probably knows this, so he didn't really bother exploring the implications of it here.

Instead we get a story about a bumbling private detective who gets mixed up in the lives of people trying to find a long-sought-after fossil deposit. I don't read P.I. novels, so I really don't know how Alex Lomax stacks up as a main character in that genre. He thinks he's a wit, even though his jokes consist mainly of cheesy-dad puns lame enough to make a seven-year-old roll his eyes. He kind of just fumbles around, sleeping with hot women and getting other people killed. Maybe that's a "gumshoe" genre convention too, I don't know.

The plot is actually a series of three plots in the sense that the story seems to be wrapping up twice before it actually does. The first time this happens is due to the fact that the first ten chapters of this book were originally a novella called Identity Theft. The second one happens when the main plot seems to have climaxed, but there is actually more to come.

To be perfectly honest, I found this book to be a series of silly antics and repetitive gunpoint stand-offs that had difficulty keeping my attention. Aside from Rory--who was endearing despite being somewhat of a stereotype--I really didn't care about the characters and what happened to them.

If you read purely for entertainment purposes and enjoy non-serious private detective novels, you might enjoy Red Planet Blues. I like to read books that make me think a little, and this one just didn't. So for me, it was disappointing.

*This review can also be found here:* <http://bit.ly/Z2ifRw>

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## **Paola says**

This book was great! It was like a Western/Noir/Science Fiction crossover, which might seem like too much but it worked out pretty good.

I've read "Flashforward" before, and I didn't really like it (I thought it started dragging for too long), so I was scared that this book might turn out the same. Clearly, it didn't, and I stayed up till midnight reading.

Stylewise, you can really tell where the original novella ends and the book begins. It's almost as if the novella is the original and the rest of the book is the sequel. That's not really a bad thing, it's just something that I noticed. But I loved the classic first person private eye style, Sawyer did this REALLY well. The whole book is packed with one-liners, bad jokes, and a hard-boiled tone of a noir film. Oh, and ancient space dinosaurs! how can you go wrong with that??

If I had any complains about it, it would be that the ending felt too complicated. Unnecessarily complicated. I know it was supposed to be these action sequences and that everything makes sense if you go back and read it, but it still felt like it could have been smoother.  
Overall, great book and a fun read.

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### **Bryan Schmidt says**

Solid mix of noir and SF with captivating narrative voice and setting. An excellent read.

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