

Destiny

Humans had not evolved to live beyond the Earth but a consortium of wealthy tech entrepreneurs believed it was humanity's destiny—to create colonies in space (not on the Moon, boring, but on Mars.) Destiny must be fulfilled and the entrepreneurs had money.

Getting colonists to Mars held imposing problems, including lengthy exposure to solar radiation. It was a one-way journey. Return rockets could not be built on Mars. When colonists arrived, after a year's journey, they would find the Mars atmosphere toxic, the planet in a deep freeze, swept by withering winds. Yet the colonists were determined to go. Some called it destiny, some ego. Some said what's the difference.

Destiny in this instance took ten years to recruit colonists, train them, build and finally launch the interplanetary spaceship. There were forty colonists at first, living in tents built to withstand windstorms and hold in breathable air. A year later, two hundred colonists, living in buildings. Two years later, a protective clear dome covered the buildings. Of course, to venture outside, they had to wear cumbersome suits.

Mars was dead. There was nothing to explore, no minerals worth mining. Colonists often spent hours playing video games, the most popular being outer space shooters, destroying aliens. Colonists came to believe their destiny was galactic high scores.

Turns out, destiny is what you decide.