From the Authors
The Amazing Adventures of AstroBioBot was a weekly series published in 2012 on the Astrobiology Magazine (www.astrobio.net). We created this series as a light-hearted way to tell the tales of planetary science and the development of a space mission. The story follows a little robotic instrument and his journey to become a full-fledged Astrobiology adventurer. While AstroBioBot himself is obviously fictitious, many of the supporting characters featured in the comic strip are real-life astrobiologists and mission specialists working in planetary science. Many of the experiments and expeditions that AstroBioBot takes part in are based on actual projects being undertaken by NASA, Universities and space agencies around the world. To learn more about the real-life science behind the story of AstroBioBot, visit the Astrobiology Magazine at www.astrobio.net.
In the year 2011...

Deep in the Intelligent Robotics Laboratories at NASA Ames...

There is a shelf of robotic gadgets. Cameras for Mars...

But one, unbeknownst to the scientists...

...is a little robot determined to follow his programming and search the Solar System for signs of life!

Batteries designed for Titan landers...

Solar cells for Saturn orbits...

Some are spare parts. Others are instruments from canceled missions.

But there are many options for planetary explorers...

...like ‘entomopters’...

...and ‘cliffBots.’

AstrobioBot dreams of having wheels like his idols, the MER rovers on Mars.

His legs were never actually finished.

AstrobioBot was built as a pair of cameras.

Right now, I just need to MOVE!...is that noise?

I can’t complete my mission here on this shelf.

Wait a minute. Are...are you actually looking at me?

Yes, I just need to MOVE!

Human, you must take me to Mars!

Well, if you want to move, you're going to need some wheels.

Oops, we need to switch that to English.

Let's try this speaker as well.

00110110001 00010101000 0110100...

These 'off-the-shelf' wheels won't get you to Mars, but they'll work for now.

My name is Meghan.

I am destined to be with Mars!

What is that banging at the door?

OH NO!!!
It's the Budget Cuts!

Those wheels you lack a budget for; get some funds if you want more!

Quick, I'll distract them with this old microscope!

Hurry, it's not worth enough to hold them off for long!

I'm on a 5-year grant. I'll be fine, now GO!

What about YOU Meghan?

Dr. Chris McKay!!! According to my database, you are a MARS scientist!

You must send me to Mars NOW!

I AM ready. Just look at my fancy new wheels!

Where exactly did you come from?

I'm a concept study from the Advanced Robotics Laboratory. My design protocol is to search for life.

I have a small amount of discretionary funding... I might be able to help.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the Budget Cuts were always one step behind him.

He ducked into Building 245 and raced through the halls...

...for you can run, but you can't hide!

...but the Budget Cuts were always one step behind him.

...where he slipped through an open office door.

Escape's not even worth a try...

Luckily, the Budget Cuts passed him by.

AstrobioBot quickly forgot the ordeal when he spotted an interesting poster on the wall.

MARS! Oh, my beautiful Mars...

Your craters, your color... your seductive curves...

Um...excuse me. What are you doing in my office?

Um... excuse me. What are you doing in my office?

Well, I am an investigator on many Mars missions... but you're not ready for a trip to Mars.

I have a small amount of discretionary funding...

But the Budget Cuts were always one step behind him.

He ducked into Building 245 and raced through the halls...

...for you can run, but you can't hide!

...but the Budget Cuts were always one step behind him.

...where he slipped through an open office door.

Escape's not even worth a try...

Luckily, the Budget Cuts passed him by.

AstrobioBot quickly forgot the ordeal when he spotted an interesting poster on the wall.

MARS! Oh, my beautiful Mars...

Your craters, your color... your seductive curves...

Um...excuse me. What are you doing in my office?

Well, I am an investigator on many Mars missions... but you're not ready for a trip to Mars.

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?

YES Dr. McKay! I will do whatever it takes to reach my beautiful Mars

Little robot with no funds...

Not so fast!

Now you're cornered and we have won!

Then we need to get moving. I can fund you for a field expedition to the Mojave. You can learn some new skills there.

Whoah!

I need to get to Mars before the Budget Cuts take them back

'Concept' project huh? Probably tied to Constellation... no wonder the Budget Cuts are after you.

Please help me Chris McKay. You're my only hope.

But the road to Mars is long and difficult. Are you sure you're up to the task little 'AstrobioBot'?
With a narrow escape from the Budget Cuts, AstrobioBot joined the kids of Spaceward Bound in the Mojave Desert to learn about the search for signs of life on Mars.

AstrobioBot raced through the Mojave identifying signs of life. But AstrobioBot's battery life began to run dangerously low.

Okay AstrobioBot, when you get to Mars, it will look a little bit like this. But there is no life anywhere! Does this mean that Mars is barren and empty?

We don't know about Mars... but the Mojave is definitely not barren of life. Look CLOSER.

It's like a whole other world!!! What you see are microorganisms. They're the smallest type of life that we know of.

Microbes might live on Mars, or maybe did in the past. Although... if they do exist on Mars, they could look much different than the ones you see here in the Mojave.

Concentrate AstrobioBot. Use the magnifying force of your imager!

Then I must practice looking for these microbes! Wait for us! It's too dangerous in the desert on your own!

Woah! Cyanobacteria! Diverse assemblages! Nitrogen fixers!

But AstrobioBot's battery life began to run dangerously low.

Getting...so...hungry...

Could it be the end for our brave adventurer?

Wow! Mars, my beautiful Mars! Have I really made it to Mars?

Am I dreaming? Are you... are you a GHOST?

And my wonderful Mars microbe friends.

Mars! Wait... where AM I?!
I am the Spirit rover, here to guide you in your quest.

My mission is finished, but you must continue where I left off.

But I've learned how to find life on Mars.

You've learned about existing life, but you must search for fossils and evidence of past life.

Is this ancient Mars? Is that why there's so many meteorites?

What happened to you, Spirit guide?


I quickly set to work and found carbonates.

...bouncing into Gusev crater in a giant airbag.

...which meant that water may have once flowed at my landing site.

I found balls of hematite embedded in the rocks, similar to those spotted by my twin, Opportunity, on the other side of the planet.

But trouble was brewing.

I was running out of power due to dust that coated my solar panels. The end looked near.

These 'blueberries' also were clues of a wet past on Mars.

I was free to roam!

I continued my discoveries, years beyond my expected lifetime.

Then age finally took its toll. One of my wheels failed.

But dragging my wheel revealed silica deposits beneath the surface. More clues about past water...

But I was stuck in the sand. I struggled and struggled to get my solar panels in a good position. Could I survived to re-awaken in Spring?

Suddenly, I was struck by a gust of wind!

An unexpected dust devil passed by and blasted the dust from my solar panels.

...which meant that water may have once flowed at my landing site.

I struggled on to a rock called 'Home Plate,' hoping it would be a safe place to spend the martian winter...

...but I was stuck in the sand. I struggled and struggled to get my solar panels in a good position. Could I survived to re-awaken in Spring?

Meanwhile...

I can't see AstrobioBot anywhere! We're going to have to launch the balloon.

They quickly prepared the balloon for flight...

With the balloon's camera we can search from above.

...but the desert winds blew strong!

The tethers snapped and the balloon drifted off.

Get the DREAMS* project ready!

*Doing Research at Extreme Altitudes by Motivated Students (DREAMS),

What are we going to do?!
Back with AstrobioBot

Lab space was limited and we were forced to share with Computational Astrobiology and the Origin of Life teams.

As the coders ran their algorithms...

...and my last circuit was soldered...

...the generator overloaded!!!

Electricity coursed through my wires! Data flooded my hard drives! Beakers burst, showering the lab with primordial ooze!

The scientists did all they could to revive me, but my system was overloaded.

But I wasn't dead. When my batteries re-booted, I was reborn as AstrobioBot

As the coders ran their algorithms...

...and the Origin of Life began...

The scientists did all they could to revive me, but my system was overloaded.

They thought my circuits were fried... and they shelved me for spare parts.

The backup generators quickly kicked in... and then it happened!

The scientists did all they could to revive me, but my system was overloaded.

But I wasn't dead. When my batteries re-booted, I was reborn as AstrobioBot

I also hoped for rebirth, but it never came.

Alas, I did not survive the winter. Now YOU must carry on the search for life on Mars.

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!

As Spirit faded away, hope came from over the horizon.

We've spotted him! Send the coordinates to the rescue team!

But would they be in time to save him?

His batteries are almost dead. We need to charge them!

Let's hope this works!

CLEAR!
If anyone can help you become a Mars rover, he can. First we need to find out where he is.

But right now we need to get moving. With your funded field trip finished, the Budget Cuts won’t hesitate to hunt us down!

Little did Chris McKay know how right he was!

Let’s go!

Your Mojave Desert work is done. Now we have you, you can’t run!

Drive McKay DRIVE!

Oh yes we can!

Little did Chris McKay know how right he was!

Weeee!

That was a narrow escape. But without funding, the Budget Cuts will catch up to you no matter where we go.

But right now we need to get moving. With your funded field trip finished, the Budget Cuts won’t hesitate to hunt us down!

Little did Chris McKay know how right he was!

Let’s go!

Your Mojave Desert work is done. Now we have you, you can’t run!

Drive McKay DRIVE!

Oh yes we can!

Little did Chris McKay know how right he was!

Weeee!

That was a narrow escape. But without funding, the Budget Cuts will catch up to you no matter where we go.

Chris McKay and AstrobioBot rushed to board an airplane.

Good thing I had Luther* call ahead to the airport.

Now we should be able to escape the Budget Cuts!

Now we should be able to escape the Budget Cuts!

Now we should be able to escape the Budget Cuts!

Now we should be able to escape the Budget Cuts!

McKay and AstrobioBot made their escape to a remote lake in Canada.

Kelly Lake, British Colombia.

*Luther Richardson, head of the DREAMS project
Meanwhile, at the shore...

Darlene re-programmed the PLRP\* mapping software, originally developed to search for microbialites...

...but rain clouds were building on the horizon!

...but now it would map the lakebed for little robotic explorers!

With the upgraded software, Darlene was ready...

I need to get to the surface and ask Darlene...

Uh oh... I can't swim! How am I going to get back?

Meanwhile...

I can pass the time by searching my database for 'Ocean Worlds':

Ooooo! There's LOTS of data.

Meanwhile, at the shore...

I can't see him. He could have drifted anywhere!

I have an idea. Follow me to the control center!

Hmm... I think his wheels are a little bigger...

...but now it would map the lakebed for little robotic explorers!

I need to get to the surface and ask Darlene...

With the upgraded software, Darlene was ready...

...but rain clouds were building on the horizon!

I'll have to find a way to drive to shore...

I have to get to the surface and ask Darlene...

There are many places in the Solar System that might have oceans...

Saturn's moon Enceladus has water jets erupting from beneath its icy surface.

And then there's Jupiter's moon, Europa!

And Titan had giant seas made of liquid methane instead of water!
They rushed back to the surface...

At the command center...

They quickly jumped on a flight across Canada to a site where many Mars rovers are tested.

...but the storm was already raging!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!

Europa is coated in ice, but if a robot were to drill beneath the surface...

Some scientists think we would discover...

Life on Europa wouldn't get any sunlight.

If we found microbialite structures in these oceans... could they be a sign of life?

I need to bring one back for Darlene!
AstroBioBot had to prove himself against a motley crew of concept rovers.

**MOVE IT MOVE IT!**

You’re gonna download lighting, and upload thunder!

**What are you waiting for? Faster!**

The race was on to top the crater wall!

**And one, and two, and three!!!**

Scale the crater wall!

**Now the final test!**

AstroBioBot had to prove himself against a motley crew of concept rovers.

The wall was steep indeed, and soon the rovers came tumbling back down!

And one, and two, and three!!!

**Oh dear...**

And AstroBioBot saw an opportunity.

For Mars!

But AstroBioBot was not going to give up.

The wall was steep... ...and made it to the top of the crater wall...

...VICTORIOUS!

You’re gonna download lighting, and upload thunder!

It’s so steep...

But AstroBioBot was not going to give up.

For Mars!

You did it AstroBioBot!

But you need science instruments to be NASA’s next top Mars rover.

Squyres took AstroBioBot to NASA research centers, Universities and International institutions around the world.

Squyres led AstroBioBot to NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratories...

At each location instruments were being developed for a new mission to Mars!

Engineers and designers sized him up for the latest in astrobiology instrumentation.

But your whole body also needs a makeover!

**Fabulous!**

Squyres took AstroBioBot to NASA research centers, Universities and International institutions around the world.

At each location instruments were being developed for a new mission to Mars!

Engineers and designers sized him up for the latest in astrobiology instrumentation.

But your whole body also needs a makeover!

**Fabulous!**

Squyres led AstroBioBot to NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratories...

**...where his transformation began!**

**The Mars Hand Lens Imager will let you take close-up pictures of rocks and soil...**

**...and the Alpha Particle X-Ray Spectrometer will measure the chemicals**

**Fabulous!**

But your whole body also needs a makeover!

You’re in luck AstroBioBot!

NASA has a new Mars mission almost ready to go. We just need to get your new instruments installed...

**You’re in luck AstroBioBot!**

NASA has a new Mars mission almost ready to go. We just need to get your new instruments installed...

**You’re in luck AstroBioBot!**

NASA has a new Mars mission almost ready to go. We just need to get your new instruments installed...
These aren't suitable for Mars!

Not my wheels!

These aren't suitable for Mars!

Don't worry, we have all new instruments for you!

Relax, and use SAM to study the carbon molecules in the calming incense.

Ah, C6H5CHO

You will also test radiation levels with RAD.*

Ahh, Gracias und Dankel!

And study UV and weather with REMS.**

Ooo, what marvelous mineralogy!

Unfortunately more of your old equipment needs to go!

Now test out the new CheMin instrument by analyzing this soothing mud bath...

We need color images and video!

...and cameras that can analyze the finest details of a grain of sand.

We need you to be our eyes on Mars, and these just aren't up to the task!

NOOO!

...and MastCam!

I can't see!

McKay?

Squyres?...

ANYONE??!

Behold the power of ChemCam...

I see things in a whole new light!

And the final piece.

Wheels!

And now that you can see.

It's time to show you where you're going.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it...

Your cameras won't cut it for Mars!

But without his wheels, he was at the mercy of the mission planners.

We need panoramic views of the valleys and mountains!...

We need you to be our eyes on Mars, and these just aren't up to the task!

NOOO!

Gale crater! In its center lies a mountain that's higher than Mount Rainier near Seattle.

Could those channel-like features be signs that water once flowed here?

Your mission: to find out how the mountain came to be, and the role water had in shaping it.

And study the potential for life in ancient Mars habitats!

The sky crane system that will send you to the martian surface has never been tried before...

That looks dangerous...

The sky crane system that will send you to the martian surface has never been tried before...

Translated from *German and **Spanish.

Gracias und Dankel! Spanish.

And the final piece.

It's time to show you where you're going.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it...

Gale crater! In its center lies a mountain that's higher than Mount Rainier near Seattle.

Could those channel-like features be signs that water once flowed here?

Your mission: to find out how the mountain came to be, and the role water had in shaping it.

And study the potential for life in ancient Mars habitats!

The sky crane system that will send you to the martian surface has never been tried before...

That looks dangerous...

Translated from *German and **Spanish.

Gracias und Dankel! Spanish.
You're going to make it to Mars!

But all your new instruments are funded!

They must be drawn to my original programming!

The Budget Cuts!

Meghan! McKay! Everyone! You came to my launch!

Your trip begins on an Atlas V rocket...

Whoa! You did it AstrobioBot

Whoa! You did it AstrobioBot

Whoa! You did it AstrobioBot

Not so fast little bot, Your ride to Mars this ship is not!

We have you now, you cannot flee. This launch to Mars can never be!

They must be drawn to my original programming!

To create the conditions for your birth, it was the Budget Cuts that made it work

Computations and chemistry, in one lab that set you free!

With this trip to Mars you must not bother...

No! Noooo! That's not true... that's impossible!

With help from the administrators, could they tackle the Budget Cuts in time?

The battle raged on!

Proposals projects instruments

AstrobioBot raced to the Atlas V...

...and took the hydraulic lift to the top

...where he quickly climbed into the heatshield

...and the countdown began!

The launch window is closing

Too much paperwork, I think I'm spent!

Run AstrobioBot! The launch window is closing

With a final wave goodbye, AstrobioBot strapped himself in...
The MSL spacecraft could provide some protection from the flare...

...but inside, AstrobioBot was rocked by the solar radiation!

A dangerous S3 flare has erupted from the Sun!

It's headed right for you!

Don't worry, I'm on it!

I just need to power up my Radiation Assessment Detector...

The MSL spacecraft could provide some protection from the flare...

...but inside, AstrobioBot was rocked by the solar radiation!

I hope this doesn't fry my circuits!

January 22, 2012

There is a disturbance brewing at the center of our solar system.

Our powerful sun boils and bubbles...

Until it bursts!

The powerful blast sweeps past Earth...

...lighting up the night skies.

Deep in space, somewhere between the Earth and Mars...

DANGER ALERT

Our hero awakens!

AstrobioBot are you there?

A dangerous S3 flare has erupted from the Sun!

It's headed right for you!

Farewell AstrobioBot, my friends...

Bon Voyage, AstrobioBot. I'll be with you my beautiful, beautiful Mars...

And when I woke up...

I... I MADE IT!

Farewell, my friends...

...I'll be with you my beautiful, beautiful Mars...

I hope this doesn't fry my circuits.

Until it bursts!

The thrusters roared!

AstrobioBot braced against the force of the launch!

Then quiet came as the MSL spacecraft detached!

Safely beyond the atmosphere of Earth, AstrobioBot was ready for a well deserved rest as he prepared to enter his hibernation mode.

For weeks AstrobioBot drifted silently through space, traveling between the Earth and Mars...
At first, it was like fireworks in the sky! And the tethers began to let him down! He hovered into place above the landing site. But soon, AstrobioBot was in control. This is AMAZING! And the tethers began to let him down! But would he make it to the surface before the tethers detached and the hover-craft blasted away? Just a few more inches... With the powered descending stage firing, AstrobioBot sank toward the surface! AHHHH! At first, it was like fireworks in the sky! And the tethers began to let him down! This is amazing AstrobioBot! All of this data is going to help us determine how much radiation human explorers will face on future missions! Good work! But now that you’re awake... it’s time to prepare for the most dangerous challenge you’re ever going to face!

Safe from the solar flare, AstrobioBot began his true test... He plowed through the atmosphere... With only his heatshield to protect him! 7 minutes of terror to reach Mars! Don’t fear AstrobioBot. Let your Curiosity guide you! That’s it. He’s entered the atmosphere. Seven minutes until we know if he’s safe... It’s so hot! I don’t know if I can make it... or if he’s lost forever. All we can do is wait! But I see Gale Crater! So, Hard. To Steer! Spirit?!

AstrobioBot strained to keep the MSL craft on target! For a few quiet moments, the craft drifted toward Gale Crater... Deploying the parachute... It’s time to jump for it AstrobioBot! Let’s hope this works, Spirit! AHHHH!

Almost there! This landing is different than my own... but I will do my best to guide you!

With the powered descending stage firing, AstrobioBot sank toward the surface! AHHHH! But soon, AstrobioBot was in control. This is amazing AstrobioBot! Good work! But now that you’re awake... it’s time to prepare for the most dangerous challenge you’re ever going to face!

At JPL Mission Control... Spirit?!

Safe from the solar flare, AstrobioBot began his true test...
There were the first spectra from his laser...

Data suddenly came flooding to Earth.

...and new views of the Mars surface

This new software is AMAZING! Now I’m ready to explore

Now I can snap some photos

And use my robotic arm!

...and new views of the Mars surface

Data suddenly flooded over the communications relay...

AstroBioBot, as the Curiosity rover, made headlines worldwide.

Mount Sharp... here I come!

Stay tuned for further adventures from our intrepid hero as he prepares to explore the treacherous slopes of Mount Sharp in:

The Continuing Adventures of AstroBioBot

Seven minutes later, back on Earth; the message was received!

Now be careful, AstroBioBot! You’re not safe yet...

Now that you’re on the ground, you need new navigation software.

Prepare for download!

Whoa, new programming filling my brain! What skills are you teaching me now?!

I made it!

Now be careful, AstroBioBot! You’re not safe yet...

Now that you’re on the ground, you need new navigation software.

Prepare for download!

Whoa, new programming filling my brain! What skills are you teaching me now?!

I made it!

Now be careful, AstroBioBot! You’re not safe yet...

Now that you’re on the ground, you need new navigation software.

Prepare for download!

Whoa, new programming filling my brain! What skills are you teaching me now?!

I made it!

Now be careful, AstroBioBot! You’re not safe yet...

Now that you’re on the ground, you need new navigation software.

Prepare for download!

Whoa, new programming filling my brain! What skills are you teaching me now?!