Jeremy Clift author interview

*Author Jeremy Clift answers questions about his new book “Born in Space: Unlocking Destiny,” the first in his Sci-Fi Galaxy series of novels.*

**1) How did you get interested in science fiction**

I became interested in science fiction as a way of thinking about the future. I often consider journalism as the first draft of history; science fiction is the first draft of future history.

Science fiction isn’t trying to predict the future, but it’s a way of discussing the future and where we are going. It’s a way of connecting society and technology.

I was a journalist for about 20 years, so I had a lot of experience in war zones, natural disasters, and economic crises of different types. Several of my friends had written books, mostly thrillers, or non-fiction biographies and analysis. So, I thought I’d try something else. I became very interested in the next frontier – mining of asteroids, building rotating habitats in space, creating cities on the moon. And I read a piece about how we’ll have to populate the future colonization of space, so I thought this might be a good theme for a science fiction book.

What happens if you are born in space? You have never set foot on Planet Earth, smelt the flowers, or swum in the oceans. What would it be like? Do you have a terrible craving to return “home”? Or are you really an extraterrestrial, a space being? Still a humanoid but having none of the experiences of the Earth.

Solving how babies get born in reduced or zero gravity is one of the key issues for humanity if we want to populate space habitats and other planets. Most people will not want to emigrate to Mars. But maybe robots will. And by then, they will probably be far more intelligent than humans.

**2) What’s the book about?**

“Born in Space” imagines a period not that far in the future when we’ve successfully colonized parts of the moon, maybe Mars, and have established rotating space habitats close to the earth that rich people have fled to because of global warming, pollution, and risks of disease.

They look down from afar at the enormous beauty of Earth. But it’s a time of acute tension as big conglomerates compete for the riches of space and freelance pirates make raids on the unguarded, while pollution and debris in space becomes a growing problem. It’s an ode to life on Earth and a warning.

**3) What motivated you to begin your first novel?**

**I’ve been a non-fiction writer all my life. But switching from journalism and non-fiction publishing to a realm driven by your imagination is more difficult than it sounds.**

**4) Do you plot your book, or are you a pantser?**

**Very much a pantser. I find book outlining a very difficult discipline. I come up with ideas and then add to them over time. Failing to have an outline at the start often means everything takes longer, but maybe your imagination has freer rein.**

**5) What is your average writing day?**

**I do research and social media in the mornings, writing in the evening. Then I read and revise what I’ve done the next day, sometimes injecting fresh ideas that have germinated over night.**

**6) What is the best thing about being an author?**

**Flexibility. Everything becomes research.**

**7) What bugs you most about the publishing industry?**

**I love books and publishing, but I find the procrustean process of fitting everything into preconceived slots or genres very limiting. “Writing to market” can only produce more of the same at a time when everything is changing.**

**8) How did you go about researching the content for your book?**

**My journalistic background makes me check and counter check everything. I amass a lot of detail and then end up using a tenth of it or less. But the research shapes the story and adds authenticity.**

**9) What made you choose the genre you write in?**

**Many former journalists write thrillers or nonfiction about their area of specialization. Because the world is changing so fast, I wanted to think about the future, what will happen over the next 100 years.**

**10) How did you come up with the name(s) for your lead character(s)?**

**Serendipity. You just notice names and think they might be appropriate. My daughter suggested I include a dog as a companion for Hunter and she came up with the name Chester.**

**11) How did you feel when you had completed your book?**

**Once you complete a book, next comes the hard part – marketing it!**

**12) What’s on your current reading list?**

I love books by Adrian Tchaikovsky, Mary Robinette Kowal, Cixin Liu, and Andy Weir, as well as Martha Wells and Becky Chambers. Outside science fiction, I admire Ian McEwan, Haruki Murakami, Rachel cusk, and Zadie Smith.

**Bonus - What’s your advice for young writers?**

Persistence, learn persistence.