**Ideas**:

* **What the book is: Crime noir about a serial killer on the loose in a *galaxy spanning (not exactly)* mystery.**
* **Premise:** It’s the year 2098. Mars has been colonized and augmented reality has become ubiquitous throughout the *Interstellar Federation of Nations*. A series of bone-chilling and very disturbing murders have the entire country on edge. Rookie detective James ‘Jim’ Speck along with his seasoned partner Nancy Kolady are on the case. What appears to be another one in the list of serial killer cases that have gripped the country over the years, reveals to be much more than Jim bargained for…
* **Plot points and ideas to cover:** 
  + Jim and Nancy investigate various murders and find patterns to the killings.
  + Nancy’s nightmares of the killer choosing her as his/her next victim.
  + The killer’s MO is that the victim’s throat is slit and
  + After about 3-4 murders, a murder happens on Mars which fit the MO of the serial killer prompting the detective duo to get a trip to Mars sanctioned to investigate the case. (research about Mars travel).
  + Create a touching narrative about Nancy’s son and her often grey ideals after being a hardened veteran in the crime fighting scene.
  + The serial killer gets nabbed but still leaves Jim without closure hinting at higher forces at play. Just as Jim shakes these nagging feelings, Nancy gets murdered and the first book ends.
  + Explain in brief about the Martian Race and the quest to claim Martian land by various space launch capable countries (India being one among them). *[To be explored in sequel]*
  + Also introduce a radicalized state formed on Mars by a faction of elites. *[To be explored in sequel]*
  + Subtle reminders of a revolutionary new technology (Portals) being advertised by giant tech company and whose launch is imminent. *[To be explored in sequel and major plot point that will tie in the transportation industry lobbyists with the serial killings]*

**Themes to explore:**

* You need to feel the blues to know how happy feels like. If you’re happy all the time, how would you even know you’re happy if you don’t have a sad experience to compare with?
* Commentary on capitalism that only really allows the rich and powerful to settle on Mars. Meanwhile there are schemes on earth to send people on a vacation to Mars for a financing plan.
* Fun news report in the background of new tombs discovered on Mars.

Chapter 1

Fly Me to the Moon

The first thing she noticed were the lights, searingly bright that she had to shield her eyes. As her eyes started to adjust, she saw that the lights were actually just the sun light passing through the various amps beating down on her face through a window. She started to notice the sound of bustle and laughter as she took in the sight of people having spirited conversations with large kegs of beer, wiping the froth away from their lips. Some seemed to genuinely be in a celebratory mood while for most, as inspector Nancy often noticed in bars, the booze was the only cause for celebration in their lives in those seemingly fleeting moments of ecstasy in a lifetime of mundanity. “You up for another?” asked a deep voice emanating from her left. She jerked her head in the direction of the voice, mildly startled and feeling a tad delirious. “Err.. Maybe I…” she started but that was all the face behind that voice needed. “Two more please!” said the man before Nancy could object. “You know, we really ought to hold back a bit on the booze Nancy.”, he said. “That’s what I was going to say before you went ahead and put words in my mouth and ordered the next round.”, she snapped irritated discovering that her head had started to pound. “Okay! Okay! I’m sorry. This is the last one. It’s just that I don’t want our conversation to end.”, he said with an apologetic tone. “You know what’s strange? I’m having a very hard time recognizing who exactly I’m having this conversation with and here you are talking as if we’ve known each other for years.” “Come on Nan, don’t play games with me. I know we’ve had a little too much of ‘the Martiani’ to drink, but surely you know me? Forget about knowing you for years, you’ve known me your whole life!” said the smooth baritone of a voice with a slight chuckle. The voice started to sound familiar and she seemed to feel like it was a voice she had heard before. But to Nancy’s horror as she finally regained her senses, this charming voice came from a face she had seen countless times and often had reasons to despise. The voice, she was hearing all this while was not coming from the face of a man but from a woman who was none other than herself sitting beside her. Unable to process this, she jumped up from her seat and stumbled backward, her gaze transfixed to her apparent newfound and unwelcome twin with the deep male voice. “Who are you!?” she found herself shouting and suddenly the whole bar went silent and dark as if the Sun’s light was turned off by a flick of a switch. Blinded again, this time from darkness, Nancy started groping about and flailing her arms in frustration not having the remotest clue as to what was going on. “Think goddamn it! You’re a fucking detective for crying out loud.”, she muttered to herself. “Was she or rather ‘it’, my clone? But it was ruled a crime to clone humans after the presidential scandal way back in 73’. Where did they pull my DNA data from? The global DNA registry? No way that can be hacked that easily and no one’s going to go to all that trouble to create a clone of me. You’re a nobody. And what’s with the damn sun light getting cut off? Are the amps malfunctioning?” “That’s right detective Nancy Kolady. Do what you do best and rationalize what’s going on. But here’s an eye-opener for you… Not everything makes sense and neither does it have to. Just go with the flow!”, came the same voice as before but this time from behind her. “Who the hell are you and how did you know what I was thinking? What do you want from me?!” screamed Nancy. “Oh, it’s not much really. I just want you to sing. I NEED you to sing Nancy Kolady.”, the voice replied maintaining the same delicious charm that Nancy just couldn’t shake from her mind and knew sounded familiar. “Some elaborate joke this is mister or whoever you are. This is NOT funny! Let me go!” she protested vehemently. “So be it.”, said the voice and Nancy found herself hurtling through empty space, falling endlessly. Nancy tried to scream her lungs out but she couldn’t hear a thing. Silence had never felt so deafening to her before and the whole world now seemed to be covered in a blanket of darkness and silence. Nancy felt sick and thought she was going to pass out when her fall was stopped with such a sudden jerk that she could have sworn would have snapped her neck in two. She was now floating and she noticed specks of twinkling light all around her. “Are those stars? Am I floating in space!?” she thought alarmed when she felt this searing pain in her throat. “Now sing!” demanded the same voice which came from Nancy’s own mouth this time. She clasped her mouth shut petrified only to discover that she had started to lose all control of herself. Slowly, her lips opened and closed to the lyrics of one of her all-time favourite songs from one of her favourite artists. People like her in 2098 were rare for the music scene is quite a bit different from that more than a century ago. But to Nancy the songs from that era are timeless as some would say. Here she was not in control of her own body, crooning the lyrics of Frank Sinatra’s “Fly me to the Moon” in the voice she now instantly recognized as Frank Sinatra’s. Just as she thought things couldn’t get even weirder and surreal, the searing pain in her throat increased to unbearable levels. A slow trickle of blood started to flow through her hands which she had cradled over her neck due to the pain. The trickle then became a steady stream which continuously seemed to increase in intensity. Nancy desperately tried to stop the blood with her hands to the point where she was choking herself but discovered she wasn’t breathing while floating around in space, still singing the song which seemed quite situational save for the abject terror she was in as opposed to love and happiness. “In other words…”, came out Sinatra’s crescendo when her throat burst with a fountain of blood gushing out.

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Nancy jumped from her bed and instantly felt her neck. A wave of relief washed over her seeing that it was in one piece and that it was just a ‘silly nightmare’. “Damn this case has really struck a nerve.”, she mumbled and wiped the beads of sweat that had collected on her forehead. She realized that her whole t-shirt was soaked in sweat and glanced at her bedside screen which announced that it was half past four in the morning, Earth time(UT) and (equivalent time on Mars).