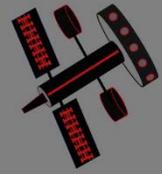


Epilogue

For



The
Deluxe
Interstellar
Edition

Project
Hail
Mary

Important notices for

Epilogue for Project Hail Mary (an essay)

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This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, organizations, places, and events portrayed in this tale are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

Spoiler Alert

The essay is intended for readers who have completed the novel "**Project Hail Mary**" by Andy Weir. If you have not already read the novel, this essay won't be as enjoyable. If you read the essay first, you could miss the element of surprise from the plot twists and turns of Project Hail Mary. It is best to read the novel first and then read this essay.

I encourage you to buy, beg or borrow a copy of "Project Hail Mary." Its commercial success and high reader ratings are well deserved.

Introduction

“Project Hail Mary” is an excellent science fiction novel by Mr. Andy Weir. The story is loaded with drama and courageous characters (sometimes despite themselves). Real and speculative science and mathematics are important elements for the story, following the path set in his first best-selling book, “The Martian,” which I also recommend.

When you finish reading “Project Hail Mary” you may wonder, “what happened next?” If you’ve studied the End Times prophecies in the Bible, you may have noticed that certain events in this novel seem like something from those prophecies.

“Is there intelligent life on other planets?” That’s a topic of polite conversation among Christians and debate within the scientific community. No man living on Earth knows the answer to this question.

I’m going to explore both of these questions through this essay, titled “Epilogue for Project Hail Mary.” I hope that you find it interesting and entertaining and that it will cause you to reflect and then give glory to God, who created this universe and the laws of science within it.

Mark C. Tredecim

Epilogue for Project Hail Mary

Prologue

In the 50th year of the Millennial Kingdom, a faint radio signal reached Earth. It originated from a special transmitting platform situated outside the heliosphere of the 40 Eridani triple star system.

The signal was highly focused and greatly amplified. It had been aimed at the anticipated future position of the Earth, considering the signal's travel time from the platform to Earth.

The signal timing, strength and targeting considered possible interference by Sol and other bodies within the Solar system and outer space.

As a precaution, the Eridians sent the signal repeatedly over the next 50 years, in consideration of the importance they placed on the message contained within the signal.

For 20-plus years, the man they called "Friend" had lived with the Eridians and had been a great teacher to them. Since his death, his Eridian students were carrying on his teaching work.

After he died, the Eridians discovered that he had sometimes recorded a personal audio journal while he lived among them.

The Eridians wanted to honor his memory and provide a report to Earth for the benefit of any surviving friends and relatives.

They constructed the space broadcast station and sent the powerful signal to Earth containing a portion of his audio journal.

In Jerusalem, the Great and True King reflected on these events and smiled. He was well pleased with the good and faithful work of His servant on Erid. The King had welcomed him to heaven when that time came.

The King was also pleased with how the Eridians had responded to His message. He had blessed their effort to send the radio signal, though He had known all along that nobody on Earth would receive it. This was not the appropriate time for any communications between the Eridians and humanity.

The antennae, supercomputers and other equipment involved in the SETI program had all been destroyed during the Tribulation. In the 50 years since the Tribulation, nobody had seen a reason to reestablish the SETI program. They had better things to focus on.

If the SETI equipment and personnel had been available on Earth, and if they had focused their attention upon this particular radio signal, they might have learned the rest of the story of the good ship Hail Mary.

What Should I Investigate?

The past couple weeks have been crazy. Even from the unique perspective of someone who has accepted the reality of being the only human on an entire planet (Erid), light years away from his birthplace. Living inside a big dome, the only thing between me and a totally toxic environment with a poisonous pressure cooker atmosphere that's so hot that I'd be poached like a trout within minutes if I went out into it.

Poached trout. What I'd give to have real poached trout. Don't get me wrong, I love meburgers and most of the other nutritionally-sound, human-compatible foods developed by my hosts on Erid. If I could market these engineered foods back on Earth, I would probably become too rich for my own good. But that's not going to happen.

Several times in these two weeks, I have had vivid dreams, unlike any I've ever had before. On the other nights, I have been dreamless and I woke up the next morning feeling disappointed by their absence. I've tried to find a scientific explanation for this.

I have done intensive testing of my food, water and the under-dome environment. I've performed the whole gamut of self-imaging using medical equipment from the ship. A comprehensive battery of lab work on my blood, urine, stool and skin tissues. I found a small kidney stone and arthritis, but nothing else out of the ordinary. I have not found a scientific reason for my turbo-charged dream activity.

I wondered if years of induced coma during my interstellar journey and the subsequent years of isolation from other humans might impact my sanity. Psychology didn't interest me in college, so I've had to go back to school.

The ship's library has an overabundant supply of professional journals, research papers and self-help books about dreams and sleep patterns. None seem helpful. I completed the "Are You Crazy?" tests published annually in various popular magazines- according to the magazines' test scorecards, the answer is "No."

The dreams didn't ruin my sleep. If anything, I slept more soundly than usual, despite the monitors showing a higher-than-usual level of alpha brain waves those nights. I woke up feeling fully rested, with a clear recollection of each dream.

Just one dream per night and the dreams didn't repeat from night to night. My participation was always from the first-person vantage point. I've journaled everything I remember from each dream.

Each morning I have updated and re-read my dream journal, considering whether I should continue my scientific quest for root causes. Or should I believe what the dreams seem to be- a personal message from God? I'm a scientist and it's in my nature to investigate. But what should I investigate?

Dreams of the Past

The first dream took me back to when I was a kid. I again enjoyed Christmas and Easter gatherings with my grandparents and the extended family. I swear I smelled the food cooking and felt Grandma Grace's kiss on my cheek. I reexperienced going with them to church for Christmas and Easter services.

When I awoke the next morning, I recalled the memorial services for my four grandparents, while I was in college. I could remember some of the music, testimonials and prayers. I teared up again with these memories.

The next dream brought me to the two-week church summer camp at age 11, at a lake in the mountain wilderness. Grandpa Arne paid my camp fee so that I could go. I almost drowned on my first day at camp, but a 16-year-old goddess named Angela dived in and pulled me out of the lake, gasping and coughing up lake water.

I was alive and in love. She told me I could have died, but evidently God still had plans for me.

Sitting with me there on the beach, Angela explained the salvation message found in the Gospel of John and convinced me to attend her daily Bible study class at camp instead of the bead crafts class that mom had signed me up for.

That summer Angela also taught me how to swim. At the last night campfire, I jumped up from my log seat when the camp chaplain asked who believed in Jesus and wanted Him in his heart.

I hadn't thought about those two weeks since I finished college and joined the working world, but now my camp experiences and Angela's caring about me seemed so significant.

The next night's dream focused on my return to that camp two summers later. Angela was no longer a lifeguard. She was now a guide for teenage campers. If Angela was in charge of a class or activity, I made sure to be there.

When camp ended, I'd been baptized in the lake and went home with a gift Bible, autographed by Angela. I hadn't opened that Bible often since then, but I now wished that I'd brought it with me on the *Hail Mary*.

Dreams of the Present

My dreams took a different turn after that. No longer childhood memories, now they were here in my dome, here on Erid. Still, they were all from the first-person perspective, as if it was happening to me that very evening.

First, I had a visit from my garrulous Canadian associate, Steve Hatch. He looked good (if anything, he looked younger and fitter than when I last saw him on Earth) and I told him so.

Steve didn't explain how he came to be on Erid. "I've never been better," he said, "I was at the Baikonur lab preparing for an experiment when the big accident happened. One instant, I was standing at a work bench. The next, I was standing in Heaven. My old life was fine, but my new life is over the top."

Steve continued, "I was sent here to affirm all the good work that you've done so far and let you know that more is expected from you. It has taken real courage, character and scientific genius to accomplish all you have done, but your best days are ahead of you."

How could I respond to that? I hadn't been told about Steve being at Baikonur that day. "Thanks, Steve. The project team provided such a great ship and loaded it with all the equipment and supplies that I needed.

And I owe a lot to my good friend and number one engineer Rocky. The Eridians tell me that luminosity from Sol is at pre-Astrophage levels, so some of the beetles made it back with the data and Taumoeba samples?"

Steve deflated my balloon. "Well, they got to third base, but didn't make it home. They reached the solar system, but didn't know what to do next. God had already cleared the Astrophage from Sol and there had been a huge political shake-up and infrastructure collapse on Earth, so they weren't even transmitting the beetle signals.

The solar system has changed since you left Earth. Planetary orbits have shifted further from the ecliptic and there is a second asteroid belt thanks to the break-up of Mars. John, Paul, and George were pulled into Jupiter and Ringo was smashed by an asteroid.”

So, I hadn’t actually saved the Earth. Why then was Steve here? What had I done deserving of any accolades?

Steve sensed that I was disappointed and he continued, “Your Taumoeba research was great. It was awesome how you jury-rigged the beetles as engines for the *Hail Mary*. And you did get the beetles back to our solar system, even if we didn’t need them. That was all pretty awesome, especially with all the hardships you faced.

Remember, your scientific work on Astrophage and Taumoeba saved Erid. Rocky couldn’t have done it without you. You did everything that God expected of you thus far.

The relationship you established with Rocky and your decision to sacrifice yourself for Rocky and his species will be the foundation for the next stage in your mission.

I’ve got to go now, but John will visit you tomorrow. I have confidence in you and I understand that we will see each other again soon.”

Then Steve walked out through the dome’s solid xenonite wall.

More Dreams of the Present

John visited my dream the next night. Not the musician John, it was someone that I'd never met or seen before. He introduced himself and it seemed to fit him. "You would know me as the apostle John, but I prefer that you call me John or brother John. May I address you as Ryland?"

I told him OK, and he continued speaking; I wasn't bothered that he spoke flawless English to me.

John looked me in the eyes and said, "I was appointed to write five books in the Bible, though I understand that you've only read one of them."

How did he know that? I wanted to explain, "Yes, my friend Angela helped me study the Gospel of John during summer camp. She gave me my first (and only) Bible a couple years later. I meant to read it more, but I never could find the...."

John interrupted me, "I know. I am glad that Angela spent that time with you. If she hadn't, you wouldn't be here now. But she did, and you believed. The next steps in your journey would be easier if you'd read more in the Bible, especially the prophetic book that is called Revelation.

If you had read that, you would appreciate that almost all of the prophecies revealed to me two thousand years ago have now become historical events on Earth; only a few are left to be fulfilled. Fortunately, Commander Yáo has provided you with all the resources you will need.

Your homework assignment for tomorrow is to read his notes on Revelation, within the red notebook in his personal duffel." John said good night, and exited my dome and dream in the same manner as Steve did the night before.

After breakfast the next day, I found the personal duffels of the crew, which the Eridians had brought down and stored carefully in my dome home.

Inside the commander's bag, I found photos of his young family and handwritten letters in Chinese. I set these aside carefully and reverently. I also found the handgun and ammunition he had requested. I confirmed the gun was not loaded and set these on the table next to me.

That left just three items in the duffel: a red notebook (with handwritten notes in Chinese), a Bible (in English) and a study book for the Bible book of Revelation, also in English. Why had Yáo brought these on the mission?

The airlock rang with the special tone that indicated a visit from Rocky. I said, “Come in” as the inner door opened and he rambled in, garbed in the appropriate attire for Eridians visiting the hostile pseudo-Earth environment within my dome.

Curious and friendly as ever, Rocky asked me what I was up to. I explained that I was checking the contents of my shipmates’ bags, as the contents were not cataloged in the ship manifest and might contain something important.

That answer satisfied him. He picked up the empty handgun and asked me, “What is this device? What is its purpose and how does it function?”

I didn’t like this subject, but I told him the truth, “It is called a handgun. It uses explosive chemical energy to launch a metal projectile at a target.”

The answer was incomplete and Rocky probed on, “What target and for what purpose?” I responded, “The usual target was an animal, with the intent of injuring it or ending its life. Sometimes this is how we would obtain food.”

Rocky could tell I was evading the full answer, “The only animals on Hail Mary were humans. Why was this device on your ship? Do humans use this handgun device to end the life of other humans?”

I admitted that humans sometimes killed each other with handguns. Rocky was horrified that humans would kill other humans and continued his inquiry, “Eridians would never intentionally harm each other. Would you use this handgun device to end the life of Eridians? Kill Rocky?”

“No, no! I would never do such a thing. You are all my friends, my only friends. I want only good things for you. I was willing to die to save your world from the Astrophage. I didn’t like the idea of a handgun on the ship in the first place. Here, let’s get rid of the damn thing now.”

Rocky followed me to my workbench and watched me fire up a torch and heat the handgun until the metal glowed red hot, and then flatten it using a heavy hammer. Crude but effective, and Rocky applauded me.

Rocky pointed to the books and notebook and asked me, “What are these other devices? What is their purpose and how do they function?” I explained how this primitive form of written communication on paper was used by humans.

“These two volumes are reference and research data records and this notebook contains the personal research notes of Commander Yáo. I need to review the Commander’s notes for possibly important information.”

Rocky opined that doing research was good for me and he said he would leave me to it. He exited through the airlock and I turned to the notebook.

The hand-written notes filled many pages, all in Chinese. That day, I scanned each page into my laptop and read all of the notes, translated into English. Sometimes, the notes referred to a particular page in the Revelation study book or to particular verses in the Bible.

With growing proficiency, I was able to follow these references and read the referenced information. It was a long day of reading and I dozed off as I was eating dinner that night.

The picture becomes clearer

I felt a tap on my shoulder. Steve and John both were visiting in this dream, standing near me. John greeted me and Steve pointed at his own chin and said, “You’ve got something on your beard, right here.” I wiped away the scrap from tonight’s dinner and told John, “Revelation is some book! Fortunately, I have Yáo’s notes and the study guide, so I’m starting to understand it, I think.”

Steve spoke, “Yáo says hello. He is sorry he couldn’t help you on the mission but is pleased his books and notes will help you now; they are his gift to you. He and his family were part of a house church in China; the government did not know he was a Christian when they drafted him for the mission. Those are his notes from a study of Revelation.”

Then Steve explained how the Petrova Taskforce had been hijacked and used in a global scheme to mislead and subjugate humanity. When almost a billion Christians vanished in the blink of an eye, the Taskforce blamed it on Astrophage radiation.

John added emphasis here, “Of course, that was the Rapture prophesized in the Bible. If you’d been on Earth, you’d have been taken up, too. But you were on your mission, traveling toward Tau Ceti, so God did not need to protect you from the Tribulation that was brought upon the Earth.”

Steve described how God eliminated Astrophage from the solar system but the Taskforce took credit for it. Stratt was displaced by a new leader. Purportedly “to keep people safe,” the Taskforce commandeered agriculture, natural resources, energy, manufacturing, and supply chains. It gained political power, police authority and eventually control over the military. Communications were censored and dissent was crushed.

The Taskforce leader’s power and prestige kept growing. Respect for the Taskforce devolved into worship of it and of its leader. Soon its leader was the most powerful man in the world. Many people called him a god, though he was really an underling of Satan.

Meanwhile, the apocalyptic famine, disease and wars that Stratt had predicted to me all came true. Steve described these and the many seismic, astronomical and environmental catastrophes that shook the world. The loss of life was overwhelming. It truly was a Great Tribulation.

While Steve spoke, John provided continuous color commentary, like “that was prophesied in chapter 8 of Revelation.” When Steve finished his report, they took turns responding to my questions. Then John took the lead in the discussion.

“All that started soon after you left Earth and ended seven years later, when Jesus returned to Earth and vanquished the massive army led by the Taskforce leader, who was the Antichrist.

The Antichrist and everyone who didn’t believe in Jesus were tossed into the eternal lake of fire. At that point, the only people left alive on the Earth were the post-Rapture new Christians who had survived the Tribulation.

For the past 25 years, Jesus has perfectly ruled the Earth from Jerusalem as prophesized in the Bible. Satan is locked deep in the Abyss. The Earth has become a beautiful and peaceful place to live, ruled by Jesus, the King of Kings. There are 975 more years remaining of His rule in the Millennial Kingdom.

Then God will bring about a new Heaven and a new Earth. Satan will be thrown into the eternal lake of fire. You can read more about all that by following Yáo’s Revelation notes.

Take a look at the last page in Yáo’s notes, where he lists the Bible chapters he wanted to read next and a Bible study commentary that he wanted to read. You should take up his reading list. That commentary is available through the ship’s library array. Steve and I need to go home now.” And they left the dome and my dream as before.

The Assignment

Three days doing my homework as John instructed, with no dreams on the first two nights. On the third night, I had new visitors in my dream. One introduced himself as Paul and told me that it was time for the next stage of my mission.

He wasn't the musician Paul, but he was accompanied by a second guy who looked familiar and was carrying a guitar. Paul's sidekick didn't introduce himself, he let Paul do all of the talking.

"What is my mission," I asked. Paul's reply was a surprise to me, "You are to tell the Eridians about God. You need to tell them about how man brought sin into creation, about God's plan to bring reconciliation and salvation through Jesus, and about His plan for a new Heaven and a new Earth."

I tried to decline, "I'm not equipped for that mission. I don't know everything about God or the Bible or Jesus. There must be someone else, or a better way for God to do it without me. Evidently Yáo was a strong Christian, he would have been a far better choice than me."

Paul looked around the dome, "Do you see anyone else? God knows about your limitations and weaknesses, and He put you into this time, place and assignment. He makes no mistakes. Yáo was a good student of Christianity, but would be a terrible teacher. A great commander, but not a scientist."

Paul pointed toward my heart as he continued, "You are a great teacher and God equipped you with the skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the mission to Erid. Your heart (with a little nudge from the Holy Spirit) led you to put your life at risk to save Rocky and his species. No greater love has a man than to lay down his life for his friends."

My argument sounded like something from one of my students, "Yeah, but most Christians don't even believe in life on other worlds, much less intelligent life. And surely God is so powerful that He can handle this without me."

Paul was gentle in his reply, I could tell he had done some mentoring before. “Yes, many Christians doubted there was life outside the Earth, but nobody should ever place limits on the wisdom, power and scope of God.

Indeed, God does, and He will continue to do, awesome things. But He often has used the meek, weak, broken and small people to carry out His plan. There is one more thing that must be done by a man, and you are that man.

You must apologize to the Eridians on behalf of mankind, for bringing sin into creation. Just today you read about how God created everything. He spoke the universe and everything in it into existence.

He instilled the order and laws of science. He created the stars and has named each of them. He created both Erid and Earth, mankind and Eridians (you noted the threads of His signature in the similarities between the two disparate worlds and species).

Sin disrupted the perfect order of His creation, and all creation has groaned ever since, including Erid. The Eridians are without sin, but they have already suffered due to man’s sin nature.

Without the intervention of God (using you as His agent), Astrophage would have killed them all. And if God permitted, sinful man would eventually travel to Erid to subjugate and destroy its inhabitants.

But now God is purging all of the effects of sin. Within the span of one Eridian lifetime, perfection will be restored throughout the universe. You are to tell the Eridians about God, about His plan and how He has planned wonderful things for them.

You were just a baby in your Christian faith, but you have matured during your mission. You have been a good student these past weeks and are ready for this assignment.

What you don’t understand, you must research in the materials you have been provided. You also should seek help through prayer.

God brought your mission to this place and the Eridians trust you, even love you. They will hear your apology and listen to what you teach. They will recognize and seek truth, wisdom and love.”

Paul paused and looked over to his friend, “Before we leave you tonight, we want to share some musical encouragement. Many of the saints wished to come and meet you, but God selected Elvis as a special reward to him and as a gift to you.”

Elvis. Of course, that’s why he looked familiar to me, though he looked younger and fitter than I remembered him. The familiar voice spoke, “Ryland, I picked a song that is so fitting for this situation.”

He started strumming the guitar and sang, “O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!.....”

Elvis sang all of “How Great Thou Art!” and then he spoke, “That great hymn was written by Stuart Hine back in the Fifties. It has always been one of my favorite songs and is loved by millions of other Christians. We sing it in Heaven. If you want, you can find it in the audio files of the library array from your ship.”

Next, Paul prayed for me and my mission, then said, “We need to leave you now, but I trust you will run this race faithfully to its completion. Be strong, but most of all be loving. We are all praying for you.” Paul and Elvis left the building, following the same route as Steve and John.

Opportunity Knocks and Duty Calls

I awoke the next morning with the sound of the airlock. Again, the special tone that indicated a visit from Rocky. He came directly to my bed and said, “Wake up sleepyhead. I wish to learn about God and Jesus.”

***** The End *****

“Epilogue for Project Hail Mary” is also available (free) in audio and video formats. Please visit the author’s website for more information.

<https://markctredecim.com/epilogue/>

If you have enjoyed this essay and want to know more about Bible prophecy, we recommend you consider the novel written by Mark Tredecim, “The Great New Deal.”

Bible End Times prophecies are explained as the Rapture and the early days of the Tribulation are dramatized. Things are unraveling and bad things are happening everywhere. Which side will you choose in this great spiritual war?

The Great New Deal is available at Amazon.com in various print formats including Kindle. The audiobook edition is available at Audible, iTunes and Amazon.