

## Q&A WITH D.M. ROSEWOOD THE AUTHOR WHO FLEW HIS MANUSCRIPT INTO OUTER SPACE

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I sat down with D.M. Rosewood to discuss the announcement of having launched his recently published manuscript *The Orb, the Link and the Library* into outer space.

**Q: What motivated you to decide to launch the manuscript of your new book into outer space?**

**A:** There are a large number of space-based science fiction novels on the market today that are enjoyed by many fans who read in this genre. Most have settings on distant worlds with dystopian societies far in the future. I wanted to call attention to Earth's situation here and now and to take young adult readers on a journey that deals with our present situation on Earth, but with a unique alien twist. I thought the best way to do that was to be the first to fly my manuscript into outer space and return it to earth to be published. My hope is that this not only brings interest to my book and the genre, but also brings young adults into a relationship with space exploration & discovery and its important role in Earth's future. I wanted to excite the dreams, aspirations and interest in space for our next generation.

**Q: It was quite a leap to say the least. How difficult was it to launch your manuscript into space?**

**A:** Challenging. While I am under a non-disclosure with the extraordinary spaceflight service company that agreed to fly my manuscripts into space, I can confirm that they flew at or above an altitude of 98.5-99.5km, the region of the atmosphere defined as the beginning of outer space by Theodore von Kármán, the famous aeronautical engineer who first researched where aerodynamic lift can no longer support traditional aircraft flight.

It's expensive to launch anything into space, which is why we only see companies placing satellites in orbit, sponsored programs conducting research in space or government sponsored programs like the International Space Station, the Hubble Space Telescope and its successor the James Webb Space Telescope. Then there is the issue of why a launch organization would support a commercial venture like this. I had to be very persuasive on why this benefited the space community and the future advocacy of space exploration with young adults, especially females who represent only about ten percent of all the astronauts who have ever flown in space. I suspect this will be easier as more people fly into space and the cost of space travel declines.

Even with all the activity in space today, there's a gap in our space advocacy efforts. We aren't cultivating enough enthusiasm in young adults for space related engagement and one way to do that is to try and reach them with an exciting space-based science fiction novel—one whose manuscript first flew to space; one that engages current events on Earth, how an alien society might view that and what a young female adult protagonist might possibly do about it. I think my story bridges this gap and the gap between the challenges we face here and now, and the great futuristic space novels that are on the market. Somewhat like what Andy Weir's 2011 novel *The Martian* did in identifying the challenges in space exploration on Mars, but with less engineering and a superintelligence alien society interacting with our own struggles on Earth.

**Q: What makes your novel different from all the other science fiction novels on the market today?**

**A:** That's a great question. *The Orb, the Link and the Library* is a huge mix of ideas cast in new ways. It touches on war and conflict here on earth; pandemics; contrasting views on the control of human behavior; the responsibilities

of the dominant species on a planet to protect its resources and protecting us from ourselves; the role of Artificial Intelligence in a society; the perspectives of two very different societies, ours and the alien Visitors; the challenges of growing up; the conflict we all need to focus on between responsibility and freedom; the huge impact change has on us and our choices in dealing with change; the role of power and its influence on those who suddenly have it. Crafting all this into a story with an interesting plot, interesting settings, engaging characters, fascinating science and science fiction was a challenge, and in a sense, it still is, as I am finishing the third book in the triptych.

**Q: That brings up another question. You call this series a ‘triptych’ not a ‘trilogy’. Why is that?**

**A:** A trilogy is typically three distinct stories with the same characters, possibly the same settings, but different plots. A triptych is one story told in three parts, much like an artistic triptych, a single work of art divided into three pieces that altogether represent the artistic creation. Likewise, my triptych is a single story told in three parts, with the same plot continuing to unfold. The first time I saw this used was in J. R. R. Tolkien’s story, The Lord of the Rings.

**Q: When do you anticipate your second book of the triptych to come out?**

**A:** Within the next few months. I’m finished writing Part 2, but a book is like a cake, if you take it out of the oven before it’s done, it won’t be enjoyable to those who eat it; if you cook it too long, it will taste like stale bread.

**Q: Would you describe your writing as “hard science fiction”?**

**A:** Yes and no. It’s not like Andy Weir’s great hard science fiction story, The Martian. In hard science fiction, the writer strives to present ideas that are plausible, within reach of science, things that could be true. You strive for scientific accuracy while letting your fiction represent plausibility. Examples of this style of writing go back to Jules Verne and Arthur Clark, like his book 2001: A Space Odyssey. But, you can’t ever lose sight of the need to write a great story, one that holds the attention and interest of its readers. I think The Orb, the Link and the Library has an interesting mix of hard and soft science fiction.

**Q: Do you think you will sell more books because you launched your manuscript into space?**

**A:** Maybe. But what really determines the success of your book is the story itself and if the readers really like it. If I have written something that they will enjoy reading and not want to put down or drop and go onto another book, then I will have succeeded. I had two goals when I wrote this story, first to draw young adults into an engagement with space like none other before me, and second to write a fascinating tale that my readers, young adults and the young at heart, would enjoy. Flying the manuscripts into space helps my readers engage with space.

**Q: There is a lot of focus on the writing craft these days. Do you think this is as important as the story you tell?**

**A:** You can’t really talk about these as separate things. Those who teach the craft of writing focus on the elements of writing that contribute to the making of a great story. Imagine you are cooking an elaborate dish and you leave out some of the key ingredients. The dish will no longer live up to the expectations of those who eat it; so it is in writing. If you fail to include the key elements of craft, it is likely you won’t have a story that is any good. Good writing is one of the most complex aspects of human endeavor that I have ever undertaken. You need interesting and complex characters; conflict that results in change for a character; a fascinating plot; interesting and engaging settings; good pacing of your story; a great beginning, a good middle and a great ending. You also need a great story that holds the reader’s attention.

**Q: What's next for you beyond this series?**

**A:** I have five other novels in various stages of progress. I'll need to choose one of these to carry to completion. It's going to be tough to decide, as I think all of the stories behind the beginning writings are fascinating.

**Q: What will influence your decision on which one to choose?**

**A:** Two things. First, the creative element, as I call it. Which one of these will provide the best opportunity for highly creative writing and storytelling. And second, which holds the most potential to provide a fascinating story to my readers.