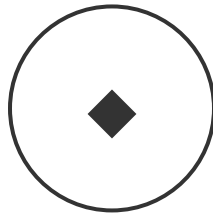


INTERPRETERS OF THE REALM



Hudson

BOOK TWO

Chapter One — Crash and Clothes

A free sample chapter

BURNEIL

BURNEIL.COM

Hudson Hayes' Journal

Chapter 1 – Crash and Clothes

I'm a scientist. I take notes.

The service unit took my iPad, so I'll have to use this journal that Gwynneth gave me to keep track of everything I observe. My handwriting is awful because I always type. I had already made some notes about the crash on my iPad, but the cleanup unit got it! I suppose I should start at the beginning again.

I first saw the other interpreters – I think we should call ourselves that now – at the airport in Denver. They were making a lot of noise and goofing off and I was reading the e-book “Photographic Compression for Satellites” on my iPad.

Gwynneth was doing imitations of people in the airport. First, she did a little old lady with blue hair who made clicking sounds with her teeth before each phrase she spoke. Then, she did a baby, well, a 5-year-old, asking over and over for a “thucker”. She did a great whine! Then she did a businessman from the Bronx on a cell phone with lots of “Yous guys” and “Tanks” on his side of the conversation. She's excellent. Most

of the time, she was doing the other accents so well that I couldn't detect her British accent.

Andico, the gymnast, couldn't sit still. The others urged him on at one point and he did a back flip right over a lady who was sipping a cup of coffee. It was a 10! He knew exactly where he needed to start the flip so that he was at his highest point when he was going over her head and went far enough forward to miss her knees when he landed. Since he flipped from behind her chair and landed in front of her, facing her, he got to see the astonished look on her face.

She dropped her cup of coffee on the floor and it splashed all over her feet and his. After Andico got done bowing to his applauding audience, he cleaned up the spill, apologized to the lady and got her another cup of coffee.

I was on my way from Sioux Falls to Houston. I took flight 227 from Sioux Falls to Denver and we were all waiting for Flight 371 from Denver to Dallas when I first saw the others. I wonder if these facts are even relevant. I'm a scientist, though, so I'll record them anyway.

My dad and I live in Sioux Falls where my dad's an electronics engineer. My mom is a software engineer in Houston. They're divorced and my little sister lives with my mom.

We boarded the plane on time and everything was normal during takeoff. My seat was behind the wing so I could see the wing-mounted engine out my window. We'd been in the air for about an hour since I'd already had a glass of orange juice and some

pretzels.

I was reading about photo compression algorithms when I heard an incredibly loud crack. Something must have hit the plane, but I still don't know what it was. I looked out my window and the engine and the entire wing beyond it were gone. They'd been snapped right off.

When pilots talk about losing an engine, it means that the engine quits working. That's not a serious problem in most multi-engine planes. They don't mean that the engine fell off and took the wing with it. Without the wing, we were doomed. We were already spinning downward and out of control by the time that thought struck me.

We had been flying at 34,000 feet at about 600 miles per hour so I knew that we would have less than 30 seconds before we hit the ground. We were all going to die in the crash.

I knew it.

People were screaming and stuff was flying out of the overhead bins and from under the seats. I peeked a couple of times to take a last look at life. People were shielding their heads to keep from getting hit as everything flew around. We jerked several times as though the pilots were trying anything they could think of to get the plane under control. We were all holding what we thought would be our last breaths, hanging against our seatbelts, dangling from our seats and waiting for the end as we plunged downward.

Morgan must have taken us from the plane seconds before the crash because I felt

my ears pop while we were still falling and that would have happened about halfway down. I realized I wasn't on the plane anymore when I smelled fresh oranges. I opened my eyes and we were on Morgan's ship with its chrome and white interior.

While Morgan kept repeating, "Sit down and be quiet" to Patrice, I got up and looked around the ship. The room we were in was very small and had a view screen and a control panel with a clear cover that shielded some unmarked buttons. There were no doors in the room so we wouldn't have known it was a ship if he hadn't told us.

After Patrice quieted down, Morgan showed us some pictures of the Fomalaire people we would be working with and then Gwynneth plagued him with questions for a while.

I could tell that Andico wasn't feeling very well. It may have been the brain tumor, the pressure change as the plane plummeted, or he may have been hit by something on the plane. I felt sorry for him, but he said there was nothing I could do for him.

While everyone else was watching the pictures on the wall, I watched Morgan make some subtle course corrections at the control panel. He looked from the view screen to the control panel and the clear cover lifted by itself. Then he pressed a few buttons, looked back at the view screen and went on with what he was saying to us.

I don't know what kind of adjustments he made. I never felt any change in our speed or direction. Something must have been changing though, because he made two or three of these adjustments while he was telling us about the mission.

Clarke's Law says: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." This ship seemed more like magic than science.

Morgan told us to use the service unit. I watched him carefully when he was ready to leave since there weren't any doors in the room we were in. I saw him wiggle his fingers slightly before the door appeared.

He hadn't mentioned where the service unit was so I followed him to ask.

I went over to the same wall he'd walked through, wiggled my fingers like he had and the door opened. It looked like a small white closet, so I thought it was some kind of elevator or hallway.

The light came on when I entered. I didn't notice that my clothes were being changed. I did notice right away that I didn't have to go to the bathroom anymore. That was a relief.

When I came out of the service unit, the girls were all concerned about whether I was all right or not. I had to reassure them that nothing bad had happened before they would try it themselves.

I wonder if the service unit uses some kind of matter/energy transformer like on Star Trek.

I sat down and realized that I'd had my iPad when I went into the service unit but didn't have it anymore. The service unit must have thought it was part of my regular clothes.

The service unit changed my clothes and boots. I wonder how it decided I was

hungry and thirsty. The juice and pretzels from the plane wasn't enough to tide me over, but now I wasn't hungry anymore.

Maybe there is some type of sensor in the unit that can tell when a person is getting dehydrated or when their stomach is empty – an X-ray would see if the stomach is empty and maybe something like a pulse-ox machine to check the fluids. A pulse-ox checks the oxygen in the blood when wrapped around a finger so I'm sure it could do something like that to check for dehydration. I don't want to think about how it knew I had to go to the bathroom.