

## Andy Weir

“I live in Artemis, the first (and so far, only) city on the moon. It’s made of five huge spheres called “bubbles.” They’re half underground, so Artemis looks exactly like old sci-fi books said a moon city should look: a bunch of domes. You just can’t see the parts that are below ground.” (1) -Andy Weir, Artemis

I was in bed, reading this book, and I thought how does he do it? The idea of living on the moon was fascinating for me, and the science was something I would never have imagined. After reading this novel, Artemis, I wanted to find out more about this amazing author, Andy Weir. His books have made me imagine the kind of things that could, (and in some cases), have happened in real life. With some research, I realized that most things in science fiction must be backed up by some truth. Early books might have mentioned a scientific theory and then it has been used in rockets today. Reading another of his books where the rocket cuts in half, goes out on cables and the whole ship spins around, I imagined that design becoming a reality. Andy’s books are interesting while keeping the science understandable, and they inspired my dreams of becoming an author.

Andrew Taylor Weir was born on the same date as me, in June 1972 in Davis, California. His father was an accelerator physicist, and his mother was an electrical engineer (2+4), and I think that that is why he ended up being a computer engineer from the age of fifteen. Growing up, Andy didn't enjoy his younger years, especially at school. Andy was a straight A student but was easily distracted and mucked about. He had a smart mouth, and this translated to fewer friends and more bullies (5). Andy became a computer engineer in high school. He did not take classes for it because there were not any, as this was in the 1980s. He learnt most of what he knew from playing around with his computer at home (5).

Andy had always wanted to be a writer, but when he was finally old enough to fulfil his dreams, he failed many times to get started with this writing business, but he had not given up on his vision of becoming an author. After coming into some money, Andy took three years off to pursue his writing dreams. He wrote a book and tried to get it published, but it did not go well. He couldn't get an agent or a publisher to represent him, and he realized that he had tried, but to be a writer, he needed someone to believe in his work and publish his stories.

Andy returned to his day job, computer engineering, but he still wanted to write. Writing would have to become his hobby. He wrote serials and posted them to the website that he created, and gradually he grew a following. This is where the idea for his first successful novel, *The Martian*, was born.

In 2009 when Andy first started *The Martian*, his first novel, it was as a serial, and he posted a chapter every two months to his website. He was working on two other serials, but was taking his time as he wanted to make sure that the science was correct for his readers (3), because they were all “space nerds” like him. He put a lot of work into the research, it was fun for him, and he loved writing about it. In this book, Andy wanted to combine his love of science with his love of writing, and in my opinion that is exactly what he achieved. Andy’s determination to finish a project better than it was at the start and his passion for his work is inspiring to me. In *The Martian*, the main character never gives up, and I think that is a feature that can be found in the author as well.

I have a comfortable childhood, parents who lovingly support me and friends who back me up. I haven’t run into many challenges in my life, compared to the characters in Andy’s books. In *The Martian*, Mark Watney must survive alone on Mars without enough food and no way to communicate with Earth. In *Artemis*, Jazz Bashara is tasked to carry out a heist in 1/6 gravity on the moon. And in *Project Hail Mary*, Ryland Grace is stuck on a spaceship with amnesia and must save planet earth. These situations are exciting to me. Reading Andy’s creations takes me out of my world. I wonder if I were in those situations, would I have thought up all the countless solutions to grinding problems? Those cunning solutions are partly what makes Andy’s books so captivating. The other part is the sense of humour of the characters in the books. They feel believable to me, even the alien in *Project Hail Mary* feels entirely plausible.

The author Andy Weir inspires me. What I like about Andy is that even though he didn't have the best childhood he kept on going, grew up and stuck to what he loved doing even though he needed to make a living. Andy’s success has shown me that when I’m faced with challenges, even if people aren’t backing me, I should back myself, and in time hard work and passion will pay off. His humour and imagination are two of the qualities of his books that keep me coming back to read more every time.

“A story in your head isn't a story. It's just a daydream until you actually write it down. So write it down.”

Andy Weir (6)

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