UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN

ANNOUNCEMENT

Florida International University

University Graduate School

Master’s Thesis Defense

Abstract

Hail Mary

by

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HAIL MARY is a young-adult novel narrated by autistic, sixteen-year-old Aiden Wright, who yearns to play on his Florida town’s football team with his older brother Brandon, the team’s star athlete. After an opportunity opens up weeks into the season, tragedy strikes during a post-game victory celebration at a local diner, where Aiden is involved in a fight and Brandon intervenes, is seriously injured, and accused of assaulting the police officer who shot him.

Though Brandon initially receives the community’s support, videos from the incident start leaking online, some of which make Brandon look guilty. Along with Isabella, a transfer student in his Life Skills class, Aiden seeks to find evidence using his technological abilities, challenging himself even while struggling with his guilt over his brother, who was, as always, coming to his defense.

As in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon, HAIL MARY leads readers into a neurodiverse character’s particular insight and worldview to solve a mystery. Influence is also drawn from Angie Thomas’s The Hate U Give, with high-school-aged characters working against a corrupt and racist system.

Along the way, readers follow Aiden’s growth as a brother, son, and friend as he asks tougher questions and demands more from the people around him, making them see him as a human rather than viewing him through his disability and race. HAIL MARY offers a fresh perspective on the lived experience of young black people coming to terms with their place in the world and seeking to do more with what they have and who they are.

Date: March 14, 2022
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Place: AC1 317, Biscayne Bay Campus

Department: Creative Writing
Major Professor: Lynne Barrett