

Miss Wisenheimer and the Aliens – Story Synopsis

Harold Babbage is a 127 year-old scientist living alone in a shack on the planet Eelia circa 3020. Having been part of the massive failed SETI mission, a bitterness, but weary determination to continue his quest, permeates his being. Humanity is moving on without him and his stubborn desire to carry on searching for intelligent life could land him in jail.

When it was discovered that the coperniverse held no extraterrestrial intelligence despite the ease with which it could be searched, a surprising religious fervor not seen since the 21st century broke out. It was assumed that if there are no aliens then maybe there really is a God and maybe God really did make the coperniverse only for humans. Another strange thing happened: 20th century rock stars were canonized, the Christian Church became dominated by musical metaphors, and became divided into sects that aligned with various styles of music. The Holy Trinity stopped being the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost and became the Composer, the Conductor, and the Lead Violin.

We find Babbage hoeing his garden and comforting his pregnant pig, Petunia. A young woman appears out of nowhere asking directions to the Dylan Shrine. It is quickly established that Zipporah, like 90% of all humanity at this time, is descended from all the races of humanity, whereas Babbage is unusual because he is white. He is very rude but grudgingly gives her directions, says goodnight to Petunia, and goes to bed.

Awakened by his smartphone (which is embedded in the palm of his hand), Babbage's boss Rosh informs him that there are people in distress in his galaxy and that he must go save them immediately. It turns out Babbage's side job is as a ranger in the National Nature Service.

Meanwhile a terrible shootout is unfolding onboard the cruise liner Thomas Aquinas as it precariously fires its retrorockets to avoid flying into Dylan's Star (the shrine to Saint Bob Dylan). Zipporah is urging her comrade Deborah to rush the ship's bridge and attack their former companions while she covers her so they can shutdown the rockets and allow themselves to "commune with Bob Dylan's spirit". The others overpower them, call the Nature Service for help, and soon Babbage is there fixing the ship so they can all go home.

Soon the Aquinas and Babbage's cutter, which is a fancy term for what is really a galactic tow truck, open ingressions (windows in space), fire their rockets, and pass into their respective home star systems. Babbage is soon horrified to discover that Zipporah's former compatriots have locked her into a compartment on his ship and now he's stuck with her. His pride stops him from taking her to her home planet and her humiliation at having attempted and failed to kill herself and her friends stops her from leaving Eelia. She decides literally to shack up with him until she can face the coperniverse once again.

Living in Babbage's shack is horrifying for her but Zipporah immediately occupies herself with various projects including being midwife to Petunia whilst she gives birth and Babbage sleeps, ordering the robots to build a large extension to the shack for a kitchen and bathroom with proper plumbing (Babbage previously

carried water up from the lake and had an outhouse), trying to convert Babbage back to Christianity, building a temple dedicated to the memory of Saint Bob Dylan, building a small fusion power station to replace Babbage's old windmill, and saving the eggs of a native animal living in the lake. This last project was out of necessity: Zipporah's fusion reactor inadvertently caused a profusion of algae to grow on the surface of the lake resulting in its cooling and placed the eggs in danger of not hatching. The so called "lake monster" befriends Zipporah after she saves the eggs, not realizing that it was Zipporah herself that caused the problem in the first place. For Babbage the worst part of Zippy's trespass is her habit of forcing herself onto his cutter and seriously distracting him every time he has to go out into his galaxy to help people or perform other ranger duties. There is never any physical activity of a sexual nature between them.

In the meantime Rosh has taken an interest in Zipporah because her parents want to know what happened to her. At first he seems satisfied by her explanation that she's too embarrassed to go home just then. Soon both Rosh and Zipporah find out that Babbage is secretly using his huge asteroid/spaceship, the 929 Galatea, as a base to manufacture and distribute probes throughout the coperniverse in a bid to resurrect the SETI program, albeit as a one-man show. Babbage had previously been one of the top officers in SETI and many powerful people felt a little sorry for him when the program was shut down. 929 Galatea was useless for any other purpose, so they just gave it to him when he retired. Its interior is a 20 kilometer-long cylinder. In this time period gravity has been conquered and one can live an almost normal life on the grassy hills of the cylinder, and at one time many people did live there as the ship ingressed from system to system all over the coperniverse looking for evidence of alien intelligence. However, it's empty now apart from more of Babbage's robots that work diligently to build probes and launch them on their missions. Rosh is not one of those who feel sorry for him and Babbage's transgressions motivate a visit.

The pivotal moment of the film is the morning Rosh shows up at the shack. Zipporah sees his shuttlecraft floating down from the sky (rockets in this context are unnecessary since gravity can now be controlled) and warns Babbage of Rosh's arrival. Soon the three of them are sitting at the table and much of the backstory that hadn't previously been explained gets explicated now, including the words coperniverse and Homiverse. In the future it has been proven that the universe is actually an infinite space containing indefinite numbers of universes such as ours. "Universes" is clumsy so the new word coperniverse was coined (in honor of the great astronomer Copernicus) and Homiverse simply means: "the coperniverse inhabited by humans".

Rosh accuses Babbage of SETI activities and he's about to confess when Zipporah blurts out that his work is in fact supportive of Christianity and that he's on the verge of a great discovery that will have a profound effect on Christian faith. Zipporah knew that Babbage had something up his sleeve so he finally admits to both of them that he has found the center of the coperniverse. This is a place that was previously unknown to scientists but Babbage has found it because of his SETI activities. It is the location of the origin of the Big Bang. Because of the unique nature of the Big Bang this pocket of unexplored space had never been

hypothesized, let alone found. Rosh is impressed but he can't ignore Babbage's crimes so he fires him and appoints Zipporah as the ranger of the local galaxy. He promises that Babbage won't have to go to jail as long as he follows Zipporah's lead, and then they can continue their research.

At first they continue as before except Babbage reluctantly is training Zipporah to be a galactic ranger and they become friends with one of the lake monster's offspring: Mrs Turner (named in honor of Tina Turner). They realize that both of them need to go directly to the center of the coperniverse without telling Rosh. Babbage wants to go there so he can see if aliens have also gone there as it's an obvious universal meeting place for races of a higher intellectual capacity. Zipporah wants to go there because she thinks she'll find the first empirical evidence of God. They don't want Rosh to know because Babbage would go to jail, and Rosh would tell everyone about it, try to take credit, and soon there'll be millions of tourists visiting the place.

They secretly board 929 Galatea, taking with them Mrs Turner and Petunia and her family, and set off for the center of the coperniverse. When they arrive Zipporah gets to see what Babbage already knew from his probes: that there are no visible stars except for a dark star orbited by three dwarf stars and huge rings of meteoroids. These are the remnants of the Big Bang. The reason there are no visible stars is because light didn't exist in the early universe and because of the phenomenon of inflation, whereby the universe expanded faster than the speed of light; the center of the coperniverse is so far from the rest of the coperniverse, light from its stars hasn't reached the center yet.

Zipporah christens the system the Dark Star Orchestra (DSO) in honor of the famous Grateful Dead tribute band. Both are convinced this mysterious neutronium body is the key to their beliefs. Its extreme gravity force requires special modification of their spacesuits and equipment but soon they're exploring the surface and unusual caverns beneath the surface. A terrible accident occurs when Babbage is almost lost and killed but Zipporah's training pays off when she successfully rescues him. The exploration continues but eventually both of them admit defeat: there is no evidence of anything other than what they already know.

One evening they're walking along the river in 929 Galatea's cylinder, chatting about how they can't go home but they can't continue either, when Zipporah asks Babbage a series of scientific questions that makes him reanalyze an old theory about ingresses (the windows that allow them to travel anywhere in the universe). Babbage goes back to his computer shed and through pure imagination and scientific study discovers that one can produce ingress bubbles outside of previous bubbles. Again this would have the potential effect of proving either one or both of them correct about their beliefs.

Each coperniverse has its own unique physical characteristics. The atoms and galaxies of the Homiverse are completely different to the physical makeup of other coperniverses. One can go there, but if one did it is likely that one's existence would immediately end, as it's impossible for the constitution of a body from one coperniverse to remain the same in a different coperniverse. By using several ingress bubbles-within-bubbles as a kind of insulation, one can do what no human

has done before: visit other coperniverses where there may indeed be aliens, or evidence of God going round creating coperniverses for races of aliens to live in.

Unfortunately they spend nearly seven years searching other coperniverses only to find nothing useful. The exotic nature of these places is mind blowing, but their quest is still a failure. One of the last turns out to be particularly scary as they nearly crash into a gargantuan wall. Suddenly all hell breaks loose when fire, loud crunching, and klaxons scare the hell out of them. Petunia and her family are in the cylinder farm but Mrs Turner is on the bridge with Babbage and Zipporah as they experience this terrifying situation. They discover that all of the bubbles that connect them to their coperniverse have been reduced to but a mere few centimeters behind them. The space within the bubbles should always be larger than the size of the asteroid ship itself so it is always able to maneuver within it. Then they find out the coperniverse they've entered has a huge mass many orders of magnitude larger than the mass of the Homiverse and the resulting pressure on the bubbles has caused this contraction which is blocking their maneuvering. Finally they use a trick (which heartbreakingly results in the destruction of the interior of the ship's cylinder and the death of Petunia and her family) to turn the ship around and fire their rockets, hoping the power will propel them forward, back towards their own coperniverse and opening up the bottleneck in the bubbles. At first it works but there's a gigantic explosion that knocks them out.

They wake to discover the 929 Galatea is travelling at over 99% of the speed of light. They did successfully re-enter their own coperniverse, but their rockets caused a breach in the bubbles and the resulting pressure from the alien coperniverse propelled the ship to this speed in an instant without breaking the physical laws of the Homiverse, and the ingress closed behind them. Upon this discovery they realize they're doomed to travel through the universe at nearly the speed of light for eternity (there's no way to decelerate) except they won't live to enjoy it because their farm and habitat are destroyed and they only have enough rations for a few days. After a day Zipporah witnesses the Big Bang. This is because of their speed, which results not only in traveling over great distances, but also in time dilation: they're travelling millions of years into the future. The light from the stars of the Homiverse has finally arrived at the center of the coperniverse and the first light to arrive is the light of the Big Bang. Zipporah is awestruck but Babbage doesn't even care to look because they're going to die, so who cares?

A few hours later the aliens arrive. They save them by simply reversing the process they went through previously which brings 929 Galatea to a halt and the aliens dock with their ship and enter. At first Babbage and Zipporah don't even know the ship has come to a halt or who has entered the ship. When they see them for the first time they can't believe their eyes: the aliens are the distant descendants of Mrs Turner's species from Eelia. First the aliens explain how they saved them and then break the news that since they have travelled tens of millions of years into the future, the human race has already died out. But in the meantime the Eelians have evolved, discovered the evidence of Babbage's and Zipporah's life on their planet and where they went, and what they did at the DSO system.

Babbage is already speechless, not being able to believe that he's the last man alive and that he finally found an intelligent alien species. Zipporah is chipper and

enjoys chatting with the Eelians. They then reveal they have a plan to recreate the human race using their science but that Babbage and Zipporah would be the new Adam and Eve. Zipporah replies, "It would be easy for us anyway. I mean, Harold and I have been lovers for years!" Babbage chokes on his eggs.