



# Alien Morning

*Rick Wilber*

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## **Alien Morning** Rick Wilber

Peter Holman is a freelance sweeper. The year 2030 sees a new era in social media with sweepcasting, a multisensory interface that can convey every thought, touch, smell, sight, and sound, immersing the audience in another person's experience.

By fate, chance, or some darker design, Peter is perfectly positioned to be the one human to document the arrival of the aliens, the S'hudonni.

The S'hudonni offer advanced science in exchange for various trade goods from Earth. But nothing is as simple as it seems. Peter finds himself falling for, Heather Newsome a scientist chosen by the S'hudonni to act as their liason. Engaged to his brilliant marine biologist brother, Tom, Heather is not what she seems. But Peter has bigger problems. While he and his brother fight over long-standing family troubles, another issue looms: a secret war among the aliens, who are neither as benevolent nor as unified as they first seemed.

Peter slowly learns secrets he was never meant to know, about the S'hudonni, and about his own family. Realizing that he has been used, he can only try to turn his situation around, to save what he can of his life and of the future of Earth.

## **Alien Morning Details**

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Author : Rick Wilber

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# From Reader Review Alien Morning for online ebook

## Deb says

My entire bookclub hated this book. Issues with the narrator's personality and recycled plot aside, my main problem with it was that it doesn't stand alone as a complete novel. I don't care that it's supposed to be a trilogy; trilogies are three linked but separate books, and this is not one.

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## Cam says

I have to wonder if any of the authors endorsing this first novel actually read it. From the jacket, I understand the author is a respected short story writer and seemingly well-connected. Seems to me he was evaluated on his other work, because this novel was slowly paced with mediocre character development and not much of a story. Too much on the underwhelming protagonist, a new media pioneer who seems clueless and not very self-aware for someone trying to broadcast his experiences and emotions while they are happening. The other characters don't have much going on and the aliens and their primary interface are vaguely depicted. This might work better if you've read the rest of the author's works, so I bumped it up a star.

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## Denise says

Rounded up. A very promising beginning but overall disappointing. I think this was partly because the novel is a work over of several short stories. But there are other issues too. Too bad.

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## Jacqueline says

Ultimately just okay. This felt pretty cyberpunk to me. It was mostly about the tech that the hero was using to document the arrival of the aliens. The aliens were just kind of there. You felt no real threat from them even though some unrest happened. I never really warmed to the main character and ultimately nothing really happened. It all seemed rather on the surface. I think this might be the start of a trilogy.

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## Phillip III says

The year is 2030. Peter Holman was a minor league basketball player. He enjoyed modest success, and fame until a knee injury took him out of the game for good. Left with few options, he took the money he had and invested in an up and coming technology. Sweeping. Connected to the web, viewers tune in to watch live, and pre-recorded feeds as Holman interviews athletes, hits the clubs, and peeks into his personal life.

For unknown reasons, when aliens make contact on earth it Holman they want as their spokesman. His audience following is exactly what they admire. Likeable, they feel he can inform everyone of the plans the S'hudonni have for the planet, and put anxious minds at ease.

It comes down to family, basically. Holman's past is a constant pull on his thoughts. A stern father who never thought him good enough, a sister who spent her life making bad mistake after bad mistake, and a brother who was always father's favorite. Holman knows truths, though, that he has kept to himself since he was a teen. Revealing the information would destroy his brother. The sibling rivalry between Holman and his younger brother is at the center of the story.

The sibling rivalry doesn't stop there. Alien representatives Twoclick and Whistle are at odds as well. The agreement prior to arriving on earth was how to divide the planet. Twoclick, a jovial and happy being is nothing like his brother, Whistle. While Holman works hard at putting earthling minds at ease about the aliens, Whistle destroys the peace, the trust, with aggressive actions that leave countries protesting, and rioting in the streets, putting the world leaders on high-alert.

Exposed to secrets about the aliens, and thrust into compromising positions with his family, Holman is forced to pick through the jigsaw pieces and find out how best to make everything fit! With proven superiority the S'hudonni race can not just cripple, but destroy the world in a war. If Holman can't gain control of the situation, billions of lives are at risk.

Rick Wilber's ALIEN MORNING was not what I expected. It was better. It was more. His creation of Sweeping can't be far from happening. We're almost there with some of the shelf products, and apps available now. Wilber's narrative is engaging, and easy, descriptive, and tight. The characters are so precisely drawn, that all I wanted was more. More about Holman's past. More about his brother. More about his sister. I wanted more about the aliens. More. More. More. I cannot wait for the next installment in this series.

Phillip Tomasso  
Author of The Severed Empire Series, and  
The Vaccination Trilogy

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## **Bookwraiths says**

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths.

First contact stories are a staple of science fiction. Most of them seem to fall into the mold of alien invasion narrative, but, thankfully, Rick Wilber has dreamed up something a little different with *Alien Morning*.

It is 2030. Peter Holman was a minor league basketball player until he tore his knee up. Now, he is a futuristic “Sweeper” who uses advanced technology to allow his followers to not only see and hear him, but also experience everything he feels as well. Sounds great – except this is Peter we are talking about. A guy who has lots of issues: family issues, relationship issues, and life issues. All of them unresolved and dragging him down.

For some unknown reason, when the alien S’hudonni decide to make contact with earth, Holman becomes their spokesperson. His audience exactly the kind of humans the aliens wish to espouse their plans to. For his part, Peter cares less about the aliens themselves or their motives and more about growing his audience and increasing his income.

Naturally, things never stay simple when aliens show up. And, quickly, a difference in opinion about what should happen to earth arises between the two S’hudonni representatives: Twoclick and Whistle. One brother

wishing to keep things peaceful, while the other does everything he can to upset every country on the planet. Holman stuck right in the middle of a sticky situation.

Other than the cool Sweeper technology, what I really enjoyed about *Alien Morning* was the main character himself. Sure, he has problems. No, he doesn't exhibit my personal morals and beliefs. But, he is relatable and likable. His many flaws clearly shading him as an ordinary guy, one who is definitely not a super hero but someone who is out of his depths and trying to do the best he can in a situation he is not prepared to handle. And that made him interesting.

The only issue I had with this novel was the time shifts. There are many, many of these. The author jumping from the alien first contact story to the world of professional sports to family issues before diving into the future of interactive entertainment. All of them were interesting, but the shift from one aspect, one time period, to another was quite jarring at times.

*Alien Morning* was definitely a different type of first contact story. In most ways, it was better. The focus less on an alien invasion scenario (which we have all seen and read far too many times by this point) and more on the characters and their problems. Peter Holman a flawed, naive narrator, who is quite ordinary yet does a great job of exploring both the jarring impact of alien contact on our modern civilization, as well as taking a look at the future of our entertainment technology. Certainly, the book is more of a stage setter for the remaining installments of the series, since nothing gets firmly resolved this time out, but it does its job very well, providing lots of intriguing possibilities going forward.

I received an advanced reading copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review. I'd like to thank them for allowing me to receive this review copy and inform everyone that the review you have read is my opinion alone.

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## **Lindsay says**

First contact between the Earth and the S'hudonni Mercantile Empire contrasts familial conflict with the early stages of colonialism.

Peter Holman is an ex-professional athlete turned freelance journalist and a pioneer of sweeping, an immersive sensory recording/playback system. He "happens" to observe the arrival of the alien S'hudonni and becomes involved in the Earth response to them almost immediately. As an early sweeper he's perfect for the aliens to use as a sort of combined propagandist/liaison and he becomes intimately involved with them, but in doing so comes into conflict with his brother. At the same time, the alien he is working with is also in conflict with *his* brother (they've divvied the Earth up between them).

I sort of see what the author is trying to do here. Unfortunately the Holman family issues are profoundly uninteresting (all revolving around various acts of infidelity) and the S'hudonni family issues far too opaque. On the surface they sound like feuding toddlers more than sophisticated alien invaders.

The recording technology and the AI helpmates are interesting and something could have happened there, but nothing is really done with them in this book. There's a creepy parallel between Peter's AI helpmate myBob and the alien Twoclicks's assistant. She does everything for Twoclicks that Peter's myBob does for him, and like myBob can read Peter's thoughts. Given Peter develops a relationship with "her" while still being with his girlfriend is something I find disturbing. It's not even clear to me that the alien assistant is

actually sentient and not just set up as Peter's perfect sex object.

There's some interesting ideas here, but overall I'm left wondering what the point was to it all and it just doesn't feel very well executed.

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### **Zora says**

Bailed at page 100. Far too slow.

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### **Andy Coleman says**

A SIMPLE MAN'S REVIEW:

This is an awful book. It combines a bit of a predictable aliens-coming-to-earth story into a long-winded narrative of the protagonist's life in pro sports and "casting". Even after I was able to convince myself to continue reading the book, I found I was often skimming the flashbacks of his entirely unrelated pro basketball career. And the worst part? Every time the protagonist asked the aliens a question related to the plot, their answer was "We'll answer all of these questions later". Guess what? There was no later. The book just ends! And there is zero chance of me grabbing the sequel.

If you want to read a great first-contact story, pick up *Anomaly*, *The Spaceship Next Door*, or *Dark Orbit*. Hell, *The Three-Body Problem* is one of the best trilogies I've ever read. So there are plenty of good choices out there - skip this one.

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### **John says**

This gets one star only because the author had me so convinced that he was setting up some major twists/shockers at the end that I was fooled into reading the whole thing. Gotta respect that. Bulletin: No, there is not one single surprise to be found either at the climax or thereafter. So what's left is a novelette with a moderately intriguing alien contact scenario featuring a not-too-bright guy who finds himself functioning as the media interface for an alien and its shapechanging hottie sex engine---padded out to novel length with tedious, NONRELEVANT flashbacks and interposed encounters exploring said guy's relationships since childhood with his thoroughly ordinary family and his experiences with women as a basketball player in Europe. I for one feel cheated, and as for the prospect of reading the sequels, that would be a big "Fool Me Once..."

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### **Carolyn F. says**

This book is more about some convoluted excuse for betraying his brother/romance and being a part of the new social network than a sci-fi book. Halfway through the book, there are glimpses and maybe two encounters with aliens but there's also sex with a couple of people that may or may not mean anything more than sex. And that's what the majority of the book was. I gave this book until approximately halfway and still

there were only 2-1/2 encounters with the aliens and one of those doesn't really count. You have to read it to understand what I'm trying not to say. If I rated this book now it would be 2 stars, but since I didn't finish it and let it perhaps redeem itself in my eyes, I'll not rate it.

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## **Wes says**

You know Alien Morning's a work of science fiction when visitors from outer space turn up in Florida and the world freaks out a little bit (as opposed to just saying "Oh, Florida!" and moving on with their day).

At its heart, though, this first book in Rick Wilber's series is a story about families - especially sibling rivalries (both foreign and domestic), with some obvious affection for locales around Ireland and Tampa Bay. It's not heavy on Tom Clancy-style how-it-all-works science fiction details, but is instead a first-person account of a futuristic YouTuber caught up in an alien first contact situation on Earth.

It's a great setup! Looking forward to more.

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## **Michael Salmon says**

Alright so I have no idea what the hell Ben Bova was talking about when he wrote that this is the "...best first contact story I've seen in decades." From my own reading I can only surmise that it's the first he's ever read. For starters the actual 'first contact' was ridiculous. Lights move in the sky in a way that suggests they are not naturally occurring, speculation abounds, the media throws out hundreds of theories, then suddenly a woman from an organisation dealing primarily with the protagonist's brother and sea turtles contacts the protagonist to say "Hey, man, we like the footage you got of the lights, come work with us."

And then ANOTHER organisation that builds rockets contacts the protagonist - though this time the chain is: Rocket place employee --> bordercollie --> heroine addict sister --> protagonist. and says, "Hey, man, cool footage, we've been chatting with the lights for weeks, turns out it's aliens, want to come see?"... So that's the actual first contact "Yeah, we've been chatting with them for weeks..."

Then there is a brief interlude where the protagonist sleeps with the girl his brother is seeing/in love with (sea turtle lady) who turns out to be an alien shape shifter (that old chestnut) and then one of the alien prince's pops out in amongst the grossly afformentioned sea turtles and starts lisping good will at everyone in the area.

The protagonist figures out that the aliens can basically control anything electronic, to the point of displaying things that aren't real and never happened in real time onto anything with a screen. Lispy McPrincling asks the protagonist if he wants to be a human video camera with all sorts of neural implants and brain hacking, an offer which our protagonist dedicates no thought to before accepting because he is a moron.

We then observe a brief intermission from the story as the protagonist remembers the time he saw his Dad screwing the secretary and makes some fumbling attempt at using that as moral justification for sleeping with his brothers alien shapeshifter sea turtle loving girlfriend. You loved dad --> dad had illicit affairs --> I slept with your girlfriend --> you should be happy? I'm not sold...

We move on to Ireland where a lot of whiskey is consumed, the Alien prince losses then regains his lisp,

ANOTHER alien prince melts a bunch of military jets on a lark, a hotelier gives away a signed copy of William B Yeats' "The Tower" so that the protagonist will give him a good review on yelp, Sea turtle shape shifting brother fucker alien disintergrates then presses ctrl+v and is all better, alien prince one lisps a bunch of Irish people offers they can't refuse, the protagonist reminisces on all the women playing basketball has allowed him to sleep with and then he hurts his knee, heroine addict sister appears from under a rock in Ireland and then explodes (and no one seems to ask any of the pertinent questions surrounding the event), the aliens heal the protagonist's burnt arm and sore knee and he's all happy again despite the fact that the aliens won't allow him to make phonecalls or talk to his hetero life companion/cellphone AI.

... Back to the sister. The protagonist spends about three chapters pre-explosion and two post-explosions trying to convince the reader that he reeeaaallly cares about her. The message is somewhat cheapened by the fact that when her partner calls him to say she's gone missing, his response is something along the lines of "I'm in Ireland, can't really do much about that..." this is about three minutes before she springs out of a hole and goes bang.

Anywho, Peter (the protagonist whose name I just remembered), takes a few naps then wakes up in Bermuda where he mentions Gosling Rum (black seal) enough times that I'm convinced his life depended on it. After that he gets an angry call from his brother who is rather upset that Peter didn't call him to mention their sister was dead (a fact he had no way of knowing Peter knew). A few hours later he calls again and leaves some veiled threats, a few more hours later and he calls to withdraw the threats and stop Peter's plane landing on a booby trapped runway... WHY WOULD ANYONE SHARE THEIR BOMBING PLANS WITH THE VICTIM'S BROTHER?! And then it turns out he knew it was coming all along... Call me crazy but what the shit kind of character is this? Multiple PhDs, savior of the sea turtles, but also the most irrational turd to ever set foot on earth. The logic, or lack thereof seems to go something like "A family spat between some aliens is killing a bunch of people and causing general havoc with humanity but you slept with sea turtle lady and now I want you to die." What about the aliens? Missing the bigger picture, Tom, you giant dick. Oh and also he's a bomb now too.

I also wonder when Peter is going to stop taking "Tell you later." as an acceptable answer for literally any question he has... That's just lazy writing. I would rather Rick Wilber have his characters just yell "BECAUSE OF REASONS, PETER!" as they all have another glass of Gosling black seal rum. arseholes.

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## **Alan Zendell says**

A somewhat offbeat but entertaining story of First Contact, told by Peter, an often naive, gullible narrator struggling with problems in his own life. The story of the alien contact is almost a story within the larger story of Peter's issues. It's an interesting approach that works very well, except for a few spots when it gets in its own way.

There's also the innovative technology of sweeping, that lets Peter the journalist communicate not only what he sees and hears, but everything he feels as well. His wired audience feels everything he feels when they plug in, and for much of the story Peter is more concerned with growing his audience (and income) than with the aliens themselves. In most ways Peter is just like the rest of us, surely no superhero, and as flawed as most of his readers. Maybe that's what makes him so likable.

As the first book of a trilogy, it's mostly stage-setting. Not much gets resolved, but it certainly provides fertile ground for the next two books.



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**Daniel says**

With a decent ending, would have been 4 stars

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