Imagine a First Contact without contact, and an alien arrival where no aliens show up.

Imagine the sudden appearance of exclusion zones all over the planet, into which no humans are allowed. Imagine an end to all violence, from the school yard bully to nations at war. Imagine an end to borders, an end to all crime. Imagine a world where hate has no outlet and the only harm one can do is to oneself.

Leaders of governments are not in the loop. Scientists have no answers. The military’s hardware has stopped working. We’re calling, but ET’s not answering.

Imagine a world transformed, but with no guidance and no hint of what’s coming next. What would you do? How would you feel? What questions can you ask--what questions dare you ask--when the only possible answers come from the all-too-human face in your mirror?

On the day of First Contact, it won't be about them. It will be about us.
About the Author

Steven Erikson is a New York Times bestselling author renown for writing The Malazan Book of the Fallen, a ten-volume series that has sold millions of copies worldwide and is recognized as number two of the top 10 fantasy books by Fantasy Book Review and one of 30 best fantasy series of all time by Paste Magazine. He is a trained archaeologist and anthropologist who has published over twenty books, most of which explore notions of privilege, power hierarchies, and the rise and fall of civilizations, or take the piss out of the same. Erikson has been nominated for the Locus Award four times and the World Fantasy Award twice. He lives in Victoria, B.C. with his lovely wife Clare.
Praise

"Steven Erikson hasn't just reinvigorated the first-contact novel, he's reinvented it. This is a wholly original book, brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed, with a fascinating central conceit related to curbing human violence. A masterpiece." —ROBERT J. SAWYER

"Steven Erikson has one of the finest minds alive. Nothing less could have produced The Tales of the Malazan Book of the Fallen. Now, in Rejoice: A Knife to the Heart, Erikson shows us what he sees when he considers the future of humanity. He calls it a thought experiment. I call it an important book." —STEPHEN R. DONALDSON

“Contact stories have been a staple of science fiction for about as far back as the genre goes. Unfortunately, for the most part they have typically been tackled as a normal terrestrial military contact or clash (an action narrative), or as criminal activities (a mystery, or whodunit narrative).

Steven Erikson, however, delves deeply into the philosophical and existential questions the term “contact” implies. Here we encounter aliens who are actually, truly, alien, not just stand-ins for those beyond our borders, or another tribe or group. This is startling and thought-provoking stuff – just what science fiction should be. Read it and try to think as you once did about, well, anything. Go on. I dare you.”—IAN C. ESSLEMONT

“A stunning work of literature.” —BENNETT R. COLES

“In Rejoice, Steven Erikson takes the varied viewpoints and clever worldbuilding showcased in the Malazan series and applies it close to home, twisting the first-contact premise to highlight our struggles and suggest possible solutions. As a study of humanity's strengths and flaws, this latest novel stands out for its pointedness and its rich blend of the fantastic and the literary.”—BRANDON CRILLY, BLACK GATE MAGAZINE

“Finally, an alien invasion apocalypse I can get behind. Erikson pulls no punches in this absolutely cutting look at where humanity is at, where we’re going, and the monumental changes that need to happen to pull us out of our death spiral. Rejoice I did at this thrilling tale masterfully told” —H.G. BELLS

Media Mentions

- In 500 Words or Less: Early Review of Rejoice, A Knife to the Heart
- Erikson Tackles First Contact With Move to Hard Science Fiction
- Steven Erikson talks about first contact
- Fireside Conversation with Steven Erikson
- Interview Steven Erikson
Why This Book and Why Now

Many First Contact novels I've read left me frustrated. Not because of the writing or the story or even the characters as such. There's some really good stuff out there. But it seemed that so many of the novels ended right at the moment where things got really interesting for me.

Okay, the aliens have arrived. Now what?

The novels that tackled that question often defaulted to a Business-As-Usual-Only-Bigger scenario: the same competition, aggression, deception, resource-chasing, wars, politics, nationalism, corporatism, as we have now, only with a bunch of bug-eyed aliens tossed into the mix (sort of like Star Trek Discovery, or DS9, or Alien).

And those assumptions make me ... skeptical. In fact, I'm having a hard time buying it. I don't think resources are scarce out there. Space isn't even as empty as we think it is (as physicists are now discovering). I don't think life is rare, even in the void between the planets. Also, I can't really imagine that any spacefaring civilization coming to visit us gives a flying f**k about our nations, presidents, dictators, covert agencies, corporate interests, borders, militaries, capitalism, communism and all the rest. As for our highly vaunted scientists, well, that'd be like trying to have a conversation with a four-year-old, we'd be so far behind. Besides, scientists aren't really people-people, or rather, they have no special qualifications for being on point in a First Contact event. Same for astronauts, military types, men-in-black (and let's face it, what a bleeped-up lot they'd be ... if they existed). Nor politicians (I mean, when was the last time any of them truly had your best interests at heart? Would you want them mucking it up with aliens? I wouldn't, for the simple reason that they're not qualified and, oh yeah, I don't trust them).

I want to know: what if ... and ... what then? And that's where this novel came from. Because I have this suspicion. If ET arrived tomorrow, all they'd have to do to bring down human civilization, is show up. No giant lasers, no hordes of giant spiders or mech-warriors. Just show up. We'll do the rest.

Steven Erikson