



Eternal Shadow

Trevor B. Williams

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Eternal Shadow is a tense science fiction story that paints a thoughtful, intelligent portrait of humanity's first contact with extraterrestrial life.

A monumental scientific discovery brings two women together and then threatens to destroy them in Trevor B. Williams's cerebral novel *Eternal Shadow*.

When Samantha and Jennifer spot an alien ship hovering near Pluto, they and their SETI colleagues are through the roof with excitement. The thrill turns to fear when the ship's destructive capabilities are put on full, terrifying display. With the clock ticking down to the ship's arrival on Earth and Earth's destruction, Sam and Jennifer scramble to learn all they can about the approaching alien while navigating the political and corporate forces that seek to help or hinder their efforts—and sorting through their feelings for each other.

Eternal Shadow, the first book in the Fall of Gods series, is a fascinating tale. The mystery builds little by little, with each new discovery inviting more questions and more intriguing problems to solve. Much of the suspense comes from the elusive nature of the ship and its sole occupant and humanity's attempts to band together long enough to stop it from obliterating Earth.

The narrative relies a great deal on scientific terms and concepts. The many detailed descriptions of satellite construction and data analysis are educational and make the situation more realistic. A sense of urgency bleeds through characters' conversations, in large part thanks to the extensive incorporation of scientific elements.

The scientific passages are complemented by descriptions of the alien ship and the research centers where much of the action takes place. Though these passages are seldom the story's focus, they give a fuller picture of the places and objectives that the characters are fighting for.

The characters are well developed and play off of each other in interesting, sometimes unexpected ways. Their fears and hopes regarding the aliens bring some characters together while forcing others apart, adding to the challenges that Jennifer and Sam face. Even minor characters show doubts, grow, and change, enriching the story with multiple layers of development and conflict.

The relationship between Sam and Jennifer is just as compelling as the extraterrestrial drama. They have a deep bond rooted in their mutual love of science, and from this seed grows a playful yet strong relationship. For a time, it is a loving oasis in an uncertain world.

There are awkward sentence structures and tense changes throughout. Illustrations at the start of each chapter depict key pieces of technology from the story. By the end of the narrative, some questions are unresolved; still, the conclusion is touching and optimistic.

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with extraterrestrial life.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September 12, 2019)

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