

## The Aquarians: 2012 - A New Era Begins

**Eric Rankin**

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There is a lot of buzz lately about December 21, 2012. This is the date the ancient Mayan calendar ends—and to some observers, it portends the possibility of the literal end of time and, with it, the destruction of the world.

In *The Aquarians*, Eric Rankin puts aside this doomsday scenario and instead interprets the date in question as the beginning of a new era. Rankin goes quite a bit further, suggesting that the relationship between humans and dolphins will play a large role in the rebirth and renewal of humanity.

It's a fanciful concept, to be sure, but Rankin weaves a tale that may well turn readers into believers. The story revolves around Rebecca Larson, a young woman who, through a seeming twist of fate, becomes a dolphin behaviorist in Southern California. She is drawn to the notion that an "Age of Aquarius" is coming and sees dolphins as a window to the future. She works with the acclaimed scientist, Dr. Troy Wallace, who is doing advanced research concerning how dolphins communicate. Dr. Wallace's research is not going well, and his investors are ready to abandon their support.

Meanwhile, Ryan Ericson, the well-known host of a television series, interviews Rebecca and is immediately taken with her. The attraction is not merely physical; rather, it is the result of a much greater force that mysteriously brings the two together.

Ryan also interviews a local fisherman, Vern Becket, with whom Ryan feels the same kind of strong, inexplicable connection. Again, a greater force is at work. It turns out the common bond between Ryan and Vern, as with Ryan and Rebecca, is dolphins.

There are a few elements in *The Aquarians* that might have been better executed. The villain, for example, is thinly drawn and one-dimensional. The use of the song, "The Age of Aquarius," to which Rebecca assigns mystical meaning, is somewhat contrived. But these are minor deficiencies in an otherwise solid story that has enough twists and drama to keep readers engaged until the very end.

Rankin, who has traveled the world studying and swimming with dolphins, offers rare insight into the intelligence of these creatures. He does an admirable job of bringing together the lives of the story's characters in an intriguing plot. The book is well-written and nicely constructed. Overall, *The Aquarians* is a compelling, thought-provoking, and enjoyable read.

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