

In this sixth Other Worldly novel, Rowan Layne travels to an unexpected place in space awash in the essence and vibration of higher self. But is it unconditional love or uncontrollable desire she's feeling for yet another alien entity?

Altogether Alien

By Lauryne Wright

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AUTHOR OF *Alien Sensation*

lauryne Wright

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Print ISBN: 978-1-958878-22-4

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-382-7

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia, U.S.A.

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Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2023

The Other Worldly series

Alienable Rights

Feeling Alienated

Aliens Abound

Being Alien

Alien Sensation

Chapter 1

Perhaps walking Bodie under a full moon wasn't a stellar idea. These days the world seemed to be spiraling into a black hole of batshit crazy. But it was such a lovely breezy night, and my scrappy dog trotted along sniffing and whizzing his peemail. Until we turned a corner.

"You're the girl who wrote that alien book, that Rowan Layne chick." A hulking male approached, reaching a meaty hand out to Bodie, who whimpered and pressed against my legs.

Yes, I was Rowan Layne, author and otherworldly advocate. But I was pushing sixty, so I couldn't help but wonder if he called me *girl* because I somehow threatened his masculinity by simply existing as an outspoken female.

I moved to cross the street, but he kept coming as Bodie twisted and pulled against his leash, tail tucked, dragging me away from the cretin stalking us.

"You should be nicer in what you say about humans. I heard there's gonna be a law that says you can't say that stuff anymore."

Was this like telling me to smile more? Experience said it was best not to engage. His next move could be whipping out a pistol. And I should have heeded the message on the mug my sister recently sent: *Sometimes I stay inside because it's just too peopley out there.*

I kept walking, holding tight to Bodie's leash. The man followed.

"You listen to me. You and your dog aren't welcome here. Do your whoring somewhere else with those harlot red curls. We stick up for our own kind, not mutants."

When we passed under a streetlamp, I glanced back to see him lunge, arms outstretched as if to snatch Bodie. Rage coursed through me. I whirled toward him.

A sharp cracking noise hissed from above and sent the man stumbling backward into a barrel cactus. He screamed, Bodie barked, and I felt bad for the resilient plant the man landed on.

Cumulus clouds appeared in the sky, blocking out moonlight as my head filled with that cottony sensation accompanying telepathic words. “We. Will. Take. Ignoramus. From. Here. Rowan.” Greens got snarkier each time they engaged another hapless jerk. Then again, Earth’s original inhabitants had dealt with human aggression far longer than most realized.

Several four-foot-tall creatures swooped in from the shadows, whisking the man upward to their cloud-camouflaged craft. One winked a large slanted black eye at me. If Greens had mouths, they’d be grinning.

The man would remember his abduction only as they wanted him to. But he likely would never mess with me or my sweet pup again.

Bodie yipped. No doubt he’d expected to play Frisbee with the diminutive entities appearing gray under artificial light, but another individual walked toward us.

“Are you okay? I heard a crack and saw the streetlight flicker as I ran around the corner.” He bent to pet Bodie, who greeted him with noisy adoration.

The young male was indeed dressed for jogging. As the moon emerged from behind clouds, I could see light-red hair and aqua eyes, more blue than green, reminiscent of someone from my past. But was he a Red Orbiter sent by friends otherwise occupied on this balmy February night in Vegas? Had he seen Greens abduct my harasser?

His face revealed nothing as he smiled at me.

“We’re fine,” I said. “Do I know you?”

A female voice slipped into my ear from afar, because that’s my alien-DNA-derived gift: extrasensory auditory abilities. “Listen to the

message he will impart, and follow your instinct. Others will support this endeavor.”

RR Bellatrix. Currently eight human months old, an alien-hybrid bossy baby. First of her kind on Earth, and I was unfathomably her guardian. An intergalactic messenger, but I had a sneaky feeling—as Mom would say—that she was my guardian too.

The young man with an alluring aura said, “Men in suits will approach as you arrive home, offering an opportunity. I will see you again.”

Of course my phone pinged right then. Had to be Mom. As I glanced down to pull it from my pocket, the mysterious man disappeared. A trick of shafted moonlight?

Attempting to view the text without my readers, I squinted as I paused on the sidewalk. “Doodles!!! Your dad says something is happening there!!! Horoscope said new beginnings were on the horizon and you could be swept up in a whirlwind of intrigue involving the number 5!!! Is your weather windy??? Raining here!!! (cloud, frowny face, umbrella, kissy face emoji)”

Doodles was my childhood nickname, which anyone within an audible radius of my octogenarian mom inevitably learned. Dad could intercept high-frequency electronic communications, so he probably heard what Greens said as they protected me.

I scurried toward the property Win acquired last year in the historic Scotch 80s Las Vegas neighborhood. He wasn’t home, working as usual. A black Chevy Suburban turned into our circular driveway. Preferable to an unmarked van with militarized secret police coming to snatch me, but perhaps not by much. Bodie whimpered and sniffed the air.

Two men in suits emerged. Good thing I had fair warning or I’d think I entered an episode of *The X-Files*. Neither dude was smoking,

but they both wore dark glasses, so maybe this was a twisted *Matrix* setup? Or *Men in Black*. Except these *were* the aliens.

Why was I fixated on fictional shows and movies when the world now knew extraterrestrials existed and I myself was 83 percent otherworldly? Did the brain revert to the fantastical when reality felt like *The Twilight Zone*? There I went again. Sheesh.

“Why the sunglasses? Does moonlight bother your eyes?” I asked the two men.

“We aren’t wearing glasses,” said one as I bent to wrap my arms around Bodie.

They were *gaslighting* me?

I looked up, and damn if they weren’t peering down with uncovered eyes. It made me think of my visit to the exoplanet Proxima Centauri b, where the landscape tended to mess with one’s perspective.

“We can cover our eyes for you if you find them unsettling, Ms. Layne. We want you to be comfortable for our first encounter. We are visitors from Sirius.”

No wonder Bodie did a happy prance. That’s where his canine species hailed from. The brightest star in Earth’s sky, in the constellation Canis Major, Latin for “greater dog.”

Where 5 percent of my DNA derived. Uncanny.

Was that horoscope from Mom coming to fruition?

One of the visitors said, “We would like you to travel to Sirius with us.”

Chapter 2

Why did it take me more than three years to have a quintessential close encounter wherein a previously unknown extraterrestrial species waltzed right up and immediately revealed who they were and their purpose for being there?

And why did I so easily trust them with my life, along with my critters', who they inexplicably knew I wouldn't leave behind?

I went inside the guest house that Win had renovated for me to gather Morris the kitty and Bodie's supplies along with a bag of toiletries and a change of clothes. Then we loaded into the men's Suburban, and I didn't think much of it. But one minute I was staring at the glaring illumination of the Las Vegas Strip as we sped down I-15, and the next the view beyond the windshield became a fiery, spiraling infinitesimal void.

Morris chattered away like he'd done this before, while Bodie leaned into the shoulder of the dude driving the spaceship I'd mistaken for a Chevy Suburban, panting in the alien's ear, slurping his scent from our perch in the backseat. Had I hopped aboard a *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* excursion?

Luminarians. That's what they'd told me they were. I assumed as in *luminous*, but figured it might be a tad rude to whip out my phone to google the term, and I'd get pukey if I did so at the speed we seemed to be traveling.

Not to mention their eyes had blazed from black to crystalline blue white while speaking, and I was concerned they'd emit laser beams like my red crystal earrings from Mars. Or maybe they had x-ray vision á la Superman, and I'd already dealt with the challenge of the actual impetus for *that* comic book alien for a few years.

I couldn't even fuss at Red Orbiter Roger Rogers—or Raucous Wilde and his brother, Rowdy, for that matter—about why they hadn't

mentioned these folks from Sirius. Though I'd likely get the same "It's their story to tell" tune from the keepers of all known data about the universe. Red Orbiter observers were reluctant to share details about others, but given the astoundingly stupid response of too many humans to the revelation of aliens among us, could I really blame them?

The visitors said their names translated as Scorch and Spark. My sister would be thrilled their names didn't begin with *R*. But, *seriously*? At least they weren't called Nuke and Annihilate. Then they'd be all too humanlike, and I'd have reason to be worried.

And yes, they were both scorching in terms of physical appeal and appearance. Hot-flash-inducing scorching. Did that mean they'd have sparkling personalities too?

"You have questions," said the Luminarian seated next to the driver.

Ya think? These visitors clearly knew more about me than I did about them.

"You said Sirius is the gateway and center of all that is deemed sacred on Earth." I shifted in my car/spaceship seat toward them. "And that it embodies the essence of playfulness and will help me recapture my lost sense of joy. But what just happened, and what are we whizzing through right now?" I gripped my thighs.

The view beyond the car window was akin to a cinematic version of flying warp speed through deep space. My face felt taut like it did when I'd landed on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific during my environmental lawyer days for the Department of the Navy.

"We're traveling in a vortex," answered Scorch from the driver's seat. "Through which energy enters and leaves the universe, and all archetypal energy flows."

"Physics," I muttered.

“On Sirius you will engage with the energy of your highest self,” said Spark. “And connect to the essence and vibration of unconditional love.”

I had definitely spiraled down a rabbit hole. No longer Dorothy with *Wizard of Oz* weirdness on Proxima Centauri b; I was Alice. I didn’t want to be Alice. Wasn’t she nutso? And who was the seriously hot jogger who approached me first? Did he represent unconditional love, or uncontrolled lust?

Now I was getting loopy. Which made sense, given I’d been plunged from the bright lights of Vegas smackdab into a space vortex. Would they let me write about this? Because it seemed like something American humans, overfed a predictable and often ridiculous Hollywood version of sci-fi fantasy, might actually believe.

“So are there other rabbit holes—uh, *vortexes*—used to visit Earth?”

“There are many. Such as Mount Shasta in California.”

“I knew it!” I said, startling Bodie into giving me a side-eye. I pet him, and he returned to snuffling Scorch. “Supposedly energy vortexes exist there, Earth’s major chakra. Lots of paranormal scuttlebutt. Is there a horned serpentlike creature in Shasta Lake?” I leaned forward. “Do you know about the fae on Earth?”

Scorch and Spark glanced at each other. “We know of Nessie in Scotland and Champ, or Sidhe, in New England. But we cannot confirm a similar creature in Shasta Lake,” said Spark.

Damn. I’d been on an unprecedented roll in gleaning information.

“How about the Bermuda Triangle?” I gripped the back of their seats. “Is it an energy vortex and that’s why so many planes and ships have disappeared from there?”

Spark smiled. “Luminarians did not abduct anyone from that region.”

Oh. My. Gosh.

“You mean like you abducted me? Except I came with you willy-nilly of my own free will. Or I hope I did.” I sat back in the seat. “You didn’t mess with my mind, did you?”

“We extended an invitation. We cannot mess with your mind, and we wouldn’t want to. It’s about higher energy.” Spark turned to peer at me, his dark eyes once again flashing to crystalline blue.

“Do you know if I’ve been to other locales with a vortex?”

“Pyramid Lake in Nevada. And while in the Pacific Northwest, you are within range of our most accessed vortex on the North American continent.”

“Crater Lake? I launched from there into space last year.”

“That is a port of call used by others, not an energy vortex accessed by Luminarians. Mount Adams is the vortex location.”

Holy space holes. I read an article about Washington being the third highest state for reported UFO sightings before the alien revelation, and strange lights in the sky around Mount Adams had been seen for more than a century.

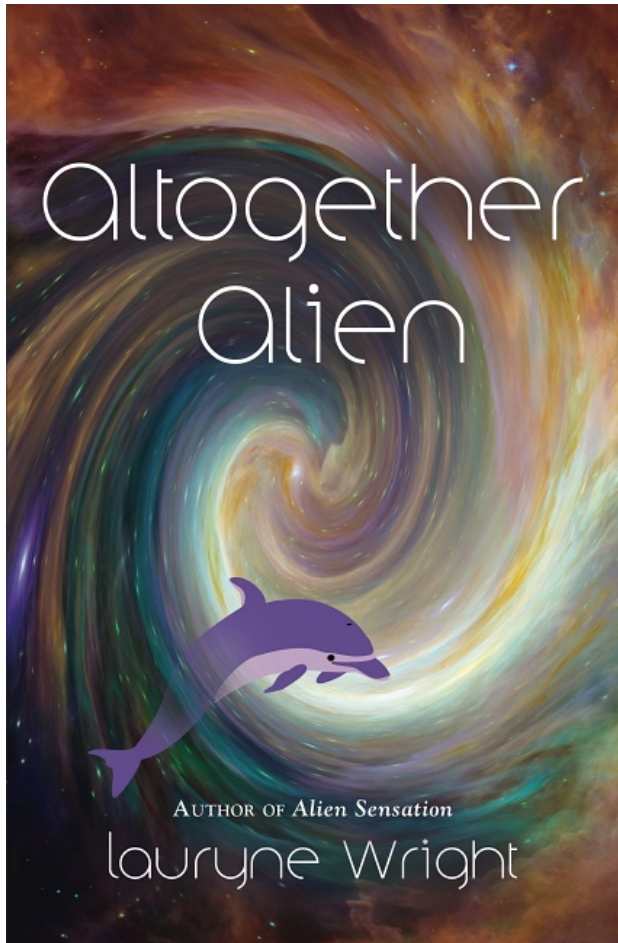
Bodie now sprawled next to me on the backseat, belly up, legs splayed, not a care in the galaxy. Morris sniffed his snout, a second-hand intake of alluring Luminarians.

“So why Las Vegas?” I asked. “It’s not atop a tall mountain, a steep canyon, or near a deep or remote body of water.”

“The space that rests in the desert valley surrounded by mountains has a special energy of its own. Naught to do with casinos and gambling, though it is often why people are drawn there to misguidedly seek monetary fortune,” said Spark.

“Or they can’t afford to live in California anymore,” I snarked.

“You have sensed this energy for what it is, Rowan. This gateway to knowledge so fervently sought.”



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