



# Coyote Horizon

*Allen M. Steele*

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**Coyote Horizon** Allen M. Steele

**"The master of science-fiction intrigue" (*Washington Post*) returns to the Coyote universe.**

The planet of Coyote has become the last, best hope of humankind, but it has also become the principal point of contact with the *hjadd*, the alien race encountered by a European starship many years earlier. Although the *hjadd* have built an embassy near the original colony, they remain a mystery.

And as the colonists make preparations to explore the rest of the new world, ex-convict Hawk Thompson discovers more about the *hjadd* than anyone has learned before-and his knowledge will change human history...

## Coyote Horizon Details

Date : Published March 3rd 2009 by Ace Books (first published February 11th 2009)

ISBN : 9780441016822

Author : Allen M. Steele

Format : Hardcover 356 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Space, Space Opera, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Coyote Horizon for online ebook

## Tina Bartholoma says

Book #4 Good series but you'll want to read them in order. Following the what if/philosophy tradition side of Science Fiction. Has a frontier setting with a foreign planet/aliens flavor. Each book jumps forward a decade or so in the colonization process, but there's always a dual plot of politics "back home" or "out there" effecting tracking with the frontier survival plot.

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## John Loyd says

Coyote is a moon around the planet Bear 47 light years from Earth. The original ship that went to Coyote took fifty some years to get there. A few years later they had a star bridge that cut the travel time to just a couple of weeks. Coyote, Coyote Rising and Coyote Frontier are about the discovery, exploration, colonization and eventual independence. Spindrift and Galaxy Blues and in the Coyote universe. At some point an alien race, the hjadd, make contact with humanity and build an embassy on Coyote.

Coyote Horizon picks up with Coyote having a few towns but with most of the world undeveloped even unexplored. Hawk Thompson is on parole, the inhibitor patch keeping him from violent actions, working as an immigration inspector at the spaceport. Hawk catches a would be terrorist coming through customs and becomes a minor hero. A bit later a hjadd ambassador comes through customs and gives Hawk a Sa'Tong-tas. A sort of spiritual guide. Hawk now has a purpose with that he breaks parole.

Sawyer Lee is a wilderness guide. Morgan Goldstein hires him to help him find his friend Joe Walking Star Cassidy. They find him and a small group on the otherwise uninhabited sub continent of Medsylvania doing things with ball plants and the pseudowasps that they contain. When the meeting is finished he has talked Morgan into funding a new building complex.

Hawk and Melissa get jobs on the work crew building the new monastery for the Order. After several months when the job is almost complete Hawk finally gets to meet with Joe.

An Exploratory Expedition or ExEx is commissioned to circumnavigate the equatorial river and do scientific research documenting new species along the way. Sawyer Lee comes along as a guide. After just a couple of weeks former President Carlos Montero is called back to handle negotiations with Earth, where the break down of the WHU means significant changes for Coyote. The WHU was the one major power that didn't recognize Coyote's independence, but the new government may be open to releasing any claims on Coyote in exchange for relaxing immigration.

The Chaaz'maha, no longer Hawk Thompson, arrives in the small town of Carlos' Pizza with Melissa and Walking Star. There, one by one, he teaches people about the Sa'Tong. We follow the chaaz'maha through the rest of the book.

Steele alludes to incidents that happened in the Coyote trilogy. Not too many and most you can pick up from context. Your understanding of Coyote would be greatly enhanced by reading the prior books, but it's not a necessity. The first half of the book is good, the second half really picks up and is excellent--other than ending with a cliff hanger, so be prepared to read Coyote Destiny.

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## Steve Gigl says

A bit disjointed (hard to avoid when a novella or two are jammed together), and featuring shallow, one-dimensional, and straw-man-filled religion, it nonetheless kept me reading throughout, which says something for Steele's craft.

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## MB (What she read) says

Enthralling, although it did not go in the direction that I was hoping!

I was intrigued by the appearance of the Hjadd (sp?) in the last book and was looking forward to learning about them. However they only showed up in this book minimally in order to move the plot along. I would also have liked more about Coyote and its ecosystem and 'creatures'. I was disappointed when the storyline left the expedition and instead followed Hawk and his (somewhat unconvincing) new religious philosophy. The stereotypical villain also bothered me. But there were a lot of interesting developments here and I will look forward to Coyote Destiny to see how they play out. This book kept my attention and was a fast read.

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## George says

It's been a few years since I read the original Coyote trilogy and I was really happy to get back into that universe. The combination of frontier life and survival with high-tech science was extremely thrilling. But, as with any series the story evolves and advances. As the coyote stories progressed modern (and futuristic) technology became more commonplace in the lives of the characters, yet still with the wilderness outpost aspect of it.

Coyote Horizon continues with this technological progress, which I guess is OK, but I kind of missed the real roughing-it feel of the earlier novels. On the other hand, there were some interesting "old technology" machines in the story that I didn't feel comfortable with having a place in the Coyote universe. Particularly coal powered boats and such... It's never mentioned where any coal mines are on the moon and there was never any mention of the moon's ancient history, but even if there are coal deposits I would think that within the next 300 years we'd be able to develop technology that would replace coal, even on remote planetoids. Granted the original colonists were from only 60 years into the future from now, but later generations had the benefits of hundreds of years worth of new scientific research. I understand some things reverting back to antiquated technology (firearms, animal labor, sailing ships, etc.) but coal powered technology just seemed to be a strange departure from the other relatively clean tech used in the novels.

Anyway, that small gripe aside, my only other major issue with the novel was the 'preachy' aspect of it. I don't want to say much to avoid spoilers, but I will quote from the Acknowledgements: "The religious and philosophical arguments posed in this novel were, in large part, inspired by *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins and *The Varieties of Scientific Experience* by Carl Sagan." And many times throughout the novel the reader is nearly bashed over the head with the philosophies presented by these two authors. I felt that religion was really not given a fair chance, nor portrayed realistically. There is a lot of gray area in people's characters, but when it came to the dogma I felt like it was a very clear cut line on where Allen Steele's

opinions lie.

Otherwise I really enjoyed the book. I would give it about 3.5 stars, but since I can't give it a half star I'll round up to 4. I'm really excited about the next book though because it seems like there might be even more actual exploration involved (there was some in Coyote Horizon, but a lot of it was just to set up the philosophical ideas in the novel).

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### **Jeff says**

This book was a three-star book until the last 50 pages when everything hit the fan. This is the fourth book set in Steele's Coyote universe and seemed to move slower than the others, up until the end when a major crisis is resolved. The book is set up in several stand alone sections, rather than a long novel with a single story arc. The setting on Coyote is unique in that it is essentially like a western, with some advanced technology thrown in here and there due to the planet's relationship with a deteriorating earth. In this book Steele talks heavily about politics, religion, and immigration. Looking forward to the 5th and final Coyote book.

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### **Robert Burns says**

Good stuff!

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### **grundoon says**

Though the original arc was essentially complete, the universe created in the trilogy was rich and interesting enough to beg further exploration, and I'm glad he returned to Coyote and its familiarity for this one. The primary arc here is a bit manufactured and perhaps even heavy-handed as it addresses religion, but it's no less compelling for its faults and comprises a variety of perfectly fine arcs with cohesive flow. More comfort here than innovation, I'm calling it a pretty solid (if inessential) addition.

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### **Craig says**

This is the first volume of a two-book follow-up to the Coyote trilogy, set somewhat concurrent with GALAXY BLUES, another book set in Steele's Coyote universe. Though this one concerns many of the same characters, events, and settings as the earlier books, I don't believe that it would be necessary to read the others first in order to enjoy this one. It has the same rigidly structured format as the original trilogy; two halves divided into four sections each, with shifting viewpoints and concerns. Steele has outdone himself here; instead of concentrating on the theme of exploration, adventure, and colonization, he examines politics, religion, diplomacy, telepathy, and many other richly considered subjects in a way that made me feel I'd read something two or three times as long as the book actually is. I really hated the ending, though; not because it wasn't well written and convincing, but because I'd grown so close to the characters that it made me sad.

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## Don Viecegli says

From My Newsletter Number 18:

I came across Allen Steele who is a two-time Hugo Award winner several years ago and enjoyed his first book in the Coyote Trilogy called *Coyote*. This novel is about the first starship to leave Earth to colonize a planet they named Coyote, which is located in 47 Ursae Majoris. The colonists escaped from an authoritative government and are starting over on a new world. Life is difficult and Earth rulers are not quite ready to give up control to the rebellious colonists. The author creates a whole new world on Coyote and continues the trilogy with two more books called *Coyote Rising* and *Coyote Frontier*.

Mr. Steele thought he was finally through with this saga, but his readers pressed him for more stories and he relented. The result is the *Coyote Chronicles* with two more books called *Coyote Horizon* and *Coyote Destiny*. In *Coyote Horizon* the year is 2350 and the colony is thriving with more refugees arriving every day. The colonists are still exploring their new world and they learn new things about the aliens that made contact with their leaders. Unfortunately, there are still people from Earth intent upon terrorist's acts who try to disrupt the new government and end up destroying the starbridge that links Coyote with Earth.

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## Ben Babcock says

Do you ever read a book only for it to be exactly what you expected? Not exactly what it promises, mind you, but to have all your expectations confirmed. That's what happened here with *Coyote Horizon*. With only vague memories of Allen Steele's first colonial SF adventures, I was vaguely optimistic about this book. I was looking forward to some politics, some wilderness, some alienness—and that's what I got. *Coyote Horizon*, like its predecessors, aptly demonstrates that science fiction books do not need to be "literary" to have great themes.

Looking at this book as a science-fiction story, it's striking how Steele uses the science-fictional elements. There are spaceships and starbridges/wormholes, and some mention of quantum computers. There are gyrocopters and some advanced medical technology. Yet Steele contrasts this with a very strong frontier, western feel: rifles, sailing vessels and boats, slums, taxi services by the indigenous equivalent of a donkey or camel. Very often characters talk about how certain technologies are only available to those with the money to afford it. So Steele retains an extremely "colonial" feel to a story that is set in our relative future.

It might be possible to describe the main plots of the story, but they are all intertwined. So let's talk about themes.

Hawk Thompson is on parole for horrific crimes. (Remember, I don't remember much from the first trilogy, so I forget how they were portrayed there.) Then a *hjadd* hands him a holy book which is actually an AI in a quantum computer, and he gets the idea into his head that he's a teacher who should spread this higher system of ethics to the rest of humanity. Alien religions going viral, hmm?

Hawk's gradual transformation into the *chaaz'maha* is, of course, your typical "finding oneself" journey for a protagonist. It's also an example of one of the dangers of exploring the universe: finding new ideas. New

ideas are scary! Or so the Dominionist preacher who opposes Hawk thinks. To be honest, I was disappointed by Cosenza. Although people like him undoubtedly exist in real life, fanatics just aren't as *interesting* characters as people who are a little more rational but nevertheless disagree with you. To me, the most interesting conflicts are the ones where people who might otherwise get along feel it's necessary to take opposing sides.

The difficulty of such thorny politics is right at the heart of the *Coyote* stories, I think. What began as a unified colony of exiles/criminals who hijacked the *Alabama* was quickly transformed by the arrival of the subsequent ships. Even so, they all shared in common that desire to distinguish themselves from Earth. With the ongoing collapse of the Western Union propelling even more refugees to Coyote, the very identity of the colony is in question.

We also see this question of identity writ large in the Exploratory Expedition's journey to circumnavigate Coyote. Though Steele only shows us the beginning of the voyage, it is an important symbol for the ongoing colonization of the planet. Several characters are quick to point out that there are less-than-idealistic motives behind such exploration, however. With more people immigrating to Coyote, the colony needs to expand. But if it doesn't take such expansion slowly, then it will be difficult to forge a cohesive colonial identity. There will be fractures, and division, and the planet and society will both suffer for it.

So there are a lot of big ideas floating around in this book. For the most part, Steele addresses them in interesting—if not entirely original—ways. His portrayal of Sa'Tong as a nonviolent system of ethics is cool. It will be interesting to see if that nonviolence aspect lasts among all of Hawk's followers. I guess I'm mostly just concerned that a lot of this ground seems to have been tread before—I hope Steele can manage to put a somewhat unique spin on things, or else it's just going to feel a bit like *Dune Messiah* all over again. We get it. You can't control what you started.

Mostly, though, *Coyote Horizon* works because it doesn't attempt to be too grandiose. My copy is a mass market paperback from the library: the spine is giving in, the print is so tiny even my young eyes protest ... and that feels *right*. Steele has come up with a solid cast of characters, each with their own prejudices and priorities, and put them in a pressure cooker. As time runs out, we get to watch what happens. It's at times exhilarating, at times infuriating—but it's never dull, I can give it that.

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## Francis Gahren says

### Review #1

The planet of Coyote has become the last, best hope of humankind, but it has also become the principal point of contact with the hjadd, the alien race encountered by a European starship many years earlier. Although the hjadd have built an embassy near the original colony, they remain a mystery.

And as the colonists make preparations to explore the rest of the new world, ex-convict Hawk Thompson discovers more about the hjadd than anyone has learned before - and his knowledge will change human history.

### Review #2 (better)

Although not part of the Coyote Trilogy, Steel's latest novel returns to Coyote to extend the adventures of the

off-Earth colony's characters and their descendants.

The subtitle of this book is a bit misleading. It's not a novel of interstellar discovery at all, except perhaps in a metaphorical sense. It's a novel of planetary exploration (partly) and of the coming of age of a civilization.

It's far too easy to give away too much when discussing a book and its plot. In this case, brevity shall prevail. Hopefully it will be enough to pique the reader's interest—especially the reader who enjoys a well-crafted epic adventure that takes place on another planet.

#### Previous Coyote Novels

For those not familiar with the previous Coyote novels, there are five. The original trilogy tells the story of the human colonization of another world. This world is Coyote, which is actually an inhabitable satellite of a large ringed planet orbiting a not too distant star. The environmental and social situation on the home planet is becoming unbearable and the human race needs a backup plan to ensure its survival. It's a familiar theme in science fiction, but a plausible one.

Two other works (Spindrift and Galaxy Blues) are also a part of Coyote universe, but take place mostly in outer space or on the home world of an advanced alien race called the hjadd. One source of tension (among several) is that the hjadd primarily deal with the Coyote Federation, to the exclusion of Earth. In Coyote Horizon, it looks like the hjadd are getting set up to play a big role in how things go back on the home planet.

#### Exploring an Unknown World

A number of things are happening on Coyote these days, one of which is the decision to mount a circumference of Coyote by boat, on the Great Equatorial River. Seems like a good idea, especially given the opportunities for adventure and events that such an expedition will inevitably produce. Morgan Goldstein, the richest man on Coyote is footing the bill. But why?

The expedition is completed, but without the reader going along for most of the ride, since ex-president Carlos Montero is called off the ship to attend to a major diplomatic problem caused by the rapidly accelerating deterioration of the situation on Earth, and the resulting large influx of immigrants. The expedition is under-treated in this book, but events transpire to encourage a hope that more exploration will be featured in a later Coyote novel.

#### The Clashing of Religion and Reality

Hawk Thompson, guilty of patricide but out on parole, is a lowly customs inspector working the Coyote port of entry. Not for long. It so happens he is related to ex-president Montero, which puts him in a peculiar position on the day that a new hjadd emissary arrives on Coyote to take up residency in the embassy. During a brief but fateful meeting, Hawk receives a gift from the ambassador. The gift eventually transforms Hawk, and by the end of the story, it looks as though it is going to transform Coyote and even Earth itself.

The "gift" is a book of galactic philosophy. Although the time of the story is over three hundred years advanced from the present, a fair portion of the human race still clings to ancient religious ideas. Naturally, a revelatory work from a clearly advanced civilization stirs things up. Steele takes the opportunity to set up a religion vs. reason dialog inspired by his readings of Carl Sagan and Richard Dawkins. Some will appreciate it, some might not.

A rather shocking and unexpected ending sets the stage for the saga to continue in the next installment of what Steele calls "The Coyote Chronicles." It will be worth the wait.

Read more: <http://alien-space-fiction.suite101.c...>



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## **Steve Phillips says**

Found in the little library in the cruisers lounge in Boot Key Harbor in Marathon, Florida, Coyote Horizon had a surprising effect on me. A lot the book has to do with a philosophical view, almost a religion, that the majority of the intelligent races share. Humans, of course, are not counted in that group, but an alien hands a human a life changing teaching device that carries within it the basics of that philosophy.

I have never been interested in pursuing any established religion or spiritual or philosophical belief, but I found myself wishing this fictitious "organized philosophy", for lack of a better term, was real and something I could join. It seems rather ridiculous, but just reading about the philosophy helped me look within myself and change some of my views and priorities. I was at a low point and rather desperate for something, and what I found in Coyote Horizon filled the bill.

Which is all kind of beside the point for a book review!

I enjoyed Coyote Horizon very much. I found the characters compelling, the story interesting, and the world building well done. I hope I will be able to find other books in the series to read.

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## **Wesley says**

It was alright; probably wouldn't have read it if I hadn't read the coyote trilogy. I am reading the sequel and might read the off shoots; I love the whole unexplored world thing but there are some big plot holes and the author decided to create this religion (that is called a philosophy) and then have every one who opposes it have dumb arguments...in the second book it looks like maybe he will use this in an interesting way but in the first it was just over the top. The religion basically taught we are all god's and therefore we should treat each other as gods.

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## **Robert says**

A very nice read. Not a real book of short stories, but I liked the division into several parts. That gave each point of view or story a better feelings and overall helped the cohesiveness of the book. I think there is potential for many more such novellas or small works in the Coyote Universe.

I was very glad the ending was left the way it was. Just the way things happen in real life we don't always know all the answers.

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