



## If at First . . .

*Peter F. Hamilton*

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## **If at First . . .** Peter F. Hamilton

Peter F. Hamilton has proven himself a modern master of epic space opera, carrying the tradition of far-future empire building begun by Heinlein and Asimov into the new millennium. But Hamilton is also a master of the short story, and when he tackles one of science fiction's most enduring themes—time travel—the result is as provocative as it is entertaining. It starts in 2007 with a break-in. The victim: Marcus Orthew, the financial and technological genius behind Orthanics, the computer company whose radical products have delivered a one-two punch to the industry, all but knocking PCs and Macs out of the ring. The perpetrator: a man obsessed with Orthew. Just another simple case of celebrity stalking—or so everyone assumes at first, including Metropolitan Police Chief Detective David Lanson. But when Lanson interviews the suspect, he makes a startling claim: Orthew is from the future. Or, rather, a future—a parallel timeline. Thus begins the ride of a lifetime for Lanson, as his pursuit of the facts tumbles him headlong down a rabbit hole—and the hunter finds himself hunted.

## **If at First . . . Details**

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Author : Peter F. Hamilton

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## **From Reader Review If at First . . . for online ebook**

### **Kelly says**

#### **A Crime Story with a Twist**

When tech genius Marcus Orthew's Richmond research center is broken into by longtime stalker Toby Jensen, the case lands on the desk of Metropolitan Police Chief Detective David Lanson. Long since disillusioned by his job – which seems to be little more than filling out paperwork and verifying insurance claims – the Jensen case promises to be a career-changer. Literally.

In the interrogation room, Jensen makes some rather outlandish claims. Chief among them: that his boyhood friend Orthew is building a time machine. Instead of sending himself back in time, soon-to-be 50-year-old Orthew transmitted information – his consciousness – allowing his past self access to technologies and information that don't yet exist. While the man is indeed a genius, his exorbitant wealth and success wouldn't have been possible without the unfair advantages afforded him through time travel. And with continual use of the machine, he's just a few buttons away from becoming a god among men.

While lieutenants Paul Mathews and Carmen Galloway dismiss Jensen as crazy, Lanson is unsettled by the circumstantial – yet creepy – evidence he brings to the table. Against his better judgment, Lanson gets a warrant for Orthew's second lab...and that's when his world goes sideways.

"If at First" is an enjoyable story with a couple of unexpected twists. What starts out as a tale from the hardboiled detective book quickly morphs into a science fiction/time travel story, and Hamilton continues to throw wrenches into Lanson's narrative right up until the end. "If at First" would make a hella fun movie.

<http://www.easyvegan.info/2014/10/26/...>

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### **Cathy (cathepsut) says**

"Peter F. Hamilton has proven himself a modern master of epic space opera, carrying the tradition of far-future empire building begun by Heinlein and Asimov into the new millennium. But Hamilton is also a master of the short story, and when he tackles one of science fiction's most enduring themes--time travel--the result is as provocative as it is entertaining."

I started off the new year with a short story, so my book challenge page doesn't look so empty. Alternate realities are always fun, but this was much too short, even for a short story. Makes me want to read some Sci Fi again.

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### **Elva says**

This is really good story with wry twists.

David Lanson is an experienced detective with good instincts. When he and his team arrest Toby

Jenson...well they think he's a nut job. But Lanson knows when someone is lying. And Jenson isn't - despite the wild story.

This is a very cool story full of irony and \*\*\*\* SPOILER BELOW \*\*\*\*

time travel.

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### **Beverly Warembourg says**

WAY TOO SHORT!!!!!! Granted it's a short story, but it was only 24% of the whole book, the other 76% was the beginning of one of his other stories. Definitely could have been longer, but it was still good. Just glad it was free.

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### **JoAnn Jordan says**

This short story is interesting, but not very well developed. Perhaps the author should have taken the story further.

I liked what there was, but did not think it at all complete. If you like short stories maybe you would find it interesting.

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### **Ralph says**

This was a good time travel short story. This is an excellent attempt by Hamilton at exploring the many-worlds interpretation of the relationship between quantum mechanics and general relativity espoused by Roger Penrose. Neal Stephenson has eloquently laid out other possibilities of Penrose's interpretation in his amazing Anathem (many-worlds coexisting) and more recently in D.O.D.O. (wavefunction collapse), though he had to bring in magic to explain the latter. This was an interesting exploration of the coexistence conundrum without trying to explain the physics behind it. Overall very well written and thought provoking.

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### **Walter E. Norton says**

**The book ,as delivered to me is a copy of the first book of the Mandel files. That is not as advertised . The story does not match the description of the book**

Somehow I was sent the wrong book (short story) and, as I already own theMandel files book I would like to see this problem rectified . Thank you. W. Norton

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### **Scott says**

Hamilton does a fine job here of balancing the detective procedural with that of a futurist time travel tale, and while I have not yet read his Mandel series (Mindstar Rising etc.), I have read Great North Road, and this has the feel of that sub-genre of Sf. David Lanson is chief detective of the Richmond Metropolitan Police Department when he gets involved in a peculiar case involving Toby Jenson, who is being held for the break-in of media /computer mogul Marcus Orthew's research center, "Orthanics". Jenson has finally caught on to Orthew's genius methods of time travel, and thus draws himself and Lanson into a quite regrettable situation. Crazy ending! To say more would ruin it. The e-book download shows this story to be a much longer tale than it is (in fact, most of the download is an excerpt for Mindstar Rising). However, it is a free e-story, and Hamilton writes a pretty decent one here, if way too short, and has me interested in reading his other similar novels in the Sf/detective vein.

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## **Rita Monticelli says**

*Scroll down for the English version.*

### **Una chicca**

Va detto che si tratta di un raccontino davvero piccolo. L'intero ebook nasce come strumento promozionale e il racconto ne occupa solo un terzo. L'avevo scaricato quando era gratuito. Trovo che farlo pagare, nonostante il valore dell'autore, non sia onesto. Eppure in questo momento è a pagamento, cosa che mi lascia perplessa.

A parte ciò, ci troviamo di fronte a un raccontino davvero geniale sulla possibilità di conoscere il futuro e su come questo possa cambiare il corso delle cose. Personalmente sono rimasta stupita dall'abilità di Hamilton nell'inserire tanti dettagli in un testo così piccolo, conoscendo la tendenza che ha a scrivere storie chilometriche. È riuscito a costruire una storia ben congeniata, abbastanza complessa, che mi ha incuriosito per tutto il tempo di lettura. Non avevo la minima idea di dove volesse andare a parare. E il colpo di scena finale è stato davvero inatteso.

Molto carino.

### **A treat**

It must be said that this is really a very short story. The entire ebook was created as a promotional tool, and the story occupies only one third of it. I had downloaded it when it was free. I find that make people pay for it, despite the value of the author, is not honest. Yet at this moment it isn't free, which leaves me puzzled.

Apart from that, this is a really brilliant little story about the possibility of knowing the future and how this can change the course of events. Personally, I was amazed at the skill of Hamilton in including so many details in such a small text, knowing the tendency that he has to write huge stories. He managed to build a well thought out, quite complex story, which intrigued me all the time I was reading it. I had no idea how it was going to end. And the final twist was really unexpected.

Very nice.

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## **Steve says**

A time-travel short story with a jab at the end. I've never read anything by this author, but the story-telling was solid and characters were believable.

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## **Olethros says**

-Aunque actual en estilos, aires de otras épocas.-

Género. Relato.

Lo que nos cuenta. David Lanson es un detective de la policía metropolitana al que se le asigna el caso de Toby Jenson, sorprendido sin autorización dentro de unas instalaciones de la empresa Orthanics, líder industrial, comercial y tecnológico del sector informático y todo gracias a su fundador y alma mater, Marcus Orthew. Durante el interrogatorio de Lanson, los policías descubren que ambos hombres se conocen desde la niñez y que Jenson forzó la entrada en las instalaciones de la empresa “buscando dónde se construía la máquina del tiempo”.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

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## **Claudia says**

Looks like Mr. Hamilton is as good in writing short stories as he is in creating epic space operas.

This particular one is a detective / time travel mix story.

Detective Lanson takes in custody a stalker of one of the most riches men in universe. But when the stalker' story begins to unfold, he finds himself on his side and starts to investigate the so-called victim. What he discovers will change his life forever...

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## **Ted Cross says**

I'm not used to reading short stories in Kindle form, so it felt way too short...though of course it is meant to be short. It's sort of a cute play on the standard time travel story. Not badly written, but not too deep either.

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## **Metaphorosis says**

First - this is primarily a marketing device for one of Hamilton's other books, Mindstar Rising, an excerpt

from which constitutes about 2/3 of the book.

#### If at First

Gene Wolfe introduces one of his stories (in The Best of Gene Wolfe) by suggesting that aspiring authors rewrite it in their own words. I haven't read the The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction that this Hamilton story is drawn from, but I hope that rewriting stories by SF masters is its theme. The story is decent, but it is very reminiscent of a George Martin story ("Unsound Variations", I think - Nebula nominee 1983), if not as well done. The concept is so very close that I couldn't get Martin's story out of my mind the whole way through, and Martin's is simply better. I'm afraid I have to recommend reading that instead.

#### Mindstar Rising

Since the novel excerpt was such a big part of this book, I felt I should say something about that as well. It's a mildly interesting look at a future Earth that's gone through upheaval in the form of rising oceans, cults, and socialist revolutions. In Britain, religious people (of all religions) live on kibbutzim. Some people have ESP. It's a sort of post-not-quite-apocalyptic time. Unfortunately, I found the characters to be neither believable nor interesting.

All in all, I recommend letting this one go, even though it's free. Hamilton has written some good stuff, but little of it is in here.

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#### **Brian's Book Blog says**

Review coming soon.

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