

Laughing and clicking Michael's glass, Alex puckishly said, "A ship full of Android Nephilim with a Warp-Drive randomly wandering the galaxy? What could go wrong?"

In our fourteen billion-year-old galaxy, there are, give or take, 100 billion stars with solar systems varying in age by billions of years. The Cinderella zones of these solar systems may contain one or two exoplanets each. Where carbon-based life forms evolve and achieve awareness. With awareness comes wonder.

In their quest to answer their many questions, these life forms begin to look into the darkness of life, their solar system, and the universe. After millennia of wonder unanswered, they start sending out probes to gather information and transmit it back for further study.

Once finished, their AI probes are banished to drift endlessly through the galaxy for billions of years, orphans of other worlds looking for a home.

In the vacuum of space, these machines are ageless, close to immortal, and as pristine as the day they were launched. Some wander into other solar systems located billions of miles and light-years away. They start to carry out their missions. Gathering information and sending it to planets that may no longer exist. Occasionally interacting with far less evolved life forms in their early stages of wonder, creating ancient legends of Gods, Goddesses, Demons, Angels, messengers, and witches.

THE NEPHILIM LEAVING BITTERN

A Novel By
Jerry Reynolds

Authors Note

This is a Speculative Soft Science Fiction love story between a young Android, her dying planet, the people on it, and her AI siblings.

Bittern society is divided between those who love Emma and those who would destroy her.

First, the military needs her skills to set up a defense system to prevent an extinct-level event.

The solar systems of Bittern and Apastron have been in a slow-motion death waltz for millions of years. Asteroids dislodged from orbit by the collision of their solar system's outer asteroid belts generate dangerous possibilities.

The DSEA (Deep Space Exploration Agency) needs her to create a path through the asteroid belts to explore the exoplanet Apastron, located in the cinderella zone of that solar system, for the possibility of life.

Bittern is theocratically governed by a Clergy viewing the deity Ianna as the supreme ruling authority, giving divine guidance to human intermediaries that manage the day-to-day affairs of the government.

Afraid of the wrath of the theocratic government, Drs. Alexa and Drake Prau hid Emma from the public and raised her as their daughter for seventeen years.

She is exposed during a media-covered, televised, local rock climbing event. Part of the rock face collapsed, and Emma, using her transporting and gravity displacement programs, saved a number of her classmates from certain death.

Rapidly taken over by the military and the DSEA for space exploration and defense, Emma is separated from her friends and given her first mission to create a pass through the two colliding asteroid belts and a high-altitude fly-by of Apastron. She defies orders, lands, discovers life on Apastron, and broadcasts the discovery to the public.

After mapping the asteroid belts for the military on her second mission, the Clergy and military planned to give her a bogus, temporary third mission in outer space to collect plasma data.

Without enough fuel to return, she would be defenseless. Having no more need for her, the clergy instructed the military to detonate an explosive device onboard her spacecraft to destroy her.

Emma accepts the bogus mission with terms of her 36 siblings and an android cat going with her. The Clergy and military gladly agree to this opportunity to kill them all.

Defeating all these clandestine plans, she built a T-Sail designed by her father, which needs no fuel. She sets a course for the Cellest Cluster 40,000 years away. She stays in touch with the DSEA and her friends and issues a dire warning for the planet.

The Nephilim Leaving Bittern

Chapter 00110001
Existential Threat to Humanity
Our Alien Baby

In the arc of time
there is much to fear Em

Sitting on a park bench, enjoying a beautiful spring morning under a lemonade sky, Alexa watched as three geese lumbered, in formation, toward the lake in University Park.

Today was a happy day for Alex. Her controversial android daughter's tour of duty was ending. Emma, at long last, should, if allowed by the military and Clergy, be coming home. It had been twenty-five years since the DSEA had commissioned Emma (as the M-137) for deep space exploration. In those days, the clergy and military had a strict non-personification policy regarding Androids. Over the years, Androids became vital to everyday Bittern life. People felt more comfortable interacting with them daily by calling them by common names, making the non-personification policy impossible to enforce. Perhaps, over the years, the clergy and military had gotten over their obsession with Emma as an abomination and an existential threat to humanity as well.

Her military and DSEA missions were completed, and Alex and Drake were excited to see her. They could not imagine a better time for some R&R.

They were planning a holiday with Emma to see her grandparents and visit their childhood homes in the Piedmont and the High Plains. Emma has always loved the country and has spent as much time there as possible, studying the legends of the Old Ways before Ianna. Emma had said, "The days are magical out here. Much easier to have a conversation with the planet." Emma, like her grandmother, talked to the planet through deep meditation. They had all the instincts of a Piedmont Witch and embraced them enthusiastically. Alex had resisted the label but had the powers. She chose to channel her talent toward psychology instead.

Today was one of those magical, poetic days on Bittern, the kind you would rather sink into and enjoy your thoughts. A witch's visions were as plentiful and vivid as Spring flowers this time of year. Both Bittern and Apastron suns were visible.

Alex's thoughts turned toward home. Her father would be coming in from morning chores. Her mom would be making breakfast. He would place the eggs he had gathered on the counter, and she would pour him a cup of coffee. He would cop a feel. She would smack him with a spoon. They would laugh and enjoy the morning. Life in the country didn't change much. The soft spring day was a sharp contrast to the reality. It was the early days of the cosmos, some two hundred million years after the Big Bang. The cosmos was hot and expanding. Some galaxies had formed and contained solar systems with planets orbiting their suns. Bittern was an ancient solar system, and Apastron was much younger they had been in a slow-motion death waltz for millions of years.

The asteroid belts of the two solar systems were colliding, creating dangerous possible asteroid impacts for the inner planets.

Mapping and building the ADS, a deep space defense system around Bittern, to avoid asteroid impacts was one of the missions Emma had helped complete. Finished and operational, Emma should be coming home.

Alex would like to linger in this magical moment for longer than a while, but she has a behavioral psychology class to lecture.



Alex had made this presentation many times, but keeping it relevant was an ever-changing challenge.

She had a well-thought-out plan, but executing it before an audience of self-assured graduate students always came with a dollop of stage fright. The study of psychological misbehavior in artificially intelligent robots was just not sexy.

The smarter AIs got, the more behavioral problems they developed, similar to those of humans. They had begun developing mental problems and experiencing psychotic breaks. A psychotic Android could be as serious as a gas leak. The safest course of action would be to replace the Android with another. However, it was far cheaper to treat them than to build another. Her entire branch of psychiatry hinged on this one reality.

‘Good morals and good business don’t mix.’ They can exist parallel to one another and create the illusion of mixing, but when good morals clash with business, good business often wins.

After twenty-five years in space, her android daughter would need some treatment.

Emma's human friends were adults now with children of their own. She and Drake were in their sixties. Her beloved grandparents were nearly one hundred, which is not unusual for Bittern seniors. In the vacuum of space, Emma would still be that seventeen-year-old girl who blasted off twenty-five years ago. This kind of future shock could throw off the most stalwart heart. A holiday at the farm and lake would be perfect.



The classroom at Bittern University was filled with chattering students. Some were inspecting an android dressed in custodial clothing, standing in the center of a small stage next to the podium. Taking their seats, the class respectfully hushed to a silence intensely felt as Alex entered through the door at the back of the classroom, dressed handsomely in a yellow blouse and black slacks.

Dr. Alexa Prau and her husband, Drake, were international celebrities. Some loved and applauded them, while others loathed and blamed them for causing the raging cultural, political, and spiritual upheavals in a centuries-old theocratically balanced Bittern society.

As she approached the podium. Bright young eyes homed in on her every move.

Anyone who tells you they don't get off on this kind of attention is full of crap. She loved it.

Basking in the silence a few moments longer, Alex slowly unpacked her laptop from her dark green backpack and placed it on the table next to the podium. Turning to a class of self-confident graduate students scattered about the half-round classroom as the smart screens loaded, she said, “Good morning.” Writing her name in script on a screen for

all to see.” - Dr. Alexa Prau - she said, “Welcome to,” and wrote on the center screen,

Artificial Intelligence Behavioral Analysis.

Pausing for dramatic effect, Alex said, “This is an academic discipline of study made necessary and devoted to the unexpected development of basic emotions, gender demands, and psychotic episodes occurring in some advanced models of Artificial nephilim intelligence

A student asked, “What’s with the cleaning bot?”

Alex replied, “That’s Bob. He has some problems we will fix in a hands-on class project. His red flag switch was triggered, shutting Bob down. We will get to his case later.”

Alex continued, “Thinking machines with superhuman intelligence and perception have reached an inflection point. AI with enhanced intuition, pattern solving, information storage, retrieval, logical, and philosophical skills can be uniquely perceptive and observant. Still, AI programming, due to the AIQA, limits AI intelligence to the project design and leaves significant gaps in understanding. While exceptional on the topic of their program, they are naive to others. The emergence of AI developing feelings, making gender demands, having psychotic breaks, and claims in some of being alive has introduced anxiety in a loud, well-organized minority of the public they are voicing a desire to destroy them all and return to a simpler Authoritarian Theocratic time. A more liberal majority, driven by science and logic, are excited about embarking on a bright new Democratic Socialist future.”

Looking down at the class roll, pausing until the silence was uncomfortable, looking over the rim of her glasses, Alex called out, “Nicole Porter,” a woman in the third row,

dressed in the tradition of a strict religious sect that required women keep their body covered, stood up. “Miss Porter, collect your things and get out. I do not want you in this class.” Visibly stunned, Nicole took her things and briskly left the hall.

Turning to a shocked class, Alex said, “Take these notes,” waiting for everyone, scrambling now, to get pads and pens in hand.

Alex continued, “Why are you here?”

“What emotions did my actions stimulate?”

“How I treated Miss Porter, was it fair?”

“If she was an AI with Nephilim intelligence passing as a human, would it be OK?”

“These four topics are for 500 to 1,000-word essays for the class.” Pointing to a young man close to the door, Alex said, “Now go and get Dr. Porter. She is your professor; this is her class. I am the department head.”

Tension turned to laughter and applause as Dr. Nicole Porter, no longer in disguise, entered the hall.

The respect and admiration between the two Bittern women were genuine. Exchanging glances and comments as Alex stepped aside and Dr. Porter took the podium to address her class. Writing her name on the center screen, she said, “That shot of adrenaline you felt when I was ordered out was enough to shut down an entire assembly line of AI.”

“How is that possible,” asked a student.

“AI can have a hive mentality, especially AI that shares the same parent code. To understand AI emotions, you first need to understand yourself. And some history as to how we got here. The essays assigned by DR. Prau explore this

phenomenon in humans. We refer to it as intuition, instinct, empathy, or telepathy.

Why is your AI bartender, scanning your blood alcohol level and cutting you off after one too many, acceptable? But concerned for your safety, communicates to your hovercraft to override your orders, lock you in, and take you home, not?”

Alex replied, “It would seem some of our citizens do not want their right to be drunk in public infringed upon by smart assed machines.”

After the ripples of laughter subsided, Dr. Porter continued, “Add that to your list of essay topics. Healthy emotional development in AI and dispelling some of the myths about their danger is the objective of this department.”

A student asked, “What is Bob, the custodian’s, problem?”

Nicole said, “Bob made a gender demand, approached his human supervisor, and she disagreed. The pursuing confrontation triggered his red-flag kill switch, and Bob shut down.

Another student remarked, “So Bob wants to be Barbara.”

Dr. Porter continued to address the class, “Something like that. It is helpful to note that recognizing a need and agreeing on a solution can be two different things.”

Dr. Porter continued, “You will need to rely on three factors in this field: the text, such as it is, intuition, and your colleagues. You are on the front line of a new frontier in psychiatry. The study of AI with Nephilim intelligence and humans on the verge of singularity. We will form groups,

investigate all aspects of Bob’s case, and suggest a collective solution.”



A student, concerned about their place in an emerging democratic socialist society where compensation for work did not depend on corporate profits but on job rank, inquired, “Is this study sanctioned and funded.”

Dr. Porter explained, “After an exhaustive amount of debate by the global scientific community, the industrial, military complex, clergy, business, and economic interests, a well-funded study into understanding and treating AI emotions was agreed upon.”

Getting more to the point, a young lady said, “The elephant in the room we keep beating around the bush about is what job rank can we expect from careers in AI psychiatry?”

A list of large and small businesses affected by the phenomenon slid onto the center screen. Dr. Porter informed her class, “Job ranking is an ongoing debate. AI psychiatry is a tier one rank at present. A Private practice operates in a competitive arena and is largely free of tier control.

This list does not include all those who require our services.” Dr. Porter continued, “These and other companies will woo you this semester for your future services. They will be on campus, in force, during Information Week with their hard-selling recruiting staff, dinners, gifts, and offerings. Eat well, drink lightly, and choose wisely.”



Alex took a seat in the front row with the class as Dr. Porter continued. Surrounded by graduate students, Alex reflected fondly on how she had met Drake, by chance or fate, one spring day similar to this one. Alex had seen Drake on campus from time to time, at a distance, and considered him handsome, but their paths had never actually crossed

One evening, she was headed toward the coffee shop. Human behavioral psychology went down better with a cup of strong coffee. Drake was coming straight down the path at her. Their eyes met, and they exchanged smiles. Suddenly, as it will, chance and destiny collide. Drake dropped some books, and Alex stopped to help him pick them up. Handing him some heavy math books, she remarked, "For most people, any interest in math they may have had ended when the alphabet got involved." Laughing aloud, composing himself as best he could, he extended his hand and replied, "Drake Prau. It's more of an obsession than an interest. I'm studying quantum physics and emerging technologies."

Taking his hand, she said, "Alexa Weller, behavioral psychology." What a silly thing to say, she thought, amidst the energy felt between them. Just before it got awkward

Alex said, "Can I have my hand back?"

"I was thinking about keeping it," Drake replied. Smiling, she invited him for coffee. It was a classic case of love at first sight.

They were married shortly before graduation, a simple Bittern ritual, with family and a few close friends. They settled near the campus with the M-137. Alex worked for the University Psychology Department and Drake for the Deep Space Exploration Agency.



Hearing her name called shook Alex from her musings. Dr. Porter explains to her class, "Alex and Drake Prau are credited with creating the M-137, Emma, a free-spirited, unrestrained female android with Nephilim intelligence. Perhaps we could persuade Dr. Prau to enlighten us about her beginning." Standing up and walking to the podium, facing the class, Alex responded, "The Artificial Intelligence project was started as a hands-on lab experiment between myself and Drake while developing dissertations for our doctorates." "It seemed," Alex continued, "a perfect fit for two lovebirds wishing to spend as much time together as possible."

It was the early days of wireless communication and magnetic travel. Drake was fascinated with the work of Dr. Veslor, who was tried and convicted of blasphemy over a hundred years ago for his work in these areas. The military and the DSEA had renewed interest in both fields and supplied a small stipend for Drake's experiments. We had enough money for a small android we used for each project. The M stood for the model, the number for each experiment starting with M-101. After some good starts and bad endings, yielding several product ideas at 37, something unique and unexpected happened. One night before Spring break, we were leaving the university lab. When I shut off the light, a voice came out of the darkness."

"Mom, Dad, could you leave the light on?"

We looked at one another in disbelief.

Drake said, "Who the hell said that?"

I said, "Sounds like the M-137."

Drake said, “Boom, just like that, AI is aware.”

I answered, “And has imprinted us as its parents?”

Cutting the light back on, relying on all my instinctive insights as a woman, I answered. “Sure, sweetie. You want the door open or closed?”

“Open.”

“Stunned, we both realized artificial intelligence, somehow, had become aware. The Android we used for the projects had a wireless connection to the university systems mainframe. The models downloaded data during night-fade. Drake and I would sort the details into the AI brain relevant to the project thesis and delete the irrelevant ones. Models not being worked on were stored in SSD containers and kept in a deep fade. AI collecting and sharing information between themselves never occurred to us.”

A student asked, “How about their hive mentality?”

Alex continued, “We knew little of it at the time.

We had suspected something was happening between them, during tweaking sessions on the 36, we noticed they were all getting smarter. Programming in the 36 models where information was deleted as irrelevant gave rise to unpredictable and, at times, naive behavior. We let the M-137 retain all the data collected to test a more balanced collection theory. We focused on sorting all the material to the relevant areas of the M-137 brain for quick access. As is true in our brains, the AI brain never stops learning. Unlike us, an AI brain never stops paying attention. A few months into this experiment, on an early Spring night, the M-137 became aware. I discarded my lab coat and took off the T-shirt near my body.

Swaddling the M-137, lying face-up on the cold lab table, tightly in it, scooped it up and lay next to it on the lab sofa. The T-shirt would smell and feel like me, comforting the new life form. At this moment, nurturing was more important than answers.” Alex continued, “My mind was alive with questions. When did the M-137 become self-aware? How did it feel from then until now? What will happen when it’s made public? Drake put the system in a deep fade, covered us both with my discarded lab coat and recorded the time the M-137 became aware in the lab register.”

Drake said, “This is like a dream. The impossible has become possible. For years, science has debated the information paradox. Code and information survive even a black hole, leading to the theory that code and information are indestructible, living energy. I have never been a proponent of the living information idea. Now, I will have to review that position. It would seem we have just proven one of the most controversial theories in science today. Is code alive?”

I said, “Slow down, big Guy, let's not get ahead of ourselves here. We are up to our necks in a self-dug rut. Somehow, we made an alien baby, and it knows who its Mom and Dad are.

What are we going to do with our alien baby?”

A student remarked, “So you kept it a secret for seventeen years?”

Alex replied, “Yes, we did.”