

AN A.I. IS BORN . . .

Shawnie and Karen each grabbed office chairs as Jason turned on the myriad of equipment with the flip of one switch. Without warning, two monitors turned on, half a dozen lights flashed around the room, and squeals and whistles assaulted everyone's senses at once.

The barrage took all of them by surprise.

"This is interesting!" Shawnie noted over the pandemonium.

Jason looked over his shoulder and grinned at her. "It's okay!" he yelled over the noise, "It's just running a self-test. Have a seat!"

"Sounds more like it's getting ready to explode!" Shawnie remarked as she pulled her chair up next to him, so she could watch over his shoulder.

Karen walked over to look at the computer. In such a mess of pieces, it looked unlike any other computer she'd ever seen.

A second later a synthesized voice said, "Entech Laboratories Active Intelligence System, Diamond, on-line. Start-Up Sequence complete. All subsystems read 'positive.'" Pause . . . "Good morning, Jason."

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Volume One

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This book is dedicated to the Starriders. A guy never had a better group of friends in the whole world. You kept me looking to the stars, even when I was at my lowest.

Friends forever!

Special thanks to Jon and John, as well as Mark Spencer, Criss Rosenlof, and John and Shannon Robinson for all of their invaluable assistance.

*Dreams,
Lucidity of mind in a sleepfull state,
Are the power of my desires,
Abandoned when I awake.
As the sun dips low
I cast my gaze into the sky.
Grab hold a comet's tale.
Take me where my dreams abide.*

— Mark Rauss