

Far-Fetched and Highly Plausible

Leandro Faria

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Leandro Faria's *Far-Fetched and Highly Plausible* is an action-packed science fiction novel that explores humanity's relationship with increasingly intelligent technologies.

Nick is a forensic auditor who uses data and his detective-like mind to investigate improper spending habits. When he's hired to audit the technology company Cogvolve, he trades documents for drama as he goes down the rabbit hole of conspiracy theories. Nick and his ragtag team of friends will use their strange skill sets to face everything from uncanny artificial intelligence to the Illuminati while uncovering Cogvolve's secrets.

Nick is a competent, curious, and adventurous professional. His knack for digging deep into corporate information and discovering secrets is established via many detailed and believable examples. Despite the technical and serious nature of his work, Nick's openmindedness and humor make him a likable lead. Nick's relationships are less authentic; many connections feel hurried and are hard to relate to.

Nick befriends a motley crew during his audit of Cogvolve, including a highly intelligent conspiracy theorist and furry named BabyKitty, two women scientists who work in budding technology and genome fields, and a love interest, Donna. Nick and Donna's relationship is too quick to form; the emotions involved are not convincing, and the part that Donna plays in the story is predictable.

Each secondary character is introduced in terms of their roles; their personal histories are brief, their voices are indistinct, and most are not dimensional. BabyKitty is the best fleshed out. His skepticism positions him as a useful devil's advocate, and his unapologetic furry lifestyle is a unique, stereotype-smashing addition. Characters' conversations are natural and insightful.

The plot folds many aspects of conspiracy theory culture into one storyline. They provide intrigue and explore some of the real life implications of AI and technology, but scientific concepts are inconsistently explained, and there are often confusing gaps in the information. Suspenseful action scenes move the story forward, but the main plot line is often lost beneath the continual additions of new concepts and characters. Big reveals toward the end of the book tie most of the loose ends together, if they leave more questions than answers. The novel concludes with essays on social advancements in artificial intelligence, highlighting the reality of the story's themes.

Language is direct and accessible. The physical aspects of the story, including settings, are described in brief and engage the senses. Occasionally, the story peeks into the past; its transitions in and out of history are not always clear.

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DELIA STANLEY (January 10, 2019)

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