



Bringing Up Mike: Provocative Upcoming Novel Questions Artificial Intelligence's Place in the Future. Could an AI Grow Up Alongside Humans?

Masterfully crafted by Mark Duncan, 'Bringing Up Mike' defies any single genre to have young adult readers pondering how Artificial Intelligence could slot into the diversifying dynamics of the modern family. While of course a work of fiction, Duncan's compelling narrative also fuses human and artificial life to explore how people mature, embrace life's second chances and ultimately find true happiness.

For Immediate Release

Menlo Park, CA – Artificial Intelligence may sound like something from the movies, but author Mark Duncan's own experiences at the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab prove that the technology is not only very real – but could have a prominent place in society's future. Duncan's new young adult novel follows the coming-of-age of a young prodigy and Mike, an artificial intelligence. Through a beautiful yet edgy story that straddles a myriad of bold themes, readers will get a vital insight into what it takes to reinvent themselves and find true harmonious balance.

Synopsis:

What happens when a teen prodigy makes drastic changes to his life and attends high school incognito with Mike, an artificial intelligence? His plans take an unexpected turn when he buys a neglected former racehorse.

'Bringing Up Mike' is a tapestry of intertwined stories over the course of a school year: A teen genius who has grown up too fast, a neglected former racehorse, a bereaved couple mourning the death of their son, a girl struggling to attend college, and a former mobster determined to be top dog. Each gets a second chance at happiness and success.

“I once attended a very informative talk where a Director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency discussed the biggest flaw of Artificial Intelligence – their tendency to say stupid things. He suggested that one way around this would be to develop an AI that could grow up alongside humans and mature with constant refinements. This got my author's head spinning,” explains Duncan.

Continuing, “I decided to use this premise for a novel through which readers could learn lots about the Human Condition; especially our inability to learn from history. Therefore, there are colliding themes of ethics and emotions surrounding AI, the welfare of racehorses, youth rights, family dynamics and the culture of Middle Tennessee. There’s no way to definitively pigeon-hole this novel, but I can guarantee that those reading it will learn plenty about themselves.”

Readers appear to agree. In fact, even before its official release, the novel has garnered a string of rave reviews.

Rebecca Foster from Foreword Reviews comments, “The author gives a convincing account of the modern teen experience, including getting a driver’s license, fighting for free speech, worrying about safe sex, attending prom, and applying for colleges. This quirky, heartfelt novel should appeal to adolescents who fall somewhere between geeks and the popular crowd.”

Anita Lock from The US Review of Books adds, “A steady mix of questions and answers, hardship and healing, as well as love and laughter, this is a fascinating and engaging read. Though it is earmarked for teens, adults will find it equally intriguing.”

Goodreads member Anne Steinemann sees huge potential for a diverse audience, writing, “This book is a tour de force. The book offers an intellectual sophistication that is captivating and unmatched among typical fictional books. The reader will learn so much about so many different topics, thanks to the author’s encyclopedic and profoundly deep knowledge. Appealing to all ages, this book is one not to be missed!”

‘Bringing Up Mike’, from Askmar Publishing, is due for release on September 1st, 2014.

Media Kit: http://askmarpublishing.com/books/bringing_up_mike_media_kit.html

Softcover Print ISBN: 978-1-935842-49-1

EBook ISBN: 978-1-935842-48-4

Book Website: http://www.askmarpublishing.com/books/bringing_up_mike.html

Publisher Website: <http://www.askmarpublishing.com>

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About the Author:

Mark Duncan grew up in Pasadena, not far from Caltech. In high school he spent Friday and Saturday nights at the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab (SAIL) and subsequently was a member of the Homebrew Computer Club. He has worked for numerous startups in Silicon Valley. He lives in Menlo Park, near Stanford and has written extensively on emerging technologies.

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