

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Gallant Beginnings

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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California State University, Northridge

## Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Abstract	iv

## Abstract

### Gallant Beginnings

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The following novella is meant to expand upon the genre of science-fiction while simultaneously delivering a compelling narrative of young-adult romance. The piece is meant to explore rampant problems present within the popular genre of science fiction, including, but not limited to: sexism, racism, xenophobia, LGBTQ+ prejudices and the effects of unchecked capitalism. By employing a third-person limited perspective from a diverse cast of point-of-view characters, I hope to create enough unique entry-points for readers to related to. The characters occupy various socio political spheres from wealthy heiress and working-class android bartender to oppressed cyborg and distressed educator. Each character will explore the very definition of what it means to be human and how the limits of our birth and upbringing can be broken through tenacity and emotional growth.

Inspired in equal measure by both William Shakespeare's iconic Romeo and Juliet and Donna J. Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto," this piece will explore the boundaries placed upon central deuteragonists, human Alexis and android Verite, as each character strives to achieve their own goals in opposition to their socially and biologically assigned roles. Like two suns entwined, the budding romance of these star-crossed loves will prove a catalyst in the lives of others and ultimately the future of a world dependent on the subservience of artificial intelligence. Rather than insisting that the two main characters' lives revolve completely around each other as the trope demands, Alexis and Verite will operate independently of each other, providing a more realistic and natural romance in a remarkable, futuristic setting.

There are numerous areas of modern activism that are often ignored in popular fiction for the sake of perpetuating the status quo. The aim of my piece is to provide a story that appeals to a contemporary audience while also challenging the hierarchical structures that historically permeate science-fiction. I have chosen speculative fiction, the collection of genres that has affected me most as a writer and addressed the missing elements I have always dreamed to see in the genre.