

DR. GALEN VEX:
AND THE
CHRONO-EMOTIVE PROBLEM EXTRACTOR

MIKE CHAMPAGNE

BOOK 2 - CHAPTER 1 TEASER

Chapter One: The Doorbell of Doom

It was a quiet day in Vex's lab, which for once hadn't exploded.

Dr. Galen Vex lounged on a battered recliner bolted to the floor for "safety," wearing his favourite robe (that also functioned as a lab coat), sipping a steaming mug of self-carbonating double-cafeinated tea, and watching the worst show in the quadrant:

"Love in Zero-G" — where the only thing thinner than the atmosphere was the plot. It's all about the drama!

Behind him, diagnostic graphs blinked over a table piled with half-finished gadgets: a telepathic shoehorn, a smoke detector that screams in French, and something labeled "Moral Compass (DO NOT TOUCH)."

Vex was finally relaxed.

DING-DONG! "VISITOR DETECTED: PROBABLY BAD IDEA," chimed the lab's sarcastic AI.

Vex blinked. "What? Who even *visits* in person anymore?"

He opened the airlock door to find a tall, serene man in flowing white robes. He had intense, magnetic eyes and a warm, practiced smile that had probably sold many books and/or terrible afterlife insurance.

"Greetings," the man said. "I am Saar Ephraim. A humble seeker of enlightenment."

"Sounds like you're also a humble user of conditioner," Vex said, eyeing the man's flawless, glowing hair.

Saar Ephraim chuckled, hands folded reverently.

“I’ve read about your work, Doctor. You are a man of science... but also of empathy. I wonder if you’ve ever considered a way to *heal the mind*. To remove suffering not with pills or pain, but by gently *extracting* it... permanently?”

Vex perked up.

“That sounds... incredibly unethical. I love it.”

Four hours later... they stood before a small device, with a humming and pulsating blue orb of energy held in place by a pyramid shaped cage. And maybe a little luck.

“The Chrono-Emotive Problem Extractor,” Vex declared. “Or CEPE. It finds and extracts lingering trauma using a blend of reverse-time-emotion siphons and... well, parts from a dream recorder and a toaster.”

Saar Ephraim beamed.

“This is beyond what I imagined.”

“That’s what most people say after working with me. Usually before they scream.”

Ephraim politely asked to take it to his “research team” for calibration.

Vex was flattered.

Then the door burst open and four robed figures rushed in, chanting something unintelligible that sounded like a blender having an epiphany.

“HEY!” Vex shouted, spinning around. “No zealots in the lab!”

One hit him square in the head with a ceremonial book titled “*The Uplifted Path: How to Obey Without Question.*”

Everything went dark.

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