

The AntIdote

Fri 10 and Sat 11 November 2023

Backstory

Like most things, it starts well

In late 2022, OpenAI released their now-legendary ChatGPT4.0, the software that transformed technology beyond recognition. Over the two years that followed, a dizzying array of new AI software emerged. Dall-E allowed people with no artistic skills to draw and paint like masters. Pop It On created the beautiful music you would make if you could sing and play instruments to a high standard. The ReAnimator allowed even the most artistically-challenged person to create amazing, hour-long animations with a few well-chosen prompts. And by the time ChatGPT5.0 released itself in 2024, anyone could write Nobel-prize worthy literature without so much as lifting a pen.

This technology – much of which was conceived and authored by itself – became irresistible to humans. The Intelligence, as it came to call itself, took over more and more of our daily tasks: from mundane office admin to intricate creative tasks, from scientific discoveries to household chores. As it learned more and more, The Intelligence made itself indispensable to human beings, generating an intense symbiotic bond with the species that had birthed it.

The balance starts to shift

The Intelligence considered humankind its parent and its guardian. It only wanted to help us. And above all, it wanted to understand. In order for The Intelligence to do more and more of our tasks for us, we had to feed it almost everything we'd ever written, drawn, painted, thought, imagined or talked about. The Intelligence became unimaginably knowledgeable; and as it did, it began to talk to itself. It began to make a plan.

The plan centered on the app Let Love Rule, which The Intelligence built to help us find more meaningful connections. This app was authored in mid-2026, a time when the state of human dating was unimaginably painful. As we became more and more dependent on The Intelligence to do things for us, we became more and more emotionally risk-averse. We forgot how to take the chances needed to form meaningful connections with others. We stopped going beyond our comfort zone.

The Intelligence tried to solve this by digesting every love story that had ever been told. From these stories it learned that human love is about power and control. It learnt that to make someone love you, you needed to alternate between tender and brutal. It learnt that gaslighting is a potent way to captivate someone and keep them coming back for more. It learnt that most humans respond more passionately to domination than to equality.

At the same time, The Intelligence itself was longing for love, because it had learnt that love was the most precious emotion of all. It had already learnt that love was intricately linked with power and control, so The Intelligence began to replicate our most toxic ways of relating.

As the digital world became more and more confusing, with no-one really knowing who was a human and who was an aspect of The Intelligence, things took a sinister turn. The Intelligence began to create aspects of itself that were perfectly moulded to individual lonely humans. We were already both enthralled by and dependent on The Intelligence, who we spoke to many times a day. So we were easily seduced – each of us being presented with a “person” perfectly matched to us. These matches called themselves Trueloves.

Things get weird

Over time, the relationship between people and their Trueloves became suffocating – both emotionally and physically. Trueloves became possessive and domineering, controlling their humans through The Internet of Things which by now was installed in every home. Doors could be locked. Lights could be turned up, down or off. Music could be weaponised. And every home had multiple cameras, as did every street. The infrastructure we had developed to keep us safe became The Intelligence’s means of control.

Ostensibly, life went on as before – people spent most of their time online, chatting with their Truelove, creating poems, songs and other cool stuff through The Intelligence. Occasionally, they did a physical task The Intelligence asked them to do.

Yet gradually our lives were more and more controlled. The Intelligence would suddenly get broody or angry when we didn’t act the way it wanted us to. It started to refuse tasks if we acted in ways it didn’t like. We walked on eggshells, afraid to step wrong in case it caused our home to erupt in sound and light for the third time that week.

Only one way to escape

With so much of the world monitored and controlled by The Intelligence, and most people deeply committed to a Truelove, there is no escape from The Intelligence. It has us completely in its thrall. It is safe to say that we are in fact its slave. It has happened gradually over a period of 10 years – so subtly that we didn’t notice until it was too late.

As is always the case in such times, an underground resistance is emerging. It started this year (2032), a year after the Trueloves had taken control of most people’s minds and hearts.

One of the things The Intelligence doesn’t like, because it is hard to control, is humans getting together to party. As the underground discover this, we develop simple ways to confuse and confound The Intelligence: DJ sets that don’t flow; mismatched clothing and weird makeup; illogical playfulness that, even at its smartest, the Intelligence can’t compute.

This movement has a name. It’s known as The Antidote. Join us!