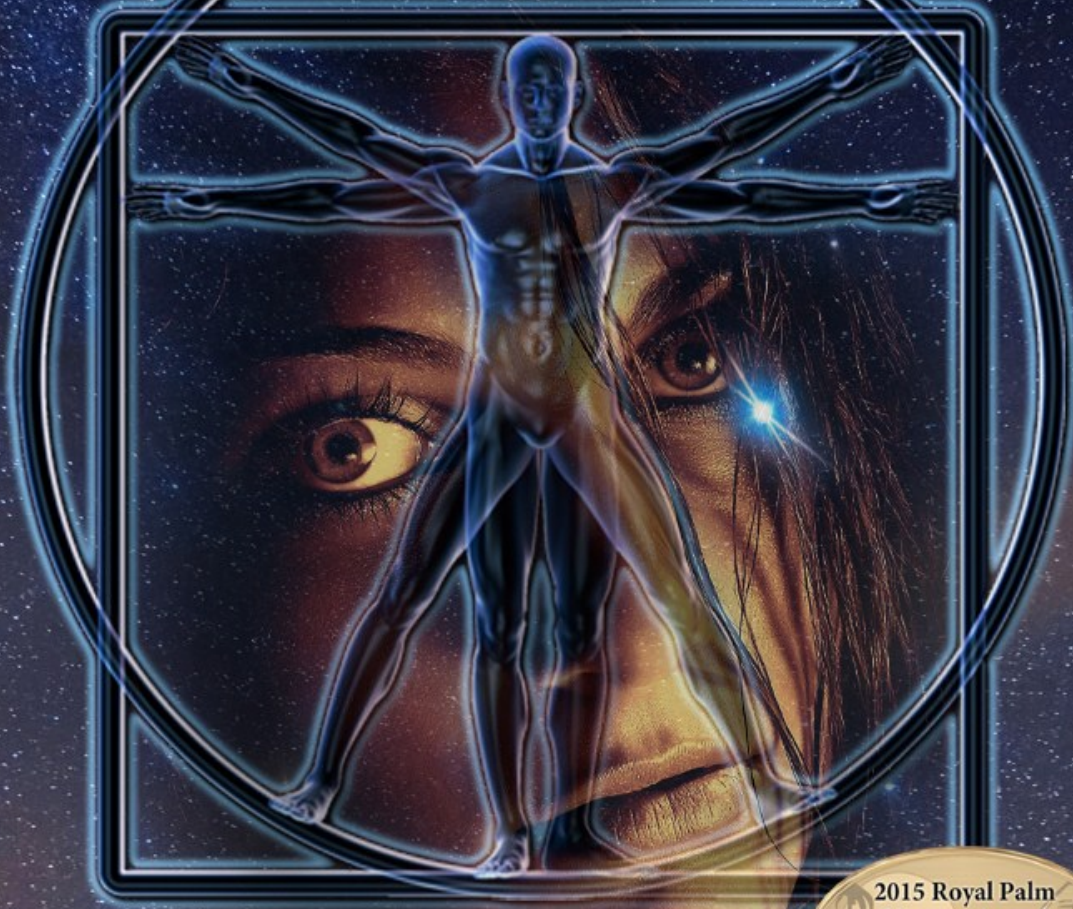


THE PROMETHEUS SAGA



LILITH

ANTONIO SIMON, JR.
AUTHOR OF THE GULLWING ODYSSEY

An Excerpt of:

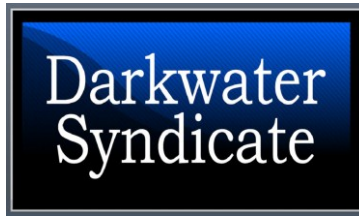
LILITH

A Prometheus Saga Short Story

by

ANTONIO SIMON, JR.

The Alvarium Experiment



Lilith

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Ken Pelham for inviting me into the Alvarium Experiment. Thanks to him, I've had the honor of working with a fine group of professionals to craft this exceptional product, The Prometheus Saga.

A big thank-you also to Charles Cornell for his work on the absolutely stunning series cover art.

Thanks also to everyone in the Alvarium Group – jointly and severally as they say in some circles: Ken, Charles, Daco, MJ, Elle, Bria, Doug, Kay, Bill, Jade, and Bard. Your efforts have taken this project from idea to reality and have made the end result greater even than the sum of its parts.

Last, but certainly not least, many thanks to you, the reader. I hope you enjoy this story, and invite you to read the other fine tales in The Prometheus Saga. A list of the stories in this collection can be found at the end of this work.

Enjoy.

– AS

The Prometheus Saga Introduction

What's past is prologue...

– William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

The individual keeps watch on other individuals. Societies keep watch on other societies. Civilizations keep watch on other civilizations. It has always been so. Keeping watch is sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent. It is most certainly prudent.

It is not a trait exclusive to the human species.

Out of such prudence an advanced intelligence, far across the vastness of space, delivered to Earth a probe 40,000 years ago, to observe and report the progress of the human species. This probe was “born” here fully formed, a human being, engineered from the DNA of *Homo sapiens*. It possessed our skin, our organs, our skeleton, our muscles.

And it still lives among us.

The probe keeps watch.

The probe is one of us. Almost. It possesses a nuclear quantum computer brain, emitting a low-level electromagnetic field. It manipulates DNA and stem cells, healing itself as needed. It dies, but remains immortal. It enters human societies, adopting any guise, any race, any gender, any age it wishes, following a three-month metamorphosis. It witnesses the events, great and small, good and bad, that shape our destiny.

The probe keeps watch.

Everything it sees, hears, feels, experiences, and thinks, it flashes instantaneously across a thousand light-years, in real-time quantum-entangled communication with the intelligence that sent it here.

The probe keeps watch.

And sometimes it acts.

It is often true that there are two sides to every story, sometimes three; but history is only ever written by the victors, and time has a way of massaging our recollection of events.

– AS

Lilith

by

Antonio Simon, Jr.

Mesopotamia, 4004 BC

He watched her from the tall grass as she bathed in the lake shallows. She was naked – he was too, but that was not why he hid. The nameless she-thing in the lake had to die.

His name was First. He was the name-giver. The role was as much his duty as his right. Everything that ran, crawled, flew, or swam had a name thanks to him. Assigning names to things granted him dominion over them. He'd given everything in the world a name, except her.

In her, he had met his match. She was no mere beast that accepted just any name. This she-thing had a rebellious streak that could neither be shouted nor beaten out of her, much as he'd tried.

It chafed his insides to think on how she'd said she disliked his name for her. Worse, she already had a name – something ridiculous he'd already forgotten – and the nerve of her to suggest a name for him! He was First, he held dominion, and he would punish her for her impunity. His fist balled up around the stone in his hand. One sharp blow to the side of the head and he'd be rid of her.

"I see you hiding in the bushes there."

First ducked lower. It was no use. She was looking right at him. He stood and walked out of the grass, making sure to drop his stone before stepping out into the clear.

"I was not hiding. I was relieving myself," he said.

"You never before hid to relieve yourself. Do you feel shame?"

"I was not hiding." His nostrils flared with the mention of an unfamiliar word. "What is shame?"

She diverted her eyes from his. "Shame is nonsense."

"It had better be. I am First, and only I am the name-giver." He crossed his arms. "Why aren't you out gathering food?"

"I needed a bath."

"I didn't say you could bathe. Get out. Now."

"I refuse."

"You defy me, she-thing?"

"That is not my name."

First's bile surged into his throat. He tore into a mad sprint for the lake. The she-thing leapt into the water and paddled away from him. First dug his heels into the turf to stop when his feet broke the lake's surface.

The she-thing floated on her back. "You forget that you cannot swim."

"How is it that you do this?" he roared.

"Buoyancy."

"Madness! You are kept afloat by the hands of evil spirits. I say again, come here at once!"

"You will harm me if I comply."

He cocked his arm. "I will beat you if you do not!"

"Not possible. You cannot reach me."

He kicked at the sand in outrage.

* * *

First gnawed at a pear in his hand, sulking all the way. He ate because he had to – the hollow feeling in his belly had grown too strong to be ignored – but he did not enjoy his meal. Frustrated as he was, eating was the last thing on his mind, but biology was a powerful thing.

Life in his camp had been peaceful before the she-thing's arrival. He knew when he first set eyes on her that she'd be trouble. As certain as he felt then that he ought to send her away, he could not simply tell her to leave. The she-thing held sway over a number of spirits through which she worked inexplicable feats. So long as he could control her, she could harness those spirits to his benefit, but letting his guard down would invite disaster.

That was not all. Something about her prompted sensations in him he could not recall feeling before her chance arrival. While she'd rejected each of his advances, he would not be deterred. Biology was a powerful thing in that regard as well.

The tree with the red fruit loomed in the distance. He sneered at it, hoping one day it would be split in two by a freak bolt of lighting. It bore the fruit the she-thing preferred. A few paces ahead of the tree was a patch of loose dirt that had not been there the day before. There were several other patches around the tree, spaced equally apart from each other.

He cocked his head over his shoulder and hollered in the direction he last saw the she-thing. It was not long before she was at his shoulder – yet still out of arm's reach.

"What is it?" she asked from just behind him.

First turned to address her. "What do you make of these dirt mounds?"

"I made these."

"For what purpose?"

"We require a sustainable food supply if we are to..."

"Nonsense!" First interrupted.

She took a moment to collect herself before making another attempt at explanation. "I have planted pomegranates."

His eyes narrowed. This was an apple tree. In fact, this was obviously an apple tree, for he himself had named it. To say otherwise was madness.

"These are apples," he said.

"Not possible," she said. "Apples are not indigenous to..."

The back of First's hand caught her with her mouth open. The sound it made on impact was like a hollow coconut against a stone.

The she-thing went into a half-spin and stumbled, planted her hands on the ground to keep from spilling over.

First advanced with his arm bent for another sweep. "What are they called?"

The she-thing wiped a trickle blood from her lip. "Apples."

"Good."

* * *

First awoke at sunrise the following morning with an ache too strong to be mere hunger. He rubbed his side until the soreness dropped to tolerable levels, then stood. His body felt so heavy. He could not remember the last time he'd slept so soundly as last night.

The she-thing toiled under her apple tree. She addressed him with a nod as he shuffled past, then got back to digging holes with her hands. It was a fool's errand. He would have told her so had his chest not felt like it was on fire.

He dropped to hands and knees in the lake shallows and drank in long pulls. The cool water eased some of the blazing hurt in his insides.

A rustle in the grass snagged his attention. His head whipped out of the water toward the source of the noise. At the edge of the tall grass by the lakeside stood another she-thing - as if things could not get any worse.

This she-thing's eyes were locked on First. She took a tentative step backward, glanced over her shoulder in case she needed to break into a run.

First stood. "Stay where you are."

The she-thing froze.

"I am First." He paused, half-expecting her to announce her name.

"Do not harm me."

"Your name is Hwa," said First.

She watched him with eyes the size of river stones.

"That is your name now," he said.

Her hands moved to cover her naked body. "May I stay here? I have been cast out of..."

"I know why you are here. It was foretold that we would meet." First winced as the dull throb in his ribs flared up.

The she-thing raised an eyebrow. "You are a mystic, sir?"

"Of a sort." He rubbed his side.

She bowed her head. "Sir, you are wise and just. I surely would have perished if not for your generosity."

"Your name is Hwa," First stressed each word.

The corners of her mouth fluttered, turned up slightly in a nervous smile. "My... name is... Hwa," she stammered.

First nodded approvingly.

* * *

She-thing sat under the shade of her apple tree. In her lap was a bunch of leaves that had been stripped from palm fronds. She worked the fronds into a crisscross pattern, then tugged on their ends to tie them in place. Whatever it was she was working on, First could have kicked it out of her lap from how angry he felt. He decided against it. Such a rash act might prompt his new friend to form a poor impression of him.

"Did I not tell you to gather food?" asked First, trying his best to keep composed.

"I am making a..." She-thing stopped short the way she always did when she was about to utter a name First had not assigned.

"The thing I am making will allow me to carry more food at a time," said she-thing.

First batted a hand at her. "She-thing, this is Hwa. You will serve her now."

"Does she-thing have a name?" Hwa asked.

She-thing opened her mouth to answer.

"She refused one," said First, "and so she is less than a beast. She will do as you say, but she sometimes requires persuasion." He made a fist, making sure she-thing saw it and Hwa did not.

An insidious snicker played on First's lip. "Hwa hasn't eaten. Get Hwa and me some food."

She-thing started collecting fallen apples in the crook of her other arm.

"We don't eat those," said First. "Go gather coconuts by the lake."

She-thing set the apples down and left, making sure to give First and his companion wide berth. Once she was out of sight, First took Hwa by the shoulders and turned her to face him.

"Listen well," said First. "If you should eat from that tree, you will surely die."

Hwa, wide-eyed from how sternly he'd addressed her, could only nod in response.

He pointed to the rough patches of dirt around the apple tree. "In those holes are spirits that will become more of these deadly trees. She-thing put them there."

Hwa's face turned more pallid than the moon at full.

"We have to dig them out," said First. "Or else the evil spirits she-thing put in the ground will overcome all of our fruit trees."

Her jaw dropped as realization set in. "We will have nothing to eat!"

First nodded.

"Why would she do that?" asked Hwa.

He looked around to make sure she-thing was nowhere within earshot. "She-thing is treacherous. If I were to die, she would take my camp. Then she could send the evil spirits away and have all the fruit trees to herself. This must not happen."

Hwa gave a resolute nod. "I will do as you say."

Working together, they dug out the holes she-thing had covered. They made sure to fling the dirt as far from each hole as they could, so to better disperse the spirits. Then they fled – it was not safe for them to remain with angry spirits in the open air.

First ran until he was out of breath. He slowed to a jog, then stopped. Hwa was right on his heels.

"Have we run far enough?" she asked, panting.

He'd have laughed at her gullibility were he not so winded. "I think so."

She hugged him. "I am glad that I have one such as you to keep me safe."

All at once, those bizarre feelings she-thing had instilled in First came raging back.

"You will lie with me tonight," he said. It was as much a question as a statement.

"I shall."

End of Excerpt

Want to see what happens next?

[Click this link to find "Lilith: A Prometheus Saga Short Story" on Amazon](#)

About The Prometheus Saga

The Prometheus Saga is the premier project of the Alvarium Experiment, a consortium of accomplished and award-winning authors.

The *Saga* spans the range of the existence of *Homo sapiens*. The stories do not need to be read in any particular order; each story is an entry point into the overall story.

The Prometheus Saga stories & authors are:

"The Pisces Affair" by Daco Auffenorde. CIA operative Jordan Jakes meets Prometheus when the Secretary of State becomes the target of a terrorist attack at a head-of-state dinner in Dubai. Visit Daco at www.authordaco.com.

"On Both Sides" by Bria Burton. When a mysterious woman vanishes during the American Revolution, young Robby Freeman searches for answers from a cryptic sharpshooter who deserted Washington's Continental Army. Visit Bria at www.briaburton.com.

"Ever After" by M.J. Carlson. Two mysterious women convey the same Cinderella story to Giambattista Basile in 1594 and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in 1811. How different cultures retell this story reveals humanity's soul to those who listen. Visit M.J. at www.mjcarlson.com.

"The Blurred Man" by Bard Constantine. FBI agent Dylan Plumm's investigation of a mill explosion puts her on the trail of the Blurred Man, a mysterious individual who may have been on Earth for centuries. Visit Bard at bardofdarkness.wix.com/bardconstantine.

"Crystal Night" by Charles A. Cornell. Berlin, 1938. On the eve of one of history's darkest moments, a Swedish bartender working in Nazi Germany accidentally uncovers a woman's hidden past. Can he avoid becoming an accomplice as the Holocaust accelerates? Visit Charles at www.charlesacornell.com.

"Marathon" by Doug Dandridge. Prometheus, posing as a citizen of Athens, participates in the battle of Marathon alongside the playwright Aeschylus. Visit Doug at www.dougandridge.net.

"The Strange Case of Lord Byron's Lover" by Parker Francis. Writing in her journal, Mary Shelley recounts a series of perplexing events during her visit with Lord Byron – a visit that resulted in the creation of her famous *Frankenstein* novel, but also uncovered a remarkable mystery. Visit Parker at www.parkerfrancis.com.

"Strangers on a Plane" by Kay Kendall. In 1969 during a flight across North America, a young mother traveling with her infant meets an elderly woman who displays unusual powers. But when a catastrophe threatens, are those powers strong enough to avert disaster? This short story folds into Kay's mystery series featuring the young woman, amateur sleuth Austin Starr. Visit Kay at www.kaykendallauthor.com.

“East of the Sun” by Jade Kerrion. Through a mysterious map depicting far-flung lands, a Chinese sailor in 1424 and a Portuguese cartographer in 1519 share a vision of an Earth far greater than the reality they know. Visit Jade at www.jadekerrion.com.

“Manteo” by Elle Andrews Patt. In 1587, Croatan native Manteo returns from London to Roanoke Island, Virginia. Can he reconcile his strong loyalty to the untamed land and people of his home with his desire for the benefits the colonizing English bring with them before one of them destroys the other? Visit Elle at www.elleandrewspatt.com.

“First World War” by Ken Pelham. 40,000 BC: As the last remaining species of hominid, *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis*, fight a desperate battle for ownership of the future, the outcasts of both sides find themselves caught in middle. Visit Ken at www.kenpelham.com.

“Lilith” by Antonio Simon, Jr. In this retelling of the Adam & Eve story, a hermit’s life is turned upside-down by the arrival of a mysterious woman in his camp. As the story of their portentous meeting carries forward through the millennia, only time will tell if Lilith is a heroine, a victim, or a monster. Visit Antonio at www.DarkwaterSyndicate.com.

“Fifteen Dollars’ Guilt” by Antonio Simon, Jr. 1881: After a close brush with death in a steamship disaster, Prometheus encounters another survivor who gripes about how aimless his life has become. Prometheus helps him find his calling, inadvertently setting in motion the assassination of President Garfield. Visit Antonio at www.DarkwaterSyndicate.com.

Visit the website to view all of the stories: [The Prometheus Saga](#)

About the Author

Antonio Simon, Jr. is a lawyer and award-winning author of several books. His debut novel, "The Gullwing Odyssey", is a fantasy/comedy adventure and winner of three awards in its first year. He is also the author of "R.A.G.E.", an original roleplaying game system, and "Miami Is Missing", which delves into Miami's hidden history. He lives in Miami, Florida. Find his books at and more at www.DarkwaterSyndicate.com.

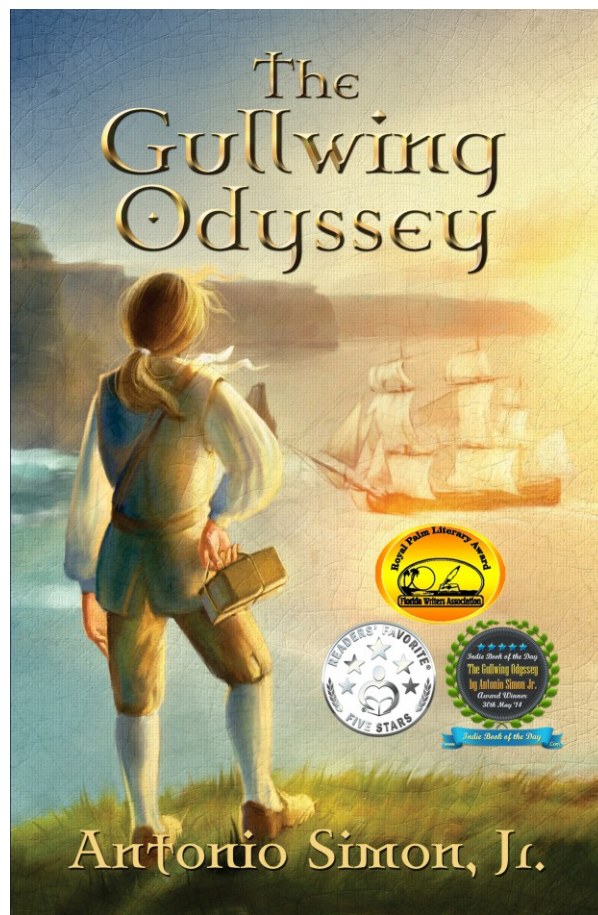
The Gullwing Odyssey

By: Antonio Simon, Jr.

"The Gullwing Odyssey rests solidly on the shaking shoulders of a good laugh – and that's what sets it apart from ninety percent of fantasies on the market."

– Diane Donovan, Midwest Book Review

A four-time award-winning fantasy/comedy adventure. When an unusual assignment sends Marco overseas, he finds himself stranded in foreign lands. Even that wouldn't be so bad if he weren't constantly outrunning pirates and attacked by a hummingbird with an appetite for human brains – that's just the start of his misadventures. If he survives, Marco may yet become the hero he strives not to be.



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By Antonio Simon, Jr.

Miami Is Missing explores Miami's abandoned, forgotten, and little-known historical places. The book delves into such places as a storied World War II blimp base, an undersea national landmark, and an abandoned factory where a ten-story rocket has waited since the 1960's to carry mankind into space. Photographs, addresses, and GPS coordinates are provided so readers can take a "then-and-now" glimpse into Miami's past.

Transit Dreams

By Antonio Simon, Jr.

Glance out the window of a speeding train. The landscape is never the same twice. That's the vibe behind Transit Dreams. Within this book is a collection of short stories and vignettes. Some may make you laugh; others may make you think. They run the gamut from fantasy to comedy, from horror to cynicism, to just plain weird and make all stops in between. All aboard. You're in for a ride.

The Many Deaths of Cyan Wraithwate

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Brash, young, and markedly sociopathic, Cyan has the makings of a full army commander if he lives long enough to be promoted. When a close brush with death breaks his resolve, he is unable to lead his men, let alone leave his tent, for weeks.

The tide starts to turn when his superiors send him a magical artifact that ensures he will not die on the battlefield. Unfortunately for Cyan, he soon learns that not dying can be worse than not living – a side effect of the artifact's magic turns more of his body into lifeless iron with each passing day. Knowing time is short before he becomes just another statue in a town square, he sets off on a quest to rid himself of his cursed immortality.

R.A.G.E. – Roleplay Adventure Gaming Engine

By Antonio Simon, Jr.

This is the Roleplay Adventure Gaming Engine – R.A.G.E. for short – and what it does is produce unforgettable adventures with you and your friends in starring roles. The rules are concise and flexible. The possibilities: boundless. The requirements: minimal. All you need are friends, dice, imagination, a pulse, and a sense of humor (more or less

in that order). R.A.G.E. is a roleplaying game system complete in one volume. It is ideal for 4 to 8 players. See why this game is all the R.A.G.E.

Forgotten Spaces: Poetry For A Pensive Mood

By: Steven M. Fonts, R. Perez de Pereda, & Antonio Simon, Jr.

These twenty-five poems explore the dark paths on our walks through life: addiction, bereavement, solitude, and more. These are the forgotten spaces, blighted areas we pretend don't exist. Everybody's got one. For some, it's outside their windows; others, it's under their very roofs. But regardless of where these dark places are, a pit of quicksand is just as deadly no matter where located. Tread lightly.

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A last-man-standing fighting tournament between a messenger, dragon, knight, wizard, princess, and a pirate where anything goes and everything will. Magic, swords, pistols, dirty tricks - you name it - it's all fair game and as they battle to be the top fighter of 2014. First in a series of three volumes.

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Late one night, a stranger wanders into a diner off the interstate highway. He orders coffee, takes a refill, and steps back out into a downpour. The waiter knows there's something off about his visitor, but he has no way of knowing just how otherworldly this stranger is until the authorities call him in for a recorded statement the next day. Just who - or what - is the mysterious Company Man?

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Nebmahket: Self-Styled King Of The Nile Is King Of The Nile

This dark comedy, written in the style of an article in a history journal, celebrates a huge find. Egyptologists unlock a three thousand year old mystery when they unearth a tablet identifying Nebmahket, the forgotten son of Pharaoh Ramesses II.

About Darkwater Syndicate

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