

# PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

## An invention for Palo Alto parents

**C**ARL had a brainstorm. It came to him while he was out walking the Dish, in the Stanford hills, looking at the other parents hiking on their own, or in pairs, without their kids.

Where were their children, he wondered? As a new stay-at-home dad, laid off from his startup, Carl was dealing with his two children night and day. How did these people walking the Dish manage to get away from their children and have the time to take a walk?

Bingo, the brainstorm came to him: a robot nanny.

“Oh my god,” Carl thought to himself, that is what parents in Palo Alto need these days, and what each Palo Alto child needs — a robot nanny!

This is part 22 of a 24-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

He smacked the side of his head. It seemed like a killer idea for a startup, and a way to make a huge amount of money. And the more he thought about it, the more killer it seemed.

“Wow,” said Carl to himself, “a robot nanny could fill all the duties of a parent.” He got excited thinking this could be a big money-maker in an era when parents are so busy, and don’t have a lot of time for traditional childrearing duties.

How could you be tied down to

a 24/7 career, trying to make your financial way in the world, and raise children at the same time? It was impossible.

A robot nanny was the solution. It could be programmed to speak different languages, for example. So part of its marketing would be to sell parents



CARL

how their children could become multi-lingual.

Any kid growing up today in Palo Alto, for example, needed to learn Mandarin in order to succeed in the world that was evolving.

A robot nanny could also be programmed to play sports — so it could play catch with a kid, or soccer,

and help drill the child on his or her athletic skills.

Such a robot nanny would have patience with a child not very skilled in sports — patience some parents did not have. How many parents had taken a child to the sports field, only to witness to their chagrin that the child was not blessed with athletic skill or coordination?

Carl got out his phone, sat down under a tree, and started making some notes. He could feel his old surge of creative excitement coming back. Surely this was the great idea that would bring him fame, fortune, early retirement, and a chance to travel the world and do whatever he wanted.

He laughed out loud in joy. It was a great day.

**More tomorrow.**