

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Carl wants Athena to rescue him

CARL sat under a tree along the Dish Trail in the Stanford Hills, furiously typing on his phone.

He'd just been struck with a brilliant money-making start-up idea: a robot nanny that could take care of a child in Palo Alto, and teach him or her Mandarin and sports; thus freeing the parent to have a 24/7 work life, unconfined by the needs of parenting.

The more Carl thought more about his robot, the more he felt there would be a huge market for such a product.

For example, a nanny robot could tutor a child in math and science, and help the child with his or her homework.

This is part 23 of a 24-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

There would also be a fun and jokes component to this electronic nanny.



CARL

In other words, the robot could do things that were amusing with the child, so that the child would come

to love the nanny robot, and the two would bond.

Of course a nanny robot would be available 24/7. No more need for a parent to get up in the middle

of the night to deal with a crying child.

Each child would have his own robot "Do the math on the profits to be made there," yelled Carl to himself.

Basically it would be a robotic parent.

It would give your children driving lessons. Heck, Google already had robots driving cars, so that part wasn't even fiction any more. It was fact.

The more he thought about it, the more Carl felt that his invention was a revolutionary device on the order of the computer, or the steam engine.

He had a name for it: Minerva.

Or wait, Athena — the goddess of wisdom. Maybe that was better.

Athena. Yes, Athena. That was its name.

Increasingly excited, Carl jogged down from the dish, got into his Tesla (which he'd bought before he was laid off from his job, and which was now killing him financially), and hurried down to the HanaHaus coffee shop, in the old Varsity Theater on University Avenue, to draft a funding proposal for his device.

"I'm going to make this one a fact," he said with determination. "I'm going to make this one a fact."

More on Monday.