

The Scorpion Rules

*I didn't actually mean for the hostage thing to create
a whole bunch of hereditary monarchies. But, you know, whatever.
Murdering princesses. I guess I can work with that.*

— Holy Utterances of Talis, Book One, Chapter Four

Logline: In a desperate future world where a wonderful, horrible artificial intelligence maintains the delicate balance of peace, Greta must make a choice: die nobly as she's been trained to do, or save her friends by becoming everything she fears.



Story: Greta Gustafsen Stuart is the Duchess of Halifax and the Crown Princess of the Pan Polar Confederacy. She is also a hostage. Greta lives in a protected precepture with other children of world leaders until her eighteenth birthday, as a hostage to peace in a delicate, twisted arrangement to maintain world order.

Five hundred years after the War Storms, it's all about the water. Talis, a powerful, once human Artificial Intelligence (AI), has taken control of the planet with orbital weapons poised to destroy whole cities. He has forced world peace by taking the children of all the world's leaders hostage. Very simply, should they war with one another, their children die.

The Children of Peace - sons and daughters of royalty, presidents and generals - are raised together in small, isolated, rudimentary schools, "The Prefectures". Together since they were six, they learn history and political theory, and are trained to gracefully accept what may well be their fate: death via the hand of The Swan Riders, the loyal, voluntary servants of Talis. The friends are close as siblings and bound together by their destiny.

Greta stands out as a natural leader among her peers and is just months away from aging out and gaining her freedom. Until then she is prepared to die with dignity, if necessary. Greta's best friend and maybe lover is Xie, the exquisite descendant of Himalayan royalty. She is her confidant and soul sister.

Everything changes when strappingly handsome ELIAN PALNIK, arrives as a hostage from a new American alliance. He defies the machines that control every part of their lives. When he is severely punished for acting out, his rebellion and passion awakens something in Greta. She is very taken by this daring young man, but he also opens her eyes to the brutality of the rules they live under.

When Elian's country boldly attacks the Prefecture, taking Talis's hostages -- hostage, Greta discovers her own quiet power. After a daring takeover attempt, Greta makes a deal with the devil (or the angel... hard to tell with Talis) to end the siege and save her friends ... if Talis allows Elian to go free, Greta will willfully agree to attempt the transformation to an Artificial.

In 500 years and 28 unsuccessful attempts at unspooling a human mind and reassembling it in software, Greta becomes the first in a century to successfully make the transformation to Artificial.

And then there were two.

No longer princess. No longer hostage. No longer human. Greta suddenly finds herself on par with the ruler of the world on the precarious precipice between human and AI. She must balance her human feelings of love and friendship with the dispassionate marvel of the vast universe that has now opened up to her, creating a fragile state where the memory of her human moments can rise up, and cause her to come apart at the seams.

Before she can fully synthesize the brutal transition, Greta finds herself in the middle of an open rebellion. She is escorted across post-Apocalyptic Saskatchewan by two Swan Riders, part of a small band of human volunteers who serve Talis and the AIs as part army, part cult. But the dry grassland may hide insurgents who want to rescue her – or see her killed.

Her fate has stirred her nation and the world, including Elian, the boy she saved—the boy who wants to change the world, with a knife if necessary. Against all odds and against their pledge to uphold and protect the AIs, The Swan Riders conspire with Elian to remind Talis that the reason for saving the world has everything to do with being human -- that there is a difference between existing and living and that humanity is what makes the existence worthwhile.



The Characters:

THE CHILDREN OF PEACE - SENIOR CLASS

GRETA GUSTAFSEN STUART, Duchess of Halifax/Crown Princess of the Pan Plar Confederacy.

LI-DA-XIA (Xie) - Yunnan (Himalayas) reincarnated descendant of Ngawang Namgyal. Greta's closest friend, first and truest love.

ELIAN PALNIK - Cumberland Alliance. Newly appointed hostage. In love with Greta, confounding her feelings, eliciting her steadfast devotion.

GREGORI Kalvelis (Grego) - Son of the Grand Duke of the Baltic Alliance. Classmate of Greta.

THANDI - She is the heir to the great thrones of Africa. Classmate of Greta.

HAN - Heir to the Asi-Russo dynasty. Classmate of Greta.

ATTA - Pacific Islander. Classmate of Greta.

SIDNEY CARLOW - Classmate of Greta. Mississippi Delta Confederacy. First to die in the grey room in our story.

THE ROYALTY

GRETA'S MOTHER - Queen Anne - Monarch of the Pan Polar Confederacy.

XIE'S FATHER and MOTHER - Monarchs of Bhutan. Spiritual and Political leaders.

WILMA ARMENTEROS - New leader, General of the Cumberland Alliance - Elian's Grandmother.

THE SWAN RIDERS

RACHEL - Lovers with Francis-Xavier - Beautiful, delicate Swan Rider, hosts the *male* AI 'Talis'.

FRANCIS-XAVIER (FX)- Loyal to the death. A black Adonis.

SRI- From Sri Lanka. - Leader of the Swan Rider rebellion

RENATA - Lieutenant to the Swan Rider rebellion.

THE AIs - (what remains of the 28 attempts at uploading a human to AI)

TALIS - Once Michael Telos, now AI ruler of the world for the last 500 years. Author of The Utterances and master of UN High Commission on Conflict Abatement. Omniscient and sole controller of the Orbital Weapons Platforms that can destroy cities with a single blast.

THE ABBOT - Once Ambrose Devalera, now AI trainer of the Children of Peace. Old friend of Talis and one of four remaining AIs. Chooses to live in a hexapod-legged mechanical body, with a human-like face screen. A kind AI, still remembering what it was to be a human.

EVANGELINE - Evie made AI at age 9, and isn't quite right. Lives as a room that's an inside-out thistle of jointed arms tipped with needles, samplers, and pincers. It contains a lone teddy bear listing slightly on a rocking chair in the middle of the otherwise empty floor.

AZARIEL - Az. speaks only in numbers.



The Series: *The Scorpion Rules* is an eight episode, one hour multi-season series television drama based on best selling author Erin Bow's award-winning young adult novels *The Scorpion Rules* and *The Swan Riders*. *Scorpion Rules* won the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Young Adults and has received praise from Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, and Booklist, among many others.

Jodi Binstock and Steve Graham are co-executive producers on Netflix's smash hit *Black Summer*, which topped the newly formed "Netflix First Top Ten List." They are producers, writers and directors on the Syfy long-running zombie series *Z Nation*.

Jodi is the Emmy-nominated Co-Executive Producer of Lisa Kudrow's *Web Therapy*, one of the first high profile Web Series to move to television (Showtime)

The Scorpion Rules is developed and produced through their Los Angeles production company Magic Hour Pictures.

