

Excerpts from the novel **Hopes and Dreams: Stuck on AutoDrive**
Copyright © 2007 by Eric Davis. All rights reserved.
For information on purchasing a copy of the book, go to:
<http://hopes-and-dreams.net>

Hopes and Dreams



A chipmunk watches me. I purposely don't catch eyes with him or approach him. I actually back away a bit. He gets on his hind legs and starts chewing me out in chipmunkese. He yells at me for moving his bricks and whatever else I've done. He gets on all fours, pauses, shifts directions 30 degrees left then 20 degrees right and hightails it out of here, to tell all his chipmunk friends about telling me off. I'm happy to play my part in making him a hero.

I shuffle through the remains of the original farmhouse and move some debris into a makeshift stairway. Climbing up without spilling my drink, I move carefully to the corner that has no roof. If the floor gives way, I want to jump out not in. I start to structurally test the floor in ways I was never taught in engineering school, culminating in my jumping up and down. Just when I finish jumping, I hear a strange sound. I listen to the house for the sounds of eminent collapse. Instead the sounds are coming from outside and above. Looking out, several people are standing on the hilltop, yelling at me. I can't tell who they are, but they might be laughing at me. I pose, take a hearty swig of delicious Double Bubble, climb down, and head back up the hill. At the top, Ruth hands me a sandwich, and she points down the hill, down the road, to where the lone hulking figure of Erix is standing, staring at a stop sign. I drive down to get him. I get out, and I open the door for him without saying anything. He doesn't say anything either during the ride. We don't want to break his concentration. I park the Pony Express back on the now-flattened grasses. Erix turns to me and asks, "Does Friday come before Thursday?"

"Yeah, about a week before," I reply.

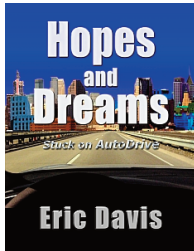
Hopes and Dreams: *Stuck on AutoDrive* by Eric Davis

ISBN 978-0-9796098-0-0

\$39.95, 592 pages, hardcover

website - <http://hopes-and-dreams.net>

e-mail - book@hopes-and-dreams.net



Excerpts from the novel **Hopes and Dreams: Stuck on AutoDrive**
Copyright © 2007 by Eric Davis. All rights reserved.
For information on purchasing a copy of the book, go to:
<http://hopes-and-dreams.net>

Hopes and Dreams



Up on the short platform, the mayor is introducing Carl Dumas to the crowd. When the mayor speaks of the distinguished achievements of Flight Control, I assume no one bothered to remind him of the time we almost took out the gas main. The challenge was that the gas lines were buried four feet down.

Dumas starts to explain the potential of AutoDrive, saying, “AutoDrive will return people with impairments. AutoDrive will talk on the phone. AutoDrive children... take directions.” It's like he memorized phrases, but not complete sentences. He's all jumbled up. We catch eyes. “We want to go with safety to... the roads. AutoDrive will allow you to drive us anywhere. It will be the car you want to have the elderly. People who can't drive will AutoDrive. AutoDrive is today's dream tomorrow.”

He's killing me. And he could be right.

He's speaking in tongues and the crowd is wondering if he's real. Carrying the microphone down to the car, he's about to pass in front of the speakers. I can't believe he's doing this, and no one up there is stopping him. Feedback builds instantly from the speakers, and people plug their ears, wincing. I'll have to remember to bring earplugs along with my satellite dish tower.

Carl turns on the car, gets out, and shuts the door. He leans in the open window with the mike and says, “Go.” His head is grazed as he tries to clear the window. The car takes off. He says, “There goes AutoDrive,” but his tone is nowhere near as positive as it should have been. He starts swearing a half second before flipping off the microphone.

The Pegasus Coup turns the corner down the block.

Hopes and Dreams: *Stuck on AutoDrive* by Eric Davis

ISBN 978-0-9796098-0-0

\$39.95, 592 pages, hardcover

website - <http://hopes-and-dreams.net>

e-mail - book@hopes-and-dreams.net