



## Cataclysmic Evolution

*Alicia Nordwell*

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## Cataclysmic Evolution Alicia Nordwell

Barron's dad makes him toe the line, and to keep his friends, they do too. The new guy could never fit in... but Revi doesn't act like he even wants to, which drives Barron crazy. Life takes a drastic turn, and Revi Porter's long hair, soft lips, and aggravating emo dress code are the last things on Barron's mind. There's no room for petty grudges in the struggle to survive. When saving a little girl leaves Barron lost in the dark, will he learn how to really see?

### **Photo Description:**

He stood there, fingers twisted into the chain-link, a challenge in his eyes as he stared me down. His curly hair framed his face, but even with the hair you could tell he was all guy. His canted hips and tight pants hid nothing. He wore a giant watch and a ton of bracelets. The brightly colored twisted cord, leather, and braided string stood out against his honey skin.

I was in so much trouble.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love's Landscapes**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The M/M Romance Group strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

## Cataclysmic Evolution Details

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## From Reader Review Cataclysmic Evolution for online ebook

### **H.V. Corbin says**

It left me wanting more, but in a good way! I want to learn more about the planet called Paradise and about what happened if/when Barron and Ravi come into contact with the colony again - especially Ravi's father. I'd also definitely like to know more about the alien biology at play. A really great read.

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### **Serena says**

I enjoyed the characters, and their world and hope I get the chance to read the story again and/or to read more within the series.

My Rating System:

\* couldn't finish, \*\* wouldn't recommend, \*\*\* would recommend, \*\*\*\* would read again, \*\*\*\*\* have read again.

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### **Erin says**

Definitely not your typical romance! Alicia writes awesome scifi adventure that contains sweet sweet romance (yes there is a difference. yes i love this author.).

Fans of this story will enjoy her other works, I think.

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### **Lilia Ford says**

Some might consider this review spoilerish.

M/M sci-fi is my favorite genre, and Alicia Nordwell definitely knows how to put together a fun, highly readable tale. This one rather crazily balances high-school flirtations and popularity jockeying with the literal end of the world. Considering that this is an account a planet-wide extinction event, i.e. the apocalypse, the story was remarkably, and to my mind refreshingly, free of horror elements--cruelty, inhumanity, ugliness. Parents are kind of bossy, kids a bit given to bullying and mean pranks, but basically everyone cooperates and helps out, with some minor heroics, but not beyond what you might find in a random group of high schoolers. It's the End of the World rated PG--with a bit of cuddling and kissing between our young lovers once they get over their mutual hatred, but minimal on-page nookie.

The story on the long side for the Love's Landscapes Event, but not long enough to adequately deal with all of the events in the story, which could probably sustain one of those 800 page sci-fi behemoths. I wasn't in the mood for anything heavy-duty, and I definitely appreciated the low stress focus on friendships and flirtation in the midst of the fight for survival. However, I did find the ending problematic. It felt abrupt and

didn't really leave me with any sense of the characters' or humanity's future. It doesn't ruin the story by any means, but I didn't find it satisfying. It may be a sequel is planned, in which case count me in.

Bottom line: another entertaining read from this year's M/M event.

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### **Adrianamae says**

3.5

Pretty good futuristic, apocalyptic story with scify undertones. There's also a bit of romance to complement the young adults that are part of this story.

I liked it, and wouldn't mind re-visiting Paradise again. I want more growing up for our young heroes. I want more world building, especially the human-symbiotic connection and developing evolution, and last, but not least, more romance.

I want...yeah, that was a hint that I'd really like a sequel for this story.

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### **Sandra says**

Offered for FREE from the M/M Romance Group's Love's Landscapes event. Thank you too all the amazing authors who participated!

I was a little iffy on the description, but I really liked Alicia Nordwell's The Experiment, so I gave this one a try...

My very first thought was, "Uhg, I *hate* that cover", and my very last thought before I went to write this review was, "Oh... now I get that cover." Still don't particularly *like* it, but I get it.

So this book, is *hard* to review. Thinking back to the first chapter, it's hard to believe it's even the *same* book. And I mean that in the best possible way. Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake is the only other post-apocalyptic book I can think of where we get to witness said apocalypse. Very different take on things from what I'm used to.

Of course, I would have liked a *little* more romance with my romance, *but*, really a spectacular M/M Sci-Fi novella. I loved how Nordwell seamlessly clued us in that male-male relationships are viewed as no different from female-male relationships without it being an info dump, and while still having the same parental standards and issues with regards to class, type, prejudice, etc. in a dating partner. I loved how the boys changed, and yet didn't, with all the insane circumstances they underwent. I loved how a *crazy* sci-fi twist

didn't really seem all that crazy, and kinda slid under the radar until it was over and I thought, "damn, that's crazy."

It didn't feel like a cliff-hanger, although given the nature of the situation there are a *lot* of unknowns. But it felt unknown in a "that's life" sorta way to me, as opposed to a "the author left things hanging." That being said. I would *love* a follow up (view spoiler)

Really very good. Ms Nordwell is quickly approaching auto-buy status for me.

P.S. I love how a freaken *Teen Beats* pic morphed into a near space opera and I didn't bat an eye. Well done.

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### **Bookbee says**

#### **4.5 Stars** rounded up.

That was freaking amazing! I cut my (very old) teeth on SciFi and this surpassed all of my expectations! It started, much like some of my favourite SciFi books, in an almost mundane way - school kids on an outing - and turned a sudden corner to apocalyptic destruction before veering left again into high adventure on a distant planet!

This was written for my prompt in the Love's Landscapes event and, as in previous years, I am totally amazed at the imagination and talent of the writers. The stories may not always go in the direction I had imagined but each year I've been delighted with the authors' vision. This year is no exception!

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### **K says**

sci-fi (near future/apocalyptic) novella length story

Barron and his class mates are on a school trip to the local caves and deep underground when tragedy strikes the earth, wiping out most living creatures. This is the story of their survival and eventual transfer to a planet known as Paradise....which is something of a misnomer.

The relationship between Barron and Revi sis a pretty classic enemies to lovers scenario and is very muted compared to the other parts of the story but it works in this situation.

I really enjoyed this until the very end part of the story which just didn't quite work for me. Otherwise though this was a very well written sci fi story.

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### **Serena Yates says**

What starts out as a deceptively "normal" futuristic story, set at the end of the 21st century, slowly develops into full-out and totally unexpected science fiction. The words "drastic turn" in the blurb are not to be taken lightly, I can tell you that much. With a main character who has a lot to learn, and events that kept me on the edge of my seat, I can fully recommend this to anyone who is looking for an unusual story heavy on fantastic

world building and light on the romance.

Barron is a pretty average teenager and a month away from high school graduation. He tries to get away with things his parents don't want him to do, he leads a group of friends who have been with him since they were small kids, and he is sarcastic. One additional characteristic did not endear him to me in the least: he is a bully. Anyone who doesn't meet his approval (as defined by his father's morals) gets taunted, or worse, and it becomes clear only a few pages into the book that he is a very mean guy, at least toward his peers.

The catastrophe hits, and everything changes. Barron is still condescending, but he pulls his weight, and the first cracks in his armor appear when he encounters a little girl who needs him to survive. Suddenly he begins to care, and when he ends up blind, his real learning curve begins. It is steep and long, but it was amazing to watch Barron begin to understand what is really important. Great character development!

I cannot say too much else without spoiling the story, but I think anyone who likes science fiction might want to give it a try. If you like the unexpected, if you enjoy catastrophes and apocalyptic events, and if you're looking for a read that is as much driven by events as it is by characters, with just a touch of romance, then you will probably enjoy this free novella.

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### **Cari Z. says**

I'm giving this one a 4.5\* and rounding up, because wow, this didn't turn out anything like I thought it would, and I'm totally all right with that. We go from a future not too dissimilar to our present, to a cataclysmic event that sets off the science fiction part of this story and sends our heroes, and what realistically teenage heroes they are, into space.

There's hurt/comfort, there's enemies to lovers--kind of, this isn't exactly your typical romance, but I think that's part of what I enjoyed about it. Sometimes I'm more interested in the world building than I am in the sweet lovin', that's just a reality of my sci-fi geekdom, and this story really worked for me in that regard. Long, never too speedy, lots of development without info-dumping...yeah, I really enjoyed it.

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### **Erika says**

:Starts reading:

:Sees the word "emo" in the 2nd paragraph:

:Stops reading:

This is probably going to come off kind of mean but it's really bothering me so:

If you're going to write about teenagers and you're going to discuss their style in the first few paragraphs, please know what you're talking about. Baggy clothes are not "in" anymore, skinny pants or even saggy skinny pants are, so your first few paragraphs were already kind of annoying (to me anyway). Secondly, NEWS FLASH: Emo is not a thing anymore. You could go with "hipster" but even that term is starting to fall by the wayside. I know this is sci fi, but still. Come up with something totally new and exciting or be on trend or make them wear space suits and silver hair. Something... Just not that.

If you don't feel the urge to use Google to do some research first, please just don't mention it (It took me 2 seconds to find corroboration that Emo officially stopped being a thing in 2010 but that people, **ESPECIALLY** the younger folks, were over it in 2006 or whatever. I'm paraphrasing here).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Reader That Is Not Normally Easily Annoyed But Has Noticed This Lazy Tendency Of Authors Not Researching "Young People" Trends They Want To Talk About Before Immortalizing Their Words For All And Sundry To See

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### **Pamela Su says**

Quite an interesting read. What if the world as we know it ended? How would humankind survive? I liked how the story addressed these questions.

The two main characters were young boys who had to adapt to the changing world around them. I liked how the story developed and we got to know the characters better.

The ending was weird though. Super weird.

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### **Alessandra says**

I love love this story. Please tell me there's a sequel. I beg you. Write a sequel #downonmykneesbegging.

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### **Elizabethta says**

#### **3.5 stars**

It's amazing how the prompt is taken and spun out into this post-apocalyptic, sci-fi adventure.

A boy leans against a chain link fence. He catches the fancy of a fellow high-school student. There is tension based on mutual interest. But during a school field trip to underground caves, a cataclysmic event occurs above ground, and their world changes forever.

The story prompt took us from simple boy meets boy to space travel, new worlds and mutant creatures. I liked this voyage, incredible though it was (view spoiler). But that's science fiction for you and I was willing to make the jump.

I also liked how the two young MCs, Barron and Revi, go from antagonists to friends to lovers. They spend much of the first part of the story apart from each other as the plot thickens-- which doesn't help the

romance-- but Barron goes through an interesting evolution from tough-guy to hero and space pioneer that makes it worthwhile. And Revi, with his loyalty and fearlessness, turns out to be worth the wait. The end of the story is really the beginning, though. This seems to be a teaser for more to come with new and exotic secrets waiting to be uncovered.

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**?♥? Michaelle ♥♥? says**

[a sci-fi space adventure as the survivors travel to another planet...that is no longer the "paradise" it originally appeared to be given actual science (they folded spa

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