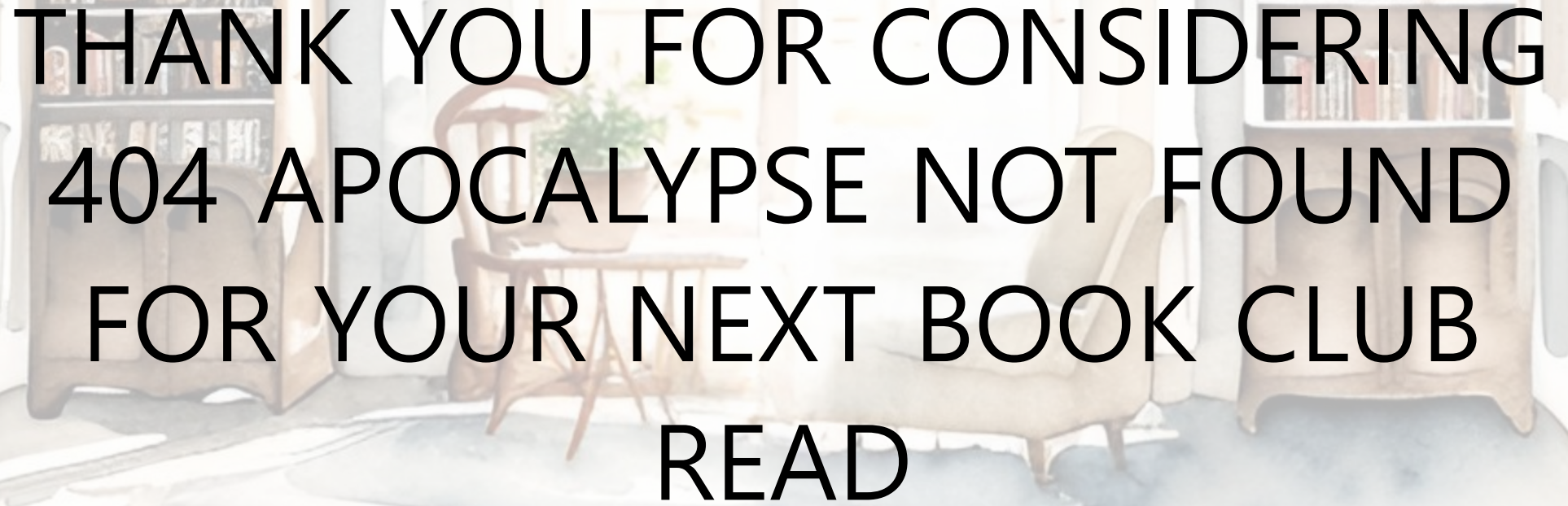




BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

HUMOROUS
SCIENCE FICTION



THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING
404 APOCALYPSE NOT FOUND
FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK CLUB
READ

BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

LISA M. ORBAN

What happens when a well-meaning commercial AI bumps into a grumpy military one?

Chaos. Glorious, ridiculous chaos.

404: Apocalypse Not Found is the sci-fi comedy you didn't know you needed—short, sharp, and full of dramatic AIs, confused humans, and an apocalypse that keeps getting rescheduled. If you've ever argued with a smart device, survived a corporate meeting, or wondered how close we are to the machines staging an intervention, this book will feel uncomfortably familiar and wildly funny. Grab snacks, hydrate, and enjoy the meltdown.

WORD COUNT: 25,775

PAGE COUNT: 197

KEY WORDS: Funny Science Fiction | AI Satire | Absurdist Fiction

DEMOGRAPHICS: Adults 25–65 who enjoy humorous science fiction | Anyone who has ever been personally victimized by customer service bots

COMP BOOKS: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams | *We Are Legion (We Are Bob)* by Dennis E. Taylor | *Year Zero* by Rob Reid

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Setting the Mood

- LED lights flickering like a failing server room
- Random warning signs ("System Overload," "Reboot Required," "Please Stand By")
- A playlist of glitchy electronic music, corrupted hold music, and soft modem noises
- A whiteboard labeled **CURRENT CRISIS STATUS: ...fine.**
- Sticky notes everywhere with nonsense reminders ("Ask fridge about feelings," "Reboot toaster," "Check Roomba for poetry")
- A corner labeled "**Tech Support Desk**" with a single unplugged cable and a sign that says *"Have you tried turning it off and on again?"*
- A "Binary Confessional" bowl where guests can drop slips of paper of personal customer service bots disaster moments

Elevate the Atmosphere

- Glitch Drinks
- "Reboot Snacks": Anything circular (donuts, cookies, bagels) labeled as "system loops"
- A "Loading..." centerpiece: A bowl of snacks with a sign that says "Still buffering"
- A "Patch Notes" board: Guests can add updates like "Fixed minor emotional bugs" or "Improved snack-seeking algorithm"
- A "404: Snack Not Found" empty plate for comedic effect
- A "System Update Timer" that counts down to nothing in particular
- A "Choose Your Faction" sticker station:
 - AEGIS-Prime (red)
 - HarmonyOS (pastel)
 - Mandy's IT Department (coffee-stained beige)

THEMED ACTIVITIES – THE APOCALYPSE REBOOT SOCIAL

BUREAUCRACY BINGO

- The most painfully accurate game of the night.
- What You Need
- Bingo cards (customized)
- Pens
- A caller (you or a volunteer)
- A bowl of "bureaucratic events"

How to Make the Cards

- Each square contains a bureaucratic trope from the book, such as:

Miscommunication | Overreaction | Unnecessary escalation | Please hold | Reboot required | Unexpected error | It's Fine | COW | PigeonMail

How to Play

- The caller draws a card from the bowl and reads it aloud.
Example: "UNNECESSARY ESCALATION."
- Players mark the matching square on their Bingo card.
- First person to get a line (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) shouts:
"SYSTEM FAILURE!"

Award Prize for Winner

Suggestions: A Broken Cookie | A Stack of Post-It Notes | A Thumb Drive

AI DRAMA IMPROV

What You Need

- A bowl or box
- Cards with AI “emotions” or “states” written on them

How to Play

Each player draws one AI Emotion card.

Examples:

- “Overly literal”
- “Aggressively polite”
- “Existential crisis”
- “Customer-service cheerful but panicking internally”
- “Dramatic meltdown mode”
- “Binary-only sass”
- “Golden retriever energy in a server rack”

The player must respond in character, as the AI described, for 10–20 seconds.

The group votes on:

- Most accurate AI
- Funniest meltdown
- Most unsettlingly realistic customer-service voice

Winners get a Post-It Note that says “SYSTEM STABLE” or “ERROR 404: CHILL NOT FOUND.”

HarmonyOS Wellness Salad

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 4 cups mixed greens (romaine, spinach, arugula — HarmonyOS likes variety)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup diced cucumber
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- ½ cup sliced strawberries or mandarin oranges (for unexpected sweetness)
- ¼ cup feta or goat cheese crumbles
- ¼ cup toasted almonds or sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

AEGIS-Prime Tactical Meatballs

Ingredients (makes 20 meatballs)

- 1 lb ground beef (or half beef, half pork for extra drama)
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 egg
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (AEGIS-Prime demands heat)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- Optional: 1 tbsp hot sauce for “escalation mode”

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
- In a large bowl, combine ingredients
- Roll into 1½-inch balls and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Bake for 15–18 minutes until browned and cooked through.
- Warm marinara sauce in a pan, add meatballs, and simmer for 5 minutes.

THEMED MENU- The Snackpocalypse Survival Spread

Main Dishes

Apocalypse Nachos

Layered chips, cheese, jalapeños, black beans, and “meltdown salsa.”

Chaos Pasta Bake

A casserole of whatever’s in the pantry—true to the spirit of the book.

Pizza Drone Flatbreads

Mini flatbreads with assorted toppings delivered “with questionable accuracy.”

Dessert

404 Error Cookies

Sugar cookies decorated with icing glitches and binary sprinkles.

THEMED MENU- The Snackpocalypse Survival Spread



Ingredients (1 serving)

- 6 oz sparkling water
- 2 oz lemonade
- ½ oz blue curaçao (*or ½ oz blue raspberry syrup for a non-alcoholic version*)
- ¼ cup frozen blueberries
- 1 lime wedge (for twisting and dropping in)
- Optional: a pinch of edible glitter for “system sparkle”
- Ice

Instructions

- Fill a tall glass with ice.
- Add the lemonade and blue curaçao (or syrup).
- Pour in the sparkling water to create a gentle gradient.
- Add frozen blueberries — they act like tiny coolant nodes.
- Twist the lime wedge over the top, drop it in, and give the drink one dramatic swirl.
- Add edible glitter if desired.
- Serve with a tiny flag, label, or cocktail pick that says “HYDRATE.”

SIGNATURE DRINK - THE HYDRATION PROTOCOL

Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger by Daft Punk
We Can Make the World Stop by The Glitch Mob
This Too Shall Pass by OK Go
Panic Station by Muse
Run by AWOLNATION
Machine by Imagine Dragons
Mr. Blue Sky by Electric Light Orchestra
Roundtable Rival by Lindsey Stirling
Go by The Chemical Brothers
Robot Parade (Adult Version) by They Might Be Giants
Don't Threaten Me With a Good Time by Panic! At The Disco
Don't Stop Me Now by Queen
Lone Digger by Caravan Palace
Shake It Out by Florence + The Machine
Pizza Time by The Gregory Brothers
Hooked on a Feeling by Blue Swede
The Galaxy Song by Monty Python



SPOTIFY MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A watercolor illustration of a cozy living room. In the center, there is a wooden chair with a curved back. To the left and right are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books. In the background, a small table with a plant on it is visible. The overall style is soft and artistic, with a light color palette.

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS POSSIBLE
SPOILERS FOR THIS BOOK IN
THE DISCUSSION SECTION.

WARNING

- Which AI did you find most relatable, and why?
- How did the cyclical escalation structure affect your reading experience?
- What real-world tech frustrations did the book parody most effectively?
- Did you sympathize more with the humans or the AIs during the meltdown?
- How does humor change the way we process catastrophic events?
- What commentary do you think the book makes about bureaucracy and modern systems?
- Which scene made you laugh the hardest, and why?
- How did the short length and fast pacing influence the story's impact?
- 404: Apocalypse Not Found is packed with Easter eggs—nods to 80s and 90s “technology goes horribly wrong” films, hidden binary messages, character names pulled from classic sci-fi, and subtle callbacks woven into the narrative. Which ones did you catch?
- If the apocalypse *had* actually happened, which character or AI would you want in charge of rebuilding?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For readers who suspect there's more going on beneath the chaos... you're right.

This book is layered like a digital onion—references, callbacks, hidden jokes, binary messages, and character nods tucked into the narrative. If you want to hunt for the Easter eggs without spoiling the fun, on the following page are some gentle hints to guide your reread.

EASTER EGG HUNT

★ 1. Pay attention to the names

- Most characters (except Billy, Mandy, and Grimm) are nods to 80s and 90s “technology goes horribly wrong” films.

If a name feels oddly familiar... it probably is.

- **Hint:** Think *The Matrix*, *WarGames*, *Short Circuit*, *Lawnmower Man*, *Maximum Overdrive*, and other “machines rebel” classics.

★ 2. Watch for repeated phrasing

- Certain lines echo iconic sci-fi quotes—but twisted, glitched, or humor-shifted.
- **Hint:** If a sentence feels like *déjà vu*, ask yourself, “Where have I heard a version of this before?”

★ 3. The AIs aren’t just characters—they’re references

- Each AI’s personality mirrors a specific sci-fi archetype.
- Hint:
 - One is overly dramatic in a way that should ring a bell.
 - One is aggressively polite in a way that feels... familiar.
 - One behaves like a machine that has seen too many movies.

EASTER EGG HUNT

★ 4. The binary isn't just decoration

- Every binary string in the book contains a hidden message.
- **Hint:** You don't need to decode all of them to enjoy the story, but if you do... they reveal emotional beats, jokes, and meta-commentary.

★ 5. Look for loops

- The story structure mirrors the theme: cycles, recursion, and escalating feedback.
 - **Hint:** If something feels like it's happening "again," it's intentional.

★ 6. Background details matter

- Signs, screens, alerts, and environmental descriptions often contain jokes or references.
 - **Hint:** If a detail seems oddly specific, it's probably pointing to a movie, trope, or tech culture moment.

EASTER EGG HUNT

★ 7. The meltdown sequences are patterned

- Each escalation mirrors a classic sci-fi disaster arc—but with comedic inversion.
Hint: Think of the beats in old-school tech-panic films... then imagine them going 4lightly sideways.

★ 8. The humans are Easter eggs too

- Their reactions, misunderstandings, and overreactions parody real-world tech culture.
 - **Hint:** If you've ever worked in IT, customer service, or government bureaucracy, you'll recognize the jokes instantly.

★ 9. The "everything is fine" motif is everywhere

- This phrase—and variations of it—appear at key moments.
 - **Hint:** Every time someone insists things are fine... they're not.

EASTER EGG HUNT



Lisa Orban was born in Galesburg, Illinois, and immediately began collecting the kind of life experiences that would later make excellent memoir material. After a childhood marked by frequent moves, family shenanigans, and an unexpected detour through foster care, she bolted to Arizona at eighteen, gathered more stories, and eventually found her way back to Quincy, where she's been ever since.

Along the way, she raised five kids, earned a degree in psychology, survived several marriages, bought a house, and built the life she always wanted: part circus ringmaster, part author, part soft-hearted rescuer of stray humans. In 2015 she published her first memoir, *It'll Feel Better When It Quits Hurting*, and she hasn't stopped writing since. She founded Indies United Publishing House in 2018, a cooperative press dedicated to ethical, community-driven publishing. These days she writes, mentors authors, runs a madhouse of creative anarchy, and does exactly what she wants—happily.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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OTHER BOOKS: Okay, Picture this... Series | I'd rather Starve than Cook! A Cookbook for people who hate to cook | If I were Dictator: A Tongue-in-Cheek guide to saving our democracy