



Your Robot Dog Will Die

Arin Greenwood

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In the mid-21st century, dogs are all but extinct. An experiment gone awry caused every canine on Earth to become hyperintelligent. When as a species they stopped wagging their tails, hysteria ensued—followed by a program of mass euthanasia. Now the only surviving dogs are relegated to a sanctuary off the coast of Florida: Dog Island. There, they are studied in a wild, feral, and protected state. And there, too, their robot replacements are tested before being sold for mass consumption.

Seventeen-year-old Nano Miller was born and bred on Dog Island, as were her two best friends, Jack and Wolf. Life has been mostly wonderful except for annual heartbreak, when another robot dog is torn from her arms and replaced with the latest model. And more recently, there is the heartbreak of her brother, Billy, who vanished without a trace a year earlier. Wolf, there to console Nano, has suddenly become more than a friend. (Bad news for Jack.) With the excitement of a surprise first romance, Nano is happier than ever, in spite of her loss. But then she makes a discovery that upends everything she took for granted: a living puppy who wags its tail. And there is no way she is letting this dog go.

Your Robot Dog Will Die Details

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From Reader Review Your Robot Dog Will Die for online ebook

Mignon DeLarre says

Uhhhhh what did I just read. It seemed all over the place. From what I can only describe as furrries and then death cults and along the way the loss of virginity. I was expecting light hearted fun and this was definitely not it.

Brooke says

Thanks to NetGalley and Soho Press for a digital ARC copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Nano lives on Dog Island, where dogs are revered, yet caged and studied. You see, a previous genetic experiment on our canine companions went awry, and dogs were thus labeled deadly and dangerous. All the remaining dogs were euthanized with “Kinderend,” a euthanasia drug, and a select few were kept on Dog Island to be examined. This isn’t the only strange thing happening on Dog Island. Instead of keeping “organic” dogs as pets, people on Dog Island are given robot dogs, which are replaced yearly when the new model comes out. Nano can’t help but get attached to her robotic pets, and cries whenever one is taken from her. This is life on Dog Island.

Things go awry one night when Nano is feeding the organic dogs with her mom. Nano discovers a litter of puppies who are quickly euthanized by her mom (we can’t have dangerous dogs breeding, now can we?). That is, all except one that Nano hides meet their “kinder end.” And this is where the wild adventure into dog smuggling, animal abuse, and secret underground worlds begins.

When I read the premise for *Your Robot Dog Will Die*, I was excited to jump into this book. Dystopia is my thing, and I hadn’t read a book about a dystopian dog world before. However, *Your Robot Dog Will Die* suffers from poor execution, outlandish plot points, and confusing storytelling. Through much of the book, I couldn’t tell if everything I was reading was a “big joke.” I was waiting for the wool to be pulled from my eyes, to get some sign that this novel was satire. I felt this way because there is essentially no world-building, and readers are thrown into a world where dogs have gone rogue, people say “thank Dog,” instead of “thank God,” water is scarce, and people actually print their clothes. There was some background provided on the dogs, but I was given no other points of reference for any of the other odd turns of events. This made it very hard to “get into” the story and really find it believable. As an adult, I honestly felt confused through much of the book, and can imagine young readers feeling equally muddled. There were also descriptive passages about animal abuse that were uncomfortable to read. That is probably the point, but for a book being marketed as a must-read for dog lovers, I found it very upsetting to have the images and descriptions of abuse thrust upon me. Lastly, the climax involving the book’s villain was so out there ... no spoilers, but I just wasn’t buying it.

I think that if this book took itself more seriously, did some major world-building at the beginning, and had a more believable and knowledgeable narrator, it could be so much more than it unfortunately is.

Gabby says

I got an advanced readers copy of this book for a honest review from NetGalley.

Generally, I am all on board for a young adult dystopian novel. Unfortunately, this was not my jam. The characters all felt a little trite. While I can also appreciate the dog puns for a little bit it ended up feeling like overkill and took me out of the book. I would probably suggest this to someone who has just aged out of the young readers section but is not quite old enough for teen either.

Lara says

UGH

Cathy says

OMG, I love this book. Here's my review —

Arin Greenwood moved to Gulfport, Florida in 2015, where she fit right in because she's as passionate about dogs as everyone else in the just-over-two-square-mile town.

So when you read *Your Robot Dog Will Die*, don't be shocked to learn the setting — Dog Island — has taken over a two-square-mile-town separated from the mainland by sea level rise. In this fictional former town of Beachport, there's a Casino, across the street from which sits an abandoned restaurant — The Smiling Manatee — that has a balcony overlooking the water. Houses, splashed with color, have plastic flamingoes in the front yard; people, horrified by the idea of animals living in servitude to people, live by strict tenets of veganism. There's a dog sanctuary that has a small hill and kayaks nearby, and there are golf cars everywhere. If you've ever been to Gulfport, this may sound familiar.

As a local, you'll delight in reading it for that reason (and a few other striking similarities) alone, but *Your Robot Dog Will Die*, intended as a dystopian sci-fi YA work, tacitly challenges our notions of kindness and our world view of bioethics.

Without spoilers, here's the nickel summary:

Read the rest.

Tamara Lush says

What an outstanding, unique book. Loved it. Excellent writing.

Dee says

Enjoyable but not outstanding.

Erin says

Living in a post-apocalyptic world where true “organic” dogs are basically extinct, the people of “Dog Island” are constantly getting new robot dogs to hold their affections. However, one day while feeding the only six living dogs that run wild on the island, our protagonist, Nano, is astonished to find four living, breathing puppies. But newborn puppies must be euthanized for their own protection in this world, and Nano, in awe of seeing a real-life pup and wanting to protect it, fails to mention just how many there were, leaving one lucky survivor.

I thought that this book had a lot of potential; it was a really cool idea that, unfortunately, was poorly executed. When writing a dystopian novel, world-building is incredibly important, but this book seems to bounce between “I’m going to explain every single detail in an unrealistic fashion” to “I’m going to casually mention some weird facet of our world without explaining in the slightest until way later.” The writing style was quite choppy and hard to get into (not to mention a few glaring typos), and combined with being restricted to a first-person perspective, it was really isolating as a reader. Descriptions were “told” instead of “shown,” which is what constitutes really great writing in my opinion. In fact, the descriptions were so vague that I didn’t realize Nano was a female until about a chapter in, and even then, the “voice” that was portrayed, combined with her two male friends and an obsession with her older brother really had me refusing to believe she WASN’T a guy. Maybe I’m subconsciously sexist. I don’t know.

The conflict of the puppy isn’t introduced until about a quarter of the way in, which made the book feel really slow. Following FINALLY establishing some sort of plot, the author goes right back to explaining what happened in society to lead to Nano’s present day, and it was... not quite believable. I get that it’s a dystopian novel, but the background has a lot of flaws that are too far-fetched. Overall, the organization seems kind of slapped together, almost like Greenwood is a bit too ambitious with the subplots of her novel: romance, missing brother, and a secret puppy all within this haphazardly constructed world.

Terri Gagliardi says

Wonderful book for any animal lover. Clever, heartfelt, quirky and thought-provoking. From page one, I found myself immersed in a future world with great characters and sweet animals. As I finished the book, I was sad to say goodbye to my new friends. It is one of those reads that sticks with you long after the last page.

Sharon Drummond says

Great premise but I found it a bit clunky to read.

Ernest says

Nano is seventeen, just discovering what lies beyond best friends with her guy pal Wolf, and lives on an

island off the South Florida coast in an overly zealous community that's keeping the last dogs in a protected "ruffuge" for their, and everyone else's, safety. Of course, this is also the group that led the drive to euthanize all dogs after an unfortunate attempt at boosting their intelligence made turned them from tail thumping companions into something from a horror movie.

Nano loves dogs, though she's too young to have known the 1.0 version, and she loves being allowed to go to the ruffuge to feed the small pack sequestered there. She's also more than willing to love the robot dog replacements that she's given as part of the product testing group, at least until they're taken away from her at the end of the year and a new model arrives. That part sucks.

When she discovers that one of the real dogs has had a litter, despite the contraceptive chemicals they're fed, one of the pups wags its tail when it sees her, behavior that's no longer supposed to exist in dogs. She hides the pup from her mother, who took her along to do the feeding and watches while her mother lovingly euthanizes the other pups. So they won't suffer.

Nano and her friends embark on the expected course of action, hiding the pup from the adults and ultimately getting mixed up with an underground movement to protect animals from the kill happy protections of the Dog Island group. As their story develops, they're faced with realities of animal abuse as well as the conflicts within the animal rights world, and ultimately must decide where they stand on some pretty thorny bio-ethical issues.

The characters are engaging, including, of course Donut, the pup, but also Billy, Nano's latest robot dog, named after her older brother who went missing from the island a year ago after questioning the leader's ideas. There's a real Jonestown cult vibe towards the end that makes Nano's choices more critical.

There are a few points that I think could have been made clearer, including what happened to change the dogs originally, and what's changed since then, but all in all this was a great read and a good place to start a dialog about humans and animals.

Vicky Who Reads says

2.5 stars

In the near future, dogs are on the brink of extinction as an experiment gone awry caused all canines to become hyperintelligent--leading to hysteria and mass euthanasia. The only surviving dogs are kept on the coast of Florida on Dog Island where they are kept in their wild state.

Meanwhile, their robot replacements are being tested on Dog Island before being sold for mass consumption. Nano Miller was born on Dog Island and has lived there her whole life, testing out a new robot dog every year. Recently, her brother Billy has vanished without a trace just as Nano's life changes when her best friend Wolf starts to become more than just a friend. But soon, Nano's discovery of a living puppy may change not only her life, but life for dog owners all across the country.

Alright, this is probably one of the most difficult reviews I've ever had to write.

Because what just happened?

As I was reading, I fully understood what was going on--Nano finds a dog, Nano meets some famous guy's daughter, daughter takes Nano and her boyfriend Wolf to see the other side of things. On the most basic level, as in what was happening in each scene, I understood this book.

But on a broader scale, I am so confused. The whole purpose of the book is lost on me. When I requested this, I was looking for some sort of comedy, whether it was the dry wit of *Nice Try*, *Jane Sinner* or the hilarious nature of *My Lady Jane* or some sort of parody or satire.

I'm just confused on what this book is trying to do. It lightly touches on so many things--animal abuse and blindly following people--but never goes in depth on a topic enough that I know what the book is doing. Sometimes it felt super serious, and other times it was so exaggerated that it felt like a comedic villain from overexaggeration rather than the satiric viewpoint on a dystopia that I was just reading about.

Basically, it felt like the comedic part of this novel got really confused. It jumped from overexaggeration to pointing out flaws in humanity on a more serious tone and it ended up really confusing me on what this book was trying to do.

Seriously, some of the phrases the members of the Dog Island community use are just so comedic. Instead of saying "Dear God!", they say "Dear Dog!" and all sorts of other doggish puns or switcharoos.

I think if it was more focused, I could have understood it better.

But it's also good to bring up the point that maybe *I* just didn't get it.

This happens sometimes--when reading more classic literature, sometimes I don't grasp the deeper meaning on the first read, especially when I read at the speed I read YA at. I could see hints of a possible deeper meaning being introduced, but I personally wasn't able to really find that in this book.

I wanted it to be more clear and centralized--and that doesn't mean to dumb the book down for us, but to pick a satire style and stick with it. Instead of overexaggerating the villain one moment and then switching to another form of satire the next, sticking with only one would have made this book so much clearer in purpose.

This was definitely a major problem that led to me not enjoying the book as much as I wanted to.

Similarly, I had a couple problems with Nano, the narrator. She felt kind of...dumb? to me.

I'm not saying she's not smart, but sometimes she sounds too young or too much like a blind follower that it makes you question if she has *any* sort of individual thought. In these types of books (see: *1984* or *Anthem*), the protagonist has this hint of rebellion deep within them.

But not Nano. Her rebellion doesn't really stem from her own observations, but rather how the situation forced her to do something. The most complex thought I really saw from her was just basic compassion for a living thing.

It made this very different to read and definitely has the potential to make some readers frustrated with Nano's simplistic thought. And, it's true that her education really isn't top notch with their spotty wi-fi and virtual school, but that doesn't mean intellectual curiosity will go away, does it?

The development of the world was also a little fuzzy for me. We spend most of the beginning of the novel on Dog Island, and how the dystopia is introduced leaves it to be kind of unclear as to if people off Dog Island actually use that funky terminology. There's also this drought which keeps popping up, but I was confused at how the drought came about? I felt like there could have been a little more exposition on this aspect and how it tied into the satire, I don't know.

I feel like this book's concept had *so much potential*, but the execution sadly just fell flat for me. I think using the "blind-follower" protagonist could have been amazing if done right, but I think the execution of this and the rest of the book's satire ended up falling flat or just flying over my head. I probably wouldn't recommend this unless you're looking for something where you can draw parallels between loosely related concepts.

Thank you so Soho Teen and Edelweiss for providing me with a digital review copy in exchange for an honest review!

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Ivana says

Oh my Dog, what an awesome, funny, sad, and funny, and hearwarming book this is! I laughed and teared up, and walked away filled with love for those heroes among us who dedicate their lives to saving animals. Arin's love for animals is pouring from the pages. This book teaches compassion and breaks down the notion that our killing of animals, however 'humane' is not the answer and that we can do better. Certainly, animals deserve better from us. I love that this is a YA book, because it's important for kids to cultivate this kind of thinking.

Aside from a serious message, this book is funny as heck. From characters like Marky Barky, to the mother clucking chickens, this book is through the roof!!...Or, as the author puts it, through the woof!

A feel good, funny book with an important message; whether you're 15 or 55, it should be read...preferably with a doggie on your lap.

Jeff Anderson says

Nano Miller, a seventeen year-old girl has a problem. Every year she is given a new robot dog by Mechanical Tail, manufacturer of faux canines. But she first has to surrender last year's model. Nano falls in love with each new robot dog during the year. So giving the old one up is rough. But she does it and names the new pet Billy, after her brother who has been missing now for almost a year. Thus begins "Your Robot Dog Will Die" a YA SF Dystopian novel set in the mid-21st century. The story follows Nano and her two best friends, Jack and Wolf as they negotiate adolescence on Dog Island in Florida. They face many trials and have tough decisions to make as the story of Dog Island, whose administrator, Dorothy, is attempting to create a Canine Utopia, unfolds. This is a first rate novel and a good read. The characters leap off the page and lodge themselves in one's imagination. They become flesh and blood as Greenwood paints a picture of a Florida vastly different from what we know. Hers is a world where Climate Change has altered the coast of Florida leaving many coastal cities as islands. A drought has made water more precious and driven many to vegan diets. Our heros live in a difficult world that they have adapted to. But the story of their coming of age

and learning what goes on behind the curtain will grip you. The story is good and well told. This is a very fast read as well. I strongly urge all to read this fantastic work. It will be out in April of 2018 and when it hits the shelves run, don't walk, to get yourself a copy. You will not be disappointed.

Kathy Cunningham says

Arin Greenwood's *YOUR ROBOT DOG WILL DIE* is a quirky YA novel set in a dystopian near-future when all but a handful of dogs have been necessarily euthanized after a genetics project gone wrong. The few remaining canines live in a sanctuary on Dog Island in southern Florida, tended by a group of animal lovers intent on protecting them. The narrator is 17-year-old Nano Miller, who was born on Dog Island and has never traveled beyond its shores. She's one of only two teens on the island – the others are Wolf and Jack, her best friends. And she loves dogs. She loves the five dogs being protected in the "Ruffuge," and she loves the robot dogs she's owned for years, created by Mechanical Tail, a company determined to return dogs to human homes, even if they will no longer be "Organic." The problem is, the residents of Dog Island are tasked with trying out the new models of robot dogs, and each year they must give up the one they've come to love and accept a new one, with new-and-improved features. This proves to be devastatingly difficult for Nano, who can't help but fall in love with each robot dog she's given.

The plot revolves around a real-life puppy Nano discovers at one of her visits to the Ruffuge, a puppy who will certainly be euthanized if he's discovered (I won't give away the reason why). So Nano and her friends set out to save the puppy. But in the process they discover some very troubling secrets, not just about Dog Island and its benefactors, but also about the world beyond the island, and what's really on.

I wasn't sure quite what to make of the first half of this novel. Nano is an interesting character, and the world she inhabits is definitely intriguing. She's falling in love with BFF Wolf, which causes a few issues with Jack (since the three of them have always been a team). Also, Nano's older brother Billy disappeared a year before the novel begins, and she's never stopped wondering what happened to him. Her parents (like many of the residents of Dog Island) are latter-day hippies, animal lovers dedicated to vegan living and peace and well-being. But by the time the real story gets going (and Nano leaves Dog Island for the first time in her life) things get very serious, very intense, and even very horrifying. It surprised me, but in a good way. Because Greenwood's story isn't about a cute teenager trying to save a puppy; it's about insidious people determined to destroy the world (with the best of intentions, of course). And Nano's goal can't just be about the puppy – or the robot dogs she's loved and lost – but rather about unraveling the truth behind the only world she's ever known and somehow making things right.

Ultimately, this is a fantastic read. I worried as I got closer and closer to the end that this would be the first of a trilogy and I'd be left hanging. But no, there's a real resolution – one that's both believable and satisfying (and that says a lot considering what happens in this novel). It's being marketed as a YA novel, and I do think kids in the 12-18 age range will love it. But I see it as a novel for all ages. Its focus is on Nano, who's 17, but its message is one that all of us can relate to. I highly recommend it.

[Please note: I was provided an Advance Reading Copy of this novel free of charge; the opinions expressed here are my own.]
