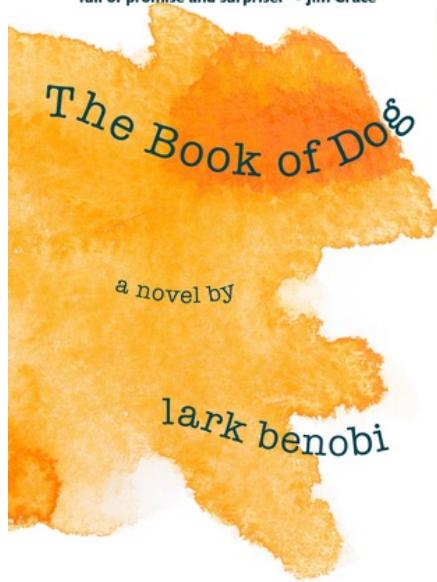


"Here's a very cunning, fearless writer,
full of promise and surprise." - Jim Crace



The Book of Dog

Lark Benobi (Illustrator)

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The Book of Dog

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The Book of Dog Lark Benobi (Illustrator)

It's the night of the Yellow Puff-Ball Mushroom Cloud and a mysterious yellow fog is making its way across the world, sowing chaos in its path. Mt. Fuji has erupted. The Euphrates has run dry. In America the White House is under attack by giant bears, the President is missing, and the Vice President has turned into a Bichon Frise. It's Apocalypse Time, my friends. Soon the Beast will rise. And six unlikely women must make the perilous journey to the Pit of Nethalem, where they will stop the Beast from fulfilling its evil purpose, or die trying.

The Book of Dog is a novel of startling originality: a tale of female friendship, politics, religion, demon possession, motherhood, love, betrayal, and occasional apocalypse. It's a contemporary Candide with a dollop of Animal Farm and a dash of Metamorphosis thrown in. It wryly explores how even the most insignificant and powerless of people, when working together, can change the world.

The Book of Dog Details

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Author : Lark Benobi (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Book of Dog for online ebook

jo says

this story goes way back.

there is a person participating in the same goodreads group i participate in, and i like her (i figure it's a she, don't ask me why), and we follow each other through the many alleyways, corridors, and thoroughfares of goodreads. we have a good time.

we respect each other, and often disagree. quite often. she finds faults in books i find faultless. she's a persnickety reader. i am basically hmmm it's awesome what was the problem again?

then i learn she has written a book. i never get around to reading it, cuz reading is a very complex thing for me. then, *then* she writes *another* book. i ask for the ARC and she graciously sends it to me. and i think, wow how is this book going to be? cuz this person, this friend of mine who i never met but feel i know a little, is a quite exacting reader.

am i worried that her book will not do justice to her exactingness as a reader? maybe.

and then i read it, and the book is perfect. i mean perfect. in tone, in the writing, in characterization, in attention to details, in what it does, in what it chooses not to do. it's a compelling and fantastic read, frothy and funny and also generous and loving, and i read it with great joy and amazement that someone who often finds the books i like flawed can write a book i find flawless. (there is no reason for this amazement, but there you go).

so, this book. this book is a fairy tale. just like Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, it is a post-apocalyptic utopia. as i pointed out when i read *Exit West*, it is difficult to write convincing utopias. i think hamid succeeds in doing it cuz he gets there through generous heapings of pain and anguish. i think benobi succeeds in doing it by employing great humor and a fantastically rendered view of christianity.

what this book has taught me: you can pull off a utopia if 1. you don't take yourself too seriously and 2. you are willing to delve into the most sacred, most revered myth about the "after" and treat it with the right mixture of respect, gentleness and irreverence.

as all the sages and mystics know, there is no faith without much laughter and a good dose of irreverence.

The Book of Dog is a fabulistic rendition of the book of revelation, which unfortunately i know very little, which in turns means you'll have to draw your own comparisons when you read the novel (something you should do immediately). there is a motley group of women of various races and ethnicities, each with her own story, and these women ultimately find themselves the chosen ones to defeat the ultimate plague of the world and the seven-headed beast.

hilariousness ensues. seriousness ensues. beautifully drawn characters ensue. a prose so lovely it makes you weep ensues.

the seven headed beast is partly, of course, our dear leader, our very own president, donald j trump. this makes *The Book of Dog* the first novel of the trumpian era that i am aware of.

it's also a burningly feminist book. the ending is a masterpiece of no-holds-barred patriarchy takedown. it's absolutely hilarious and life affirming and hopeful and lovely.

i think you should read this book. you should find for yourself what a world in which fearless and big hearted women saunter about and do their thing can look like. you should let yourself be encouraged by the majestic power of women of good sense who unite against evilry. cuz, right now, we need precisely this kind of encouragement.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

My penultimate read of 2017. This very funny book had me giggling in the corner about apocalypse and dogs. The author was inspired to write it as a response to the presidential election. I found even more funny bits in the attempts to control/understand apocalypse/rapture, the willingness to embrace new identities, and the adaptability of the characters. The ending is particularly rewarding, and I find this so often to not be the case when approaching the end of an apocalypse novel.

ETA: I read a prepub version and the book was revised between my reading and publication. Official pub date is after this, as often occurs in review copy reviews.

Robin says

Before I delve into my review, I need to make a confession of sorts: I am an ostrich. A wild, Canadian ostrich - when it comes to politics. It's pathetic. I'm NOT proud of it. But there it is. I despise watching the news. I often declare: "I am not a political person." I obstinately nestle my head in the sand. If I don't know about it, it's *almost* like it's not happening. And because I am Canadian, and an ostrich, I can **almost** believe in this often snowed-in enclave of the world, whatever is happening south of the border has nothing to do with me.

I know, of course, this is not true. I do know this. And as I mentioned, I don't say any of this with pride. But I'm putting it out there, as it needs to be acknowledged in this review. Because Lark Benobi's book is a delightfully *political*, satirical piece on the state-of-the-nation (and actually, world) in light of the results of the most recent American election.

Like-minded people who share the author's sense of apocalypse with the ascension of the 45th president (who is never named, though his Samson-like locks are referred to a few times) will find much to appreciate in this book. If you are NOT like-minded, it will probably piss you off :D

The story features a diverse group of women who find themselves in the midst of strange events that mirror the book of Revelations, complete with the Rapture and "The Beast". The world is in chaos. And, people are turning into animals. The animal part is wonderful, by the way. I smiled at how animals are so present they have a hard time scheming, or thinking about things beyond the current smell that has captured their attention.

I have to say, the novel surprised me. This feminist fable doesn't take itself too seriously. It's funny, clever, decorated with the author's own charming illustrations, and oddly, given the topic, is optimistic and hopeful.

Perhaps the world will never be the same again, is the message I received. But maybe, if people work together, we can come out on the other side better and stronger.

The message of hope is probably why this ostrich enjoyed the whole experience, causing me to see that pulling my head out of the sand might not be such a bad thing after all.

Thank you to Lark Benobi and Vegetablian Books for providing me with a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

karen says

NOW AVAILABLE!!

#vacationreading
no. 5

"Well that was something," Stella said.

this is a very...contemporary satirical look at the run-up to a possible apocalyptic scenario that begins with the spread of a “Yellow Puff-Ball Mushroom Cloud,” which disrupts the weather before going on to overturn the order of the world, eventually turning people into different animals.

a pregnant teen is about to pop out the spawn of The Beast (and the fetus is *very* chatty), and a group of “unlikely,” “insignificant” women (or, once-women, now animals) will be placed into position to prevent the full-on apocalypse from coming to pass:

“The undocumented and disabled. The forgotten ones. The left behinds. The last will be first. It's our turn. All of you need to fight together, every which way you can, and then some, and then some more, and even after you do all that, you will probably fail, and then die.”

“Your advice feels problematic...”

it's a fun, crazy, thought-provoking journey and - yes - it is illustrated:

even though i'm not much for political fiction (reading is how i escape from all of the things in the world), it's a broad-spectrum satire that encompasses not only today's worrisome political sphere, but it also lassos in various aspects of the social, cultural, religious, personal and natural worlds for pointed commentary.

as far as political satires involving anthropomorphized animals, this one is a lot more rollicky fun than Animal Farm and has more pig latin than actual pigs.

there's something - to me - a little freeing about turning into an animal, as long as you get to be a good one, like a bear. or one of these little creatures in a traveling pack of mischief pals:

Just when both of Josefina Guzman's feet were safely back on the ground, some shapes made their way out of the muck and reeds. The shapes were trotting toward her. Her eyes were bad and she thought they were dogs until they stopped right in front of her: a fox and three raccoons, traveling together. Their eyes glowed. They nodded their small animal heads wisely. Josefina Guzman half-expected them to speak. Next she wondered if they were rabid. She wasn't sure whether to step toward them boldly to scare them off, or to run away. Before she could decide, the fox let out a cry that sounded like laughter and the four creatures ran away together into the dark.

"That's right, scat, get out of here," Josefina Guzman said.

But she felt disgruntled to be so easily dismissed by these creatures. Also it worried her to be talking out loud to animals.

later on, she turns into a goat, so the lesson here is, 'don't worry about looking crazy, because crazy things happen all the time.' lesson two is 'please don't ever let me turn into a goat.' i wanna be something chubby and fuzzy with big eyes and clever hands. lesson three is 'read this book if you want to feel hopeful about how even marginalized, habitually overlooked people can overcome impossible odds by working together. even if they are goats.'

come to my blog!

Nadine says

If you think the drawings are cute, odds are you'll like the story. A dystopian satire that marries the horrible and the adorable ;)

Dan says

Lark Benobi's the Book of Dog is a tale of the logical, or at least understandable, consequences of the Age of Trump, with scene after scene ricocheting between uproarious and absurd satire, all with a recognizable core of contemporary American society and politics. The Book of Dog ends on a strangely optimistic note, leaving me feeling that all isn't necessarily lost in 2017 America.

My limited imagination and equally limited knowledge of contemporary American popular culture leave me feeling as if I didn't fully understand and can't do full justice to The Book of Dog. But even from my limited perspective, I can comfortably say that in my reading experience The Book of Dog is an incomparably unique novel: Margaret Atwood with a riotous sense of humor and of the absurd, relocated to California?; James Thurber reborn from my boyhood to illustrate The Book of Dog?

Incidentally, it's worth your time to check out Lark Benobi's bookshelf on her website, with enough enticing titles to keep me busy for months: <http://larkbenobi.com/wp-content/uplo....>

Leslie Martinez says

So good!

I am recommending this book to all I know. Once I started I could not put it down. Absolutely wonderful!

Monica says

Book of Dog is an epic road trip for down trodden feminists...or something. Confused?!? Me too! Are dystopian novels about the destruction of society under its own weight of injustice and misogyny and racism supposed to be whimsical, silly and fun? Also clever, and smart and for goodness sakes, kind?? Benobi paints an audacious landscape where those with the least among us end up saving the world from the 7 headed monster who resembles an orange menace but seems to be a representation of the white patriarchy. Do you recognize this enclave:

“It was a town mostly populated with elderly John Wayne fans and their caregivers.”

Benobi lampoons lots of high minded sacred cows, but in a thoughtful and searing way complete with fun, whimsical drawings. This was a dreamy flight of fancy and what a strange and strangely alluring trip it was. Full disclosure, Lark Benobi is a gr friend of mine but honestly if I didn't enjoy the book, I wouldn't have written a review nor would I have rated it. It was a quick, engaging and uplifting read. I read this shortly before the November 2018 election. Who knew it would be so prescient. Indeed I think women will end up saving the world. Loved this! Read it! It will bring a smile to your face and a firm slap towards the 7 headed orange menace in your world.

4 + Stars

Read the dead tree version

Marchpane says

Fun and fearless, and somehow both trenchant and sweetly optimistic at the same time. What an unexpected treat. It's a quick read, playful, clever and with a very satisfying ending. Woof Say All!

Jennifer (aka EM) says

I want to first say I feel privileged to "know" this author through goodreads, and have very much enjoyed reading lark's take on novels (which frequently differs from mine, but often overlaps too). And it's so delightful to read a novel by someone I kinda sorta know! AND IT'S EVEN BETTER BECAUSE THIS

NOVEL IS ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS!!

What a romp! What a fantastic, unaffected, but at the same time immensely *confident* voice: whimsical but also serious (is there a word for this? I keep going to *insouciant* but that doesn't quite capture it).

It's the end of the world ... and the six women characters, in their human and animal incarnations, feel *fine*. Well, if not exactly fine, then at least down with whatever's gonna happen next and up for the challenge. I'd like to say here that these characters are lightly sketched but also complete, distinctive and oh-so-interesting. I can't think of better travelling companions through the apocalyptic wasteland.

And there are illustrations! And they are adorable, and simple, and entirely in keeping with the tone of the book.

Listen, I know it's awful to suggest a comparison and maybe I'm dead wrong about the influence - but it reminds me of early Vonnegut, including the illustrations, but mostly because of the *humanity*. That sense that we are veering dangerously close to hell in a handbasket (the Beast is none other than a six-headed, orange Tr*mp; the event triggering the end times is the release of a toxin called Agent-T), but that we - people finding each other and working together with love and kindness in our hearts (and kitchen shears in our purses) - are the only thing that might save us, or at least the last thing we should let go of even if all else is lost.

I loved it.

Mary says

Strange, cataclysmic events are occurring. People are transforming into animals and the veneer of civilization has shattered.

At the center of these events is a group of women, some of whom are dogs, panthers, bears, and condors, who gather together in Nethalem, CA to defeat evil and to protect the pregnant protagonist and her ill-fated spawn of Satan.

This charming fable was written by the author, Lark Benobi, to channel her feelings about the current P45*, who may be the Beast of the Apocalypse. The text is accompanied by delightful illustrations. I enjoyed this book immensely.

Carol Peters says

A mad unlikely impossible romp while the world as we know it ends. No end of legerdemain. Brilliant riff after brilliant riff. Politicians you'll recognize down the drain. If only what happens in *The Book of Dog* could really happen!

Ace says

4 stars

It's not often that I find myself in the position of reviewing a book that hardly anyone else has read. If you have a sense of adventure and hope, this book is worth a read. Funny, with a very rewarding ending (particularly if you share Lark's views of the current ruler of 'the free world' which I definitely do), this book will take you through an apocalypse like none you've read before.

I know Lark through Goodreads and consider her to be a friend and valuable part of my virtual online booking experience. I am proud of her accomplishment and the emotional and creative impetus to write (and draw) that made this into the great story that it is. I mean, (view spoiler) so it's brilliant in that respect alone. I dropped a star because I think there was a lot of prior mythology, literary and religious references that went right over my head. I hope to have the opportunity to discuss this as more people get a chance to read and review it here.

I also learned a valuable life lesson to never leave home without the Kitchen Shears!!!!

LindaJ^ says

Read this while traveling from US to Italy. It was a humorous, sometimes scary, apocalyptic farce with Thurberesque (maybe not a real word but it is the adjective I want) drawings of various scenes in the book. Five plus woman turned to bears, dogs, a panther, a goat, and a majestic & large bird, as well as a pregnant, unwed, teenager, save the world from the seven-headed beast of the Book of Revelations. The beast being the less than beloved US President. Highly recommended.

Miranda Reads says

4.5 stars

As for Stella King, she was unexpectedly pregnant with the unborn child of the Beast.

It could have happened to anyone.

Funny, witty, exciting and engaging!

Thoroughly entertaining and thought-provoking throughout - **this book had it all**. I have a strong feeling that I will be diving back in for a re-read before the year is out.

Here is the story of how six unlikely women changed the fate of the world.

The Yellow Puff-Ball Mushroom Cloud and its corresponding yellow fog is **creeping its way across America**.

"Has no one been out of town lately? It could be the end of the world for all you know."

Citizens are slowly succumbing to its **inexplicable and inescapable influence** - whether it be their minds or their bodies, everyone is changing in one way or another.

A great evil that has swept over America, spreading **lies and false promises**.

The Beast could fool the best of them, and he almost always got his way.

But maybe not this time.

Stella King, along with five other women, stumble their way through the apocalypse and finding the strength in each other. Their group may be unconventional, but together they must rise **to fight the good fight**.

"The undocumented and disabled. The forgotten ones. The left behinds. The last will be first. It's our turn. All of you need to fight together, every which way you can, and then some, and then some more, and even after you do all that, you will probably fail, and then die."

"Your advice feels problematic..."

If you can't already tell, **I adored this one**.

And I honestly didn't expect to like it - political books aren't my thing. And political commentaries about society are so left-field from what I normally read that I was extremely apprehensive.

Turns out, I was worrying for nothing. Lark Benobi covered the politic aspect with such an amazing touch that I was **continuously impressed and delighted** by every moment.

One of my favorite examples can be found when Benobi comments on religious extremists.

[Stella's] little pink pocket Bible fell open and she read: THE BEAST STOOD BEFORE THE WOMAN ... TO DEVOUR HER CHILD AS SOON AS IT WAS BORN.

"Well, that can't be good," she murmured. "Honestly I had no idea that religious people had such violent beliefs."

It's hilarious, to the point and above all, doesn't rely on horribly abrasive humor to force a laugh.

Honestly, I feel like my review will never be adequate for this book - **you will just have to check it out yourself!**

With thanks to the publisher for a free copy in exchange for an honest review

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