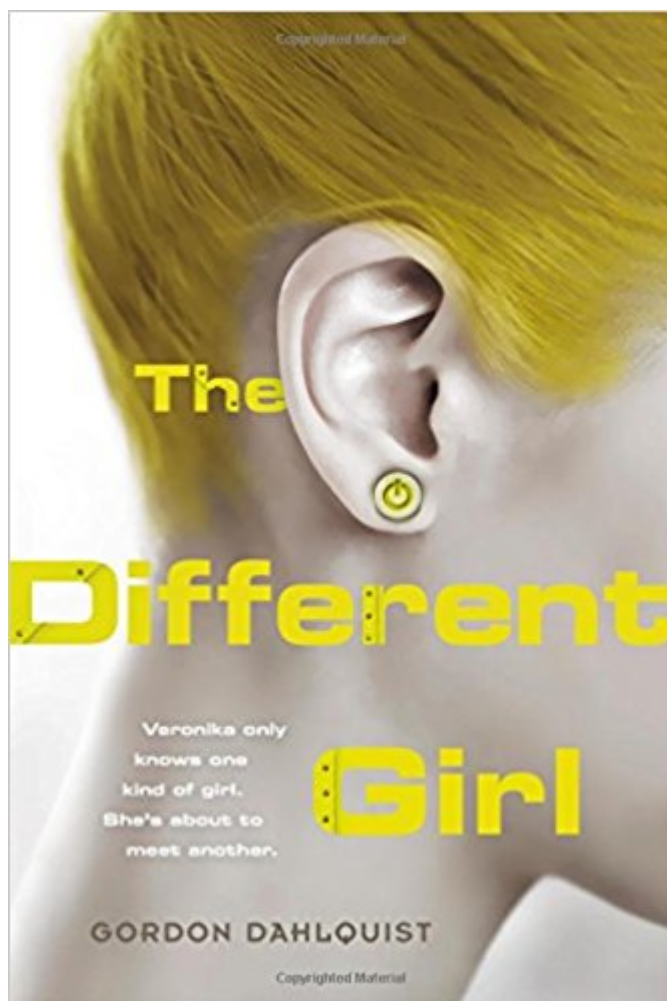


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The Different Girl



Synopsis

A timeless and evocative debut for contemporary and sci-fi fans Veronika. Caroline. Isobel. Eleanor. One blond, one brunette, one redhead, one with hair black as tar. Four otherwise identical girls who spend their days in sync, tasked to learn. But when May, a very different kind of girl—the lone survivor of a recent shipwreck—suddenly and mysteriously arrives on the island, an unsettling mirror is about to be held up to the life the girls have never before questioned.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up-With The Different Girl, Dahlquist presents a cryptic vision of the future through the eyes of artificial intelligence. Life has always been the same for four teens. The girls study their island with the help of their teachers. Each day is the same: walking and talking and building upon the things they learned in the days before until it is time for the teachers to put them to sleep. But when May arrives, life begins to change at a frightening pace. The narrator, Veronika, knows only what her teachers tell her and what she is able to observe. Readers must rely heavily on imagination and inference to puzzle out the circumstances of the world beyond the island and the extreme secrecy that seems to surround the four robotic girls and their handlers. Fans of science fiction and dystopian societies will find plenty to pique their interest, but little to satisfy their questions.-Sara Saxton, Tuzzy Consortium Library, Barrow, AK (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly

owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Told from the perspective of one of four identical, but not interchangeable, girls isolated on an island with their two adult caretakers, Dahlquist's introspective sci-fi novel asks readers to ponder the nature of thinking itself. Veronika has red hair, and in the beginning that's how she differentiates herself from her sisters' hair colors are black (Eleanor), yellow (Isobel), and brown (Caroline). Every day they meticulously observe their surroundings and report to Irene and Robbert, who are teaching them to think for themselves instead of as a unit. Their patterns are disrupted when May shipwrecks on the island, bringing trouble, and the girls must learn new ways to survive. Spoiler alert: the girls are androids, something that becomes clear as Veronika tells of her awakening, but her limited understanding of the larger picture may frustrate readers, as could the lack of a fully realized world. On the other hand, the unanswered questions will make for great discussions: Why is their existence secret? What is their purpose? Who attacks the island and why? Readers will no doubt want to know. Grades 7-10. --Krista Hutley --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I ordered this book based strictly upon the synopsis provided by its product page on Amazon. It sounded like an intriguing and highly original work and was fairly presented in that regard. The narrator, Veronika, is one of four "girls" that inhabit a remote island with two adults (Robbert and Irene) that act as their caretakers and instructors. The girls are identical in every respect except hair color. They live a highly regimented life, constantly instructed by their caretakers with a focus on perception and awareness of surroundings. We know from the start that we are dealing with a very unusual situation, as the author drops little hints that eventually lead us to an understanding of the nature of the girls and their relationship with Robbert and Irene. The story increases in complexity with the arrival of a shipwreck victim, a girl named May, who is quite different from the other girls. The interaction between May and Veronika and the intervention (both anticipated and realized) of the outside world form the basis of the remainder of the work. This novella is easily read in about three hours. While it is highly unusual, and maintained my interest, I must say that for long stretches of the story, very little if anything happens. Much time is spent describing and analyzing very mundane situations and natural occurrences as seen through innocent and naïve eyes. Were this story much longer, it would soon become quite boring and pedantic. I have seen the book described as a great "middle" in search of a beginning and end, and I cannot disagree. Perhaps a prequel and sequel are on the horizon. If so, I'm not sure I'm a customer.

I loved this book. I should say first off, I'm an adult reader, a novelist myself (have published a couple YA books as well as two more clearly directed at an adult readership). This novel is subtle and complex, more like Kazuo Ishiguro's NEVER LET ME GO than like THE HUNGER GAMES - I think some of the negative reviews here have to do with thwarted expectations. Beautifully written, haunting, memorable - it reminded me a little of John Christopher's novels, which I loved as a child. Highly recommended.

I really enjoy Dahlquist and this latest book is no exception. It was an easy read and very cleverly thought out. The characters were real enough to be likeable and the plot, although it appears on the surface to be shallow, is actually pretty thought provoking and give just enough of a hint of deeper meaning to make you think about it long after the last page is complete. Although I don't think one is forthcoming, I would love to see a sequel for this.

Reading about how the girls thought and learned was fun and really made me think. I definitely recommend buying it. I tried the free demo and was hooked.

No real development or story and climax or drama.. I forced myself to finish it but hands down the worst book I've ever read.

The Different Girl is well different. I'm not a big fan of sci fi, but the premise of this book really intrigued me. The first 50 pages of the book are a bit difficult to get through, but that's because you are given a look into the day in and day out life of the characters in the story. The Different Girl centers around four identical androids who have different colored hair to differentiate between them. They are looked after by their caretakers Robbert and Irene. The androids are Veronika, Caroline, Isobel, and Eleanor. The story is told from Veronika's point of view. And I must say it is interesting to read a book from an android's point of view. Especially when the android believes that they are human, and their lives are normal. Now unfortunately for the reader, we never find out what the purpose of the androids were. We never find out why or even how they were created. This was a major letdown. This book is probably not really for your average young adult reader, and I'm not even sure it's for your average sci fi fan. There is a mix between sci fi and contemporary, and personally I don't think it worked out very well for this novel. I think that it gives a good message about friendship, and accepting people for their differences. My favorite part of the book was

Veronika's interactions with May. May is a human girl who found herself on the island that the androids were on after her ship was wrecked. May's reactions to the androids were probably what your average person's would be. First there was fear, then anger, then a mild curiosity, and finally acceptance. It was very entertaining to see her relationship with Veronika evolve. I think I can see what the author was trying to do with the story because there were elements of mystery, and there was a build up. What really kept me going was the story seemed to be leading up to this big reveal, to find out exactly what was going on with the androids. But unfortunately there was nothing. I was left with more questions than answers. Reviewed by Sana @ Step Into Fiction

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