



Fifteen Dogs

By André Alexis

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Winner of the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize

Finalist for the 2015 Toronto Book Awards

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"[Alexis] devises an inventive romp through the nature of humanity in this beautiful, entertaining read ... A clever exploration of our essence, communication, and how our societies are organized." – *Kirkus Reviews*

"This might be the best set-up of the spring." – *The Globe & Mail*

"André Alexis has established himself as one of our preeminent voices." – *Toronto Star*

— *I wonder, said Hermes, what it would be like if animals had human intelligence.*

— *I'll wager a year's servitude, answered Apollo, that animals – any animal you like – would be even more unhappy than humans are, if they were given human intelligence.*

And so it begins: a bet between the gods Hermes and Apollo leads them to grant human consciousness and language to a group of dogs overnighing at a Toronto veterinary clinic. Suddenly capable of more complex thought, the pack is torn between those who resist the new ways of thinking, preferring the old 'dog' ways, and those who embrace the change. The gods watch from above as the dogs venture into their newly unfamiliar world, as they become divided among themselves, as each struggles with new thoughts and feelings. Wily Benjy moves from home to home, Prince becomes a poet, and Majnoun forges a relationship with a kind couple that stops even the Fates in their tracks.

André Alexis's contemporary take on the apologue offers an utterly compelling and affecting look at the beauty and perils of human consciousness. By turns meditative and devastating, charming and strange, *Fifteen Dogs* shows you can teach an old genre new tricks.

André Alexis was born in Trinidad and grew up in Canada. His debut novel, *Childhood*, won the Books in Canada First Novel Award, the Trillium Book Award, and was shortlisted for the Giller Prize and the Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. His other previous books include *Asylum*, *Beauty and Sadness*, *Ingrid & the Wolf* and, most recently, *Pastoral*, which was also nominated for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and was named a *Globe and Mail* Top 100 book of 2014.

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Editorial Review

Review

'[Alexis] devises an inventive romp through the nature of humanity in this beautiful, entertaining read ... A clever exploration of our essence, communication, and how our societies are organized.'

—*Kirkus Reviews*

'Alexis manages to encapsulate an astonishing range of metaphysical questions in a simple tale about dogs that came to know too much. The result is a delightful juxtaposition of the human and canine conditions, and a narrative that, like just one of the dogs, delights in the twists and turns of the gods' linguistic gift.'

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

'A novel about a pack of talking dogs, you say? The very idea will most likely breed thoughts of insufferable whimsy, like those paintings of mutts playing poker, or of more or less effective satire, in the vein of *Animal Farm*. It's a grand thing, then, that this spry novel by Canadian André Alexis spends its 160 pages repeatedly defying expectations ... I'm far from being a dog person, but as a book person I loved this smart, exuberant fantasy from start to finish.'

—*Jonathan Gibbs, The Guardian*

'Over the course of this novel, slim yet epic in scope, Alexis chronicles the fates of these strangely afflicted beasts, shifting from thought experiment to comic parable to something more delicate, laden with detail, discovery and emotional nuance.'

—*The Globe & Mail*

'A remarkable book. Insightful, wildly original and beautiful. Buy it.'

—*Mark Medley, Books Editor at The Globe & Mail*

'Truly a privilege to read.'

—*Wordfest Reviews*

'Alexis takes up notions of language and consciousness on a fundamental level, and what it means to have both or one without the other.'

—*Full Stop*

'Alexis's technical skills are extraordinary. His characters are diverse and expertly differentiated, and his sentence crafting is brilliant. ... I'm not ashamed to say that I cried at the end.'

—*LitReactor.com*

'A clever and beguiling study of human nature through the eyes of dogs.'

—*Largehearted Boy*

'A nimble rumination on consciousness, language, love, and art.'

—*Albert the Dog*

The 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize jury citation:

'In *Fifteen Dogs* – André Alexis' powerful apologue – questions of knowledge and happiness, fidelity and fate are grounded in the real-world adventures of a group of dogs. Here is a beautifully written allegory for our times: one in which man's best friend shows us the benefits of higher consciousness – the favoured bone of fact buried where we might all find it. *Fifteen Dogs* is an original and vital work written by a master craftsman: philosophy given a perfect form.'

The 2015 Giller jury citation:

'What does it mean to be alive? To think, to feel, to love and to envy? André Alexis explores all of this and more in the extraordinary *Fifteen Dogs*, an insightful and philosophical meditation on the nature of consciousness. It's a novel filled with balancing acts: humour juxtaposed with savagery, solitude with the desperate need to be part of a pack, perceptive prose interspersed with playful poetry. A wonderful and original piece of writing that challenges the reader to examine their own existence and recall the age old question, what's the meaning of life?'

About the Author

André Alexis was born in Trinidad and grew up in Canada. His debut novel, *Childhood*, won the Books in Canada First Novel Award, the Trillium Book Award, and was shortlisted for the Giller Prize and the Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. His other previous books include *Asylum*, *Beauty and Sadness*, *Ingrid & the Wolf* and, most recently, *Pastoral*, which was also nominated for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and was named a *Globe and Mail* Top 100 book of 2014.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jonathan Solis:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a e-book. The book Fifteen Dogs it is rather good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book has high quality.

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Violet Jarrell:

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