



# Monitor

*Leigh Alexander (Creator)*

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*Three young Breaker Bay grads dream of making a difference in the world—and becoming Network celebrities—away from the desks of their dreary MegaBuy call center jobs. After they recover an NBN executive's PAD at a protest in Broadcast Square, it seems Lana Rael and her friends, Johnny and Tim, might finally have their chance to discover the truth behind NBN's saccharine and explosively popular franchise, Sunshine Junction.*

*But when the aspiring activists stumble into the corporation's all seeing eye, they find themselves in the limelight—and not in the way they hoped.*

*As camdrones begin to follow them through the megacity and broadcast their every move on live threedee, Lana and her friends will have to ask themselves just how much they're willing to sacrifice to fight the corps. Is making a difference worth risking their privacy, their lifestyle, or their lives?*

Fans of media giant NBN, its colorful programs, and its high-profile characters gain unparalleled access to the megacorp's HQ in Leigh Alexander's Monitor. As the media-focused megacorp responds to the threat posed by a trio of wannabe activists, we learn more about such popular characters as Jackson Howard, Victoria Jenkins, and Dinosaurus.

Meanwhile, as the protagonists have their privacy stripped away, they lose control of their lives. Their actions become increasingly desperate and surprising. As they look for ways to retaliate, will their lives spiral into total anarchy? Will they regain control of the context that defines them? And who is responsible for their suffering? In Monitor, the truth is malleable, and learning how to shape it is paramount.

In addition to its 96 pages of fiction, the hardcover edition of Monitor comes with a sixteen-page full color insert with setting information on activism in the Android future, NBN's Global Adaptive Entertainment, MegaBuy, and the future of marketing.

## Monitor Details

Date : Published 2016 by Fantasy Flight Games

ISBN : 9781633442504

Author : Leigh Alexander (Creator)

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Genre : Science Fiction, Cyberpunk, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Monitor for online ebook

### JosÃ© CortÃ©s says

A decent read for fans of the Android universe, but otherwise too short and too dry.

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### Tim says

Fun, quick read. Especially, if you're a fan of the Android games (Netrunner, etc.).

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### Ru says

I am a big fan of Alexander's non-fiction and journalistic writing, so was enthusiastic to read her debut novella, despite not being familiar with the universe in which it is set. Although the story was a fun sci-fi romp playing on very modern insecurities about mass surveillance and social media, the writing fell very flat for me. I thought the characters were clumsily developed, and there were lots of awkward turns of phrase. Alexander also repeated certain lazy descriptors ("the curl of her lip" being the one that KEPT jumping out at me) sometimes within the space of a single page. I didn't feel much of anything towards the main protagonist, and I'm not sure that can entirely be because of my lack of immersion in the setting.

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### Stéphane Desjardins says

First of the Android novellas, and probably the most interesting. A story about the power of the news corporation, and what happens when reality TV seriously throws ethics out of the window in order to gain viewership. An enjoyable quick read in a Blade-Runner-esque world.

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### Snawlz says

I'm familiar with cyberpunk conventions, but this was my first look at the Netrunner universe. Leigh Alexander packs a lot under the hood of this novella. Its main focus is on a group of young, socially-aware people who want to put some good into a world overrun by nightmare capitalism. Here, the dystopia wears a friendly, sugar-caked mask, like the cheery Facebook algorithms that feed you photos of your exes, dead loved ones and pics of yourself from 50 pounds ago.

"Monitor" imagines the excesses possible in a society that hurries to click through EULAs so they can participate - on a basic level - in a society where cameras record, store and collate everything they observe. It shows how the tables can turn on someone through a medium that commodifies user participation, and values "engagement" more than protecting those users from the unrestrained impulses of rubberneckers and bomb-throwers.

The NBN megacorp's moves against the protagonists are not very far removed from our present-day reality, where Chewbacca Mom's kids get full rides to college -- or where women are dissected by mobs for the

crime of existing too prominently. This part of the book peels with authenticity -- the physical, gut-level reactions of a woman driven into hiding, watching as "well-meaning" (often male) allies cash in on the destruction of their privacy, unsolicited strangers evaluating her like a piece of meat at a market... and other "well-meaning" allies who are more interested in tearing down a system or spitting ideologically correct invective than protecting someone vulnerable.

I'm very interested in "powerless fantasies," for lack of a better term - stories in speculative fiction where the inhabitants of a dystopia are trying to live as well as they can. The characters in "Monitor" don't lie down and take their pummeling. They react and act within the means available to them. But this isn't a story where young, hyper-competent revolutionaries topple an evil government - nor is it a story where the female character goes through a Tomb Raider-style harrowing, breaking apart so everyone can coo over how "strong" she is. This is a lovely, dark story about people trying to find room to breathe in the small spaces left to them in a smarmy Silicon Valley tech-hell.

It's been a very long time since I've read licensed fic willing to say so much. It's hyper-relevant and I'd recommend it to people who have no familiarity with Netrunner. I would love to track the lives of these characters after this novella, and I hope Leigh Alexander writes more stories like this.

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### **Matthew says**

Monitor is a punchy & restrained novella exploring the cruelty of a not-very-far-extrapolated media in a not-very-far-off capitalist technocracy. Despite the book's tie to a nerd universe full of a cyborgs and space beanstalks, the author only lets you glimpse it through the struggle of two women fighting for their place in the world. They're tied together in a cat & mouse plot with all the guilty tension & tedium of a 2016 social media bloodbath. You're a gawper, you'll know it exactly.

Monitor also features surely the most sinister otter ever to be written into science fiction. I cannot tell you how much I dug the otter, the otter steals the show.

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### **Ryan says**

A fantastic addition to the Android universe. Leigh Alexander weaves an entirely too plausible short story about corporate greed, entertainment media, and what happens when the corporations control it.

I will concede that as a big fan of the Android universe (board games, card games, novels and novellas) my judgement is rather clouded :)

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### **Patrick says**

#### **Solid Cyberpunk**

While very similar to being a mashup of several black mirror episodes, this is a really well paced and dark cyberpunk story. Good writing, especially for a brand tie-in novel. I'm liking the Android books almost as much as I enjoyed the majority of Pathfinder novels

## Read Ng says

This was a GoodReads Giveaway win.

I did not know what to expect of this book. After reading, I will place this in the Young Adult reading group. I tend to not read much YA books. The characters and storylines just don't seem to interest me as much. The characters and this storyline were only average. I do like the whole concept that our lives are being "monitored" a bit too much. Increasingly, we allow this monitoring to take place as a means to make routine acts seamless with our lives. Take a networked home thermostat. It now learns your daily schedule, but since you can now network it, it can adapt to your comings and goings to further increase your home's energy efficiency. It's watching you.

The "Android" universe that the author is creating is interesting, but this small short novella does little to introduce you to that world. Those aspects are better flushed out in the appended informational pages after this story's ending. It is not a highly technical science fiction work, but rather a study of people and society in a future setting. The plot line for me was only fair. The ending leaves room to explore other plots, and introduce other characters.

I stand corrected. The Android Universe apparently started as a Board Game. Not being familiar with the origins of this universe, I would have to state that I assume this book would be recommended reading for fans. If you are not familiar with this universe, it may be worth looking into. For my taste, I expect a bit more refinement in the story telling. It is a good concept, just a bit toned down for myself.

Have a GoodReads.

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## Alan Castree says

Much better than I expected. Short and sweet but a lot of nice world building. In this book you definitely get more intimate with NBN and the consumerism of the Android Universe. It was also nice to read the fluff in the back. Actually, that fluff might be better when read first just for the reader to become more familiar with the setting.

I hear it's not as good but I have Monster lined up in my to read pile.

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## Vexation says

Annoyingly short, but delightful to read. Flows well, and despite some not so great efforts to maintain an early Gibsonesque prose style, it's rock solid.

Interesting story, nice cameo appearances by staple Android universe characters and netrrunnerish.

Happy puppy

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## Mike says

A solid Black Mirror-esque novella set in one of my favourite gaming universes.

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