## TITLE INFORMATION

**DOGS DON'T CRY**
*Novels of the Great War*
John F. Andrews
46 North Publications (300 pp.)
$23.99 hardcover, $13.99 paperback, $6.99 e-book
ISBN: 9798989383542
January 13, 2024

## BOOK REVIEW

In Andrews' historical novel, two French siblings and their dog desperately attempt to escape invading German forces in 1918.

Marcel and Geneviève Durand, 15 and 13 years old, respectively, live in Bouresches, a region of France soon to be evacuated as German troops march perilously close to it. However, Claire, their mother, is terrified by the prospect of evacuating because Geneviève is gravely ill with pneumonia and likely to die if compelled to walk even a modest distance. The Germans inevitably arrive, and Claire dies protecting Geneviève from their furious assault on the town. The children's father, Pierre, also perishes fighting on the front, and they are left orphaned, their only guardian a fiercely devoted border collie named Abby. Marcel remembers they have a cousin named Henri somewhere in Paris—maybe in Neuilly-sur-Seine—but he has never met him and doesn't even know his cousin's last name. Abby, though, knows Henri and his wife, Sophie, well—they were once her owners. In this moving tale, Abby herds the siblings through a countryside ravaged by war, a dangerous journey that threatens the life of the ailing Geneviève. The story is told from multiple perspectives—including Abby's, who is depicted with great nuance as deeply intelligent (border collies are "geniuses of the dog world") but still not overly anthropomorphized: "I may not understand human sadness, but I know what it smells and looks like. It fills the house," the canine observes. The opportunities here for schmaltzy sentimentality are manifold, and occasionally the author simply can't help but indulge, especially toward the conclusion of the novel. However, for the most part, Andrews resists the allure of maudlin melodrama and limns a surprisingly unflinching tale of loss and survival. This is often a profoundly forlorn story, but not a hopeless one, and it is as emotionally affecting as it is historically authentic.

A remarkably sensitive depiction of the teenage psyche under unthinkable pressure.

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