

## Wilders

**Brenda Cooper**

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*This is science fiction with an ecological focus, delivering a sharp story alongside questions of how humans relate to their world.*

Brenda Cooper's *Wilders* is a captivating eco-thriller that finds a young girl breaking free from an idyllic city, risking everything for her sister as the truth of her world slowly unfolds.

The domed techno-utopian megacity of Seacouver provides everything for its citizens—weather control, highly advanced technology, basic income, and more. Still, it's not enough for Coryn Williams. After the tragic double suicides of her parents, her sister opts to leave the city for the wild Outside, and Coryn is set adrift.

After Coryn passes the city's test and becomes a full adult, she strolls out of Seacouver on a mission to find her sister. She knows that the Outside will be dangerous and wild. Still, she and her companion, Paula—an android and a surrogate parent—are surprised to discover that truly nothing is safe—not even the scattered megacities they were taught to trust. Massive ecobots, eccentric religious cults, and double agents collide as Coryn is thrust into a world she doesn't understand.

World building is accomplished smoothly as Coryn and her android explore the Outside. Instead of massive info dumps, the truth behind the megacities and the Outside unspools slowly, in between bursts of intense suspense and drama.

It seems like no one can be trusted, not even Coryn's sister. Instead of focusing on the wonder of the future, the allure of the wild, or the increasingly advanced technology, *Wilders* locks in on Coryn and her relationships with those around her. She can be a bit naive, but her heart drives her to do the right thing, even as others engage in betrayal and lies, or use her to further their own goals.

*Wilders* blends environmentalism, futurism, and science fiction for an engaging story with important messages about humanity's relationship with the world around it.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May/June 2017)

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