



Title: The Laughing Robot

Author: Julia Ross

Category: Fiction

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About

In a near-future world where robots are becoming increasingly prevalent, recently widowed social worker, Anna, grapples with grief, betrayal, and an uncertain future. When Anna's husband dies, she finds herself drawn into an experimental robot companionship program and having to navigate a treacherous web of political and corporate interests while fighting to maintain her dignity and autonomy. When the enigmatic 'Henry', and later his more advanced successor 'Henry2', come to stay with her, Anna must confront her growing dependence on technology, her fears about aging, and the very nature of what it means to be human.

About the author

Julia Ross has worked as a nurse, social worker and mediator, and has held the position of Director of Social Services in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for ten years. She worked for several years in the digital world learning about AI and predictive analytics before becoming Chair of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW)UK from 2022-2026. Julia is passionate about writing and has published two books previously, *When People Die*, a book on death for children, and *Call the Social* a novel published in 2022. Julia lives on the Isle of Wight where *The Laughing Robot* is set.

Reviews

Anna is the heroine we all need for our times - unforgettable and inspiring! A brilliant read! **Lady Paddy Hunt (Wimbledon & House of Lords)**

A timely take on the opportunities and risks that AI and social robots will bring to us all in our later years from one of the sharpest observers of the social care scene. **David Brindle, former public services editor, The Guardian**

AI, an ageing population, the social care conundrum, generational disharmony and corporate greed – 'The Laughing Robot' is a satire for our times that delivers both a warning and a message of hope for the future. **Shahid Naviq, Editor PSW**

Professional Social Work

A witty delve in to the future where robots, AI, and the aging process merge ... **Helen Lederer**

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