

Preface

Are you:

- Wondering if your government is inching (or hurtling) toward dystopia?
- Interested in the concept of dystopian government but lacking the time to read the hundreds of excellent works in this ever-growing genre? Wanting to connect them to real-life examples?
- Pondering that eternal question of human existence, how in the world can we create a government for ourselves that is neither totalitarian nor useless?

This book is for you.

We are two feminist political scientists who have a passion for democracy, good public policy, and horribly depressing visions of the future. Let us guide you through some of our favorites, tying them to real-life examples and pointing out key patterns and trends.

Dystopian government happens all the time, in both fact and fiction, and it has all kinds of recognizable “hallmarks” and major weaknesses that you should know about. Some of these examples are truly terrible, but there are also some useful

examples of resistance that are important and uplifting. These are what give us hope for the future of democracy and, well, the human race.

Ultimately, this is our message to you: Be not afraid.

Maybe that is overstated. Okay, be a little afraid. This is not a normal moment in modern history or politics. Right-wing populists are gaining strength in the United States and Europe, and left-wing populists have done fairly well in Latin America. Both have done a *lot* of pandering to people's worst instincts to stir up fear, hatred, and resentment. But don't let the fear overwhelm you. Worse threats than this have been faced down and overcome, and the human spirit has a way of shining through in the darkest moments.

The resistance has already started. All over the world, regular citizens are standing up for the basics of democracy, like free speech, freedom of religion, rule of law, the right to vote, and checks and balances. Their strength gives us courage for the battle ahead.

**SURVIVE
AND
RESIST**
