**Monsters of Men (Chaos Walking Series) by Nick Podehl, Angela Dawe, MacLeod Andrews, Patrick Ness**

In the riveting conclusion to the acclaimed dystopian series, a boy and girl caught in the chaos of war face devastating choices that will decide the fate of a world.

As a world-ending war surges around them, Todd and Viola face monstrous decisions. The indigenous Spackle, thinking and acting as one, have mobilized to avenge their murdered people. Ruthless human leaders prepare to defend their factions at all costs, even as a convoy of new settlers approaches. And as the ceaseless Noise lays all thoughts bare, the projected will of the few threatens to overwhelm the desperate desire of the many. The consequences of each action, each word, are unspeakably vast: To follow a tyrant or a terrorist? To save the life of the one you love most, or thousands of strangers? To believe in redemption, or assume it is lost? Becoming adults amid the turmoil, Todd and Viola question all they have known, racing through horror and outrage toward a shocking finale.
Reviews of the **Monsters of Men (Chaos Walking Series)** by Nick Podehl, Angela Dawe, MacLeod Andrews, Patrick Ness

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Spoiler Alert.
Patrick Ness is a bit of a bastard.
Just so you know ahead of time, there will be no mercy.

Book 3 began exactly where Book 2 left off: The army of New Prentisstown is at war with the army of The Answer and Mayor President Prentiss is talking his way out of being overthrown by Todd. The Spackle forces are attacking and Viola’s racing to intercept her incoming scout ship before Mistress Coyle can get there.

The story once again expands by adding yet another point of view, that of 1017. 1017 is essentially the one that got away... and proceeds to plot vengeance. He was a Spackle slave in New Haven, who watched his one in particular, die to keep him safe. Forced to work under Prentiss's command and branded with a number intended for livestock, he survives a brutal massacre and escapes to find his people. And this is where his POV, becomes really useful; the reader gets to learn about the Spackle from a Spackle. The Spackle are fiercer and smarter than they've let on and they've spent their downtime between wars inventing new weapons. They call themselves The Land and are a species perfectly evolved to a planet that induces telepathy in its inhabitants. They choose a leader, The Sky, to watch over them, to think independently and make decisions to their benefit. And The Sky keeps his secrets...

Todd and Viola are once again caught in a war they want no part of... Todd is stuck keeping tabs on Mayor Prentiss who's becoming increasingly nice, even though no one is buying that brand of BS, except maybe Todd who only ever wants to see the good in people. Viola is stuck trying to keep the scouts, Simone and Bradley calm, while preventing Mistress Coyle from convincing them to unleash Hell on New World.

Throughout the majority of the story, New World is having an all out civil war and there's nothing civil about it. Mayor Prentiss calls his peculiar brand of leadership a war tactic when really there's just a lot of murder. Mistress Coyle calls it opposition against a tyrant when she plants bombs in unexpected places, but most see it as terrorism. And as Todd and Viola try to be advocates of peace, getting what they want is going to cost big.

Which brings me right back to Patrick Ness is a bastard. Todd and Viola, having found each other time and time again, fought for each other, and survived bloody, fiery wars... Todd and Viola, constantly having to prove themselves the heroes of the story, despite the despair... The ending...
brings hope, hope in the human and the Spackle alike, hope that happiness is near. And then Patrick Ness drives MacTruck over that hope. And I read the final pages in tears.

I can’t really find anything to complain about in the final installment...The plot-timing was perfect, the plot twists were exciting. The suspense kept me flipping pages even when I wasn’t sure I wanted to read what happened next. The loose ends were tied up beautifully. And even though Patrick Ness made me cry, I can’t fault him too heavily for that... The fact that he was able to make me feel so much is a testament to his ability as a storyteller.

Bluddefender
Whew!

The breakneck pace I noted in my review of The Knife of Never Letting Go and my abbreviated—I ain’t got time for no stinking review ‘cause I got to get on to the next one—review of The Ask and the Answer continues, only slightly throttled down, in Monsters of Men, the third, and unfortunately, final, book in the Chaos Walking series.

I have no idea how Patrick Ness wrote the trilogy, but the way it reads is one big ambitious story split into thirds, much like The Lord of the Rings was initially one big book that for marketing purposes was sliced into three pieces. It worked well for Tolkien, right? Anyway, there’s no hint of afterthought here. Monsters had to follow Ask which had to follow Knife. And they connected seamlessly—setting, characters, conflict. The characters’ choices made sense, as did the changes they went through (or didn’t go through).

In my short review of The Ask and the Answer I mentioned the concept of Scene and Sequel and the fact that there was a high proportion of Scene (action on the page) in the first two volumes, and not so much Sequel (reaction to the scene, interior monologue, point of view stuff). There are a few more opportunities to catch your breath in Monsters, a few more chances to think about possibilities and philosophical notions and who’s doing what and who’s good and who’s bad and the gray areas in between.

But still, there’s a lot happening in Monsters, and the few breaks intensify the action when it ramps back up again. Aside from (and contributing to) the slight slackening of pace, there’s the introduction of another point of view, which dilutes the intensity of the focus a bit but makes up for it by giving the reader a deeper appreciation for the universal “humanity” of all reasoning beings, even when those beings aren’t human.

When I wasn’t completely caught up in the story, I spent some moments admiring the author’s imagination and organizational skills (it’s a BIG story) and above all, character development. No cardboard characters here. I’m not going to get into spoilers just to convince you, but if you haven’t already read the trilogy (it’s not new), I highly recommend it.

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