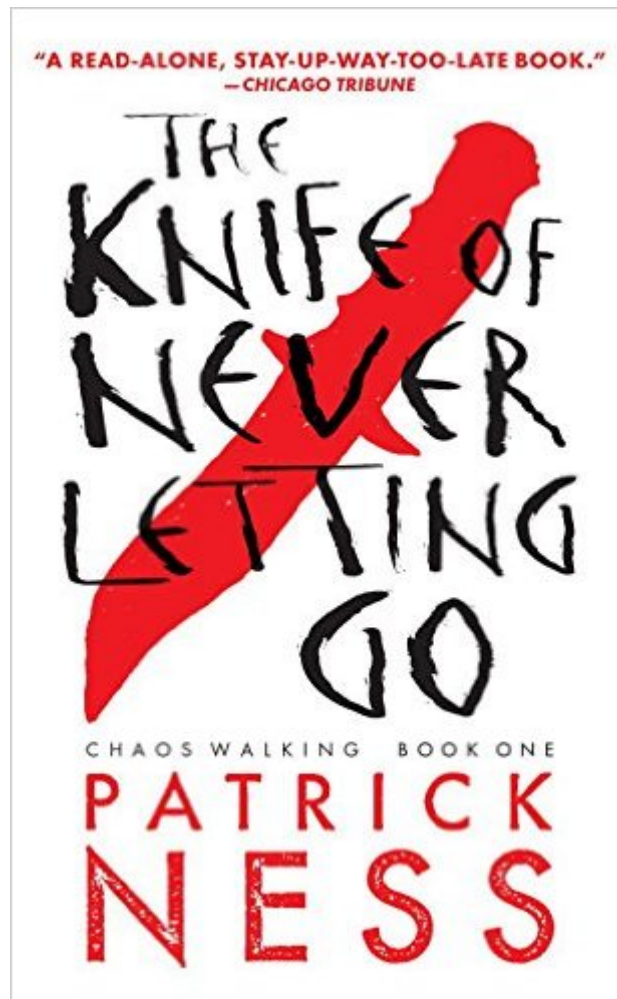


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The Knife Of Never Letting Go (Reissue With Bonus Short Story): Chaos Walking: Book One



Synopsis

The riveting Chaos Walking trilogy by two-time Carnegie Medalist Patrick Ness, reissued with compelling new covers â ” and a bonus short story in each book. Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

Book Information

Series: Chaos Walking (Book 1)

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; 2 edition (July 22, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763676187

ISBN-13: 978-0763676186

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (485 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #23,589 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence #133 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Science Fiction #222 inÂ Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Dystopian

Customer Reviews

...or you'll have missed out on a brilliant book. I won't regale you with plot details (you can find them elsewhere easily enough and I'd hate to spoil this for you), I'll just tell you why I loved it. A few months ago, I was complaining to a friend that there was nothing really original coming out these days in the areas of speculative fiction, particularly when it comes to the YA end of the spectrum. It all seems to be vampires this, werewolves that, discovering latent magical powers here, falling in angsty love with someone with magical powers there... My friend listened patiently and then

recommended that I read the 'The Knife of Never Letting Go'. Friends are great. I chewed through this book in a few sessions. I wouldn't have put it down if everyday life hadn't so rudely interrupted. It made me laugh, cry and cheer. Then I gave it to my partner who is not a keen fiction reader and he loved it as well. Before Patrick Ness started punching out punchy fiction, he was (and still is) a journalist. It shows. Not a word is wasted in this book, the prose is always expertly crafted and never dithering waffle. The post-apocalyptic dystopian world is unique and wonderfully built, even though we only get to see it through the eyes of Todd, our illiterate protagonist. Ness evokes a rare and pure honesty in Todd's voice that immediately sweeps us up in the action and continues to hurtle us through the story until we slam into the brick wall of an ending. 'The Knife of Never Letting Go' is a masterpiece in itself, but thank the Muses that Chaos Walking is going to be a trilogy. My 'Where It's At' rating: 4.8/5@@@@ Plot@@@@@ Pace@@@@@ World@@@@@ Characters@@@@@ Style

Todd lives in Prentisstown, a dystopian nightmare where all women are dead and everyone can hear each other's thoughts (known as noise). As the only "boy", the youngest in the restless and violent town, Todd's only real companion is his (talking) dog, Manchee. When he discovers a girl in the swamp one day, his caretakers tell him he's in danger and he has to make a run for it. As thus begins book one of the Chaos Walking trilogy. It's best to go into the book knowing only as much as Todd knows (which is surprisingly little considering no one's thoughts are private), so I won't go into spoilers here. Suffice to say that leaving Prentisstown considerably expands Todd's worldview and understanding. Todd is an intriguing character, a real innocent, with a voice that matches his lack of education. The ideas here are very creative, especially in regards to the noise. It's interesting to see what animals have to say (not much of interest actually) and how differently the various settlements Todd encounters on his journey have dealt with the problem of broadcasting their every thought. I cruised through this thinking the whole time that it's an A-/B+ book - until I hit the ending. The narrative is dark, but the ending is even darker and though it works on an intellectual level, it's an emotional sucker punch - a cliffhanger that makes you think the book must be missing some pages.

On a far-flung world newly settled by humanity, twelve-year-old Todd Hewitt of Prentisstown is a boy on the brink of becoming a man. When settlers came to this world, they found it already inhabited by aliens known as the Spackle, and a war was waged against them to colonize the planet. Now, almost twenty years after the first settlers landed, the world is low-tech but free of the "spacks." However, they left behind them the "Noise germ," a chemical contaminant that causes all the men

who come in contact with it to broadcast their thoughts for everyone's hearing--and kills all the infected women. On the eve of his thirteenth birthday, Todd has never seen a woman. He was the last child born in the settlement before his mother succumbed to the Noise germ and died, and now he's the only boy left in the village of Prentisstown, all the others having turned thirteen and been proclaimed men. Now, with Todd's birthday approaching, the entire town is anxious, and Todd can hear it. The men of the town are keeping something from him; although they can hear each other think, it's possible to learn techniques that allow one to control the information that others can hear. Ben and Cillian, his adoptive guardians and old friends of his parents, are both worried for him, though Todd doesn't know why. And then, with less than a month to go until Todd's thirteenth birthday, he stumbles across a secret that no boy is meant to know and all men have been forced to forget, a secret about the history of his world and the lies he's been told. Todd has no choice but to escape from the town he's called his home and the people who have been his parents, on the run from something more terrible than the alien Spackle, and more familiar. The sheer intensity of the story Ness tells kept me reading straight through this book, despite its length and occasionally hefty prose. Todd's first-person, present-tense narration has an inexorable pull that places the reader within the context of the story and keeps you turning the pages. The plot is full of twists and turns, the world is immaculately and innovatively crafted, and the characters' pain and longing seeps from the pages. My largest complaint with this book was the way in which it ended, without resolving some major issues that had been significant throughout the story. It is the first book in a series, so this sense of incompleteness may be slightly forgiven, but I felt like I'd spent the entire book hurtling forward into empty space only to be slammed at the last minute against a brick wall. That said, I'd recommend *THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO* to anyone who enjoys dystopia or slightly darker fiction, and I know I can't wait to see what happens next! Reviewed by: Candace Cunard

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