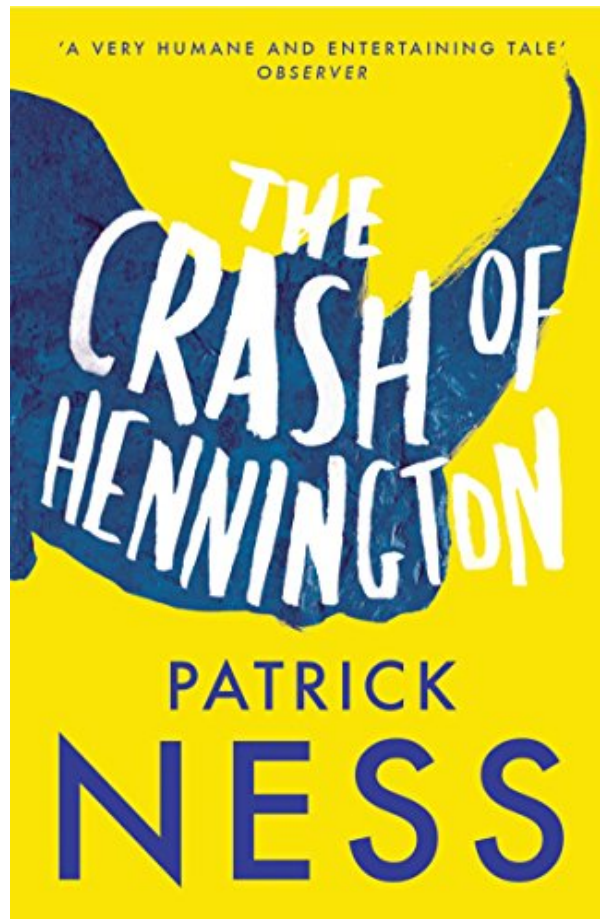


THE CRASH OF HENNINGTON BY PATRICK NESS



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Review

'Patrick Ness recreates the world as we know it, infusing it with a charm and whimsy that brings to mind Calvino and, of course, the Ionesco of "Rhinoceros". This is a true changeling of a book, both funny and subversive.' T.C. Boyle

About the Author

patrick ness was brought up in Seattle, on the west coast of America, but now lives in London. The Crash of Hennington is his first novel.

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Love is political, obsessive and utterly strange in the first novel from the author of the Chaos Walking trilogy and new novel 'More Than This'.

Love is political, obsessive and utterly strange in the first novel from the award-winning author of the Chaos Walking trilogy, 'A Monster Calls' and and new novel 'More Than This'.

Welcome to the seaside metropolis of Hennington, where a mysterious herd of rhinoceros has wandered city streets for so long it's become a civic feature, where the current mayor first met her husband on a nude beach, and where Jon Noth has returned after four decades to reclaim a lost love.

Unfortunately for him, that lost love is Cora Larsson, long-time mayor of Hennington, happily (and flexibly) married – and still not interested ...

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Most helpful customer reviews

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

A betwitching debut

By The Peruvian Wunderkind

Having never heard of either the title or the author, I nevertheless purchased the book as the absurd premise rather intrigued me: a fictional modern mega-city called Hennington that is normal in seemingly all respects but for its peaceful co-existence with a large herd of rhinos (technically called a crash). Reinforcing the fictionality of the environment, Ness introduces new words for established concepts e.g. "Forum" replaces heroin, "Rumour" replaces religion.

The book deftly weaves in and out of a dizzying number of storylines involving Hennington's colourful characters: a millionaire octogenarian, a powerful golf course owner, a still-lactating 40-year old plus accountant/prostitute, a well-endowed gay waiter, an attractive out-of-towner with nefarious plans, etc. etc.

Each chapter dedicates itself to one of these plots and rotates to the others accordingly. As many of the chapters are only 4-5 pages long, the reader is constantly juggling the various plots and puzzling together what went before and how the various story pieces fit together. The narrator function is liberally spread among characters, human and non-human alike, as well as an external narrator; oftentimes, the shift in textual orientation occurs in the same sentence.

The multiple plots gradually coalesce into a sole narrative, and we see how the seemingly unrelated actions of one person nevertheless affect another (much like the vaunted 'butterfly theory,' where the flapping of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world lead to tiny atmospheric changes that can eventually cause a tornado somewhere else). As the title suggests, the fate of the city is inexorably intertwined with the fate of the rhinos. The rhinos serve a sub-plot function, and like many of Shakespeare's plays, anticipate and suggest important developments in the main story lines. The rhinos are actually quite interesting; Ness obviously took the time to understand their social organization, individual traits, and feeding habits and makes their actions in a sprawling metropolis as believable as can be. The reader is usually privy to the mind(?) of the herd's leader; a compassionate middle-aged female whose over-arching concern is the welfare of the crash. Her frequent deliberations with notions of leadership, responsibility, self-sacrifice, and hope are very similar to the psychological entanglements the human characters must face.

Howlingly funny in places, unspeakably tragic at others, but always entertaining, this was one book I had great difficulty putting down. The book is all the more impressive as this is Ness' debut novel. I will definitely be on the look out for any further Patrick Ness offerings and would highly recommend anyone else to do the same.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Inventive and involving.

By RQC

'Crash of Hennington' gives you so many characters that it's hard to believe each one strikes you as real. Yet the dialogue and motivations behind each personality are so spot-on and true to human nature that it's impossible not to care about, wonder about, or even fear (in some cases) the characters -- and that includes the rhinoceros leader -- whose thoughts and intentions are painfully human, thanks to Ness's vivid insights. The alternate world we're presented is also not that difficult to imagine; there is no technology beyond our grasp, and no religious belief that isn't mirrored by anything in our existence. It's a glimpse into a world that could be ours, and at people who could be us. I highly recommend it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Great book by a great author

By Anxy Jackson

Great book by a great author. Creative plot and characters with an unexpected turn out. Enjoyed thoroughly and you will too.

See all 3 customer reviews...

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