

Nation

By Terry Pratchett

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When a giant wave destroys his village, Mau is the only one left. Daphne—a traveler from the other side of the globe—is the sole survivor of a shipwreck. Separated by language and customs, the two are united by catastrophe. Slowly, they are joined by other refugees. And as they struggle to protect the small band, Mau and Daphne defy ancestral spirits, challenge death himself, and uncover a long-hidden secret that literally turns the world upside down.

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Nation By Terry Pratchett Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #148083 in eBooks
- Published on: 2008-09-18
- Released on: 2009-10-06
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Starred Review. Grade 7–10—In this first novel for young people set outside of Discworld, Pratchett again shows his humor and humanity. Worlds are destroyed and cultures collide when a tsunami hits islands in a vast ocean much like the Pacific. Mau, a boy on his way back home from his initiation period and ready for the ritual that will make him a man, is the only one of his people, the Nation, to survive. Ermintrude, a girl from somewhere like Britain in a time like the 19th century, is on her way to meet her father, the governor of the Mothering Sunday islands. She is the sole survivor of her ship (or so she thinks), which is wrecked on Mau's island. She reinvents herself as Daphne, and uses her wits and practical sense to help the straggling refugees from nearby islands who start arriving. When raiders land on the island, they are led by a mutineer from the wrecked ship, and Mau must use all of his ingenuity to outsmart him. Then, just as readers are settling in to thinking that all will be well in the new world that Daphne and Mau are helping to build, Pratchett turns the story on its head. The main characters are engaging and interesting, and are the perfect medium for the author's sly humor. Daphne is a close literary cousin of Tiffany Aching in her common sense and keen intelligence wedded to courage. A rich and thought-provoking read.—*Sue Giffard, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, New York City*
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From Bookmarks Magazine
Critics praised *Nation* as a hybrid, deeply philosophical book aimed at young adults, but one likely to appeal to adults as well, much like Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy or J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. With echoes of William Defoe and William Golding, *Nation* takes the form of a "classic *Robinsonade*," notes the *Washington Post*—that is, a book in which characters on a desert island recreate civilization. As his characters grapple with questions of leadership, humanity, and survival, Pratchett explores fundamental ideas about religion and culture. This might all sound rather heavy, but there is plenty of originality and humor—and cannibals, spirits, and secret treasures—to go around. In the end, Pratchett offers a vision of a deeply humane world. "In some part of the multiverse there is probably a civilisation based on the thinking of Terry Pratchett," writes the *Guardian*, "and what a civilised civilisation that will be."
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From Booklist
Starred Review What qualities ensure the continued existence of a nation? This thoughtful survival story examines the concepts that create a civilization's collective consciousness, pitting science against superstition as survivors of a massive tsunami struggle to forge a new culture on a tiny tropical isle. Thirteen-year-old Mau, the sole native survivor of a small island "somewhere in the South Pelagic Ocean," and Daphne, a shipwrecked successor to the British throne, unite in a shared duty to build a community of survivors. Briggs' eloquent reading, with perfectly balanced expression, begins with restrained tones that intensify listeners' engagement. As the story reaches a climax, his reading reflects a controlled cathartic emotion. The motley castaways are rendered with vocal interpretations that range from absurdly eccentric to sensibly stiff upper lip. Briggs' long association with Pratchett's works, from scripting stage adaptations to narrating previous titles on audio, is evident as he infuses his speech with the rhythm of the author's wry British wit, shifting from laugh-out-loud humor to pure sentiment with complete unaffectedness. Reading in a mellow British accent and lowering and raising tones to differentiate genders, Briggs expands the audience of this book (a Booklist Editors' Choice, 2008, selection), which draws comparisons to Lord of the Flies and Robinson Crusoe. Grades 7-11. --Mary Burkey

Users Review

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