



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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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 "Somewhere in the South Pelagic Ocean," a tidal wave wipes out the population of a small island—except for Mau, who was paddling his dugout canoe home after a month spent alone, preparing to become a man. The wave also sweeps a sailing ship carrying Daphne, an English girl, up onto the island and deposits it in the rain forest, where Mau finds her. Over the months that follow, they learn to communicate while welcoming more people to their shores and building a community of survivors. Mau searches for the meaning behind his people's gods, while Daphne applies her nineteenth-century knowledge of science and history to the many puzzles she discovers in this unfamiliar place. Broad in its scope and concrete in its details, this unusual novel strips away the trappings of two very different nations to consider what it is people value and why. Certain scenes are indelible: Mau's nonverbal communication to Daphne that a pregnant woman has landed, and she must help with the birth; or the terrifying yet awesome descent into a cave. Quirky wit and broad vision make this a fascinating survival story on many levels. Grades 7-10. --Carolyn Phelan

Users Review

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