



Jonesbridge

M.E. Parker

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In this world-building series, perfect for fans of Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451 and Hugh Howey's WOOL, to survive a grim island prison a young man and woman must work for the Complex. To escape it, they will need to destroy it.

Myron enters the Jonesbridge Industrial Complex as a worker, a prisoner, commanded to harvest the scant resources that enable the powers that be to continue waging an unwinnable war. When Sindra—a fellow prisoner and a spirited fighter—joins him at the salvage line, he finds a new reason to live, and to escape. Even though any attempt to leave will lead to execution, Myron and Sindra plan a daring escape.

But when a guard is found murdered and Myron is blamed for the crime, it appears that they will not even get a chance to attempt to fly over the gorge that separates Jonesbridge from the rest of the world. It will take everything that Myron and Sindra have to merely survive their brutal overlords. It will take even more to set them both free. As their world changes, Myron and Sindra work through the Jonesbridge underground, meeting a mesmerizing cast of characters—dangerous survivors bent on destroying Jonesbridge once and for all.

Jonesbridge Details

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Author : M.E. Parker

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From Reader Review Jonesbridge for online ebook

Jonathan H. says

A dystopian world with two factions at war. I never got a really good grasp of the premise and who the two factions were. I found the grammar errors throughout the book distracting, too: like using "peddle" for "pedal." And the main characters kept making really bad decisions throughout—if they weren't the protagonists, they would have been dead.

Suanne says

From the intensely chilling opening scene of torture combined with brain-washing, Parker builds a unique dystopian world. A “patriotic slave” like many more of Jonesbridge’s residents, Myron works as a slog in the Jonesbridge Industrial Complex. Like prisoners of war, they are fed just enough to keep them functioning. Women are sterilized. Slogs are worked to death, recycling anything they can to fuel a never-ending war against the Eastern Bloc, a holdover from the Zealot War in 2043, “the year of the flash in the sky that stole the life from all machines.” When Myron meets Sindra, a spirited young woman, he experiences stirrings slogs aren’t supposed to have. The two try—and fail—time and again to escape and be together. There is a wonderful scene reminiscent of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller, Jr. in which Myron finds himself with the Stony Mountain Fallout Shelter. There is also a lovely line, “hate was not such much an extreme dislike of something...rather it was the fermentation of his sorrow...” I look forward to reading the remaining works in the series.

I reviewed a digital ARC in exchange for a fair and honest review.

James R. says

In the darkness of Jonesbridge, eternal lights shine bright: a woman's love for the child within her, a man's hunger for freedom. The timeless dystopia of the world created by M.E. Parker reveals transcendent truths about human nature. Love, above all, survives oppression, grinding labor, hopelessness. Parker's inventiveness, never overblown, always understated, makes the bleak world of Jonesbridge hauntingly real. "Trial by stockade," the omnipresent ghosts, the slogs--little, plain words like those that would be used by the people of Jonesbridge to describe features of their everyday lives, pulls you deeper into the story and the trials faced by the two main characters.

Parker ends the book with a good set-up for the next installment that leaves you rooting for the humble hero.

Bob says

It was okay. Seemed kind of repetitive. The story is fairly depressing and there's not a ton of the imagination I usually enjoy from science fiction.

Gina says

I received this book as a First Read. The pace is slow and the characters are a bit one dimensional. The story is interesting and paints a vision of a fairly credible dystopian future. Fans of Starship Troopers will enjoy this book.

Patricia Kaniasty says

Over all, I really liked this book. Had some unique scenarios mixed in with the right amount of grit. However, the ending started to go flat, but surprise.....twist at the end.

Cats of Ulthar says

REVIEW: JONESBRIDGE [Echoes of Hinterland #1] by M. E. Parker

I wrote in a review not long ago that there is dystopiana, and then there is DYSTOPIANA. The former you can read of, close the book, and forget. The latter will never leave you. JONESBRIDGE falls into that latter category: from the brutal reader's hook of the first several pages, the alert reader is steeped in the oppression, regulation, and pointless suffering. I've had nightmares that scared me much less than the mere thought of Jonesbridge. People aren't human here; they are "slogs." No love, no freedom, no emotion. Jonesbridge is an unending living nightmare.

Garrett Calcaterra says

Jonesbridge is a solid debut novel that combines elements of dystopian and post-apocalyptic fiction with a touch of steampunk. My only critique is that the pacing and prose move too fast for me at times. I personally would like to seen more development of the dark world M.E. Parker created. All in all, a fun read, though. The ending is particularly great, as you get to see how the world of Jonesbridge ties into the history of our own world, very much in the vein of A Canticle for Leibowitz.

Peter Tieryas says

It was my pleasure and honor to blurb this really entertaining book from M. E. Parker:

"Hinterland casts aside YA tropes to weave a compelling narrative that is hopeful, tragic, and uplifting all at the same time. Myron and Sindra make for unlikely heroes, but their plight makes it clear this isn't just a dystopia of geography, but that of the human condition, ravaged by history. Their journey is a revolt against the destitution of their world and M.E. Parker is a cartographer of the spirit, navigating us through his powerful prose that is unflinchingly honest. I can't wait for the sequel."

Elena Alvarez Dosil says

My original Jonesbridge audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

Jonesbridge is in a secret location, a place where the slogs are kept in subhuman conditions, working twelve hour shifts and watched 24 hours a day by the called ghosts. The story is set more than 200 years in the future, after the Zealot War, which started with what looks like an enormous EMP pulse. The slogs in Jonesbridge are instructed to protect the Alliance with their work, and try to salvage spare parts from a dead old world. They are fighting against the Eastern Bloc over the land that could still be worth it and radiation free.

Myron and Sindra are the main characters in this story, two slogs decided to escape their destiny and try to pursue their dreams. Most slogs are captured as children, making this easy to condition them. Myron was hidden by his family until the age of seventeen, which helped him to gain knowledge inaccessible to most slogs.

This is a dystopian / postapocalyptic story from the ones at the bottom of the society's point of view, the slogs. This is why we are told very little about how the world works, and what were the exact events leading to the current situation. This is mainly a story about poverty, slavery and despair. People enduring inhuman conditions, without the possibility to dream about a different life. They are reminded every day about the importance of their jobs to win the war, but I do not think they even know what the war or the world beyond the war is about.

This is classified as YA, but the events happening in the book could be related to any age, and I did not especially identify Myron or Sindra as teenagers. They were, indeed, but their life was so different to normal teenagers', so void of dreams, that I would not call this a YA book. The main topic here is survival; and love, if there is a bit of it, does not even play second fiddle. Myron and Sindra are much more busy and worried about other things.

The characters, apart from Myron and Sindra, are one-dimensional. It is not that Myron and Sindra are very developed, but at least we know their dreams and motivations. I wished we were shown more about how Jonesbridge worked or how it came to exist. We discover a little bit almost at the end of the book, along with Myron, and I suspect that there will be more in future books.

Joel Richards' narration was correctly done, very clear and the characters' voices were different enough. The audio production was spotless.

As a first book of a series, this one has a lot of potential. There is a lot to be developed but I guess Parker is keeping some interesting stuff for future books. I am looking forward to listening to them.

Amanda says

Normally I'm a sucker for much lighter fare and opt for purely escapist literature, but this dark, unpredictable, and rather harsh dystopian story offered a well-written and interesting foil to my standard brain

candy.

Parker has created a brutal world whose description and inner workings are skillfully woven throughout the story--as opposed to residing in giant chunks of exposition lesser writers often use to bludgeon their readers. I often found myself thinking, "They just can NOT catch a break," which, while admittedly frustrating at times, was a refreshing change from all too convenient deus ex machinas or multiple by-the-skin-of-their-teeth escapes. A few rays of hope and humanity do struggle to shine through the grit and grime of life in Jonesbridge, and these slowly brightening beams are what light the reader's path through the intentional bleakness of this narrative landscape.

I would say this book is more of a slow burn than a thrill-a-minute adventure, and it keeps enough hidden in historical shadow to make you wonder and speculate about how our world came to this. The images and questions it burns into your mind stay with you long after the last page, and make you both look forward to and fear the next installment.

Kurt Baumeister says

M.E. Parker's *The Nethers: Frontiers of Hinterland* follows his 2015 novel, *Jonesbridge: Echoes of Hinterland*. A literate (though still taut) series, Parker's Hinterland trilogy is slated to end next year with *Bora Bora: Escape from Hinterland*.

Known to the literary community as former editor and publisher of the esteemed journal *Camera Obscura*, Parker brings the same sharp editorial eye to his own work. Refusing to settle for simple genre content, this is sci-clu-fi at its best, literary quality balanced meticulously with dramatic tension. Though there is a substantial amount of worldbuilding here, it's not done with the same leisure you often find in genre work, which makes for a much more exciting, immediate read.

At the heart of Parker's drama sit Myron and Sindra, lovers desperate to be together, destined perhaps to survive apart (if at all). The primary tension of *The Nethers* and *Hinterland* as a whole being whether Myron and Sindra can thrive against the machinery arrayed against them, a sort of amalgam of limited remaining technology and the humanity it has largely destroyed, a humanity that nevertheless remains unable to see that technology for the danger it is.

This review ran initially at The Nervous Breakdown on June 13, 2016 as part of my Review Microbrew column.

Brenda Geraghty says

I read half of it the first day, then had to force myself to slow down because I wasn't ready for it to be over.

Whitney Ford says

A captivating story set in a dystopian future where environmental destruction and war have forced citizens

into deplorable work camps. Through telling the story of struggles and love under conditions that make the Hunger Games districts seem like luxury, Parker created a page turning adventure well worth reading.

Kasey Cocoa says

This book starts out with a slap and never lets up. The whole read has that dark gritty feel, really setting the stage and then keeping it there the whole way through. I enjoy dystopian but I'm picky about my reads. This book ticked all the check-marks for a fun yet dark read without the need for filters or blinders. The setting is just far enough into the future that it feels like it could actually happen in your lifetime. The horrible things people have to endure really add to the dark feel. I like that Parker didn't hold back or gloss over the events or characters. Everything feels well thought through and fleshed out. If you like your books a bit on the dark edge of things then you'll likely love this book. I received an ARC through Smith Publicity in exchange for an honest review. This in no way influenced my opinion.
