



The Crane Wife

Patrick Ness , Jamie Glover (Narrator)

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A magical novel, based on a Japanese folk tale, that imagines how the life of a broken-hearted man is transformed when he rescues an injured white crane that has landed in his backyard.

George Duncan is an American living and working in London. At 48, he owns a small print shop, is divorced, and lonelier than he realizes. All of the women with whom he has relationships eventually leave him for being too nice. But one night he is woken by an astonishing sound - a terrific keening, which is coming from somewhere in his garden. When he investigates he finds a great white crane, a bird taller than even himself. It has been shot through the wing with an arrow. Moved more than he can say, George struggles to take out the arrow from the bird's wing, saving its life before it flies away into the night sky.

The next morning, a shaken George tries to go about his daily life, retreating to the back of his store and making cuttings from discarded books - a harmless, personal hobby - when through the front door of the shop a woman walks in. Her name is Kumiko, and she asks George to help her with her own artwork. George is dumbstruck by her beauty and her enigmatic nature, and begins to fall desperately in love with her. She seems to hold the potential to change his entire life, if he could only get her to reveal the secret of who she is and why she has brought her artwork to him.

Witty, magical, and romantic, *The Crane Wife* is a story of passion and sacrifice, that resonates on the level of dream and myth. It is a novel that celebrates the creative imagination, and the disruptive power of love.

The Crane Wife Details

Date : Published January 23rd 2014 by Penguin Audio (first published April 4th 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Patrick Ness , Jamie Glover (Narrator)

Format : Audiobook

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Magical Realism, Romance, Adult, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Crane Wife for online ebook

B the BookAddict says

Prior to reading this novel, I had read a couple of stories in Scottish folk tales and I think in one Alice Hoffman novel, featuring a *Selkie*; a shape shifting faerie and the basic fairytale in The Crane Wife is not dissimilar. I'm finding out recently that I do enjoy a grown-up fairy story, a fantasy novel if you will.

Ness' The Crane Wife is brilliant, a whimsy, it is simply wonderful: I must make mention that I read the volcano and the crane parts twice simply to savour the beautiful imagery. Mr Ness is obviously a very imaginative man, he hasn't just written a fantastical story, he also writes some delightfully, beautifully lyrical prose.

“and it was as if the night itself stopped to listen to her.” how gorgeous is that? Who could imagine a night stopping to listen? Mr Ness, that made me nearly swoon, yes, swoon; I think that type of imagery deserves a decent swoon.

“The inability of people to see themselves clearly. To see what they are 'actually' like, not what they fear they are like or what they wish to be like but what they actually 'are'”

“To be human is to yearn.”

An example of Su Blackwell's talent.

In his Notes & Acknowledgements, the author directs us to the “extraordinary of Su Blackwell” whose work is similar to that of George. Although Ness says *“To compare what George does to what Su does is to compare finger-paints to Kandinsky.”* While part of me is in awe of this mastery, the reader in me laments all the poor lacerated books.

The Crane Wife is a magical read; a haunting tale, poignant and a little enigmatic. Ness's masterful prose is simply sublime and a pure delight to absorb. Recommended to me via Mish's review, I will remain indebted to her for bringing this wonderful foray into Ness's work to my notice. Without hesitation, 5★

Dannii Elle says

I just want to start this review by saying that this cover does its contents no justice. It is not that I dislike the cover, but I feel it doesn't match the poignancy of the book too well. But, hey, the lesson here is to never judge a book by its cover, kids!

I read one paragraph of this book and I instantly knew I was falling in love. Having previously only read Ness' YA fiction, I was intrigued as to how his adult fiction would translate. I am so pleased to say that it had the same delicacy and poignancy incorporated in the writing. The opening paragraph sums up Ness' writing entirely and beautifully - vividly piquant, heart-achingly descriptive and quietly witty. His writing continually shocks and enlightens me as he constantly pushes the boundaries of the reader's expectations,

whether that's from something as simple as sudden humour or something as dark as a sudden plunge into death and despair. Here, it was the former, but that did not mean it set the tone for the entire book. There was plenty of the latter thrown into the mix too, in true Ness style.

The Crane Wife is the story of George Duncan, who is the epitome of the average man. That is until he is awoken at night by the distinctly unaverage occurrence of a crane crash-landing in his back garden, after being hit through the wing by an arrow. This mix of the fantastical and the ordinary is where the power of the book lay. It is a book full of ordinary, everyday people, the ones unlikely to have a story written about them at all. But here they are. And here it is.

It is sometimes a little arduous to dissect the truth of the story in amongst the overlying sub-plots and side-story. But, to quote Ness himself, "there were as many truths - overlapping, stewed together - as there were tellers. The truth mattered less than the story's *life* . A story forgotten died. A story remembered not only lived, but *grew* ." And I wholeheartedly agree.

Suanne Laqueur says

Wow. Just...wow.

Emily May says

The Crane Wife, quite simply, didn't work for me.

I've been highly anticipating this book since I learned of its coming existence for no other reason than the fact that Patrick Ness wrote it. Ness is easily one of my favourite teen/YA writers and I find myself having to read everything he writes - even when he ventures out of his comfort zone and writes a novel for adults. Not only was I eager to jump back inside Ness's brilliant mind, but the promise of a retelling of an old Japanese folktale really called to me. My knowledge of Japanese myths and stories is limited, so I was sure the experience would be something unique and refreshing. And I suppose on some level it was.

The story is about George Duncan who is woken one night by a strange cry. Going outside, he discovers an injured Crane. George finds himself overcome with compassion and rushes to help the bird, removing an arrow from its wing. The very next day, he meets Kumiko - a mysterious woman whom he falls in love with and together they create beautiful pieces of art. But George is dissatisfied with this existence and feels he needs to know more about the strange woman he loves. This desperation for knowledge is George's ultimate downfall; where the male character in the original story is ruined by his lust for money, it is George's need to know more that is his undoing.

It seems like I am being very harsh and critical to say that I think Ness should stick to his more subtle tales for young adults like *A Monster Calls* but I don't see it that way. *The Crane Wife*, though Ness's most ambitious work in terms of language and complexity, seemed somewhat pretentious and overly concerned with the reiteration of its own depth. Ness has evidently tried to take his writing a step further and play with language - but this story feels a lot more strained. The message in *A Monster Calls* was gentle, sad and powerful. *The Crane Wife* made me feel like I was being smacked repeatedly in the face with lessons in the

philosophy of knowledge. So, yes, I do say that Ness should stick to more subtle tales or maybe he shouldn't write for adults - who knows? - but I don't mean this as a criticism. Ness is brilliant at handling poignant tales for children, whether it be about a boy with a dying mother or an adventure in a dystopian world, but his experiment in the different here was, in my opinion, a failure.

The Crane Wife really plays on the theme of knowledge and truths. I actually love and agree with the idea that the truth is not absolute but dependent on the person telling the story. I expect to see lovers of this book pulling up quotes like these:

"There were as many truths – overlapping, stewed together – as there were tellers. The truth mattered less than the story's life. A story forgotten died. A story remembered not only lived, but grew."

"No one wanted to hear that people other than themselves might be complicated, that no one was ever just one thing, no history ever just one version."

But I come back to the lack of subtlety again. I feel like Ness keeps making this point again and again throughout the novel until I just wanted to be like "I get it! I swear, I get it!!" I don't know why Ness was so concerned with our ability to understand the message he was trying to put across when he's managed to weave them so gently and brilliantly into his young adult works.

Another thing I really didn't like was George. George is a nice guy, don't you know? Everyone loves George. George is a do-no-wrong, wonderful, women-treat-him-like-crap-cos-he's-such-a-sweetie type of guy. I can't stand that. For one, I can't stand unrealistically nice and good characters (whatever that male equivalent of Mary Sue is - I can't remember); for another, I hated the suggestion that there is something wrong with all the women who come into George's life for not appreciating him.

"a pleasant enough man, but lacking that certain something, that extra little ingredient to be truly worth investing in. It was a mistake women often seemed to make. He had more female friends, including his ex-wife, than any straight man he knew. The trouble was they'd all started out as lovers, before realising he was too amiable to take quite seriously. 'You're about sixty-five per cent,' his ex-wife had said, as she left him. 'And I think seventy is probably my minimum.' The trouble was, seventy per cent seemed to be every woman's minimum."

George is that "friend zone" guy that all women adore but cannot be with for any length of time because they're too busy screwing bad guys. Why can't women just notice the nice guys standing in the wings, waiting to be awarded with sex and love for being such good friends? Ugh. This post is a fantastic discussion about the friend zone issue.

The Crane Wife isn't an awful book and, like I said, there were some beautifully written parts that I'm sure many will rush to quote. For me, though, I think I'm going to stay away from any future adult books by Ness and hope he delivers more of what he's good at. It's not an insult to say his power lies in younger books with simpler language; J.K. Rowling is no Proust but there are millions of children and adults around the world that will be forever grateful that she isn't.

Stella Chen says

Edit #2:

Hmmm...after reading Brigid's review, I am not sure I want to read this anymore...I'll wait for *More Than This* instead.

Edit: Ohhhh a cover and a description! I totally love the sound of this book. Sounds reminiscent of classic fairy tales where the nice but poor girl helps out an old lady, who happens to be a magical person in disguise.

Also, I've been looking to read more adult fiction and what's better than a Patrick Ness book? I cannot wait!
End of edit.

My logic: Patrick Ness wrote it so must be good.

Erik Fazekas says

Toto je najlepšia kniha, akú som tento rok prečítal. A nehovorím to len preto, lebo je to Nessorožec a patrí medzi mojich obľúbených autorov.

Naozaj nie, myslím si, že je to jedna z najprehliadanejších kníh v modernej svetovej beletri. Keď si prečítate anotáciu, tak si poviete že pfú... komu sa chce čítať o 48 chlapíkovi, ktorému sa rozpadol život.

Ale táto kniha je úplne o niečom inom. Je o vzťahoch... medzi rodičmi a už dospelými deťmi, medzi rozvedenými partnermi, medzi kamarátmi medzi kolegami... a hlavne je to o tom, že ak sa chce, aj tie úplne drobnosti dokážu hory prenáša?.

Samozrejme je to Ness, teda je tu vpletaný japonský mýtus o žeriavovi a sopke a ich láske. A pri čítaní som si myslal, že je to nejaká hlúposť, ale keď dočítate celú knihu, tak si uvedomíte, že na tom mýte niečo bolo, a prečítate si ho ešte raz (pomedzi kapitoly) a vtedy vám to celé dopáli... a ste pripravení čítať túto knihu ešte raz, aby ste odhalili všetky Nessove skryté narážky.

Je to prosto super, odporúčam, možno je cesta pre zrelších čitateľov, ako objaviť čaro Nessových kníh
PS: slovenský preklad sa už pripravuje.

Mish says

Patrick Ness got the idea for part of this book from a Japanese folk tale, The Crane Wife, a tale that I must admit was not familiar with. Mr. Ness weaves part of this tale into modern day life so effortlessly – even non-readers of fantasy/magic could read because the feelings/thought/actions that are portrayed here are real and genuine. He created a heartwarming and sweeping story about love in all its exquisiteness and fury. And it's told through three series of events.

The Mythical creatures, the crane and the volcano, fiercely in love but vastly different in their beliefs. The volcano wants destruction and war, where the crane wants harmony and forgiveness in our world. Not willing to see eye to eye, their love turns into a hurtful and dangerous game of possession and rage.

George Duncan, a divorced man, ordinary and middle aged owns a printing shop. When Kumiko, a mysterious woman enters his shop, George's life is forever changed. Kumiko will show George a life of love

through passion, art and storytelling. But George is starting to feel little insecure and impatient with Kumiko secretive nature, and this is where complications begin.

Amanda Duncan, daughter of George Duncan, always had difficulty relating to people. She is highly opinionated and can come across as a bit arrogant. But when her French Husband Henri, the man she's still in love with, broke up with her, Amanda's emotions crumble. She lost the man whom she thought knew, or understood her best. Amanda becomes bitter, angry, cries at the drop of a hat. She desperately craves for friendship, someone to talk to, but hasn't a clue how to go about it.

I'm really at a loss for words on how to describe my feelings about this book, but many times I just wanted to wrap my arms around it and hug it. My heart swelled with much emotions by the simple, yet significant dialogue used to express love for someone, kindness and gratitude. There was lots of humour too, which Ness blended in with ease.

Like the gorgeous cover, the story is incredibly picturesque with the tiled art that George and Kumiko create using feathers and paper cuttings used from discarded books. The soft white feather of the crane in the mythical story, you just want to touch with your fingers, and the hot blazing yellow/red/orange volcano that complements his fiery temperament – Absolutely magnificent!!

Patrick Ness is incredible and is becoming my new favourite writer. This is beautifully written book that had me spellbound. If you like a good romance with a difference (magic), I do suggest try this one and hope you too fall under its spell.

Read for #litexp14 - Magical Realism

Amber says

When a man named George Duncan saves the life of a beautiful white crane with crimson red crest and golden eyes who has been struck by an arrow and pulling it out, he thinks it is a dream but is surprised when a mysterious young woman named Kumiko changes his life forever by giving him the gift of love and of paper cuttings that are turned into artistic masterpieces. Can their love survive and will his happiness last? Read on and find out for yourself.

This is a pretty good and sad read that is based on a Japanese folk tale. I enjoyed checking out this new story from Patrick Ness the author of the Chaos Walking trilogy. Definitely check this out for yourself if you love stories about forgiveness and being loved in return. You can find this book at your local library and wherever books are sold.

Connie says

3.5 stars. "The Crane Wife" is a contemporary retelling of a Japanese folk tale. In the original story a poor sailmaker helps an injured crane by pulling an arrow from her wing. The next day a beautiful woman arrives at his home, and soon becomes his wife. She offers to weave sails for him which brings in needed income, but with the condition that he cannot watch her work. The sailmaker becomes greedy and takes in more and

more orders for sails. Eventually he went into her private room as she was working and saw a crane weakly plucking the last feathers from her body. His greed ruined the relationship and he was left alone. (There are other variations of this tale.)

Patrick Ness has written a modern version of this folk tale set in London involving George and Kumiko. Kumiko brings George the love he needs, but always keeps her past very private. She makes exquisite artworks by combining her cuttings of feathers with George's paper cuttings made from old books. Kumiko's artistic tiles tell a secondary story about a volcano who destroys the earth (but also creates mountains), and a bird called "the lady" who forgives out of love. These two stories have elements of fantasy, myth, and magical realism.

George has a daughter Amanda, a young divorced mother of a toddler, who has problems with anger, self-acceptance, and despair. Her story is more realistic and sometimes funny, and would probably give this adult novel crossover appeal to a YA audience. The humorous Mehmet, a twenty-something assistant at George's store, is also a young character that would appeal to a YA reader.

I read a children's book, "A Monster Calls", by Patrick Ness a few years ago and was very impressed. Although I enjoyed "The Crane Wife", I felt that there was a bit too much going on at once with a fantasy (the volcano and the lady) within another fantasy (George and the crane/Kumiko), plus Amanda's emotional journey. The author writes beautifully, has a sense of humor, and understands human nature. I just prefer his simpler stories to a more convoluted one.

The recordings of The Decemberists of "The Crane Wife 1 & 2" also inspired the author to write the book:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ERax...>

Mary-ellen says

Three and a half stars for me.

There was some lovely writing here, and I enjoyed the strong themes around family, love and relationships that Patrick Ness explores. I love the wonderful human insights he brings to life, especially in relation to the characters of Amanda and George. It made these characters seem very real. I also liked that this was based on a Japanese folktale, which I wasn't familiar with before reading this book.

Overall though, I wasn't a huge fan.

Ivan says

Well it was OK, maybe even good which is disappointing as I expecte lot more from Patrick Ness. Competently written yes, but this book really lacks his special spice that keeps you from putting book down.

Amy | shoutame says

A whimsical and touching read. So incredibly different to all of the other books I have read from Patrick

Ness - this guy has some serious skill.

- So we follow the story of a man named George. One night George is woken by a strange sound coming from his garden. Upon further investigation George discovers a large crane has landed with an arrow shot through its wing. He helps remove the arrow from the crane and the bird then takes flight, leaving George in a dazed and confused state - he can't quite work out if he was dreaming or not. The next day a mysterious and beautiful woman enters George's shop and he feels as if he already knows her. The woman brings an exquisite piece of art to George and convinces him to allow her to incorporate his own artwork into hers (does that make sense?!). So George and the mystery lady continue making art together and it becomes incredibly valuable. People can't seem to get enough of it and this sends George's life into a whirlwind of delight and confusion.

- In this novel we read through three main perspectives - George, his Daughter, Amanda and The Crane. We see how George's relationship flourishes whilst his Daughter battles with her bitchy work colleagues and difficult ex-husband. I found Amanda's story to be somewhat humorous and loved the interactions she had with her colleagues. All of these stories slowly turn back to the crane and Ness manages to beautiful link them all come the end.

- The mystery surrounding the woman continues throughout the novel and we are also given snippets of story from the life of the crane that landed in George's garden. Ness has interwoven elements of folk law and myth to create a wonderfully allegorical tale full of intrigue and beauty. I have never read a novel quite like it!

- 3 out of 5 stars and I would definitely recommend to everyone - especially any love of Patrick Ness!

Melki says

All stories begin before they start and never, ever finish.

I loved the characters that inhabit this novel. Their fairly ordinary stories of day-to-day life and their struggles with loneliness were beautiful and involving. For me, the tale of a sad divorced gentleman, his daughter, grandchild and the prospect of a new romance was magical enough. I really didn't need the 'Crane Wife' plot and the author's attempts to tie modern day reality to the folk tale didn't work for me.

There were the bones of a terrific story here...the feathers were not necessary.

TheBookSmugglers says

Original review posted on The Book Smugglers

“The Crane Wife” is an old Japanese folktale. Its most common version tells the story of a poor sail maker who one day finds a wounded crane and nurses it back to health. After he releases the crane, a beautiful woman appears on his doorstep. He falls in love with her and they marry. Their marriage is happy but they are poor so his wife offers to weave these wonderful sails they can sell but only if he agrees never to watch her weaving them. They make a lot of money, the husband becomes increasingly greedy, asking his wife to weave more and more. He eventually breaks his promise and peeks in to see his wife’s working only to

discover that at the loom, a crane is doing the work, plucking feathers from her own body and weaving them into the sails. The crane – who was of course, his wife – flies away and never returns. This tale can be interpreted as a cautionary tale about the dangers of greed, a melancholy story about love lost, a sad account of promises broken and lines crossed.

Patrick Ness' *The Crane Wife* is a retelling of that tale, set in modern-day Britain.

American expat George wakes up one day in the middle of the night to find a wounded crane in his garden. Incredibly moved by the vision and the pain the beautiful crane is in, he helps the bird, removing an arrow from his wing. The next day, an enigmatic woman called Kumiko walks into George's printing shop and his life is transformed. They fall in love and there is whirlwind romance but also communion through art. Kumiko creates wonderful artwork of scenes and characters made of feathers but thinks they lack a certain something. When she sees the cuttings George makes out of pages from old books, she realises their potential. By combining her scenes and George's cuttings, Kumiko composes extraordinary art that deeply move not only George but also an increasing number of people who offer ludicrous amounts of money for the pieces. George grows increasingly greedy and this is where Ness departs from the original story, for his greed is not for money but greed born out of love, a want for more knowledge about Kumiko, who remains elusive and mysterious to him despite their growing love. In fact, the more time they spend together, the less he seems to know Kumiko. In the meantime, the two work together on a series of art pieces that tell a story that is both myth and reality.

Their story runs parallel to that of George's daughter Amanda. Amanda is a troubled young woman, whose anger and cutting remarks make it difficult connecting to friends and family. Her tale is a tale of self-acceptance and it too, is connected to Kumiko's presence in their lives.

There is a moment in the book when its protagonist George expounds on the nature of memory and storytelling. On how different people might retell one story in a variety of ways and how this matters not because there is hope of finding out "what really happened" but because:

"There were as many truths – overlapping, stewed together – as there were tellers. The truth mattered less than the story's life. A story forgotten died. A story remembered not only lived, but grew."

This idea is a very strong presence in Ness' tale: it shapes both George and Kumiko's lives, it is repeated ad nauseam throughout the book (more on the issue of repetitiveness later) and is used by the author himself when writing the actual narrative. Toward the ending, for example, one single event takes place and its very existence is presented as a possible result of a myriad of actions.

It is possible to take this idea and expand on it: as a reviewer and as a reader, my interpretation and reading of *The Crane Wife* is only one among many and are definitely shaped by who I am and my experience as a reviewer. To me, *The Crane Wife* turned out to be a combination of several different things that rubbed me the wrong way.

Fairytales and folktales are usually concerned with the "what happens next", with story and themes rather than character development. In fact most of the time, characters in fairytales/folktales are archetypes i.e. the Mother, the Father, the Princess, the Crane Wife. When reading a retelling, I expect more. I expect more from its themes, its story and I definitely expect more from its characters.

In *The Crane Wife*, a lot of the original folktale has been changed, reshaped to fit a more contemporary Western setting and its themes re-imagined. But the strongest connection to the original Japanese story

remains the crane wife herself, Kumiko.

I have nothing against retellings of stories in different settings, of bringing the Japanese folktale of the Crane Wife to the West (the more people reading these stories, the better, and I like the variation from the usual western fairy tales). That said, the fact that the only magical, “mysterious”, “alluring” character is still a Japanese woman while everyone else of note is white is terribly problematic to me because it definitely plays into the “allure of the East” trope.

In fairness, and going back to different readings, there are other possible interpretations for this: Kumiko, despite her name and the fact that most characters do think she is Japanese, is often presented as a mythological figure that is ageless, timeless, placeless. Her mysteriousness is the very topic of the story, and it is possible to argue that she is only “mysterious” because those who interact with her are not satisfied with how she presents herself – as a quiet woman, who wishes to keep her own private thoughts. A secondary PoC character do call out George’s attraction to Kumiko thusly:

‘This isn’t some mysterious allure of the East thing you’ve got with this woman, is it? Because I’d find that, like, amazingly offensive.’

Although I find that more of a deflecting tongue in cheek comment, perhaps a nod to concerned readers like me. Especially when that line is followed by:

‘You’re from the East, Mehmet, and I find you neither mysterious nor alluring.’

I personally do not think any of this mitigates the problem because Kumiko is never truly developed in a meaningful way and the story is strongly George’s and Amanda’s.

Speaking of George there is an incredibly annoying emphasis on how much of a “nice guy” George is. It overwhelms the narrative sometimes. George is:

“a pleasant enough man, but lacking that certain something, that extra little ingredient to be truly worth investing in. It was a mistake women often seemed to make. He had more female friends, including his ex-wife, than any straight man he knew. The trouble was they’d all started out as lovers, before realising he was too amiable to take quite seriously. ‘You’re about sixty-five per cent,’ his ex-wife had said, as she left him.’ And I think seventy is probably my minimum.’ The trouble was, seventy per cent seemed to be every woman’s minimum.”

I have a predisposition to absolutely abhor characters like George who, because of their decency, expect to be rewarded by the universe with the love of a good woman. One can definitely argue that this is George’s view of himself but every single character remarks on George’s nice-guy status. And the universe and the narrative of The Crane Wife actually do attempt to reward him for that.

There is some real beauty in The Crane Wife though – there is beauty in how Amanda’s story is written, her arc one of self-knowledge and acceptance. There is beauty in the way that the story acknowledges that George’s greed for truly knowing Kumiko’s as perfectly understandable, perfectly human. Wanting to truly know someone can be a huge part of falling in love but there is also the question about what motivates that type of greed. The question of knowing the other can also be read as attempting to owning someone and in this scenario also effectively disrespecting the other’s own momentum and imposed limits.

But those moments of beauty and truth are buried under the repetitiveness strain of its themes – forgiveness,

power of storytelling, greed – and the odd bluntness in which they are presented. Kumiko repeats George's and the author's point:

"Not explain. Stories do not explain. They seem to, but all they provide is a starting point. A story never ends at the end. There is always after. And even within itself, even by saying that this version is the right one, it suggests other versions, versions that exist in parallel. No, a story is not an explanation, it is a net, a net through which the truth flows."

And then George explicitly summarises:

"he had demanded. He had been stupidly, stupidly greedy for knowledge of her. And he had found out. He knew her. But wasn't that what love really was, though? Knowledge? Yes. And then again, no."

For a story that spends a lot of time attempting to be elusive as well as allusive, these moments of tactless "deep" lesson-teaching are pretentious and eye-rolling.

It is funny that I found *A Monster Calls*, Ness' book for children, a much more nuanced and subtle story than his book for adults. Go figure.

Maxwell says

A very strange and inventive story that looks at love, forgiveness, and family. While I didn't totally get some of what happened, I was always intrigued and compelled to read on. I'm also glad to have finally read a book I've had on my shelf for years. If you're looking for a quick, unique read that's got humor and heart, this one will do the trick.

Lindsey Lynn says

Beautifully written. I just didn't connect well with any of the characters. I felt too much like an outsider when reading this. But wow does Ness know how to build a book before your eyes. I think I'm just not at an age yet to appreciate this fully.

?Skye? says

Having read most of Ness' other works, I have to say that I think this is my least favourite. This is a book for someone with a very good eye for hidden messages and metaphor, and perhaps a better knowledge of Japanese folklore than I have. This unfortunately just went mostly over my head.

The Crane Wife follows George, a divorcee who runs a shoe shop and retains a close relationship with his ex-wife and daughter. When he has an encounter with an injured crane one night, it sets off a sequence of events involving him and his daughter, including George's meeting with Kumiko, a mysterious woman who he will grow to love.

This book is so explicit about itself. It tells you about its hidden depths and the messages readers are meant to discern, but I just didn't get any of them. This is a book where it's not the book, it's me, because I just didn't really get what this book was trying to tell me. I only really understood the plot on a surface level,

with very basic links to the underlying folklore tale it was meant to replicate.

I did appreciate the characters. Each of them was in an unsatisfied stage in their lives and I do think this book does a good job of teaching us to appreciate what is around us and to take advantage of it. Amanda and Rachel are both difficult women who don't fit in, and it's nice to see women being unashamedly so. George himself is a little bland, which I guess is how Ness intends to portray him, but he is sweet and I did like him. Ness' prose is as always beautiful, and I definitely admire that about this book.

Ultimately, I don't have a fat lot to say about a book I didn't really understand. I do still love Ness as an author, but this book has a very particular audience to which I do not belong.

Linna says

Sadly disappointed by this book. George is a boring, bland character that I couldn't stand, and the writing has that certain quality that I often find in adult books - the kind that make me want to bang my head against the wall. They're filled with endless descriptions dithering around for ages, talking about nothing with a hint of pretentiousness permeating every scene. And then when the themes and messages come in, they're communicated in a heavy-handed way. I don't hate this book, but I do get an overwhelming feeling of: meh.

Lou says

An act of kindness gets payed forward, a series of hearts become warmed and love takes reign.

The story successfully grabs you by the first page with a scene unfolding that's visceral and magical in its compassion and kindness.

This story Crane Wife was inspired due to it being a folklore tale told to author in his youth. The author has used a unique original way to tell this tale and has used his way of retelling it and his own rules which worked and connected for me, he unorthodoxly tells two stories in one, he weaves a folklore lore story in a separate realm and world in separate chapters but in a parallel with the main protagonists real world story. Dreams and realities take the storytelling to great places some mysterious, others tender and heartwarming. There is a great tale here in the whole picture.

This starts off like a mosaic very small carefully made pieces, meaningfully put together and then the grand finished picture.

Put together like a jigsaw puzzle, when you final come away from the story that final piece that painting it formed in your mind every reader or onlooker may come away with something different, another interpretation and muse over it, some may see the beauty and the love it leaves you with in its grand poignant love story.

It's the kind of story that may have you grabbing your loved ones close or seeking out humanity in need of company and cherish one more last breath before the curtain drops. This final piece, this novel is a memorable and meaningful work on the combined elements of kindness, love, regret, loss and forgiveness. A illuminating heart, of a splendidous tale.

Review also @ <http://more2read.com/review/the-crane-wife-by-patrick-ness/>

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Following one of the most bizarro days in my time perusing Goodreads, I find it fitting that I pulled a Patrick Ness book out of the library bag. When so-called “authors” are attempting to cast stones at others who dare to venture out of their assigned genre – I figured it was a perfect time for me to read an author who breaks that boundary each time he puts pen to paper.

I pulled *The Crane Wife* off the “notable releases” shelf at the library knowing absolutely nothing about it except (i) it shared the name of an old fable; (ii) it was written by Patrick Ness; and (iii) the cover was lovely and inspired by an artist who brings new life to books that would normally be discarded

I’ve had a bit of a miss with Ness’ work (*A Monster Calls* - don’t shoot me, I know everyone else loved it) and a major hit (*More Than This*). (FYI – I have had the Chaos Walking trilogy on my TBR for months, but I have been terrified I (once again) won’t loooooove it like all of my friends and I also just **hate** reading anything that comes in series form.)

Having now read books by Ness from the children’s section, the young adult section, and the adult section of the library/bookstore I can confirm that whether I loved it or just kind of liked it – Ness consistently writes stories that I want to read and his work can’t be pigeonholed.

Ness is an example of how authors should feel about writing. Don’t let yourself be typecast – break down the genre walls. Prove to all of those who say “I would **never** read young adult” that they will change their mind – just as soon as they read **your** book. Be a Patrick Ness or J.K. Rowling (or Robert Galbraith, if you must). An author whose name I see on the shelf and immediately pull the book without reading a blurb, synopsis, review, **NOTHING**. An author whose next release date is marked on my calendar. An author who makes me throw my planned reading list and/or book buying budget out the window because I simply can’t pass up being one of the first people who will read their latest release. I’m not the only crazy person like this – this site (and so many others) are *filled* with us.

As for *The Crane Wife* - I have few words. It was beautiful and heartbreakingly real and magical and brilliant and

I think I might be ready to take the plunge and read *The Knife of Never Letting Go* now.

As for the **authors** haters out there who are spending so much time and effort belittling other authors or reviewers:
