

Echo of the Boom

Maxwell Neely-Cohen

Rare Bird Lit (Apr 15, 2014)

Softcover \$18.00 (456pp)

978-1-940207-17-9

It's the end of the world as we know it, but how do young people feel about it? Maxwell Neely-Cohen tells us in a character-driven tale of the apocalypse.

Echo of the Boom, by Maxwell Neely-Cohen, focuses on a generation of young people who live shortly before the end of the world. It is a generation born between two of the most monumental events in history and written off as lazy and technology obsessed. The novel is a coming-of-age story about finding meaning in our technologically advanced world as the end grows near.

The novel jumps around in time, but the closer it gets to the end, the End, the more reality seems to hit home for the characters, and they become more fearful or more pessimistic. Each character struggles to come into his or her own, holding vastly different views of history, spirituality, and what the future has in store.

Efram is a jaded and quiet young man returning to school after the apparent suicide of his father, a hired gun. Molly is a young girl, also affected by the death of a parent, who obsessively preps for the apocalypse alongside her paranoid father. Steven's father is a "consultant" for less-than-reputable characters all over the world, and brings Steven on his travels to witness the gore his job entails, desensitizing him to tragedy at an early age. Chloe is the most popular girl at her school, whose weapon of choice is her trusty cell phone, which she uses to spread nasty rumors about her classmates (In private, this fills her with haunting regret.).

Each story weaves together seamlessly near the end, the characters growing and changing as their world changes around them.

The novel is written with a striking attention to detail, each character's particular quirks shining through on every page. The relationship between Molly and her father is based on prepping for the end of the world, which seems to be one of the only things they bond over. Steven's father, Norman, acts more like his business partner than a father to him. Very occasionally does Steven even call him "Dad," making for an interesting dynamic between the two of them.

The novel spans different countries and time lines, starting slowly enough to get the audience used to each distinct character. This book is not for the impatient. It acts as more of a character study than a story about the apocalypse. It is not a story condemning the new generation, but it does show the effect media and technology have on young people—in the case of Chloe, making it easy to bully her victims without ever having to face them.

People who enjoy their apocalypse novels more character-driven will be drawn to *Echo of the Boom*.
SONYA LOVY (March 20, 2014)

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