



## **Melt Down**

*Edward W. Robertson*

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In the hills of Idaho, Ness Hook is about to be run out of his mom's house by his bullying brother Shawn. In Redding, California, Tristan Carter is about to graduate college, but with no job and no prospects, she may have to move back in with her parents.

Ness soon discovers his best friend dead of disease. With a pandemic burning through Idaho, Shawn takes Ness and their mom to the mountains to wait out the plague. When both Tristan's parents fall sick, her mother leaves her in charge of her younger brother Alden. She keeps Alden safe through the collapse of humanity--but can't keep him safe from the invaders who sent the plague.

Driven out of the mountains by the attackers, Ness and Shawn join a makeshift village at a nuclear power plant, where they plan to begin a guerrilla war. To find Alden, Tristan must escape the aliens who took them prisoner. Even if the survivors make it through the invasion, they may fall prey to their fellow humans instead.

## **Melt Down Details**

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# From Reader Review Melt Down for online ebook

## Lotta says

My gut feeling tells me this story had better flow than the first part. It's still the same format, told in alternating points of view every other chapter. Some interlocking with part one. Liked it well enough to buy the rest of the series after finishing.

Dates are approximate, I read the books while on an offline holiday.

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## Timothy Ward says

I'm sorry to say it's been awhile since I listened to this, but authors need reviews, so better late than never. That said, I'm going to have to be brief based on what I remember.

Edward W. Robertson is building a strong reputation with this second book in the Breakers series for giving me what I want in post-apocalyptic fiction: character focused, clean prose, emotional engagement, solid action, and unpredictable endings. More of a twist is that he's essentially started over in Breakers #2 with a new cast, and yet doesn't lose any of my interest as this cast is just as interesting and in just as much turmoil. The world is the same, as is the event that caused the apocalypse, but we get a different view into a new bunch of survivors. You can read this without having read Breakers #1, but you might as well start from the beginning. This is turning into one of my favorite post-apocalyptic series.

To reiterate, both plot lines and the characters involved engaged my reading experience by combining the fear of a plague with characters I cared about. Brothers struggling with a home without a father, the pressures of finding a career and the way siblings can let these frustrations turn into in-family fighting. I can relate to this difficulty, and really enjoyed Robertson's story through their lives. This engagement was my favorite aspect to their plotline, but I also enjoyed how the younger brother used his gaming skills and strategy methods to turn their farming community resources into a fun puzzle to watch piece together.

The other plotline also delves into sibling love, with Tristan having to find a way to rescue her younger brother. She is a strong character that went through very rough situations, displaying surprising resiliency. Breakers: Meltdown is a great book, a fast read, and a unique addition to the post-apocalyptic genre, but if I have one area that I felt let me down it was that 3/4's of the way through Tristan's plotline, I began to lose the amount of interest that I had earlier on.

The ending was good, but the slowing in my reading momentum and interest caused my rating to be 4/5 stars. Meltdown didn't blow me away, but it is still a book I'd strongly recommend for fans of post-apocalyptic thrillers. Ray Chase once again delivers a fantastic performance as one of my favorite narrators.

Reviewed at <http://www.timothycward.com/2015/09/1...>

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## Dave Farmer says

Meltdown follows the same time line as Breakers but with a new set of characters, and whilst there's nothing wrong with starting from the beginning, with different points of view, I couldn't help but feel both cheated out of finding what happened next after Breakers, and yet intrigued to see the events unfold with new characters.

The story begins on a firmer footing compared to Breakers, the characters are more fleshed out, relationships are well defined and when things go bad it has more impact and seems more realistic than Breakers.

On the down side there seems to be some unnecessary padding here and there, lots of dialogue and inner monologue that doesn't drive the story forward. At times I found myself losing interest and wanted to scan lines to find the next good bit rather than read every word.

This is a decent book, and though I enjoyed it there were a lot of inconsistencies and weird repetitive mistakes that brought me away from the story to figure out what was wrong.

I've hidden the rest of this review as it references some things could be considered as spoilers.

(view spoiler)

The weird thing about Meltdown is that despite all the inconsistencies, errors and repetition, I still like the overall story. What bothers is that I want it to be better, with less padding and more attention to details that matter, instead of lists, dialogue that goes nowhere and characters behaving contradictory to how they were set up at the start, where I guessed how the arc of each character might plan out, and was annoyed and somewhat betrayed at their feebleness to take control of their lives.

Regardless of all these things I'm still going to read the next one, Knifepoint as I'm hoping to find out what Walt does next, as he remains my favourite character by far.

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### **Maggie says**

The series is still interesting me. Contains a lot of violence, but manages to hint at other nastiness going on without describing in full gory detail, thank goodness.

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### **Cathie Stumpenhous says**

Am enjoying this series a lot. Rapid pace and twists make this volume hard to put down. Starting book three immediately!

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### **Sarah (Workaday Reads) says**

I really liked this second series book. The series has an interesting format in that this book covers the same basic timeline as the first, but is told through 2 new viewpoints. The timeline goes just a touch further in this book, which gives you a few more clues about what's coming next.

Of the two viewpoints, I greatly preferred Ness over Tristan. Tristan had too much of a cliched I-can-do-everything-I-try heroine setup. She encounters problems, but it never seems dire, she has too much of a superhero setup to be believable.

Ness, however, is a much more in depth and complex character. He deals with a lot more emotions, and was a lot easier to understand and root for, even if some of his actions near the end of the book seem weird or even insane.

Overall, I'm really enjoying this series. Getting a new perspective on the apocalypse was a great way to relive the excitement, and let me experience the story again with re-reading the first book.

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### **Shell Shearer Swinscoe says**

so much better than the first one!

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## **Amanda says**

So this is the second book in the Breakers series, and it honestly didn't go the way I expected it to. I think the author is playing the long game with this one! I really wish the GR rating system was out of 10. The 5 star system isn't specific enough for me. Anyway, that's my moan over! Back to the actual book review.

Breakers is apocalyptic fiction that takes you from the very beginning, and in Breakers it starts with a virus, but that really is the very beginning!

I liked this book, it had heart. For me I enjoyed the detail, as I find this make apocalyptic fiction more believable. It's not perfect, there are a couple of characters that I can't see the point of, they just don't seem to add anything to the story.

I am going to start the next instalment straight away, mainly because I want to know what happens, as this story ends on a cliffhanger for one of the main characters.

I've decided I'm going to add my own rating at the end of my reviews from now on, so this for me was a solid 7 out of 10. That is a compliment by the way, it's enjoyable to be surprised.

I did expect that this book would continue the story from the first book, but instead it told the concurrent stories of Tristan and Ness. I really enjoy the plot weaving of the author, and the subtle links to the first book.

Going straight on to book 3, I just want to know more!! 7 out of 10.

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## **Christina Torretta says**

This is a lot like the first book. Different characters but the same scenario.

That said, it was not my favorite. The characters are good but the first book I thought was slow and this was painful for me. The story is there, the characters are there, but I just wanted the plot to move along already! Since I already know what is going to happen I was hoping for a bit more in this one.

Also like the first the characters are very real. That is the fun part of reading apocalyptic books; getting to see how the characters will react. However, in this one again, I'm not much of a fan of the characters. I loved the characters in the last one but some of these characters just make me want to scream. The things they do... it's amazing some of them make it. Still, they have depth and many of them are just not heroes and do not try to do heroic things. This is true to how things would really work! So, that I really enjoyed.

The back and forth and constant stopping the story is also frustrating me. I do want the story to move along so when there is a pause, almost like a commercial break, I want to put the book down. I do understand why authors do this, a teaser so to speak, but with such a slow plot adding in teasers can be a deal breaker for readers.

All in all, these can be read in any order. This one does not need to be read second.

## Emma says

I really enjoyed this book the first time and again recently. Quite a few reviewers complain that it starts the whole story over again, but I found the characters fascinating and really enjoyed reading through their experiences in light of what I already knew from the first book. And of course, in my second reading, in light of knowing how the entire story goes.

I was struck by the brutality of Tristan's story in particular. Many people don't like her character, however if she was more likeable, then she wouldn't have survived as long as she did. She had to grow in a different way to the other characters because she was a woman and she was alone (unlike Mia for instance in book 1). The most confronting scene in the book for me was when (view spoiler)

Ness's story seemed to show the most growth out of all of the characters so far, and I loved that all his faults and fears were on show. I loved watching his slow realisation about his relationship with Shawn, and all that comes after that.

The first two books are my favourites in the series, because I find it so interesting to read about how the characters survive during and after the plague.

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## Soo says

Melt Down goes back to the start of the plague that kills off most of humanity and introduces new players: Tristan and Ness. At first, the names threw me off because I thought Ness was a girl and Tristan was a boy. I'm sure that was intentional. If my name was Nestor, I'd probably go by Ness too. It was harder to get into this book. A mix of what I hoped to find in book two and not really liking either Ness or Tristan. Every time I thought I had a handle on either character and started to enjoy who they are, something would happen and I'd become guarded.

If this novel was meant to set how unsettled and dreary the world has become, it did a good job. Overall, I had a hard time taking what happens to Tristan, her actions and choices. It wasn't the violence. It was a mix of the sequence of events and the fact that I felt like Tristan was a deranged see-saw of a character that had no baseline other than her need to find her brother. I really liked the setup for Ness and how he develops in the story. But, I still don't like him.

Time is too fluid in the story and makes it hard to line up events but perhaps that's a reflection of how things feel in real life. Some things feel like it took months rather than days and a blink that was hours.

I don't have a clear idea of what anyone looks like and it's like having a strange androgynous show play in my mind with different shapes and sex but no real features.

Did anyone see that twist coming towards the end? I didn't. But it is a nice way to explain the explainable.

The hug. There were moments in the story that really stuck out to me. The hug was great.

Melt Down was a nice story that filled in some blanks but it didn't really hold as a story on it's own for me. The epilogue was my favorite part of the story. *That* bit at the end totally makes me eager to see what's next in book three.

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### **Ozsaur says**

The author is very good at creating unpleasant and unlikeable characters, that's for sure! Tristan and Ness, the two POV characters, are both annoying as hell but in different ways. Tristan is an entitled brat, while Ness is a whiny loser who lives with his mother.

If you can get past the first few chapters, which is mostly about the characters, then you're in for some interesting story arcs. And lots of action, and a few surprises. Tristan and Ness both eventually get over themselves and grow up. Ness not quite as much as Tristan, but he still grows as a person.

The story is absorbing in places, but dragged in others. Some scenes could have been cut or compressed. There's some repetition that became annoying in some places.

What worked for me was how realistically a lot of people reacted to the apocalypse. Some people became tyrants, others became followers. Many simply wanted protection for the price of their freedom.

One very realistic scene was a fight between Tristan and a guy she wanted information from. This was in no way like a perfectly choreographed Hollywood fight scene. It was so visceral that I kept pushing my tablet farther and farther away from my face until the words blurred! That is how real fights work. Also, Tristan practices fighting, but she doesn't suddenly become a Kung Fu master. She survives more through sheer will and intelligence than through physical fighting.

I did enjoy the book, but it really needed a thorough edit for content. It also felt like a loooong read, and I was ready for it to be over.

I'll still read the last book in the trilogy.

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### **Jemma says**

The dignified way to start this review would be to hold my hands up and admit I was wrong. In my review of the previous instalment, 'Breakers', I had all but sworn not to continue with the series; and yet here we are. I honestly only meant to read a few pages, to catch the flavour and then put it to the back of my mind, but 'Meltdown' had other ideas for me. From the get go I was hooked on this book, and I truly loved it from start to finish. Even I am surprised by the complete 180 my brain has done regarding this series, I really had low expectations of this book due to my dissatisfaction with the first one.

'Meltdown' is written in much the same style as its predecessor, before the flu epidemic has hit and decimated the world's population – the key difference being that the reader is more informed on what is coming, especially in regard to the aliens. It is very much like a rewrite of the first book but with different characters, and if you aren't expecting this then I can imagine this book would be a huge disappointment.



And whilst it is easy to see why some people may feel resentful that this book has barely advanced any further forward (chronologically at least) from the first, for me the anticipation of knowing what was coming balanced this out. I felt the plot was cleverly interweaved with 'Breakers' and it was enjoyable piecing events together; another unexpected bonus. I also felt a comfortable familiarity with the style of writing, which made reading this almost effortless.

Another similarity is the structure of the book; we are given new characters but the author still teasingly switches us between two very different and fascinating dialogues. We start off with Ness, an avid gamer with no real plans outside of his next online raid, and then Tristan, a music graduate who also lacks a direction in life. These problems are soon proved obsolete as the flu completely decimates their world and alters their perception indefinitely – qualifications and job interviews mean very little in the unfamiliar and dangerous world that is left. The characters are equally as interesting and diverse as the first book, as are the constant ethical debates which were a huge theme in 'Breakers' as well.

Every fault I found with the first book was overcome smoothly in this one, and I truly found it hard to stop reading; I kept telling myself 'just one more chapter won't hurt'. My main issue with 'Breakers' was the stilted presentation of the aliens, and I found it ran so much more naturally in 'Meltdown'. Perhaps having knowledge of the aliens cushioned the blow slightly for me because I couldn't fault it – it was very convincing and legitimately unsettling.

I blew hot and cold with the first book, I fell madly in love with the second; what on earth am I going to make of the third? I'll certainly find out soon.

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## **Gbolahan says**

Still wondering what to give this. It's not as good as 4 stars nor is it as bad as 3 stars.

I had initially thought I would not like it much, seeing as it's almost basically a change of POV for stuff that happened in book 1, and total story did not so much move forward in the series, but author managed to still make the new relationships in this book interesting. Somehow. And actually moved the total story a little bit forward.

Just a little bit though.

Descriptions were fairly easy to skim over, didn't really need to read minute details of places I've not been to yet, which in the end made the book an easy and quick read.

The characters seemed real, it's a gritty world so only few people were all-evil or all-good.

Plot devices, whatever that means; something is still lacking though, I think. I hope those matters will be addressed in later books, things like how relatively easily the (view spoiler)

Anyways I've started book 3. Later.

3.5 stars. So...4

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## Kevin says

Still keeping my enthusiasm up for this multi-volume saga. We meet another set of characters and see how they came to find themselves in the world after the Big Sick. Tristan and Alden a brother and sister pair in Northern California, and Nes and Shawn in rural Idaho. There is some interesting overlap with the two volumes, two characters meet and is retold from the opposite perspective from the first volume, Rashomon style.

Overall this is not quite as strong (IMHO) as the first part, but still pretty good. We see some of the usual things happening, erstwhile strongmen creating fiefdoms in interesting places. I find this somewhat tiresome, in that I wonder if that would be able to develop effectively. The world now has 2% (or less) of it's previous population, that leaves a lot of open spaces. I wonder if there would be enough people around who would be supplicating enough to submit to such a situation without just walking away to another area. That part doesn't add up for me, but is not unique to this series, more of an overall genre challenge.

I'm still in until the wheels fall off, or it sucks too much. So far so good.

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