

**Title: *The Disasters***  
**Author: M.K. England**  
**Genre: Sci-fi**

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Benjamin W. 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Date Reviewed: February 20, 2020**

This book takes place in 2194 and humans have already colonized many other planets outside of Earth. The only way to get to these colonies is by using a spaceship's A-drive and A-jumping through space which is a form of really fast transportation through the universe.

Nax Hall and three other washouts of the Ellis Station Academy are just about to head back to Earth when the academy is attacked by a group of terrorists. The four of them, unseen by the intruders, steal the shuttle the terrorists arrived in and jump to another colony to escape death.

The four washouts end up crash landing on the colony of al-Rihla near the city of Saleem. There, they discover they were framed for the Ellis Station Academy attack and are wanted by law enforcement. They also uncover a plan by the organization Earth First to kill off human life on all colonies. With the help of Asra, who's stepfather is a member of Earth First, Nax and his new friends steal Asra's stepfather's very expensive, illegally modified spaceship and jump to the colony Serenity. They believe that Earth First shipped a special device to every colony in order to kill off the humans there. The colony, however, is unwilling to help and the only option left is to head towards Valen and hopefully get help from Nax's brother Malik. Malik works at the spaceport in Valen and only he can get them access to the spaceport and its packages. The group is able to steal the package sent by Earth First and while escaping more law enforcement, figure out exactly what their plan is and how destructive it can be. With time running out, will this hastily put together group be able to stop Earth First or will all life on colonies be wiped out?

Nax Hall is a hotshot pilot and got washed out because he tried something too fancy and crashed his simulation test. He has a history of making bad decisions and doesn't have good relationships with his parents. He becomes the captain of the small team and works hard to keep them safe. His fellow washouts are Zinaida (Zee/ Dr. Eyeliner), Casandra (Case/ Genius Girl), and Rion. Zee is a medical trainee and an amazing athlete. She always stays calm and has a really good kick. Case is an engineer and is very intelligent. She is the one who does all navigation and controls the power of the ship. Rion is a politician and can talk his way through things. He is useful for distracting guards or deceiving them. This group meets up with Asra who is very determined and is a master at hacking.

Now, I will answer some questions about the book:

*Did the plot keep you interested?* - This plot definitely kept me interested. There was a lot of action and suspense that made me not want to stop reading. Each event in this book leads up to the final outcome and the author just made me want to find out how it would end.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?* - I think the pace of this book was just right. The author kept the book moving with new events like when they stole Asra's stepfather's spaceship. The author also didn't push the pace too fast so I wouldn't understand the plot.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?* - I think this book is appropriate for kids in grades 7-11. There are some curse words in this book so it isn't really appropriate for younger kids. Kids in higher grades will be able to have a better understanding of the story and be mature enough to understand what getting high is and the use of curse words.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?* - I would recommend this book to readers who like a good amount of action and suspense. This book would also be good for readers who like a story with a good plot that just pulls you in. I wouldn't recommend this book to readers who like informative books or books that have lots of details and descriptions.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book* - In this book, there is a no return policy which means once someone leaves Earth's space, they may never return. All colonies are outside Earth's space but the Ellis Station Academy is not.

I would rate this book *4 stars*. The author came up with a really good plot that kept me interested throughout the entire book. The author kept a steady stream of events coming that pulled me further and further into the story. There would also be some funny lines that made me laugh. I do wish the author could do a better job describing the A-drive part of a spaceship and the act of A-jumping to colonies in the beginning because I was a little confused.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: February 29, 2020**

*The Disasters* takes place in the distant future, where humans have learned how to move through space faster than the speed of light. Earth has been sending explorers to other planets to form colonies there. Nax Hall is a 17-year old boy who applies for Ellis Station Academy, a school that trains pilots, medics, navigators, and so on. Nax is kicked out of the Academy because he crashed the ship in the simulation while trying to do a fancy maneuver. He gets onto the ship that will take them home along with 3 other rejected students, Rion, a diplomat from London, Case, a girl genius and Zee, a talented medic. However, right before the ship takes off, a group of armed soldiers attack the ship. The rejects overpower the soldiers and barely escape the station by stealing one of the ships. While Nax pilots the shuttle away from the station, they realize that the soldiers overtook the station and let all the oxygen out, effectively killing every student in the Academy. The ship was damaged by the soldiers, and the group is forced to jump to the nearest colony and crash land, nearly dying in the process. The colony they land on is called al-Rihla, and the group starts to make their way to the nearest Earth Embassy, where they can report the incident. They receive help from a young boy, but suddenly meet a stranger who tells them to come with her. The stranger introduces herself as Asra, and that the boy was leading them to the police station for reward money. Confused, the group asks what she meant, and she shows them that they were framed for the attack on the Academy. Asra leads them to a safe house and explains that her uncle is the local drug and weapons dealer, who is high up in the corrupted government of al-Rihla. Asra needs to escape the planet before he finds her, and she believes that they did not commit the crime. The ragtag group meets Asra's grandmother, who gives the group weapons and supplies. They pull off a daring heist and manage to steal Asra's uncle's prize ship, a fast and armed expensive Honda Breakbolt Mark III. The group steals a tablet from one of the guards of the ship and reads the latest message, which is telling all members of Earth First to get loved ones off of the colonies. Asra explains that Earth First was a group of politicians, scientists, religious leaders and soldiers who believed that colonization of

other planets should be banned for various reasons. The group deduces that Earth First is trying to destroy all of the colonies to achieve their goal of banning colonies. They need a place to refuel and get modifications to the ship, so they ask for the help of Nax's brother Malik, who Nax hasn't spoken to in two years. Malik was in the same car as Nax when they got into an accident that nearly killed Malik, and Nax blamed himself and cut himself off from Malik. Malik gives them shelter and leads them to a mechanic who is willing to modify the ship so that they do not get detected by Earth First. The group intercepts messages and learns that they have a day to stop Earth First's plan to destroy the colonies using a machine. The group flies back to the Academy and fights their way to the machine, where they manage to destroy it and send all of Earth First's plans to the Earth government. The government gives them a pardon and an apology, as well as a lot of reward money. The academy gives all of the crew full scholarships, but the crew members all decline and decide to stay together to take jobs across the galaxy.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested?*

The plot of *The Disasters* definitely kept me interested, as there was a lot of suspense and plot twists that kept you anticipating what would happen next.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was a little fast, but you still had enough time to process everything.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book is appropriate for grades 8-12 as there is some strong language and a lot of violence.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys Science Fiction novels. I would also recommend this book to anybody who enjoys action and suspense.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

The book is told from the perspective of Nax Hall.

*5 stars: I'm really glad I read this book; it was awesome!*

The book was action packed, as there were many fighting scenes and space chases. There was a lot of humor and you could really relate to the characters. The author made the story fit together very well and the ending felt natural. Overall, *The Disasters* was an extremely good novel that I really enjoyed reading.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Owen M. 8th grade**

**Date Reviewed: March 28, 2020**

The book *The Disasters* is a fiction book that takes place in a futuristic earth, one that has been able to terraform entire planets to become suitable for Human life. To do this though, they have to be able to train new recruits to help with the jobs around the earth colonies. The base of training for these children is the Ellis Station Academy, which is on the moon. There are four recruits that have "washed out" of the academy for various reasons, they all must return home to Earth. The four main characters are Rion, a tall, broad shouldered African American-English boy with dyed red hair. Nax a tall lean soccer player from North Carolina who aspired to become a pilot. Zee a Russian medic with a background in martial arts. Case a teen genius with a knack for computers. And finally, Asra, a Muslim girl living on the colonies with an extensive knowledge of the new worlds. After the four main characters meet at the main hangar of the space station, they see their shuttle coming in, but almost immediately something is off. They see that the shuttle has a weird marking across the side as soon as the shuttle touches down six soldiers clad

in space suits jump off and begin killing anything in sight. The kids survive by making a mad dash to a shuttle. They crash land on the stunning planet of al-Riddah. There they learn that someone was an insider on this terrorist attack, and someone had blamed them.

*Did the plot of this book keep you interested?* This book was very interesting, it kept me on my toes for this entire adventure.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow or just right?* This book was a perfect read in every way, it was fast paced during the chases and slow during the conversations.

*What grade level is this book appropriate for?* This book is appropriate for ages 13 and up, it is very good when it comes down to the equality aspect of the story, and how no character is judged for anything besides their abilities as a person.

*Who would you recommend this book to?* I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys any form of fiction because this book is the best of all worlds.

*What other information do you think would be useful to teens reading this book?* I believe any teen reading this book just needs to be cautious with leaving this book out if they have any younger siblings.

*5 stars;* I gave this book 5 stars because it was an amazing book to read, it is an amazing futuristic world where you aren't judged for anything other than your personality not your sexuality or your race. This book was a very interesting read that was a real page turner.

**Reviewer name and Grade: Jonathan Z. 10th grade**

**Date reviewed: March 30, 2020**

**Summary:** The novel *The Disasters* by M. K. England is a novel about a group of highly skilled and intelligent 17-year-olds who discover the interstellar plot of a terrorist organization called Earth First to kill all the colonies that aren't on earth or its moon.

The beginning of the novel opens up with the main character, Nasir Alexander Hall getting rejected from the Ellis academy for pilot training getting made fun of a former classmate from high school who managed to get in, even though his previous endeavors such as getting high on laughing gas seem to be in direct opposition of the school's image. He is then required to board a train to travel back to earth after being rejected, the interesting thing is only 3 other people were on the train with him. The 3 people are called Zinaida Ivanova Rozhkova, Casandra Hwang-Torres, and Rion William Kwesi Turner. On the train down, they engage in some small talk but it is mostly strained due to their rejection from the academy. However, when the train just departed suddenly stops and a group of terrorists who we later learn to be called Earth First invade the station and kill everyone inside it by opening the airlock. Their main goal was to install something on the data servers which they accomplish. The train the 4 students are on quickly loses life support and they manage to take the lifeboat out to safety, after being discovered by the terrorist group.

The rejected students are all outstanding individuals and only get rejected from the academy due to bogus reasons such as trying out new tricks on the flight simulator test. Either way, after the students flee the space station, they light jump to a different colony and end up in Al-Rihla, one of the earliest settlements. On the planet, they meet Asra Haque, the daughter of the most corrupt politician in the colony. After saving the 4 people's lives they agree to work together to prevent the Earth First organization from succeeding. Afterward, they embark on a series of journeys to restock supplies, find out information about the Earth First plan and

ultimately prevent it from happening. One such adventure takes Nasir to the colony his brother works at and they spend a few days recovering their prior relation which decayed due to Nasir almost killing his brother on a plane flight.

After finding out the plan to destroy all the colonists boiled down to sending out a signal from a transmitter to make all the machines suddenly send out a sonic blast which would kill everything, they rush to stop the transmitter from deploying. The 5 teenagers manage to pinpoint the transmitter which was in the Academy space station and end of destroying the transmitter. They do so by dimply blowing up the front doors with a giant missile and hacking into the transmitter to stop it from sending. While they were trying to escape, the Earth First group manages to trap them, but Nasir does some quick thinking and releases N<sub>2</sub>O on them, which makes them all incapacitated. During that time, the group sends the information about the Earth First group down to earth and are hailed as heroes for discovering the plan that could have killed all of the colonies Earth has spent making over the past few hundred years.

Setting: The novel takes place in an interstellar setting with some pit stops on a few made-up colonies that are located in planets far away.

Time Period: This novel takes place in the far future where light travel already exists.

Main Events:

- The 4 teens are rejected from the academy
- They manage to escape a terrorist attack
- Crashland on a distant colony
- They are framed for the attack and are chased around the galaxy by the Earth First group under the disguise of the Tiger squadron
- Nasir's brother Malik helps them identify what plan the terrorists were going to use to destroy the colonies.
- Nasir and his group destroy the transmitter and send the plan's information back to earth headquarters where the arrest order on them is released.
- The 4 teenagers and Asra are hailed as heroes and given large rewards. They are also accepted into the academy but none of them end up going to it.

**Questions:**

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested?*

The story was interesting and kept the reader engaged. A variety of different events that any science fiction lover would enjoy was present throughout the novel. In addition, there were some scenes of romance between the crew members as well. In addition, conversations between the characters helped develop them as a whole and gave everyone their own unique personality.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the story was just right since it kept the reader constantly engaged but also wasn't too fast so you couldn't understand the general plot of the novel.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book is suitable for seventh graders since it contains mild language and no explicit scenes. Furthermore, there isn't any need for much background information with regards to history since the novel takes place in the far future.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I recommend this book to any person who likes fantasy or science fiction books. The novel follows a group of heroes who have to complete a quest to save the world so if anyone is interested in that, they would enjoy this book.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

Some information that the reader may need when reading the novel is some basic understanding of what a spaceship is but in all honesty, you don't need any more information on that topic than what you can learn from watching Star Wars.

**Rating:**

*4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading*

This book deserves 4 stars due to a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the tempo of the novel, the action scenes in it, and the real-life references we as the reader get. The novel itself isn't slow nor excessively fast so if you ever want to be engaged in an adventure book, this one is perfect. In addition, the action scenes in the novel are also interesting and will keep you distracted for hours. Finally, the conversations held in the book between the characters are exciting and relate to real-life problems as well, so you never feel out of place.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Oliver W. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: July 16, 2020**

It is the year 2194 and space colonization has been going on for quite some time. Nax Hall is a bisexual 17-year-old who wants to be a pilot. After being kicked out of the Ellis Station Academy, where future colony officers train, because he crashed his flight simulation, Nax is forced to go back to Earth. Once he gets on the ship heading home, he meets the people who also failed. There is Zee, an athletic Kazakhstani girl who is good with medicine and was kicked out because she is trans; Case, a super-smart girl who is really good with tech but struggles from anxiety; and Rion, a wealthy black boy who is interested in politics and can stay calm and talk his way out of many difficult situations. When a group of terrorists attack the station and leaks the oxygen, killing everyone there, the four of them are the only surviving witnesses. The group escapes to the colony world of al-Rihla, but Nax crash-lands on a beach outside the city of Saleem. Nax feels responsible for the safety of the group and is mad at himself for not being a good enough pilot.

There, they meet a Pakistani girl named Asra, who is an expert hacker. She informs them that they are being framed for the attack on Ellis Station and turning themselves in would probably mean execution. Asra wants to get off the planet because she wants to get away from her dad, who is a prominent politician but also runs a secret drug-dealing ring. In a video message sent from Ellis Station, the headmaster tells everyone that all transportation to Earth-controlled space would be halted temporarily and would likely resume in 4 days. The group needs to figure out how to warn Earth about the potential dangers that might be coming. They

find out that this attack was planned by Earth First, a group against space colonization that appeared briefly when space colonization first became a thing. They know that Earth First probably has members as prominent figures on all the colonies. Case and Rion both start to develop feelings for Nax.

The group forms a plan to steal Asra's dad's spaceship and they escape to the planet Valen, where Nax's brother Malik is a security specialist for the spaceport authority. Nax hasn't talked to Malik in 2 years, after Nax crashed an aircar and severely injured Malik. Nax has PTSD from the incident and gets nervous every time he is flying a ship with other people in it. After landing in Valen, Nax talks things through with his brother and he realizes that Malik never hated him. All of them work together to find out that there is a super-strong signal that comes from Ellis Station that will cause all the speakers on a planet to blast at full volume, killing almost everyone. Asra finds out that the first test planet will be the illegal settlement of Tau'ri, where her mother and sister live. They must find out how to stop the attack from happening to save everyone on the colonies.

***Did the plot keep you interested?***

Yes, the plot kept me interested. It was a very exciting situation that the characters were in and new information that was revealed during the book kept me wanting to read more. The story was full of action and was well thought out, and it was a nice adventure to read.

***Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?***

The pace of the book was pretty good. The story evolved quite quickly and I didn't get bored while reading any part of the book. The characters were constantly finding new things and flying to different places, but there were also some romantic parts of the book, with Case and Rion both having crushes on Nax.

***What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?***

This book contains occasional profanity and there is a lot of shooting. Rion gets shot once in the arm. Other than that, there really isn't anything inappropriate about the book. I think it would be appropriate for readers in grades 7 and up.

***What type of reader would you recommend this book to?***

I would recommend this book to readers who enjoy books with a lot of action and with futuristic technology.

***What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?***

I think it would be helpful for teens reading this book to know that there is something called an A-drive on the spaceships that the characters use to A-jump between the planets. In the space around each planet, there is a zone where you can A-jump to other planets and a zone where you arrive.

**Rating:**

I would rate this book *4 stars*. It had a nice plot and touched a lot of issues that could happen to many people in real life. The diversity in the characters was really nice and the author created a fun world with space travel, though it may not all be realistic. It was a wild adventure

that was really fun to read but I also enjoyed reading about the characters' internal struggles. The reason why I didn't rate this book 5 stars was because some parts of the book just didn't make much sense. The characters would laugh at things sometimes that just weren't very funny and usually wouldn't make people laugh. Also, I don't get why Rion was kicked out. He seems to be a very good shooter and there doesn't seem to be any reason for him to have gotten kicked out of the Academy.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Philip G., 10<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Date Reviewed: January 10, 2021**

The Disasters is set in the far future in the year 2194, when colonized worlds existed for years and space travel was a fact of life. The story follows a teen named Nax Hall who was applying for a position at the Ellis Station Academy located on the moon. It is an elite training program for Earth's new pilots, programmers and politicians for Earth's colonized worlds. Nax, while good at piloting, had a questionable background which led the academy to kick him out in less than 24 hours. However, just when he was about to make his one way trip back to Earth a terrorist group attacked the station forcing him and three other washouts to make a daring escape on the space shuttle the terrorists came from. They were pursued and made a hasty decision to make a one-way trip to the colonies in order to escape. The four end up having to crash land on a planet called al-Riddah and after being branded as criminals they embark on a dangerous mission to find out what the terrorist group plans to do and how to stop it before it's too late. Nax is joined by Case, a genius and tech prodigy who helps navigate them through tough situations when being chased in space. Rion, a rich kid from London who was taught politics by his strict father. Zee, a blonde, athletic girl who is skilled at medicine and surgery, and eventually Asra, a skilled hacker that gets them out of dangerous situations when breaking into terrorist facilities.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested?*

I really liked the plot of the story and it really kept me wanting more. It is incredibly enjoyable for anyone who is into science fiction and the transition between chapters was almost seamless. Some days I would find myself reading for hours on end, and when I stopped I was always wondering what was gonna happen next.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was just right most of the time. There were only a few instances where the pacing felt like it slowed down but it was never that way for too long.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

Personally I believe this book is appropriate for grades 9 and older. Most of the book should be understandable for 7th graders but there is excessive use of language all the way through that may not be appropriate for any grade lower than ninth.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys science fiction, action, and adventure. People who enjoy those genres are most likely to enjoy reading this book and find it worthwhile.



*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

Just know that you will enjoy it if you love action and adventure with a little touch of romance.

*4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading*

I really liked this book in many ways and I would recommend this book to other people.

However, there was nothing extra special about the book that would make me give it 5 stars. In my opinion what would make the book better is if the story wasn't so rushed towards the end of the book. Most of the book is the group avoiding getting caught by the terrorist group, which is fine, but they almost learn nothing on the way until the end where they lay it all on you suddenly.