



Nobody's Pawn

Amy McNulty

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Men can love, but they can also hate. Noll knows too well that the men in her village have adjusted poorly to the freedom of their hearts, but she hopes to bring peace back to her community. With the lord's return, Noll feels confident that together, they can work to settle down the villagers, but in his rebirth, he remembers only one thing about her: that she caused the curse that tortured him for a millennium in the first place.

Determined to start anew, Noll must accept that, romantically, she and the lord are better without one another, but she'll need his help to uncover what's really behind all of the suffering in her village. Escorted to a land beyond the mountains, Noll uncovers the truth about her village and the strange occurrences in which she's had a hand. When someone who loves her discovers the same things and betrays her, Noll feels powerless to stop her village's fate. By learning to forgive and seek forgiveness, Noll finally understands true love of a free heart—along with true sacrifice.

Nobody's Pawn Details

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From Reader Review Nobody's Pawn for online ebook

Alexandra Bayer says

I received this book for free from Amy McNulty in exchange for an honest review

Ever since the curse on the men in Noll's village was broken, disaster and destruction ran rampant, resulting in the death of the lord, the one man whom Noll was able to trust, and even love. But now, with the lord's rebirth, he's different - he doesn't remember the time he and Noll spent together; all he remembers is that Noll cursed him, long ago. Now Noll doesn't know who her friends are anymore, and who is out to hurt her. It makes dealing with her life a lot more difficult, especially when Noll is taken away from her village, and discovers that her life has never been entirely under her control. But she must fight to gain some control over her life, before she loses it entirely.

This book felt very different from the first two in the series. This is largely because Noll makes a huge discovery that completely changes the way she regards her world. Although the discovery made sense in the world of the book, and worked with the storyline, I felt that it almost came out of nowhere. I couldn't read any hints earlier in the series pertaining to this game-changer. Obviously there were clues, but the reader thinks that these clues mean something else entirely. I think that because this shift in power was so sudden, and the book became about something else entirely, it just felt a bit disconnected from the first two novels.

Although I did feel as though the third book was set apart from the first two a bit more, that's not to say that I didn't enjoy it. I thought that the revelation Noll discovers was very original. This entire series has been very original, so it's not surprising that Amy McNulty continues to impress. When Noll uncovers the answers to the secrets that surround her village, it made me think. I love when a book forces you to consider or analyse without making the prompt too overt or trying to be too much like a textbook. I realized that Noll's discovery could double as an allegory. Again, it was not in-your-face, but more open to interpretation, which I always appreciate.

The ending of this book was also the ending of this series, and I wasn't entirely happy with it. Yes, it explained a lot, and it wasn't overly ideal and thus unrealistic, but there wasn't enough romance for me. I'd been waiting for Noll and the lord of the village to act on their love for each other since less than halfway through the first book. I understand that this series is meant to focus on the repercussions of love, as opposed to perfect relationships, but I wanted to read more about Noll and the lord once they were actually allowed to be together, by others and by their own choice. I found the ending satisfactory, but not necessarily happy or detailed enough to totally please me.

I did enjoy this book, and I am glad that the series ended in the way it did. I think that Amy McNulty is a talented writer with very original ideas, and I'm happy that I stumbled across the first book. Overall, this book deserves a rating of four stars, same as the others in the series. Although I did have more complaints about this book, I still found it just as enjoyable. I would recommend this novel to readers who enjoy unconventional magic, plot twists, and a strong female lead.

Annelise Lestrangle says

Review originally posted on The Book Adventures of Annelise Lestrangle :)

I received this copy from the author in exchange for an honest review. Let's go :D

The Story

If Noll thought things were bad with the curse, she had to admit that without the curse, they downward tragic. With Jaron's poor leadership, the men in the village were completely rebellious and deep into existential crisis. Now that the parties slowed down and they realized that being free wasn't just about the good stuff, most men were feeling lost and helpless. How did you manage freedom if you never knew it in the first place? Noll's friends were going crazy.

The women weren't doing much better. Without their other halves helping, the village started to falter and nerves got shattered. Most of them had been left as soon as Ailill suspended marriage contracts and didn't know how to woo their loved ones back home. Some, like Rosalyn, never would – her man had found love with another man, after all. And it was all Noll's fault.

At least, she was given one last chance to right at least one wrong: Ailill. Against all odds, the lord is back for yet another life... But has no memories from the time he spent with Noll on his previous life. As things get trickier with the village and Jaron tries to make Jurij the new lord, Noll and Ailill are forced to travel beyond the Never Veil. No matter how great the danger, Noll will be dead and buried before anyone messes up her home – you know, more than herself.

Three people crossed the veil... how many will the kings and queens allow coming back?

The Analysis

Just remembering that those were my impressions and opinion as a reader :)

As I reached the last page of Nobody's Pawn, I blinked once. Twice. Like, is this for real? No more Never Veil series for me? How am I supposed to keep breathing? Once again, Amy petted me in the head on one moment as I successfully predicted a twist and kicked me in the stomach right after with another twist I would never even dream of – all metaphorically, please! Hahahaha! Seriously, this definitely is one of the best series I've had the pleasure of reading this year and it changed my life in levels I can't even begin to explain. All I have left to say to Amy for now is thanks for the memories and I hope I get to fight with see Noll and Ailill again sometime! Four proud and shiny stars <3

Ok, maybe I have some more things to say, haha! Like, talking about the narrative, again in first person style from Noll's point of view. Also, I have to start by point out how much Noll grows as a narrator in this book – she slowly learned how to recognize the problems around her and to weight sufferings. It may sound stupid to say so, but it made all the difference for the reader: her own problems weren't oh-so-big anymore, so she gave us a much better picture of what happened in the village. Unfortunately, I was turned really down to see the line “I released a breath I didn't even realize I was holding” used twice with slight wording change and another time applied to tension on the muscles. I just can't with this line =(Along other minor problems that will be mentioned later, this is one of the reasons why this book isn't a full five stars.

The other minor issues are on the plot – they are three in fact. Let's start with those, shall we? =)

To start, I felt like Noll's sentiments for Ailill evolved too fast without a good explanation – actually, this is a problem present on the last book already, I forgot to point it among all my late-teen angst, sorry! I felt she hated him with the force on the moment and then snap your fingers, suddenly Ailill is the dream man. I understand that some key things did happen rather suddenly, but I think someone as Noll would have been

more confused and less prompted to instalove... Oh well, what do I know about feelings? Haha! Moving on.

The second aspect is Noll's powers. I felt her magical powers were kind of left aside during the series and suddenly poof, she is indeed a goddess in the better sense of the word. I'm not a regular fan of over power characters without a good background behind them, but again, it's a personal pet peeve. But now that I think of it, all reviews are about pointing how many pet peeves of ours that books can ruse and our rating goes higher the less our feathers are disturbed. Interesting.

Anyway, not the moment for deep reflections about society! Third aspect, back to track! The end itself was too open for my tastes. I felt as if there was a chapter missing, as I still had so many questions and McNulty had already started the acknowledgements. Another personal trace, of course, as there isn't any rule saying ends need to tie up all strings, but I felt many important answers were missing. Oh, well, I can't have it all, right? =)

Now, to the part of the plot I really liked: the pace. Once again McNulty's brilliant writing style made us float from a moment to the other without ever wanting to release the book, no matter how hungry you are or how many messages your boss sends you during your lunchtime #truestory. At the same time, I loved how slowly McNulty eased us through the whole truth about the village and Noll's world, as having everything dropped out so suddenly isn't nice at all. As I commented on the first book's review, this is where we understand how badly gender wars can be to a society – despite the heavy fantasy, all characters are still human and act the part. The choices made are poor and result in an unwelcoming world for both sides. As they learn to unite and ignore what's between each other's legs, things start to work and harmony slowly ascends.

Risking sounding repetitive, this is what the Never Veil series is truly all about: choices. Kinship. Loyalty. Responsibility. Maturity. The gender question is necessary and important, the romance is amusing, the adventure is thrilling, but they are all flourishes to McNulty's true message: your happiness is in your hands alone. You make your own path, no matter if you are aware of it or not. As much as people try to keep you in or out of paths, it's still your decision to follow their advice and orders. It's all about the power of our beliefs and what we choose to do with what is given to us.

Or maybe McNulty just wanted to write a badass book and I got so drunk in Diet Coke I'm already down a really high and wasted path of thinking and saw too much into the small things. It wouldn't be the first time, haha!

I'll spare you all from more of my teen angst and talk about the characters =) To resume it all on one sentence: OH BOY HOW THEY GREW! As I apparently was born without the ability to stick with only one sentence to do anything on life, I'll just keep going now, ok? Haha! Of course, Noll has the most important and notorious personal growth of the whole series, but many characters reached an important maturity level on this book, especially among the men, and this maturity is the key for them to move on. I mean, the whole village – Noll included – had their asses kicked with Noll's interventions, but how you deal with it afterwards show your true colors.

All right, that was cheesy even for my standards, so let's just peek at some cool quotes from Nobody's Pawn and be done with this, haha!

"Because I was always outside, even when I thought I was in." – Noll

~*~

"Being alone for any period of time can be a torment." – Ailill

~*~

“Freedom can be a difficult burden.” – Ailill

~*~

“My name sounds so lovely on your tongue. Like it belongs to this special woman who isn’t me, but whom you [Ailill] believe me to be.” – Noll

~*~

“I didn’t realize I could almost faint from embarrassment without even looking at something.” – Noll

To wrap up this kick ass series, if you like dystopian, fantasy, young adult, gender equality discussions and mind-blowing books, you need to have the Never Veil series in your life <3

Thanks so much for reading my review! Also, thanks a million to Amy for sending me this book and for simply being the awesome person she is <3

Minke says

I'm sad the series is over but I loved this book and felt that it was a perfect ending to the series. I love how this book finally shows you the mysterious 'they' that really controls the village and how you learn more about 'what' the villagers are and how special Noll really is. All in all a great book and great series!

BellaKara says

Excellent conclusion to a great saga. The ending was a little predictable given the title but it was still excellent. I hope she writes spinoff stories for it. It was just too good to end but I loved the ending of it.

Pallavi Sareen says

It makes me so happy to finally come at the conclusion of this book. This trilogy was a combination of ups and downs for me but this book is definitely an UP. I adore how the characters have grown and the story matured. This is the last book, so everything is out in the open now, all the secrets exposed, all mysteries explained. And I like how towards the end it turns into a power struggle among the men and women, to find who's stronger or better. Plus, the cliffhanger in the last book really had me intrigued for this one and it didn't disappoint. The book to keep an eye on the villagers, the gold bangle, the hole behind the throne and most of all Aillil, these are all the elements that joined up to create a much bigger hidden plot. And I liked all of it. I'm definitely keeping an eye out for this author's other books.

I received an ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Chalyss says

Yay my review is the first one up. That's cool! Anyhow, I received a free e-ARC of the book from the author in exchange for an honest review. That being said I probably shouldn't have gone from McNulty book to McNulty book.

This book was like a 4th of July moment. Fireworks exploding everywhere. I just wasn't sure where the next one would go off, what shape or color it would be, or if I'd still be reeling from the last one before the next goes off. Let's start with the firecracker that is our beloved Noll.

She has grown much more in the time frame of the books. Her character is strong, stronger than even she knows and it is so great to watch her grow. That doesn't mean she doesn't slip up, because she does but everything done here is in attempt to make things better for the village and people she loves. Speaking of the people she loves can I take a moment to love Ailill. His actions spoke so loud as to what his goal was and it just made my heart melt towards him more. He loves Noll so strongly that he's willing to risk so much for her. All of the characters are so passionate in this book that they cause a lot of headache to get some answers and protect others.

It is that passion for answers that moves this plot along. Everyone wants answers and no one is willing to stop until they get some. The amount of things that could have been avoided had everyone just been patient was extensive but this is the village we are talking about. Nobody is patient there and in this book we learn where they get it from.

That was one of the best parts of this book, besides the circling love between our stubborn main characters, getting answers beyond the village, beyond the mountains. What we find is definitely a head spinner. I'm talking moving toward psychotic but I loved it. The reasons behind it all just make everything better and better.

I don't know how to describe the awesomeness that is every surprise in this book without giving anything up. I just encourage you to read it. Please do, then growl with me as you reach then ending. That was the only thing I was sad about in this book. I was begging for more once I hit the last paragraphs. Especially after the few tears I shed some chapters before the ending (oh my heart!). On top of that the last sentence! Why oh why did it have to end there (*sniffle*)?

Oh well, my time in the village has ended but Oliviere and Ailill shall continue on. Maybe I'll meet them in the castle garden some day.

Maggie says

sobs It's over. I will be posting a review super soon though. ???

Kirsty (Amethyst Bookwurm) says

Nobody's Pawn is the good final book in this trilogy and it is still fast paced and I did not want to put the book down. I really liked the slow burn romance, the world building and the commentary about gender roles. It answered all of the questions I had from the previous books and I did not predict where the story was going at all.

Noll has really matured in this story as she is more forgiving than before while also willing to step up to responsibility of people's expectations of her as well still being as passionate and adventurous as before. Ailill seems more relaxed in this book but still has so many secrets which seems to take their toll on him.

While the other characters are interesting and I enjoyed getting to know them, I wish I could knock some sense into most of them as everyone seemed to be thinking with their hearts but never with their heads and no one seemed to actually have the conversations they need with anyone.

I really enjoyed this series and I am very much looking forward to reading more of McNulty's Books. I would recommend Nobody's Pawn to fans of the first two books in this trilogy, and the trilogy to those who like surprisingly deep and twist filled YA fantasy books.

This and my other reviews can be found at Amethyst Bookwyrms

Michaela says

I have so many emotions about this, because I loved this whole series! It's one of those stories that stay with you. It was as if life was breathed into the characters through these pages. Following Noll, in what starts out as her selfish desire to change the status quo of her village. A foolhardy disaster that she had a hand in and desperately tries to fix, and her journey along with the entire village on the complexities of love. There was never a dull moment as Noll, Aillil and company find a way to correct the mistakes of their past in order to fix their future. I was so attached to just about all these characters, laughing, loving and forgiving right along with them. I am sad and happy with such a lovely and deserving ending.

Isabel says

Wow! I just have to say that. What an absolutely great ending to this book. i even think I shed a tear. (i did) Amy's writing has gotten better I would say, it has never been bad but this book has a great flow to it and I felt like speeding the pages.

And more Aillil this book. That makes my heart flutter a bit, I think.

Noll will be one of my favourite persons ever. I am a bit sad that I will never hear from Noll again but that is the wonder with books isn't it? I can just see her future for myself. And that ending at the book. So great, and it felt genuine. It has a reason. And Aillil. What a good progress they both had. What great progress everyone had. Just like they should. This book deserves a full five stars from me. It does everything a good sequel should.

And again, thank you Amy! You write such a good book. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I am looking forward to more of your books.

And a blast from the past (review), I still love you Amy!

Kaitlynne says

So these days it seems like the only time I get to read is late at night when everyone else is asleep, and even

that's pretty iffy. Two part time jobs, two online classes and, well, all the other things I have to do... well let's just say I'm not reading as much as I would like.

So this is another one that I started at like 11pm, and didn't stop until I was finished, because I knew if I didn't finish it in one sitting, it would probably never get finished.

I don't ever remember being so confused by a book since, well, since the time I read Nobody's Lady... It might have had something to do with the fact that it had been a minute since I read the second book, and I didn't have time to do a re-read of the series. Oh well... But I think it also had something to do with the fact that things seemed to jump from one thing to another without any sort of explanation, so it was hard to keep up with at times.

So why did I give it a 5 star rating then? Because I loved the characters. I loved the world building, and the character growth, and how there were so many twists and turns that I rarely saw coming.

Jessica ? says

I am quite bummed that the series is over, but I feel satisfied with the conclusion.

The thing I liked most about this trilogy was that each book was distinct from the others, but still carried over the plots from the previous books. Noll is different, too. She's no longer a moody little girl moping because a boy doesn't like her -- she's a tough chick with some big problems, the worst of which is the mysterious "them" beyond the mountains who seem to be pulling all the strings.

Despite the many wrongs that have been done to Noll, she is surprisingly forgiving as it becomes more and more apparent that most of the conflicts stemmed from incomplete or incorrect information being propagated. Some of the villains gain their redemption; others get what's coming to them.

I appreciated that I couldn't predict the ending, but that it still made sense.

Finally, the fantasy mechanics of the world are further explained, clarifying any confusion that may be left over from books 1 and 2. (Ex: the cavern pool, the authority with which Noll was able to take charge in book 1, why people disappear when they die, etc.)

I'm going to miss Ailill and Noll, but I think they're happy right where we left them.

Ariana Velasquez says

Was a very lovely way to end the series! I enjoyed how the action was intensified and the plot twists were extremely unexpected! I am glad to be a part of Noll's journey!

Shelby Trautman says

(possible spoiler alert) I really liked how this one turned out! It starts off right at the end of the first book so

it doesn't leave you wandering what happened. I like the fact that the book won't let Noll travel back in time any more. Unfortunately it leads to some awful things happening but it really secures her actions and I think it makes her a more mature character because of it. Super excited to see what the next book brings! (I received this book in exchange for an honest review.)

Irina says

God I can't believe it's over...This wonderful trilogy it's over!

I can't begin to explain how amazing these books are. They have everything a good book should have: world-building, strong characters, interesting plot, character development, plot twists, EVERYTHING!

I loved it, I loved it so much! This is now my new favorite trilogy!
