



# Outpost

*Ann Aguirre*

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**Outpost** Ann Aguirre

*Deuce's whole world has changed.*

Down below, she was considered an adult. Now, topside in a town called Salvation, she's a brat in need of training in the eyes of the townsfolk. She doesn't fit in with the other girls: Deuce only knows how to fight.

To make matters worse, her Hunter partner, Fade, keeps Deuce at a distance. Her feelings for Fade haven't changed, but he seems not to want her around anymore. Confused and lonely, she starts looking for a way out.

Deuce signs up to serve in the summer patrols—those who make sure the planters can work the fields without danger. It should be routine, but things have been changing on the surface, just as they did below ground. The Freaks have grown smarter. They're watching. Waiting. Planning. The monsters don't intend to let Salvation survive, and it may take a girl like Deuce to turn back the tide.

## Outpost Details

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Author : Ann Aguirre

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# From Reader Review Outpost for online ebook

## Vivian says

OH MY GOD...i just read the blurb

## FACEPALM

'*Outpost*' has been infected by the plague terrorizing YA books known as '**Sequel book syndrome**'. It'll be jam-packed with love triangle dilemma, where the female 1.0 will be constantly torn between male 1.0 and male 2.0. The book seems it will be in a developed stages of 'Sequel book syndrome'. The male 1.0 will be ignoring the female 1.0 causing female 1.0 to spend more time with the male 2.0 but will still wonder about the male 1.0 while with male 2.0. [INSERT EPIC SIGH]

This is going to be one hell of a slow read from my predictions...

Not to mention the whole schooling she's forced into. [OMG PLEASE DON'T TELL ME I'LL BE TORTURED WITH ENDLESS JIBBER-JABBER ABOUT SEWING AND COOKING...I THINK I ACTUALLY MIGHT DIE]

I loved '*Enclave*' because of the constant action, blood and gore. It got me thrilled to keep reading, even when the story plot didn't hold much. I pray to the heavens that the amount of torture is about 20% taking up about 3-4 chapters, MAXIMUM. Or else i might outright shoot myself.

PS: Stalker is the most random male 2.0. He's an ass face who mistreats others but Aguirre attempted to maul it over by stating its 'Hunter Instinct' or whatever BS she used to justify him becoming male 2.0.

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## Mizuki says

The second book is doing a bit better than the first one, the writing and the story is good enough to keep me turning page and wanting to know what will happen in the end. I also like how the heroine and her personality is developed.

However I don't really like the romance, and I think the author overdid the 'women being suppressed due to gender discrimination and superstition' issue a bit too much. I mean, hey! there're mutants surrounding the safe town and women are still not supposed to fight alongside men? Hey! Guess what? Women want to live too!

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## Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Here we are again: me singing praise to Ann Aguirre and you guys putting up with me. (Oh, stop trying to run away, I'm not about to start singing for real.) I must admit I was terrified of reading this book, but not because I doubted Aguirre in the least. After reading 11 of her books and loving them all, I know perfectly well what she's capable of. No, I was terrified because, even before starting it, I knew it would crush me into

tiny Maja bits. And it did.

There's a reason for everything, and a million reasons for some things. The list of reasons why Ann Aguirre's books always affect me so deeply is about three miles long. I'm very familiar with her work – I've read everything she's published under her own name, some books more than once even, and I've long ago stopped being surprised by how consistently good she is.

Let's start with the worldbuilding, shall we? I can be rather nitpicky when it comes to dystopian worlds. I need them to make sense, but sometimes they truly do appear as if they'd been created by YA Dystopia Story Generator. (Hot water has been banned and the government controls fish byproducts, or something along those lines.) But in a world destroyed by a disease, with no government, internet or means of transportation, extremely violent gangs would undoubtedly form, as they did in Deuce's world. There would surely be groups of people, entire communities that would go back to old values. And some would probably find their way underground, where such a thing is possible. As always, Aguirre's world is fully realized and flawless.

But character development is where the author's skill truly shows. She doesn't just point out Deuce's upbringing when it's convenient or when it serves to further complicate the plot. She is meticulously consistent, and not just with Deuce, but with all her characters. Not many authors leave me in awe of their insightfulness and intelligence, but somehow, Ann Aguirre always does. She is, above all, an excellent psychologist and she knows her characters to the bone.

To call what happens between Fade, Stalker and Deuce a love triangle seems vastly unfair and oversimplified, although I suppose, technically, that's what it is. It is a triangle of comfort, hope and kindred spirits, and there is nothing simple about it. I may have hated some things that happened in this book with a fiery passion, but I never hated the characters for them!

Deuce is amazing, one of those characters that make you want to stand up and do something extraordinary for yourself and for others. She is grown up in some ways, and adolescent in others, naive at times, but a quick learner too. She grew up knowing nothing of how the real world functions, and yet it didn't take her long to start appreciating family bonds and friendships, or develop her interpersonal intelligence.

I suppose I should address the cliffhanger as well, as there's been a lot of grumbling around the blogosphere. It's a trilogy, and as much as it pains me, I understand the need to leave things open for the last book. And truth be told, this open ending (not exactly a cliffhanger) is less painful than most.

This is, hands down, my favorite book in 2012. I hope I helped the rest of you decide to read it, and soon.

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## **Elisabeth says**

3 stars

I really enjoyed Enclave, however, this one didn't live up to my expectations. There was too much teenage romance drama. I wanted to see more of the world and more of the Freaks. :\

I haven't decided if I'm going to continue onto Horde.

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## karen says

this three star rating should not be a mark against this book; i am just giving it a three because i liked it slightly less than *enclave*, to which i gave four stars, and that is the way i do math...

and of course the first book in a series is usually the best: new characters, new setting, exciting world-building; everything is designed to reel you in and make you want more.

this second book is more concerned with character development. and probably, upon a re-read, i will like this one just as much as i liked *enclave*, once i can see the bigger picture.

because this story is important. it is no longer about deuce's struggle to survive, but her struggle to adapt.

deuce has come out from the underground, from her rigidly structured social system where survival from the freaks was ensured by designating certain highly-specialized roles to its members, because this is dystopian YA and we have to have our factions, right? and her role was a huntress, and she is oh so very good at the fighting. but now she is aboveground, in a protected township, with people who have formed a society that is more recognizable to the reader. these people have managed to form a true community, despite the threat of the monsters at their door.

and deuce is learning that her old way of thinking just doesn't apply here.

this is a more reflective book than *enclave*, one where deuce is given the space to consider her past actions, and develop emotional attachments that just weren't possible in her underground life.

don't worry, there are still plenty of action scenes, and they are great, but they are just not the focus as they were in the first book.

it is more about adaptive morality, and the ways in which people respond to threats, and the lengths they will go to survive, but also about forgiveness, empathy, and understanding how where people have come from defines their behavior. once distanced from her enclave, and after meeting fade, stalker, tegon, and now these people in salvation, deuce spends much of this book dealing with the messy intrusion of emotions that go against her training as an impassive huntress, but which will, ultimately, make her better-equipped not just to survive, but to *live*.

*Until tonight, I had thought of her only as someone giving me a place to stay out of obligation, out of charity. I hadn't known she cared. Why would she? I wasn't a proper girl, nobody she'd have chosen for her kin. And yet her regard was unmistakable; she had been worried about me. I didn't think anybody ever had been before. I was a Huntress, so if I went out and died, then I had done my job.*

she is learning how to become more receptive to emotional concerns that were not part of her training, and it is difficult to shake her past.

*The enclave had its rules and didn't permit bonds to form between offspring and parents. For the first time, I almost understood what a loss Fade had suffered, because he could remember both of his.*

it is that "almost" that kills me. oofa.

some quick notes about stalker: i know a lot of people are enraged that he is a leg on this love triangle, because of his past, and what he and his gang did to girls. and i am not one to give a thumbs-up to a rapist, but context is everything, isn't it? we love deuce because she is fierce and independent, but it's not like her past doesn't have some black marks. and she acknowledges this, as she makes stalker's case for him:

*...it was hard for me to blame him when he hadn't been taught otherwise. The things I'd done on the elder's orders filled me with hot shame now. I had killed an innocent man as a test of loyalty, and I'd let them murder a brat in cold blood. My own hands weren't clean. Maybe Tegan's were; and she'd never hurt anyone who didn't deserve it. I couldn't help what I'd done before I learned it was wrong. I could only do better in the future. And the same held true for Stalker, whether anybody else believed it or not. Whether he could rise above the person he'd been in the gangs, well, that rested squarely in his own hands.*

i can't help but think that this is an authorial response to the stalker-hatred. deuce does this a lot in this book; she never justifies what stalker did, or makes apologies for him, but in her new home, she is able to understand more, and become more sympathetic and understanding to different situational necessities: the things we do to survive, when we don't know the whole story, and the only reality is the day-to-day struggle to stay alive and ensure the future of humanity, which is a pretty big battle for a buncha teenagers, yeah? her people cast out the sick and injured to die, and bred the useless attractive people simply because they seemed to have no other purpose... that's not much better than what stalker and the wolves did. and she realizes it, even if tegan doesn't.

this is a rather long passage, so i am putting it in a spoiler, but i don't think it is technically a spoiler for anything, if you have read the first book.

(view spoiler)

so, you see. it's a lot to think about, for our deuce.

but enough about all that - i totally get why people are skeeved out by stalker, but honestly, the teen-relationship stuff in this book is a little strained, anyway. it is the weakest part of the book. it is great that deuce is learning and growing, becoming more socialized and able to expand her worldview and overcome her training to allow emotions to factor in - to see that there is joy to be had in other people - in family, in romance, but all the running away from her feelings and not understanding them and denying them and blahdiblah. i think it is just that i have read three books in a row now where that was happening to the female lead, and it is just so maddening to me.

but it was good, and it is a very high three stars for me, and oh yeah:

cliffhanger ending! cliffhanger ending!!

dammit.

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## Jen (The Starry-Eyed Revue) says

**\*\*Possible (mild) spoilers for *Enclave*\*\***

Wow, even a week after finishing this book, I'm still having a difficult time putting my thoughts into coherent sentences. There is no Middle Book Syndrome to speak of here. *Outpost* is all fast-paced action and unpredictable plot twists. But after the insanity in *Enclave*, I shouldn't have expected anything less. And legions of Ann Aguirre fans are probably shaking their heads at me, thinking, "I could've told you so."

I love that in *Outpost*, we get to see more of the world top-side and how those survivors are living, as opposed to the glimpses we got in the ruins and in the tunnels in *Enclave*. Now that Deuce and her companions have been whisked away to Salvation, literally and metaphorically, we get to see the type of life the adult survivors have created for themselves. The amount of time spent expanding upon all facets of Deuce's world – new and old – never seemed cumbersome or tedious, and it served to help characterize the townsfolk and explain why some of them felt as they did toward Deuce. The brief history lessons show the reader that, although the citizens of Salvation have majorly regressed, the setting is North America in the probably not-so-distant future. Something horrific has plagued the country, resulting in the creation of the Freaks...or Muties as the citizenry of Salvation tends to call them. In other words, it was not always this way, and we most likely brought this destruction upon ourselves.

Deuce is finding her new life in Salvation rather difficult to acclimate herself to. She has to learn how to navigate friendships, family and love, as well as keep a low profile where some of the townsfolk are concerned, which is easier said than done. Deuce is an ace with her knives, but she's a novice with her heart. She undergoes more of an emotional journey than a physical one in this novel, and it shows in the growth of her character. But the good people of Salvation do not see things in this respect; they feel that a woman should not wield weapons, nor should she do a man's work, for fear of bringing the wrath of God down upon them all.

And then there's the matter of Fade. I was glad that these two found each other down in the tunnels. Deuce is the yin to Fade's yang; he's the light to her darkness. They are drawn to each other as opposites often are, but because of some misunderstanding, they keep their distance from each other in Salvation. If you've seen other reviews, you've probably read tales of a love triangle, and yes, the outline for it is there. But I'm still not convinced it exists. Stalker has made his feelings more than clear to Deuce, but Fade is the one who taught Deuce how to love and be kind, and her heart belongs to him. I maintain that Stalker is simply there to complicate matters. Well, that, and the fact that he's a pretty badass zombie killer himself.

This novel had me pondering a lot of things where the end of days are concerned. Would people's religious beliefs change, for better or worse, should the end of the world prove near? How many of us would resort back to the ways of old? What if it meant the difference between life and death? Would we go back to persecuting those who did not believe the same, just to ensure our own survival?

I loved *Outpost* even more than I enjoyed *Enclave*, which is saying a lot. *Outpost* is such an explosive continuation to Deuce's already exhilarating story; I was so emotionally and physically drained after finishing this book. I guess I'm not as ready for the Zombie Apocalypse as I'd previously believed. \*sigh\* It appears that I have a lot more preparations to make...

*Thanks to Macmillan for providing an ARC for review!*

My full review and other related media can be found at The Starry-Eyed Revue.

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## Nicole says

Unsurprisingly, I liked *Outpost* as much as I liked *Enclave* if not even more. It kept me interested since the first chapter. I just liked less analysing sometimes. It was useless. And more description (shockingly). But this book still was great.

After being rescued by Longfoot, Deuce and her friends settled in the Salvation and each one of them was "adopted" by a family there. Our heroine is living now with the lovely Mama Oaks and her husband. Even though her new parents are so kind, good and even understanding (at least most of the time), she's finding it hard to adapt. Everyone is gossiping about her. Girls are supposed to work at home and work not want to fight and kill Freaks, wear dresses and cashmere instead of pants and gears. She's the intruder here. Fade is acting strangely. He's scarcely talking to her. Only interferes when she's bullied by the natives. And let's not talk about school. She's fighting material after all and useless for history lessons. Stalker seems to be the only one who understands her and sharing her situation. That's why she's spending most of her time training with him. But it doesn't look like that for the others. Tegan has been clearly avoiding her. Well, who can blame her for wanting to blend?

This piece won't last long. Summer is coming and they'll have to plant outside their post. Then collect harvest and visit some nearby towns for goods. When the first attempt was destroyed by Freaks, who seems to only get smarter, they decide to retry and protect the crops this time. Their enemies are getting stronger and clearly planning something big and dangerous. But what is it?

Deuce is as amazing as ever, even though she times don't get it fast. Fade is just awesome, but he needs to understand her more. Stalker is more likable in this book. And Tegan is surprisingly braver.

*"I want to drag you off and hide you away," he whispered.*

*"Why?"*

*"I always knew you were beautiful, but now everyone else will too. I won't be able to keep other boys away from you, and it'll make me crazy."*

I'm sure I'll like *Horde*, with this ending, it seems so promising. The characters are so good that you forget sometimes that Deuce is only 15-16 years old. While this trilogy is one of my favorites, my hopes are very high for the next book.

*"People try to make sense of things, and if they don't know the answers, they make them up, because for some, a wrong answer is better than none."*



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## Wendy Darling says

Reading Outpost gave me an entirely new outlook on Enclave, a book I liked but struggled with somewhat. I really liked this one, though, and I have a much better understanding of the society the author created, as well as an appreciation for what she did with the first book. I need to go back and reread that one sometime with this new perspective...but in the meantime, I'm forging straight ahead to Horde!

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## oliviasbooks says

I breezed through 'Outpost', the sequel to 'Enclave', in a matter of hours and I wish I could go with Deuce and her friends on her next frighteningly dangerous journey through freak-infested territory by devouring 'Horde' right now. It doesn't happen so often that I am that contented with a second/middle volume.

I suppose, I definitely could do without the love-triangle - although it's not a very sharp-angled or annoying one since the heroine's preferences are pretty clear and remain that way. Another tiny blotch is the occasional use of words which Deuce with her cut-off-from-topside-life-and-civilization-background should not know yet.

The rest has been almost perfect: The post-apocalyptic setting, the action, the mystery of the fast evolving zombie freaks, the extraordinarily wonderful heroine, her clashes with an equally strict, but completely different society - world, even - from what she is used to that do not cause her to cower or back down, but also do not tempt her into gloryfying her former life as a Huntress in the College enclave; plus I liked the the accute picture of how circumstances and good or bad experiences form or damage people and how important and necessary second chances can be.

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## Justine says

Razorland continues to be a solid and entertaining series. Deuce is a great character; a strong and confident young woman who strives to know herself better and to grow in her changing environment. As was the case in Enclave, Outpost deals with several complex personal issues in a frank and forthright manner. The lack of angst and drama for the sake of drama in this series is refreshing. The excitement comes from the action in the story, not from unnecessary emotional games.

I'm also loving the length of these books. They are well paced and without sections that feel simply like filler. It seems as if in recent years the page counts of YA Spec Fic books are getting bigger (although that certainly isn't limited to YA), and like so many things, more isn't necessarily better. I've been reading this series straight through without feeling any story fatigue or other signs that it is starting to go on longer than it probably needs too.

So, off to finish the last book of this quite excellent series!

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## **Sarah says**

I won this ARC through a contest on the author's website.

This book begins where Enclave left off. Deuce & Co. (Fade, Stalker and Tegan) are now adjusting to life in the topside town of Salvation. Men and women in Salvation stick to their roles...and Deuce is not a fan. She isn't a girly-girl; she's a fighter. As each member of the group works to fit in, we see them growing up in a more traditional sense. All of them have been through so much that they are wise beyond their years. However, relationships and matters of the heart are new to the group.

Deuce believes that the population of Salvation is living too soft and not taking the dangers of the Freaks/Muties seriously enough. With the support of her mentor, Longshot, Deuce is able to join the town's guard. We see Deuce attempt to reconcile her tough Huntress nature with her own feminine nature. She grasps the importance of relationships and even cultivates a few within Salvation.

I was shocked (though, not completely) with some of the revelations near the end of the book relating to the Freaks/Muties. Deuce & Co. have made it this far. They have no shortage of courage or determination. I loved how the book ended. It was a slightly more positive note and we see the close-knit group band together. Tegan surprised me with her resilience after the horrors of her time with the Wolves. Fade and Stalker are not-quite opposites and I am incredibly curious to see how they manage their tentative truce.

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## **Elena says**

While this is not necessarily one of my favourite trilogies, I still can't wait to see how it ends!

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## **Sarah says**

Everything is different now that Deuce and the others have arrived at Salvation and she's finding it hard to fit in. She's not comfortable with the way they expect girls to dress nicely and learn useful skills like cooking and sewing and the town just don't know what to make of her tomboyish ways. It's also hard being treated like a child and expected to go to school when she's spent so many years fending for herself and helping to protect others in her role as a hunter. Things start to look up when she proves she has the skills to be one of the town guards and is given a job helping to protect the farmers during the summer harvest but as the Freaks continue to get smarter and prove a far greater danger than ever before she's going to have her work cut out for her.

I'm so glad I've finally made a start on this series, it's one I'm really enjoying and I loved seeing how much Deuce grew as a character in this book. What I love about her is that she accepts that she doesn't know everything and she's willing to ask questions and learn what she needs to. She also knows where her strengths are though and she refuses to let anyone put her in a box just because of her gender. I had to admire her for standing up for what she wanted when it would have been so much easier to go along with the town folk's expectations for her. I felt sorry for her as she struggled to find her place though, Tegan found it so much easier to fit in and preferred to spend time with new friends because Deuce and the others reminded her of a difficult time, Fade is still jealous and is also keeping his distance so the only one it seems like she can really rely on is Stalker.

I'll admit I was worried in the first book that it might turn into a dreaded love triangle but I'm convinced now it's not going to happen. Stalker is obviously interested in Deuce but it's very clear she only has feelings for Fade and I can't imagine that changing any time soon. I wasn't at all keen on Stalker's character in the first book - let's face it he's done some horrific and pretty unforgivable things! - but he actually really grew on me in this book. At least he's willing to admit the things he did wrong and he wants to make amends for them and who knows how we would have acted if we'd been born in his shoes. I think one of the things I like most about Deuce is how self aware she is, she recognises that she acts in certain ways because of the way she was raised but she wants to learn and do better and she recognises a similar quality in Stalker. As much as Stalker has grown on me I'm still 100% on team Fade though! I was irritated with him for pushing Deuce away at the beginning of **Outpost** but he's been through a lot and his insecurities were showing. When it comes down to it he always has Deuce's back when she needs him the most and I love seeing them fight alongside each other.

This series is quite brutal and it doesn't shy away from the violence of post-apocalyptic life which makes it feel very believable. There is always plenty of action and I've flown through both books so far so this series certainly didn't suffer with second book syndrome. **Ann Aguirre** has kept the pacing tight and it's clear she has a solid plan on where the series is going from here. After that ending I'm very interested to see what happens to all the characters next and I'm very glad that I don't have to wait a year for the next book to release before I can read it!

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### **Jena says**

I hope there more of Fade & Deuce than the first one! (I was kind of like huh? That's it? With the ending of the last) deuce can kick some a\$\$ tho!

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### **Stacee says**

I think I enjoyed this one a bit more than Enclave. It was interesting to follow Deuce as she settled into Salvation and struggled with the different roles she was expected to take on. From Huntress/adult to school girl/child, she never completely compromised and for that, I adore her.

And Fade? Plenty of swoony lines. I loved his reactions to Deuce when she wore dresses and curled her hair. That his love seemed to grow more when he saw that side of her and that he never tried to get her to change just endeared him to me.

The only downside to getting this ARC is that now I have to wait even longer for the final book.

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### **goldn\_rule says**

I had so much hope for this book after reading (and immensely enjoying) Enclave, only to be quite disappointed.

Let me start with what I think is the biggest flaw of this book. Stalker. In my mind, I keep seeing all the violence on his tab. (Oh how the rape was so not subtly implied!) There's just no redemption nor restitution

for such a grave transgression. Comparing him to Fade is a really bad idea. Making him a 'potential' love interest is just downright creepy. Every moment Deuce spends with him makes me cringe. And while I still enjoyed the dynamics of the Fade - Deuce "partnership", the Fade - Deuce - Stalker love triangle made my skin crawl. It also pains me to notice how the once ferocious Fade turned into this sappy Edward Cullen clone. It's like seeing Hamlet standing in as Romeo. It's probably the other characters Tegan, Momma Oaks, Edmund, Longshot and the Freaks who saved the story from a train wreck.

The storytelling is just not as great as the first installment either. It didn't draw me in the way Enclave did. (I apologize for the comparison for I cannot help it.). Furthermore, there were parts that seem inconsequential to the story. Don't get me wrong, I still think the premise of Outpost was awesome, but the elements of the book just didn't come together the way the first book did.

While fans of Ann Aguirre and the Razorland series might still find this book amazing, it just didn't do it for me.

However, I am giving Outost 3 stars, because I loved Enclave, and I am hopeful that somehow the third book will redeem the blunders of Book 2.

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### **Mary says**

September 2012? Really?? Fml. Well, I wish I woulda waited to read Enclave.. the anticipation is killing me!

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I like the cover :]

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### **Patricia Crowther says**

I really enjoyed this one. It kinda reminded me why I love YA so much. I can't understand why I don't see more people reading it. It was even really sad at times and that ending promises great things for the next instalment.

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### **Courtney says**

I have to admit that I am love with this book. I loved Deuce and Fade and I am SOOO glad she made it clear to Stalker early on that things weren't going anywhere between them. I can never get over Stalker being a rapist and I will never see him as a love interest. Plus, he feels very manipulative to me... For instance, when Deuce was going to save Fade and he is all like Kiss me, kiss me before you go... Really, I think that was manipulative, this girl is going to save her boyfriend and all you can think of is getting her to kiss you... Seriously??? Not to mention, he wants her to leave becasue there is nothing to fight or kill in the beginning... Deuce NEEDS the love she finds in Momma Oaks and Edmund, she needs the family unit and she needs Fade...

I did hate that Fade went through what he wet through but I understand his response... Noe did I agree with it, no, but I understand it. Think of how many soliders we send to war and who see something that none of

their training has prepared them for and come home to the ones they love and they do not know how to express what is going on with them? Ever stop to think that maybe he is traumatized because he being captured made him feel weak? Made him feel like he was no longer "STRONG" enough to be what Deuce needs? Maybe he isn't ready to tell Deuce everything that happened? Maybe he doesn't want to feel like she pities him? Maybe he is traumatized because of what he saw because he is tired of having to fight for his right to live and wants to settle down and be happy, and seeing the Freaks and what they have planned for the humans makes him lose hope... There is nothing wrong with that especially if he is in love and wants more than to be a hunter for the rest of his days... Not to mention he is 18 years old... Grown men couldn't handle some of what he has seen and he is being called weak for taking a step back and trying to figure things out for himself.

I am glad the Deuce is in it for the long haul. Fade needs that and she will prove that love can prevail even in the worse of situations... I hope that their persistence is rewarded in book 3.

I am anxious for Horde... I hope that they find what they are looking for and eliminate the Freaks and I hope they find a home...

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## **Anagha Uppal says**

\*This review contains some spoilers, especially for those who have not read Enclave\*

That second paragraph of the synopsis reminds me of *Ashes* by Ilsa Bick and how much I can't wait to read this book!!!

July 26: Just got an ARC of *Outpost*. Color me excited!!

September 27 -

This probably sounds redundant because *everyone's* *Outpost* reviews are starting with this, but the most important you should get out of this review is that its plot is very unlike *Enclave*. Whereas *Enclave* was all about surviving in harsh environments, walking until your whole body felt like it would fall over any second, and fighting for dear life; *Outpost* focuses on the relationships between characters, emotional development of the teenagers, and learning more about the enemy.

Deuce, Fade, Tegan and Stalker has finally found a place that (seems to be) safe and they are relieved to be rid of the danger of Freaks, but there are problems of a different kind at *Salvation*. For one, Deuce and Fade are so different from the teens here, there are constantly teased and ridiculed. Girls are expected to cook and sew and wear pretty dresses here, and Deuce cannot tolerate these rules. She joins the summer patrols to protect the growers only to be threatened for indecent activities. She does find a family for the first time in her life when she is taken in by a loving and understanding couple - it is here she learns tenderness and devotion and the meaning of love.

Once she joins the *Outpost* to protect the town's crops from the Freaks, Deuce starts noticing strange things such as fire being stolen from the campsite, and she realizes what this means - the Freaks are growing sneaky and more intelligent and they seem to have a personal grudge against the humans! Nobody listens to her, and eventually, her dear Fade and his tent-mate are taken from the campsite to a giant settlement of Freaks and only Deuce and Stalker can save them.

*Outpost's* pace is a lot slower than *Enclave* and most dystopians I have read, but I suppose that's what makes

this book so unique. It is so heartwarming that in the midst of all that despair and danger, one can find a love so pure and honest. What hasn't changed since Enclave is Aguirre's impeccable writing style that makes me jump into Deuce's head and want to stay there :)

Deuce is one of the few characters who can successfully pull off being both a kick-ass MC as well as an emotional girl in love. When she talks about her fighting, you can feel the passion radiating off the page, and when she and Fade are together... well, MOAR passionfulness!! Those two have the sweetest relationship ever, up until... well, I can't spoil *that*.

During Enclave, I was all for Fade. I felt like there was no competition at all and Stalker was just a random dude who tried to kiss Deuce. She didn't even like it (much)! It was the same case with Outpost (except you learn just how deep Stalker's feelings do). By the end, though, I really don't know what to think. Fade's still Fade, but Stalker has changed, become deeper and more meaningful. Fade's beautiful and sweet and emotional, while Stalker is loyal and so much like Deuce herself. I really don't know what to make of it.

I am dying to know how the Freaks (or Muties) came about and what the humans did to elicit this kind of response. By the end, we are made aware that these aren't just zombies but mutants. I can't wait to join the foursome (together again) on another heart-stopping adventure in *Monsters*.

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