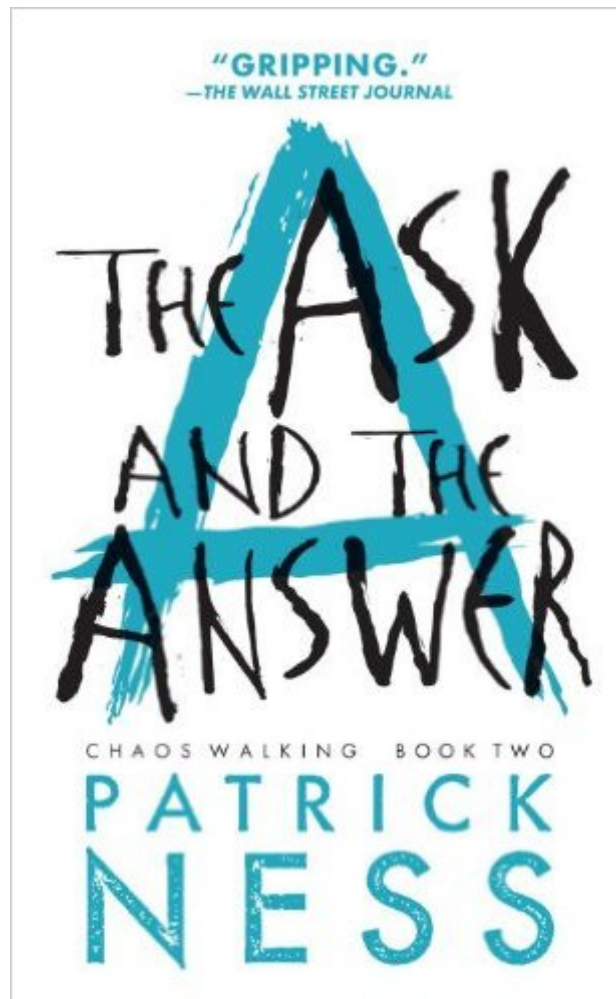


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The Ask And The Answer (Reissue With Bonus Short Story): Chaos Walking: Book Two



Synopsis

Part two of the literary sci-fi thriller follows a boy and a girl who are caught in a warring town where thoughts can be heard and secrets are never safe. Reaching the end of their flight in *THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO*, Todd and Viola did not find healing and hope in Haven. They found instead their worst enemy, Mayor Prentiss, waiting to welcome them to New Prentisstown. There they are forced into separate lives: Todd to prison, and Viola to a house of healing where her wounds are treated. Soon Viola is swept into the ruthless activities of the Answer, while Todd faces impossible choices when forced to join the mayor's oppressive new regime. In alternating narratives the two struggle to reconcile their own dubious actions with their deepest beliefs. Torn by confusion and compromise, suspicion and betrayal, can their trust in each other possibly survive?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gold Star Award Winner! It is important to read the first book in the CHAOS WALKING trilogy, *THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO*, before beginning *THE ASK AND THE ANSWER*. Patrick Ness doesn't leave anything out when he begins book two of the trilogy; *THE ASK AND THE ANSWER* picks up exactly where *THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO* leaves off. Todd, after being captured by Mayor Prentiss' men, wakes up with thoughts of Viola. He is beside himself with worry since Viola was dying in his arms when they were captured. Is she dead or alive? No one will tell him, and it is consuming his thoughts. Thoughts that everyone around him can hear. While everyone around

Todd can hear what he is thinking, he can't hear the thoughts around him. It seems Mayor Prentiss has found a way to stop his Noise and the Noise of his men, thus explaining how Todd and Viola were lured into Haven and captured. Mayor Prentiss, now calling himself President Prentiss, uses Todd's concern for Viola to control him and force him into working with Prentiss' son, Davy, the one who shot Viola in the first place. Todd can't stand the people around him and feels the tasks assigned to him are barbaric and inhumane. Fear for Viola's safety prevents him from going against Prentiss and he suffers along with the other townspeople as security gets tighter and more strict every day because of a rebel uprising by a group calling themselves The Answer. Then...bombs...begin...to...explode. Patrick Ness has done it again. THE ASK AND THE ANSWER contains the same heart-pounding excitement as THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO. The reader will experience Todd's internal struggle with every decision he is forced to make in order to survive under Prentiss' control.

I won't lie, I am really disappointed in and exhausted by this novel. "The Ask and the Answer" is very little like the first book in the trilogy "The Knife of Never Letting Go." If the first one is a fast-paced chase kind of story, which keeps you hooked by gradual revelation of the New World's mysteries of Noise, Haven, Viola's origin, etc., this book is basically an account of a civil war between Mayor Prentiss's army and the resistance called here the Answer. The book raises various issues of genocide, war ethics, torture, and holding onto one's identity under pressure. All issues are interesting, but I find myself surprisingly uninterested in them, mainly because in this book I am strangely detached from Todd and Viola. In these tough circumstances they are nothing more than naive petulant children used as pawns in various evil plans. They are described as so strongly attached that they are willing to do almost anything for one another and yet they are so easily led to mistrust each other. This mistrust constantly gets them and people around them in trouble, it's painful to read. I think pretty much in this book you simply can't find even one likable person. Todd is the one I dislike the most at this point. No matter how hard the author tries to make us believe that Todd still holds on to his innocence and thus is better than everybody else, it's pretty hard to swallow when you know what Todd has done for no good reason than his dear girlfriend left him. In addition, there are the same plot holes as in the first book. I still don't understand the "specialness" of Todd, there is still a lot of build-up and allusions to various secrets that end up being not that interesting or important.

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