



## THE ASK AND THE ANSWER by Patrick Ness

1. Curiously, the beginning section of the book is called The End and the end section is called The Beginning. Why do you think this is?

Todd says: *'This is the end. It's gotta be the end. They won't let me live. They won't let her live.'*

Why do they allow him to live?

2. For much of the book, the narrative is split between Todd and Viola, who have been separated by events. In what way does this affect the storytelling?

How do these two perspectives differ?

3. How do Todd and Viola react when they are finally reunited? And how do you react as a reader to this? What are the frustrations of their separation? How do their parallel existences compare? What impact does this have upon the plot?

4. The town of Haven has been renamed New Prentisstown. What else has changed in the town? Has it been changed for better or for worse?

5. What kind of organisation is the Answer? Would you call them a terrorist group? What are they fighting for, and who is the enemy?

Who is their leader? How does her leadership compare with that of President Prentiss? What are his views towards their leader?

6. Although female animals such as Todd's horse Angharrad have Noise, Mayor Prentiss describes women as 'naturally Noiseless'.

In what way does this make them different? Does it give them an advantage over men, or a disadvantage?

7. What kind of creatures are the Spackle? What is Todd's attitude towards them? How does it alter during the course of the book? What is your reaction to the way The Spackle are treated (such as the fitting of metal bands that can never be removed)?

Does it remind you of any real-life historical events?

8. What is the significance of the phrase **I AM THE CIRCLE AND THE CIRCLE IS ME?**

How and why does Prentiss use this phrase? How does this mantra impact upon Todd? What does it teach him, and when does he use it?

9. *'In this world of numbness and information overload, the ability to feel, my boy, is a rare gift indeed...'*

How does this set Todd apart from other people? Why is this a quality that make him stand out from his peers for the Mayor? How has Todd matured and developed as a person? Has he made a convincing transition into manhood?

10. Why does Prentiss insist upon banding the women of New Prentisstown? How would you feel if you had to be tagged like an animal? Are you surprised when Viola receives her metal band and becomes number 1391?

What are the implications of this tagging? Why does she agree to it? And how will it impact upon her relationship with Todd?

