



NATION by Terry Pratchett

1. The book begins with a prologue that tells '*How Imo made the world*'. What is the relevance of this short chapter to our understanding of the book, and of Mau?

Who is Locaha? How does his philosophy dictate the way that Mau and his people live?

2. '*On the day the world ended Mau was on his way home.*' [page 13]

Why does the author refer to the tsunami in this way, as 'the end of the world'? How is Mau spared, and how does he react to the catastrophic event?

What would you do? How would you survive on a desert island?

3. At what stage of life is Mau? Why is this particularly relevant to the story? What kind of person is he? What qualities does he demonstrate?

How would you feel if you were in Mau's position, if everyone else in your community had been wiped out by a terrible disaster?

4. When Mau first meets Daphne, he calls her 'the ghost girl'. Why does he call her this? What significance does it have? What is her real name? Why does she become Daphne? In what way does this affect the plot?

Do you like your name? Would you ever consider changing it?

5. How do Mau and Daphne first begin to communicate? What sort of techniques do they use? How effective are they? How would you communicate with someone who didn't speak your own language? Why is this part of the book one of the funniest sections?

6. Because they have survived, Mau and the others have '*become what we have to be*'.

Is this what defines us, the circumstances of our lives?

Mau has become the chief even though he is making the transition from boyhood to manhood.

Do you think he would have become the chief under normal circumstances?

7. What sort of relationship does Mau have with the priest Ataba? How well do they get on? Why does Ataba call Mau 'demon boy', and in what way does it help Mau? How do Daphne and Mau's attitudes towards their respective gods compare? Are they both firm believers?

8. Why does Nation become such a haven for tsunami survivors? What does it represent to them? Is it just because it has '*the finest god anchors in the world*'?

9. Who are the 'trouser men'? Why do we find this term so funny, and so apt?

When Mau says of Daphne '*I want to talk to her like a trouser man*' what does he mean? Are the trousers just an item of clothing, or are they symbolic of something else? What effect do they have on Mau when he puts them on?

10. '*it's the kind of ending you get in real life...and isn't the story about being real.*'

Did you want Daphne and Mau to remain together at the end of the story? Did it make the story feel more realistic for you?

Was it inevitable that they had to separate? Do you think they were in love? Do you think that should make a difference? Or is it more important to have a sense of duty?

