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The Ask And The Answer (Chaos Walking Book 2)

"GRIPPING."
—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

THE ASK
AND THE
ANSWER

CHAOS WALKING BOOK TWO

PATRICK
NESS



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

File Size: 3078 KB

Print Length: 530 pages

Publisher: Candlewick Press; 1 Reprint edition (October 18, 2010)

Publication Date: October 18, 2010

Language: English

ASIN: B0044UHVVM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #45,310 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #19

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Issues > Violence #25 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Mysteries &

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Customer Reviews

Patrick Ness has crafted a fantastic story. The story gets far more intense and the horrors the characters experience get much worse. The change to dual perspectives makes for a more complex narrative, with some truths being hidden behind both characters being told different lies.

Expectations are set and nothing goes as planned, but then things change direction several more

times before the sequence concludes. The unpredictability makes for a kinetic read. I had a great time reading this. On to the finale!

With *The Ask and the Answer*, Patrick Ness's *Chaos Walking* trilogy returns with a vengeance. Let me tell you, the second installment of this trilogy will get your heart racing- it's crazy. I will tell you this, the *Chaos Walking* books are the weirdest books you'll ever read- but they are sci-fi dystopia at it's best. "Faith with proof is no faith at all." This second installment, I'll admit- does lag towards the end. But for the most part- Patrick Ness's gift for pacing shines here. In the beginning of the novel (minor spoiler) Todd and Viola are separated upon arriving to Haven- now New Prentissstown. From that point- Viola and Todd embark on two separate journeys. Their character's develop seamlessly. Todd struggles with controlling his noise and committing atrocities to keep Viola alive- and Viola struggles with working for terrorists. *The Ask and the Answer* is a heavy, graphic book- at times its hard to get through- but it's an important book. Though it is a dystopian- I don't feel like the issues that our characters deal with are all that far away. And perhaps, that's what makes this book so good. It gets underneath your skin. I can't wait to start the final volume

I was always one of those students who read the books in high school....and enjoyed them. Now, more than 10 years later, I can still appreciate writing that demonstrates key literary tools. Foreshadowing. Perspective. And a mastery of themes. Oh, yes, the themes. I found myself thinking throughout my time reading this book that it would be great in a high school curriculum. The lessons you can learn. It's almost enough to make me want to be a high school English teacher. Just to teach this book. I know this says very little about the content, but it's an incredibly powerful story. I'm not a sci-fi fan usually, but I would beg you not to let that be a deterrent. I would recommend you start with book one, but if you don't want to, I think that's OK too. It's not exactly a page turner, but if you want a good story; if you want great literary skill... just read this book.

The Ask and the Answer is a little bit different than *The Knife of Never Letting Go*...The story pretty much starts where *The Knife*'s cliffy lets us hanging... Viola's life hanging in the balance and Todd facing down evil Mayor Prentiss with no hope in sight. But in part 2 of *Chaos Walking*, Viola and Todd become separated, and so the story is told from two perspectives. His and hers. Through Todd we learn Haven surrendered to Mayor Prentiss, who then changed Haven's name to New Prentissstown and declared himself President of the New World. Mayor Prentiss is a sick twist, no

doubt about it, and he didn't waste time learning that the best way to keep Todd in line is by holding Viola hostage. Todd is sent to work, under Davy Prentiss Jr's supervision, as a slave-driver, keeping the Spackle prisoners clearing the land. Through Viola, we meet the healers, and a new character by the name of Mistress Coyle. Mistress Coyle tries to develop a relationship with Viola, asking her questions about the new settlers coming in, and pumping for information about the invading army, and trying to get Viola to understand that the decision to surrender was not a unanimous one. Unfortunately for Viola, it takes her too long to figure out Mistress Coyle isn't the beacon of hope she promises to be. As a cold war turns red hot, Chaos Walking dives deeper into darker themes. Men and Women are separated by thought in book 1, but in book 2 they're separated by opinion, by walls, by curfews. And as President Prentiss's dictatorship thrives, he takes the Spackle servants of Haven and turns them into chattel. As President Prentiss begins to settle into his new role, revolutionaries flee, organize, and fight back; people get caught in the cross fire and terror spreads... Bringing the thin line that separates terrorism and revolution under stress. I loved getting a closer look at Davy Prentiss Jr,. In book 1, he depicted as being as awful as his father and in book 2 we get to see why that is. First he's raised by a sociopath, then he's cast in the role of forever trying and failing to achieve his father's love... And as the new president tries to keep his new government together, the more it becomes blatantly obvious that blood's got little to do with family. Todd and Viola are put under increasing pressure to conform and behave, so the other may live, so they might someday reunite... Even as they hold their survival first, they begin to recognize the cost of choosing sides in a war... The cost of lives of those stuck in the middle. And just as the story becomes overloaded with moral and emotional dilemmas, just as a full scale war for possession of the New World begins-- Another cliffhanger ending. The only reason this story missed out on another five star rating: I felt the author became inconsistent with Todd's narration. He only remembered once in awhile that Todd couldn't spell big words... Although that may have been an attempt at removing the last of the humor and evolving the story into more serious material... I was also a little peeved at another cliffhanger.

I'm very hot and cold with this series. This book was good but not as good as the first one. I read straight through it, but by the end, I didn't really care. I bought the third book but haven't even cracked it yet. I think the author did a great job developing relationships between characters in a realistic way. This was one of my favorite things in the first book and it was even better in book two. The author is great at allowing his characters to grow, without making them unrecognizable. Because of this the author really avoided many annoying YA tropes, which I really appreciated. That

being said, the motivations of the primary antagonist were very weak for me in the first book but the non-stop adventure kept me furiously turning pages and wanting more at the end. This book has the same problems with the antagonist but without the action-packed plot. To make matters worse, the author added in new antagonists (or quasi-antagonists) whose motivations were equally poorly developed. That was a bit of a problem for me. I will definitely finish the series at some point, but the end of this book just didn't leave me wanting more. I really like Ness's writing style and will likely check out other things he's written.

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