

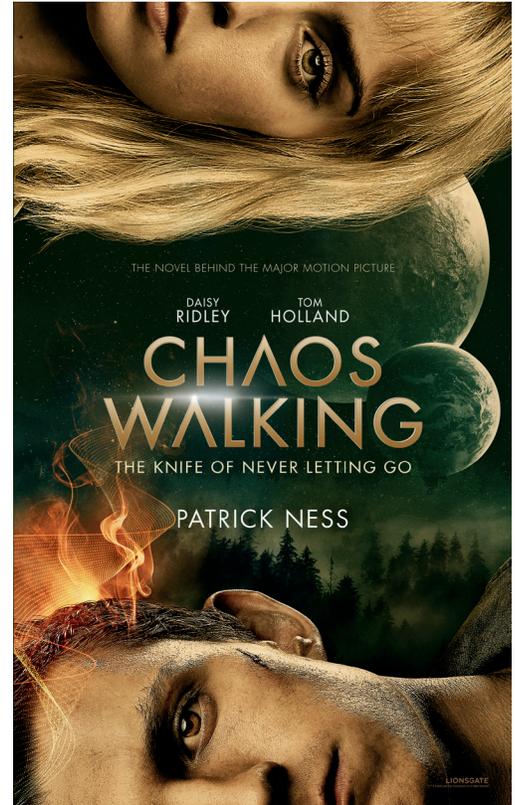
# THE KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO

The Novel Behind the *Chaos Walking* Movie

BY PATRICK NESS

## READERS' GUIDE

1. How does Todd's voice, including his grammar and spelling, reflect his environment and upbringing?
2. Reading and writing aren't allowed in Prentissstown. How is Todd's journey affected by his lack of education?
3. How does the denial of education allow totalitarian governments, like that in Prentissstown, to control their citizens?
4. Why do you think Noise is indicated with a different font?
5. Dystopian novels—ones that describe a future that is dark and often fearful—give the author a chance to comment on present-day society. How does Noise translate into our current lives? Where do you see Noise in the present day? What positive and negative impact does Noise have on our lives?
6. How do Todd's actions against the Spackle change him? How do they change Viola's feelings about him? Do they change your feelings about Todd?
7. Think about Patrick Ness's use of gender roles in the novel. How are they similar to and different from contemporary gender roles? How does Viola change Todd's views of women and their roles in his society?
8. Hope is an important topic in the last hundred pages of the book. Todd and Viola's hope rests in Haven. Do they find what they had hoped to at the end of the road?
9. The men in the novel can hear one another's thoughts via Noise, but do they really know one another? Even though Todd can't hear Viola's Noise, he discovers that he can read her thoughts and feelings anyhow. Think about the development of their friendship. How is it that Todd knows these things in the midst of Viola's silence?
10. What role does the knife play in Todd's views of a person's strength and weakness? Is he right?
11. If you were adapting the book into a movie, how would you handle Noise?
12. Do you prefer to read a book prior to seeing a movie adaptation, or vice versa?



Patrick Ness is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *A Monster Calls*, which was made into a major motion picture, won both the Carnegie Medal and the Kate Greenaway Medal, and was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. He is also the author of the other two titles in the Chaos Walking trilogy, *The Ask and the Answer* and *Monsters of Men*, and of *More Than This*. Born in Virginia, Patrick Ness spent more than a decade in London and now lives in California.



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