

# MORE THAN THIS

by Patrick Ness

A boy named Seth drowns, desperate and alone in his final moments, losing his life as the pounding sea claims him. But then he wakes. He is naked, thirsty, starving. But alive. How is that possible? He *remembers* dying, his bones breaking, his skull dashed upon the rocks. So how is he here? And where is this place? It looks like the suburban English town where he lived as a child, before an unthinkable tragedy happened and his family moved to America. But the neighborhood around his old house is overgrown, covered in dust, and abandoned. What's going on? And why is it that whenever he closes his eyes, he falls prey to vivid, agonizing memories that seem more real than the world around him? Seth begins a search for answers, hoping that he might not be alone, that this might not be the hell he fears it to be, that there might be more than just this. . . .

The line between life and death — and between this world and another — blurs and twists and sometimes disappears altogether in this uplifting and confounding adventure about a teenager who abandons hope, then learns to embrace it.



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Also available in audio

COMMON CORE

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help your students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL**), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL**). Questions can also be used as writing prompts for independent work.



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

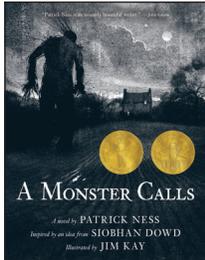
1. The line between life and death is usually very clear, but not in this novel. What do you think happens to Seth after he drowns? Does he actually return to England? Is it all in his mind? Does it matter? In what ways does death make Seth better at being alive?
2. Once you've finished the last chapter, return to the first. How are these two chapters similar in style and very different in mood? What has fundamentally changed in Seth by the end of the novel?
3. What are Seth's reasons for committing suicide? When he steps into the ocean, why does he believe that "he had never, not once in his life, felt this powerful" (page 158)? How does suicide make him feel powerful? Should it?
4. When Seth finds himself back in his English hometown, he suspects that he is in hell. Why? What makes him think that he deserves to be in hell? Does he?
5. Tomasz meets Seth while rescuing him from the Driver in the first of Seth's many just-in-the-nick-of-time rescues. Why does Seth think this keeps happening to him? Why do you?
6. "Know yourself," Regine says to Seth, "and go in swinging" (page 229). At what points in the novel does Seth act on her advice? How does it transform the way he lives?
7. Regine tends to be pessimistic. Tomasz tends to be optimistic. How do they depend on each other? Why does Seth need both of them?
8. Seth's friends in Washington consider him English, but Tomasz and Regine view him as American. Where does Seth belong?
9. How was Seth's hometown destroyed? What glimmers of hope exist for its future?
10. Why is the Driver pursuing Seth and his friends? What is its ultimate goal? Who (or what) do you think controls the Driver? What is the reason for the Driver's act of mercy at the end of the novel?
11. Seth believes that "it's possible to die before you die" (page 74). What does he mean by that? Which characters in this novel seem dead before their physical death? Why?
12. Seth's brother was abducted when their family lived in England. Why does Seth feel responsible? Should he? Who else bears responsibility?
13. "People see stories everywhere," says Regine. "We take random events and we put them together in a pattern so we can comfort ourselves with a story, no matter how much it obviously isn't true" (page 217). What do you think? Do stories do more than comfort? How does Seth use stories? How do you?
14. Regina suspects that a system malfunction explains why she, Tomasz, and Seth are alive again. "We were supposed to die in this world, too," she says (page 219). What else might explain their survival?
15. What were Tomasz and Regine doing just before they died? How is the way they died reflected in the way they now live?
16. "I can't be anyone's everything," Gudmund tells Seth. "Not even yours" (page 423). What does Seth initially want from Gudmund? Why does he feel betrayed by Gudmund? What does Seth come to understand about Gudmund?
17. As Seth is drowning, "Please, is all he thinks. Just the one word, echoing through his head" (page 3). When Seth fears that he is dying yet again, he says please again (page 449). In each instance, what is he asking for? To whom is he pleading?
18. How does the book's title capture what Seth has discovered about himself? What does it say to you about how to live your own life?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Patrick Ness** is the author of the internationally acclaimed *A Monster Calls*, the only book to win both the Carnegie Medal and the Kate Greenaway Medal. His *Monsters of Men*, the final volume of the Chaos Walking trilogy, is also a Carnegie Medal winner. Born on a Virginia army base and raised throughout the United States, Patrick Ness now lives in England.

## PRAISE FOR A MONSTER CALLS



“A gift from a generous storyteller and a potent piece of art.”  
— *The New York Times Book Review*

★ “A profoundly moving, expertly crafted tale . . . a singular masterpiece.”  
— *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

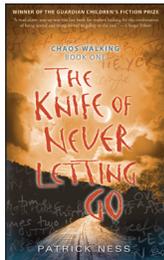
“Patrick Ness is an insanely beautiful writer.”  
— John Green, *Time Magazine*

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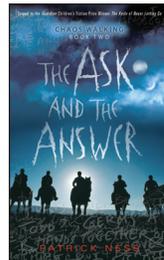
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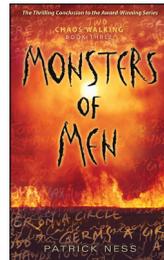
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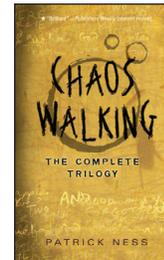
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