

Book Review:

More Than This by Patrick Ness

A boy drowns, desperate and alone in his final moments. He dies.

Then he wakes, naked and bruised and thirsty, but alive.

How can this be? And what is this strange, deserted place?

As he struggles to understand what is happening, the boy dares to hope. Might this not be the end? Might there be more to this life, or perhaps this afterlife?

Seth drowns off the coast of his small coastal American town, in what seems like a terrible accident. But he also wakes up in his British hometown, the one he left when he was young after an event that fractured his family. And he also meets two other people, in a world it seems they aren't supposed to be in - Reggie and Tomasz, both of whom tell him they are supposed to be dead. They are as trapped by the prison nearby as the bodies kept alive in coffins are inside it.

More Than This tells of stories intertwined so deeply you can't separate them out. Seth, Reggie and Tomasz are inextricably interlinked, as are the people in Seth's life before his death. They are linked by the dumb luck of experience, or mutual friendship, but also through shared trauma. More Than This tells the story of a world caught in the spiral of denial, one that chose to flee from the disaster it had created rather than fixing it. It tells of fear - Seth, Reggie and Tomasz's fears, both shared and individual, and the fears of the world they did and did not live in - and how it can paralyse.

But, More Than This also leaves its reader with a central message, a last piece of advice in the fight against fear:

Know yourself, and go in swinging.

- **Kirsty, Year 11, Thorp Academy**