

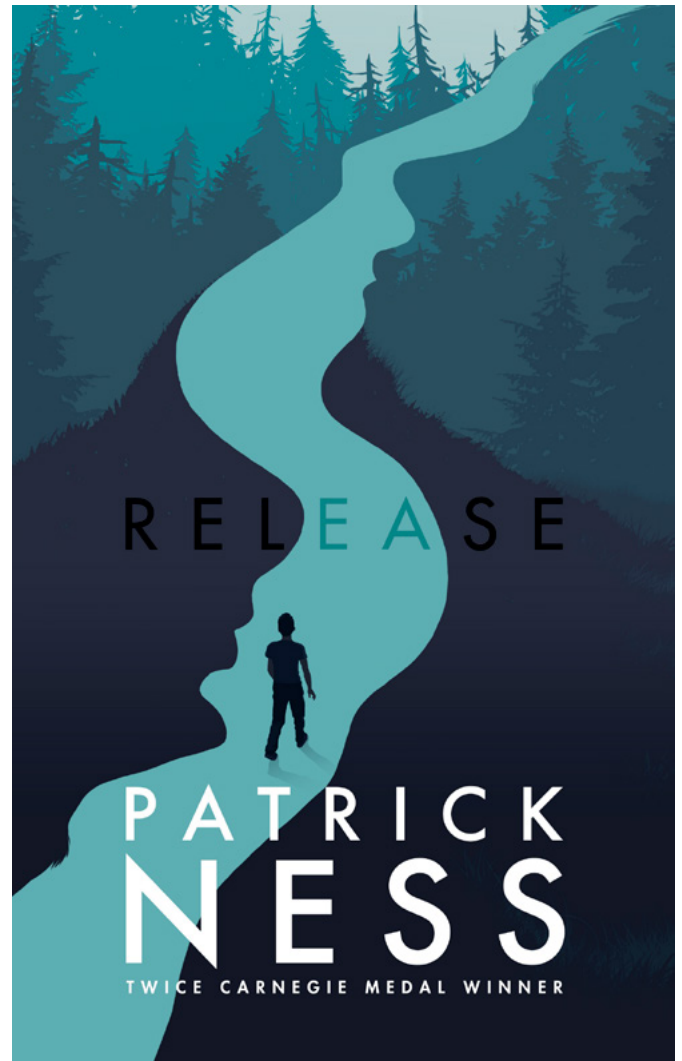
# RELEASE

By Patrick Ness

Walker Books

2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist,  
eligible for Amnesty CILIP Honour

**'Ness demonstrates his profound understanding of the complexities of being a young adult and what it means to live secretly, in fear of disapproval and burdened with shame. Elegant, flawless writing.'** *Judging panel*



## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Article 3:** We have the right to life, and to live in freedom

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book takes place over one day – a defining day for Adam Thorn, 17, who is getting ready for his ex-boyfriend's going-away party. As the day unfolds we learn his family, job and relationships are at risk and he won't come out of it unchanged. Meanwhile a second story across town follows a ghost who has risen from the lake.

*Release* explores the impact of discrimination, cruelty and violence but also the potential to find ways beyond that. Human rights belong to all of us – although some people are denied them because of their gender, sexuality and class. This book speaks up for anyone made to feel inferior and says that other people's opinions of you aren't always that important.

### HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS STORY

The right to equality; to safety; to be free from cruel and degrading treatment; to be protected and cared for; to have opinions and to be heard; to have enough money to live on; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

### YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

#### Sexuality

- Adam says 'Sometimes a guide or history or a long-established literature would have been useful' (page 19). Why do we need characters we can identify with? What message does it send if people like us are missing?
- 'Why do you have to call yourself anything?' (page 43). What would you say to Angela?

- Adam believes that saying he is gay is ‘not a reduction. It’s a key’ (page 44). Do you agree?

### Religion

- Adam worries he will be sent to an ‘ex-gay camp’ (page 36). What impact does this have on him?
- What would you say to Marty when he says ‘It’s not real love’ (page 60)?
- We have the right to believe in what we want and to practise our religion. We also have the right to be safe, free from degrading treatment and to be treated equally. How can these different rights be balanced with each other?
- How do you want Adam’s parents to behave?
- What does Adam’s father mean when he uses the word ‘healing’ (page 216)? What does the word mean to Adam?

### Family

- Marty and Adam are treated differently. Double standards within family – how does that make you feel?
- ‘They’re your parents. They’re meant to love you *because. Never in spite of*’. Discuss. How do you want Adam’s parents to treat them?
- Are you surprised when Adam’s dad says ‘I wish you felt you could be completely honest with me. It hurts my head that you’re afraid’ (page 207)? How can families ensure that people feel it is safe to be honest?
- What do you think about Marty’s behaviour? Do you believe it will change?
- What might happen next for the Thorn family? What do you hope for?

### Violence against women

- Is anyone surprised by what happened to Katie? Do you think people who use or are addicted to drugs are vulnerable?

- Angela rages against any, even slight, suggestion that Katie brought it on herself. Why?
- What was Katie/The Queen going to do to Tony? How should we respond to men who are violent to women?
- Who could have protected Katie?

### Sexual harassment and assault

- Why does Katie’s mother beat her when she reveals her boyfriend has assaulted her?
- Adam’s dad blames Adam for leading Wade on. How often do adults really listen and pay attention? What difference might it make?
- After Wade assaults him, Adam thinks ‘maybe it didn’t even happen’. Why?
- Why didn’t anyone try to stop Wade? What should happen to him?

### ACTIVITY

Imagine a Thorn family dinner one month after the events of *Release*. Write a scene, chapter or set of four diary entries (one for Adam, Marty and their mum and dad). Think about the impact of the day’s events, and how the pregnancy, planned marriage and revelation about Adam’s relationship are thought about and talked about.

### RESEARCH

Research Amnesty International’s campaign for LGBTI rights including equal marriage in Northern Ireland. [www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/lgbti-rights](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/lgbti-rights)

‘You have no idea how hard I work to love you.’  
*Adam’s dad*

## WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

When using these notes, you can download for reference:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights simplified version, especially useful for younger children [amnesty.org.uk/udhr](http://amnesty.org.uk/udhr)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [unicef.org/crc](http://unicef.org/crc)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [amnesty.org.uk/education](http://amnesty.org.uk/education)



The CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Children’s Book Awards

