

ESSAY TOPICS Knife of Never Letting Go

English 9 Ms. D.

1. **The Knife**— discuss the symbolism throughout the novel and how the knife finally completes the journey.
2. **Too much information**— Privacy - compare the Noise to your teenage world today—the internet and social media is rewiring brains and emotional states, it is redefining adolescence—how does this impact lives? challenges? advantages?— what kind of FILTER is necessary to control this kind of 21st century NOISE?
3. **Religion and Fanaticism**—Aaron represents the extreme side of religion and what happens in this extreme—how does his character develop through the story and what symbolic references are made throughout to religion, i.e. sacrifice, martyr, “I am the circle and the circle is me.”, to kill you must hate, how do these things play into the psychopathic world that Aaron lives in?
4. **Self Deprecation Negative Talk**—throughout the novel Todd is constantly down on himself and continuously engages in this verbal/emotional abuse of self worth— how does this theme develop throughout the story—does he overcome this?
5. **Loyalty**—this is a journey that is not done alone, “never leave me”, who and what events demonstrate loyalty and strength in supporting, offering hope and empowerment as Todd’s journey unfolds?
6. **Bravery and Cowardice**—a fine line between these two—what defines these attributes and how does this relate to Todd?
7. **Literacy and Language**—throughout the novel we hear profanity toned down and become aware of Todd’s inability to read and spell, how does this reflect on his attitudes of self? Does literacy define a man? How does our society look upon language as an indicator of character? Does it? Are we more tolerant today of slang/ profane vocabulary? Why?
8. **Innocence and Becoming a Man** —“The Hero’s Journey”- Rites of Passage—discuss the rituals in Prentisstown in becoming a man and how that process unfolds for Todd—discuss this journey as a child to a “man”, coward to hero.
9. **War makes Monsters of Men**— Do you agree or disagree? Why? Do you have to “hate” to be able to kill? Did Todd become a monster? Viola? Aaron? Mayor Prentiss? All the men of Prentisstown? How does war impact Todd’s life? How does war affect your world today? What is the cause of war? Can it ever be stopped? How many days of peace has there been on the planet?