



## Discussion Questions: ***Consumption*** by Kevin Patterson

### Questions from Anchor Books

1. The narrator states “any conviction that technology inevitably demeans humans fails on contemplating what must have been the misery of that life,” referring to the Dorset Inuit, who lacked the sophisticated tools of the later Thule Inuit. How do you think contemporary Inuit, as they are portrayed in *Consumption*, feel about technology?
2. In both the Sanatorium scene and in the depiction of Amanda’s friends the boys seem more displaced, more adrift than the girls. Are girls and women affected differently by rapid cultural change than men and boys? Do you find this portrayal convincing?
3. Why was Penny so desperate to find Pauloosie after he went out on the land? Would he have made different decisions had he known her state?
4. Victoria’s kids and Amanda and her friends are similar in age but live in very different places. Do the problems they face better reflect these similarities or these differences?
5. How did the depiction of the hunting scenes affect your understanding of these characters and the Arctic?
6. The author contends that change is harder on children than on adults. Do you agree with this?
7. What is the author’s purpose in interweaving Balthazar’s ruminations with the narrative of the novel? What do you learn about Balthazar that you wouldn’t have otherwise?
8. Who is the real core, the central character of the book: Victoria, Balthazar, the Inuit, Pauloosie, Emo?
9. Why won’t Victoria have anything to do with Balthazar at the end of the novel? Does this seem convincing?
10. What are the differences between Penny and Johanna’s characters and how do they account for their different fates?

11. Is Robertson on the whole, a sympathetic character? Were you surprised to learn who killed him?
12. Children in the book play the role of savior in several instances, especially to Amanda, Johanna and Pauloosie. Does this play a role in the author's portrayal of women as more resilient than men, in the face of cultural change?
13. There are several important members of the celibate orders in the book: Isabelle, Bernard and Raymond. What common role do they play, and why does the author place them so prominently?
14. What does the title *Consumption* mean to you?