



In your Stephen King-endorsed novel *Meat*, the main message we take away from it is that it's okay to persecute against vegetarians. However, which do you think would win in a fight, broccoli or cauliflower?

JDL: Broccoli.

Why?

JDL: It's greener.

But cauliflowers have really good defences, the leaves are super tough.

JDL: Well, it depends on... nah, I'm going for broccoli. It's a stiffer vegetable.

Have you ever had that tender leaf stuff, the purple-sprouting broccoli? It's really tasty.

JDL: Oh yeah, it's great. But that's never going to beat a cauliflower.

No, never. Well, maybe if it ganged up with a leek, it could possi...

JDL: *Never.*

Fair enough. Getting back to the book – without giving too much away, another main theme of *Meat* is that all ginger people are ruthless tyrants. But who would win in a fight, the ginger kid from Harry Potter, or... how

about Frodo Baggins?

JDL: The ginger kid from Harry Potter.

'Cause he's chubbier?

JDL: 'Cause he's *cheekier*. Cheeky people tend to fight better, I find. They don't mind fighting dirty.

But he doesn't have a ring, though. He doesn't have The One Ring.

JDL: He doesn't, but then... what's Frodo going to do with The One Ring anyway? He's only going to make himself invisible. The second he reappears, he's going to get his head kicked in <laughs>

In the book, one of the main protagonists, John Collins (not to be confused with Joan Collins), somehow manages to live off nothing but fresh air and sunshine. I've been trying this diet for the last twenty-four hours, and it doesn't appear to be working. Which do you think is better, the Collins or the Atkins?

JDL: <laughs> I've got to say the Collins! I've tried it myself, you've got to have the right attitude. The Atkins diet is alright, but if you know what you're doing with the Collins diet, you'll flourish!

I heard Jillian McKeith is an advocate.

JDL: <chuckles> Is that right?

So, the setting for the novel, Abyrne, is a desolate town with little aesthetic beauty on the inside and not a great deal of worth surrounding it. With that in mind, which is worse? Abyrne, or Southend-on-Sea, Essex?

JDL: <pauses for thought> I've never been to Southend-on-Sea.

Mmm, don't. What about Swindon?

JDL: <bursts into laughter> Never been to Swindon!

Plymouth?

JDL: I've been to Plymouth!

Okay, which is worse, Abyrne or Plymouth? Tread lightly.

JDL: I think I'd prefer to live in Abyrne, purely because I'm more... *familiar* with it.

Fair point. Now, the book is endorsed by Stephen King. But which would you rather have – a quote from him on the cover of your next book, or a quote from you on the cover of his next book?

JDL: I think I've got to go for the second one, obviously. That's a mark of true success!

Does Stephen King even have quotes on his book covers? I don't think he

needs to, does he?

JDL: I don't know, actually. But you're right, he doesn't need to, does he? He speaks for himself.

On the subject of book covers, you've been touring with fellow Bloody Books debut author Bill Hussey, author of *Through a Glass, Darkly*. Which one of you guys has the better cover?

JDL: <bursts into hysterics> I'd quite like to answer this seriously, if I can?

Go for it!

JDL: I think the cover for *Meat* polarised readers. Or potential readers. I think people who saw it thought it was going to be a sort of extreme slash-fest, and didn't read it on that basis. Bill's cover is much more subtle, much more inviting. So in a way, as much as I like the cover for *Meat*, I do think... yeah, I do think Bill's *might* be a better cover.

He's got spooky crows on it.

JDL: Yeah, and fading parchment, which is always good.

Would you change the cover of *Meat*, knowing what you know now?

JDL: The only thing I'd change about it would be to make it less shiny. I'd have the main part in a rusted, matt texture and have the hook shiny.

The tag lines have had a lot of response, too.

JDL: I think, again, that people feel the book is going to be something in particular and don't read it on that basis, which is a shame. But then again, we're learning as we go along. Hopefully we'll be a bit more subtle next time.

Bloody Books have really been behind the novel all the way.

JDL: Oh yeah, superb. I mean, I couldn't have asked for a better publisher to get me started. But I've been waiting a long time to *get* started, so it's all been worth it.

And the next book?

JDL: . Bill Hussey's book, *The Absence*, and mine *The Garbage Man* are coming out on the same day, April 2nd. We haven't come up with a launch stunt yet, but I'm sure we will.

Well, if you can top the meat wagon, that'll be awesome.



JDL: I'm not sure if we'll be able to do that, but we'll certainly try!