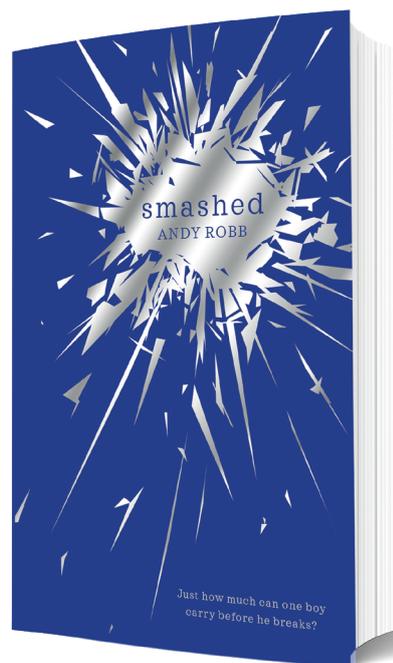


Smashed

Book Club Discussion Points

- After his dad leaves, Jamie believes he needs to assume the traditional masculine role: become 'the man of the house,' and take care of his sister and his mum. To what extent - if at all - is he right about this?
- Jamie rejects the idea of his father as a role model, but he's afraid of turning out like him despite his best intentions, worried that it might be inevitable. Do you think we are destined to follow in our parents' footsteps?
- For some people, sadness seems to lead to a spiral of self-destruction. Why do you think this is and can it be prevented?
- Adil is monosyllabic and he and Jamie don't talk openly about their feelings, but - when push comes to shove - Adil is there for Jamie. What does this tell you about different types of friendship? Do you think it's always important to talk and open up, or can friendships be based on something unspoken?
- Is it fair of Jamie's mum to ask so much of him?
- When the bank clerk allows Jamie's mum to empty their bank account, she is breaking the law. What do you think motivates her to risk her job in this way? Is she right to do so?
- Jamie's dad is clearly in the wrong: he has hit his wife, is withholding financial support and even using their daughter to manipulate her into taking him back. Do you think Jamie will ever forgive him? Can he be redeemed?
- Jamie's descent into alcoholism is swift and extreme: he's desperately unhappy, and drinking to numb the pain. However, many teenagers who drink 'for fun' consume more than he does on a regular basis. Is his drinking more problematic than theirs?
- Why do you think Jamie feels the need to split up with Nadia?
- Although she leads Jamie into destructive behaviour, Lauren is actually quite kind to him: she invites him into her friendship group and makes him feel included. Do you think she recognises a kindred lost soul, or is she merely mocking him?
- The stop-motion project is clearly dear to Adil's heart. What does his dedication tell us about his character?

- Jamie is very introspective; he analyses his every thought and feeling. Do you think this is a healthy characteristic?
- Do you think Nadia is right to suggest she and Jamie are better as friends than boyfriend/girlfriend for a while? Do you think their relationship stands a chance?
- Because *Smashed* is a first person narrative, we only ever see things from Jamie's perspective. How does this affect our view of what happens? Is he a reliable narrator?
- Despite his avowed rejection of his dad's old-fashioned view of manliness, Jamie has clearly picked up some negative traits, either from his father or from wider society, e.g. the way he reduces the girl at the party to her body parts, referring to her simply as 'Nipples.' What does this tell us about toxic masculinity and how it is perpetrated?



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