

Discussion Notes

1. ***Dad's constant warning about keeping our business private echoes in my ears. How if social workers and do-gooders get to hear about him working away as much, they'll cause us all sorts of problems.*** Discuss Calum's relationship with his dad, and their living arrangements at the start of the book. Do you think this relationship improves throughout the story?
2. ***Sometimes it feels like [Linford]'s the adult and that me, Jack and Harry are just little kids for him to order about.*** Examine Calum's role in his friendship group at the beginning of the story. Why do you think he hangs around with this group, and what other kinds of friendship does he discover later on?
3. Sergei and Calum seem like unlikely friends at first – what do the two boys teach each other throughout the course of the story?
4. ***I think about Amelia and Sergei. Their home is a place they love; for me, home is somewhere I can't wait to escape from.*** Discuss the different depictions of home in this story. What do you think defines 'home'?
5. ***I can feel the pleasant buzz of new ideas inside my head. They're flitting back and forth, mixed in now with a bit of confidence and hope.*** How important is it, Calum having a creative element to explore via his screenwriting? What do opportunities like the competition run by the Expressions centre offer to children like him?



6. Why do you think the author chose to intersperse Calum's screenplays with the main narrative? What effect did this have on your reading experience?
7. ***I can't wait to finish school and get a job; preferably well away from here. At the same time, I can't imagine ever being able to escape the estate.*** Examine Calum's feelings of being stuck and how they relate to his council-estate upbringing. Has his outlook changed by the end of the book?
8. ***'Yo, Immi,' Linford calls [to Sergei]. 'When you pissing off back home, then?'*** Discuss the real-life issues (such as immigration and racism) explored in this book. Why do Linford and some of the other characters give Sergei a hard time?

