

CHEAT SHEET

King of Nothing



SUMMARY

King of Nothing follows Anton Charles, a Year 9 student in South London. Anton and his friends have built a reputation as the toughest and most feared boys in school. After Anton gets into trouble at school, his mum decides that he needs to change. She takes away his internet privileges and makes him join Happy Campers, a community volunteering group. Anton hates the idea, especially when he discovers that Matthew, a boy he and his friends normally bully and look down on, is also involved. During a camping trip, Anton gets into danger after being stung by a bee. Matthew saves him. This changes Anton's attitude towards Matthew, and the two boys begin to develop an unlikely friendship. Anton now has a problem: he wants to maintain his reputation with his friends, but he is beginning to realise that Matthew is actually someone he likes and respects. Through their friendship, Anton starts questioning his ideas about masculinity, popularity, friendship and what it means to be strong.

CHARACTERS

Character	Summary
Anton Charles	Anton is the narrator and central character. He is confident, funny and intimidating, but he cares a lot about his reputation. He initially believes that being tough and feared makes him powerful.
Matthew	Matthew is treated as a "loser" by Anton and his friends, but he is intelligent, kind and thoughtful. Matthew helps Anton understand that being vulnerable and caring about others are not signs of weakness.
Anton's Mum	Anton's mum is strict but wants what is best for him. After his repeated trouble at school, she takes away his internet and makes him join Happy Campers.
Anton's Nan	A character Anton cares about deeply, even though he doesn't always show it. She represents family, love and emotional vulnerability.
Anton's Dad	Anton's dad is in prison, which is part of Anton's background and helps explain some of the pressure surrounding his identity and reputation.
Anton's friends	Anton's friends help maintain his reputation as one of the toughest boys in school. They intimidate other students and encourage Anton's aggressive behaviour.
The Happy Campers	This group initially represents everything Anton dislikes: volunteering, being helpful and doing activities he considers uncool. However, it introduces Anton to people outside his usual social group.

VOCABULARY

Patriarchy	Having a fixed opinion about someone before you really know them, often based on things like their background, appearance, or identity.
Toxic Masculinity	A concept that covers exaggerated masculinity, or outdated or unhealthy interpretations of masculine traits and attitudes.
Misogyny	The hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women and girls.
Hierarchy	A system where people, things, or ideas are arranged in levels based on rank, importance, or authority.
Manosphere	An umbrella term for online communities that have increasingly promoted narrow and aggressive definitions of what it means to be a man

T H E M E S

TOXIC MASCULINITY, FRIENDSHIP, PEER PRESSURE, PATRIARCHY, MISOGYNY, GRIEF.

KEY MOMENTS

Moment	Discussion
Comments about earning respect through fear (pg 1)	Anton explores how he is respected because people know he and his 'mandem' will fight. He explains that to earn respect, he sometimes has to prove a point and fight. Refer to PP.
Anton explaining a hierarchy in school (pg 2)	Anton explores the 'food chain' in school and the challenges this poses. Please refer to PP.
Anton's group of friends mock each other (pg. 4)	Anton's group of friends are exploring family dynamics and what it means to have respect and to be disrespected. Please refer to PP.
Kehinde explores what it means to be a man (pg 70-71)	Kehinde verbalises ideologies that echo toxic masculinity and the manosphere. There is also discussion of his crush on Jen being uncomfortable. Please refer to PP.

Moment	Discussion
Anton is beginning to challenge Kehinde (pg. 137)	Kehinde is recalling how he stole a mini fridge from Jen's house. Anton challenges him on this so we can see that Anton is changing. Please refer to PP.
Josh explores the role of the alpha male and what it means to be a leader (pg. 162)	Anton queries the term alpha male. Josh debunks this term and explores the qualities of a good leader. Please refer to PP.

TRIGGER MOMENTS

Moment	SUMMARY
There's a disagreement with a student at school (pg. 2)	Kehinde picks an argument with another student and spits on him. The child goes to retaliate but doesn't when he sees Anton and Caleb. Another student videos it.
We learn Anton's dad is in prison (pg. 5)	Anton explains how Kehinde was the only friend to him when students learned that his dad is in prison for violence and assault.
There's another altercation with the group (pg. 24)	Anton and his friends are hanging out and there is an altercation between them and another group. There is intimidating behaviour.
Anton explains how Kehinde's behaviour towards Jen is inappropriate (pg. 71)	Anton explores how Kehinde is 'obsessed' with Jen and 'now it's just uncomfortable'.
Anton's mum is telling him off (pg. 81)	Anton's mum is warning him about the way he is behaving and how much she dislikes his 'gang' of friends.
Matthew and Anton discuss how men should or shouldn't accept help (pg. 111)	Anton is stung by a bee and Matthew offers help. Anton explains he doesn't need help, he just needs to be 'firm'. Matthew counteracts this by saying 'real men accept help.'

Moment	SUMMARY
Anton is stung by a bee (pg. 110)	Anton has an anaphylactic reaction to a bee sting.
Anton's father is released from prison (pg. 135)	Anton returns from his camping trip to learn that his father is being released from prison. He asks about whether his dad has tried to contact him whilst he has been in prison and deliberates whether to contact his dad.
Josh explains the purpose of his charity (pg. 156- 157)	The charity that Anton's mum works for, Josh explains, provide a 'safe space' for women. It's not explicitly stated but this is from domestic abuse and violence.
Discussion around gender stereotypes (pg. 157- 160)	Josh facilitates a discussion about sexism, toxic masculinity and gender stereotypes.
Anton receives a message from his dad (pg. 184)	Anton receives a message from his dad saying he wants to meet.
Anton meets his dad (pg. 198 - 209)	This is a heavy section of reading. Anton's father briefly explains what prison was like. The dad explores the relationship with his mum and many of his views echo Kehinde's. Anton shares his experience with his mum and she implies Anton's father was aggressive, if not violent (this isn't explicitly mentioned)
Anton's Nanna is in hospital (pg. 264-268)	Anton's mum calls him to say that his Nanna has collapsed and is in hospital. Anton remembers and recalls memories with his Nanna. She dies in the first line of the next chapter.
Anton grieves his Nanna (pg. 286)	Anton speaks to his mum about his Nanna and how much he misses her. He talks about how unfair it is that she died.
Kehinde destroys the mural at the church and attacks Matthew (pg.293-294)	Kehinde destroys the mural at the church and attacks Matthew. There is a physical fight between Kehinde, Caleb and Anton.