

LIKE A BROTHER

Book Club Discussion Notes

1. In what ways does Owais feel confident in who he is, and in what ways does he feel unsure or insecure? How does this reflect being a teenager?
2. When Abass first arrives, how clear is it that he doesn't feel like he belongs? What behaviours show this?
3. The friendship between Owais, Savio and Lara provides safety and support. What do Owais's friendships give him that Abass is missing when he first arrives?
4. Why do you think humour is so important to Owais's identity? How does he use it? When does humour act as a shield, and when does it fail?
5. When Abass reacts negatively at the LGBTQ+ fundraiser, how do his words reflect ideas he may have learned rather than opinions he has questioned? What is the author suggesting about where prejudiced views come from, and how they can be unlearned?
6. Savio challenges Abass's views by saying that being gay is not a choice and that life is already harder because of it. Why is Savio's calm but firm response so powerful? Why is this moment important for showing the theme of acceptance in the novel?
7. The novel does not resolve Abass's homophobia instantly. Why is it important that change is shown as gradual rather than immediate?
8. Think about stereotypes around masculinity. How does the book challenge these stereotypes through characters like Savio, Owais and Owais's dad?
9. How does Owais's relationship with Savio influence the way he thinks about identity, acceptance and standing up for others?
10. After their fight, Owais chooses to help Abass clean the room instead of demanding an apology. How does this moment mark a turning point in their relationship and in Owais's own character development?
11. The book shows us that grief does not always look like sadness. How else can grief manifest, as demonstrated by Abass? Why do you think the author wants to show this?

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12. Before the pillowcase incident, many characters see Abass as simply aggressive or difficult. How does this moment change the way we understand his earlier actions?
13. The adults in the novel respond differently to Abass's grief. How do Owais's parents model compassion, and why is this important?
14. Owais's dad and Uncle Serge respond very differently to their shared childhood experiences. What impact do their choices have on their sons?
15. How does empathy – from Owais, Savio and the adults – begin to disrupt Abass's defensive behaviour?
16. What message does *Like A Brother* send about holding people accountable for harmful views while still recognising their pain? Does understanding someone excuse their behaviour?
17. Art becomes a space where Owais has to engage with who he is without relying on jokes. How does his experience on the art programme – and his interactions with Chloe – challenge the way he sees himself? What does it suggest about how creativity can help people explore their identity?
18. Family is described as messy, loud and imperfect throughout the novel. How do small everyday moments – shared meals, teasing, or music in the bedroom – help rebuild trust after conflict?
19. Imagine you are Owais. Pick one key moment from the book in which you would have acted differently and explain why. Now do the same, imagining you are Abass.
20. Why do you think the author chose Owais to tell this story in first person, rather than telling it from Abass's point of view?
21. Do you think belonging is something you earn, something you are given, or something you choose? How does the novel explore this?
22. All of the characters are shaped by circumstances beyond their control – grief, family history, prejudice, school pressure. Where in the story do we see characters beginning to make different choices despite these constraints? Why is choice such an important theme in the novel?
23. What do you think the title *Like A Brother* suggests about Owais and Abass's relationship? By the end of the book, in what ways do Owais and Abass behave like real brother?

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