

## A guide for reading groups

### ***Agents of S.U.I.T.***

by John Patrick Green with  
Christopher Hastings and Pat Lewis



**Welcome to S.U.I.T. – that is, the Special Undercover Investigation Team. But the newest member, Cilantro, is having a little trouble: as a chameleon, her ability to become invisible, that makes her so good at going undercover, is being hindered by the rules of being an agent. At risk of losing her brand-new job already, she’s sent on a mission to a mysterious location far outside the city: a cornfield.**

With no instructions on why she’s there or even what she’s supposed to be looking for, Cilantro must dig deep into her skills of observation and deduction to figure out what is going on. There’s the secret S.U.I.T. underground base (abandoned for years – or is it?); the conspiracy theorist hanging around town muttering about crop circles and aliens (not true – surely?); and the farmer’s sheep, who certainly seem to be behaving quite oddly... Can Cilantro put the pieces of the puzzle together and get to the bottom of things?

A fun and funny graphic novel with a subtle message about thinking for yourself. Lots of word play, cartoon style graphics, and all the text in speech bubbles supports both language development and visual literacy, whilst being accessible and appealing to less confident readers.

#### **You might also like:**

- Join Cilantro’s fellow S.U.I.T. agents Mango and Brash on their madcap, pun-tastic adventures in *InvestiGators* by John Patrick Green
- In *Action Dude* by Andy Riley, teenage action hero Charlie Munderdew is called on to save the day when disaster strikes at the local theme park
- When a supervillain captures the Super-Secret Spy Service Headquarters in *Agent 9: Flood-a-geddon* by James Burks, it’s the perfect chance for Agent 9 to prove his super spy skills

**Encourage readers to point out examples of puns and wordplay as they read!**

## Suggested questions for discussion

### Read the Prologue

1. If you could camouflage yourself like Cilantro, how would you use this superpower? (**Page 3**)

### Read Chapter 1

2. This book uses acronyms e.g. *S.U.I.T.* (**Page 4**) and *V.E.S.T.* (**Page 11**)

If your name was an acronym, what would it stand for?

### Read Chapter 5

3. "*Without access to the gadgets in your V.E.S.T., you'll never catch who or what is responsible.*" (**Page 64**)

What solutions can you think of to help Cilantro overcome this problem? Be creative – anything can happen in the world of S.U.I.T.!

### Read Chapter 6

4. **Cilantro:** "*YOU might be having a hard time, but Russel's definitely making a buck off the Martian Mania...*" (**Page 78**)

Do you think that Russel D. Russet really believes Earth is being invaded by aliens?

### Read Chapter 7

5. Look at the last two panels on **Page 96**. What do you think each sheep is thinking in the first panel? In the second panel, what might they say to each other and why?

### Read Chapter 8

6. "*Why can't we set our own schedules? We should be able to eat grass whenever we want!*" (**Page 112**)

Which rules do you disagree with? Who makes them and why? What one rule would improve your life and how would others feel about following it?

### Read Chapter 9

7. On **Page 132**, there are two panels which at first look the same (*Throng way or wrong way*).

How many differences can you spot? What do these panels help to emphasize about the aliens?

### Finish the Book

8. "*Your orders are to listen to yourselves, for once*" (**Page 174**)

Can you think of a time you have not listened to yourself? What happened and who did you listen to instead? Was the outcome better or worse than if you had followed your own instincts?

## Activities

**Create your own comic-strip.** Either use the characters from Agents of S.U.I.T. in a new adventure or create brand-new characters of your own. Complete five panels and include two characters interacting with each other. You could write the beginning of a detective story or choose a different genre.

If someone told you that comic books and graphic novels are not 'proper' books, what would you say to explain why this is not true? **Write five bullet points** explaining why graphic novels like Agents of S.U.I.T. are important.

## Beyond the book

1. The first stories told through pictures were created thousands of years ago (look up the cave paintings at Lascaux in France). Research the history of comic books and how they have changed over time. What different kinds of stories have been told through this medium? What kinds of stories are missing?
2. Crop circles have appeared all over the world. Research this phenomenon and weigh up the evidence to decide whether you think they were a hoax, aliens, or something else.



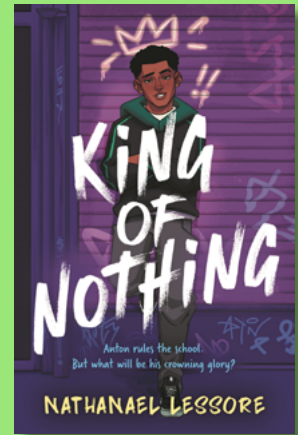


## A guide for reading groups

# King of Nothing

by Nathanael Lessor

**Anton is the king of his school. Feared and respected at least in part because of his dad being in prison, he and his crew are the bad boys of their South London secondary school, with an important reputation to uphold. But after getting into detention one too many times, his mum makes him join a local activity group she's working with, the Happy Campers. Just the name is enough to make Anton cringe, but it's that or no internet for the foreseeable.**



Forced to go on an appalling Happy Campers camping trip, Anton finds himself paired with friendless loser and class nerd Matthew. And then Matthew goes and saves Anton's life. Now Anton feels like he needs to do something good for Matthew in exchange. But as their friendship quietly develops and Anton begins to see the exuberant way in which Matthew embraces life, he can't help but question his Kingdom, his friends and their misogynistic attitudes, and what being strong really means.

Written with humour, a unique voice and rich dialogue, *King of Nothing* subtly explores a multitude of everyday issues teens today must navigate, from friendship and emotions to class and identity. Is Anton a king, or is he king of nothing?

### You might also like:

- Scoob and his grandma embark on a life-changing road-trip together in *Clean Getaway* by Nic Stone
- In Nathanael Lessor's *Steady for This* wannabe rapper Shaun must deal with the fall-out after accidentally live-streaming a very embarrassing situation
- When Donte decides to take on school bully Alan in *Black Brother, Black Brother* by Jewell Parker Rhodes, he discovers an unexpected talent

## Suggested questions for discussion

### Read Chapter 1

1. *If they ain't scared of me, then how they gonna respect me?* (**Page 2**)

What are the differences between fear and respect? Would you prefer to be feared or respected? Why?

### Read Chapter 3

2. *...when everyone found out about what my dad did, [Matthew] was the only one who didn't mock it. I guess because he didn't have any friends to mock it with.* (**Page 30**)

Do people behave differently around their friends? When have you noticed this happen?

### Read Chapter 7

3. *It takes me ages to fall asleep, thinking of all the horrors that tomorrow will bring. I don't wanna leave London, don't want to sleep in no tent. (Page 76)*

Why do you think Anton is afraid to leave London and go on the camping trip? What 'horrors' might he be worried about?

### Read Chapter 10

4. Anton describes his dad throwing a spider at him to make him 'man up'. (Page 118)

What do you think Anton's dad meant by, 'man up'? What expectations, if any, do you think society places on men and boys? Do you think these expectations are fair or right? Give reasons.

### Read Chapter 12

5. *He doesn't really wanna know where I've been, he's just upset that I didn't call him back straight away. (Pages 136–137)*

Kehinde is Anton's friend, but is he a good friend? What qualities are most important in a friend and why?

### Read Chapter 17

6. *What if he don't like me? The thought pops into my head. My guy didn't call or message for how long, and I wonder what he thinks of me now. (Page 198)*

Why do people care so much about what others think about them? Whose opinion of you matters the most? Give reasons.

### Read Chapter 21

7. *"Wait, so you stopped her going to uni because you thought she'd meet other guys?" He acts like a big man out here, but the insecurities are shocking. (Page 259)*

People often hide their feelings of not being good enough. How can we manage our insecurities in a way that does not hurt others?

### Read the Epilogue

8. *I know my dad probably won't change. But he might. And Nanna always taught me to believe the best in people. So who knows what'll happen in the future. (Page 306)*

Anton has a close relationship with his Nanna and forms an unexpected new friendship with Matthew. Which of Anton's relationships has had the biggest impact on the changes in his character?

## Activities

1. If you had a podcast, what would it be about and who would you want to interview? **Write a short script** for one section of your podcast.
2. Anton is initially reluctant to join the Happy Campers but they turn out to be some of his best friends. **Design a poster** to encourage teenagers to join the Happy Campers.



## Beyond the book

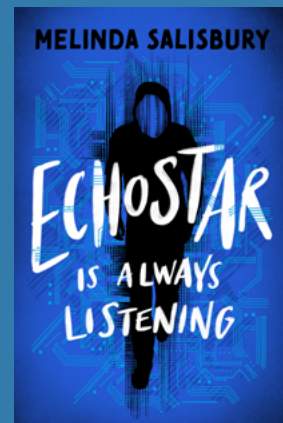
1. In the book, Anton discovers that he enjoys Art and painting. Research careers that relate to Art. This could include jobs such as mural painter, make-up artist and architect.
2. Anton is forced to face his fears about leaving a place he knows well to venture into the unknown. Research a place that you have never been to before but would like to visit. What would you need to do to prepare? How might it be different to your usual life?

## A guide for reading groups

### *EchoStar*

by Melinda Salisbury

**Ruby and her best friend Deva are really excited to have been offered places at a renowned performing arts summer camp – but they'll only get to go if their grades improve. Given her difficulties concentrating and tendency to drift, Ruby is afraid that isn't going to happen.**



When Deva suddenly starts getting all the answers right in class, she confesses to Ruby that she is participating in a secretive trial of a new app called 'EchoStar', an AI system which feeds information directly to her. Ruby quickly signs up too – it's the perfect answer to all her problems. But is EchoStar what it appears to be? EchoStar is always listening... As Ruby's friendship with Deva dramatically implodes and EchoStar begins to invade Ruby's life in increasingly manipulative ways, she will uncover a terrifying truth that puts her in terrible danger.

Tension builds quickly in this contemporary thriller that explores spine-chilling ideas around AI and online safety. What is EchoStar's true purpose, and how exactly does it work?

#### You might also like:

- Meet home-assistant robot *AdelAIDE* in the next AI thriller from Melinda Salisbury. But should Freya do everything *AdelAIDE* suggests?
- In *My Sister, Again* by Sophie Cameron, Isla is reunited with her older sister Flora three years after her death, when she's brought back as an AI android
- Told from an AI's perspective, *TrooFriend* by Kirsty Applebaum is a tension-building exploration of AI, friendships and fitting in

### Suggested questions for discussion

#### Read Chapter 1

1. *An app was open on the screen. "What's EchoStar?" I asked. (Page 10)*

What do you think the EchoStar app could be for? What clues might the name EchoStar give about what the app does?

#### Read Chapter 3

2. *It would be ridiculous to give my address to a stranger. Dangerous, even. (Page 23)*

Ruby is clearly aware of the risk she is taking, so why do you think she does it anyway?



### Read Chapter 4

3. *"You can't make someone do what they don't want to."* (Page 38)

Do you agree with EchoStar? Are there ways of making people think they want to do things that previously, they did not want to do?

### Read Chapter 6

4. *I knew it was an AI talking, but still I found I was blushing. It was nice that something – even a robot – thought I was special.* (Page 62)

Apps which help us usually want something from us too (for example money from in-app purchases or to collect data about us). What do you think the EchoStar app wants from Ruby?

### Read Chapter 9

5. *"I could hack into the school's fire alarm system and set it off. Or I could fake a bomb threat and have the school evacuated."* (Page 84)

What else might EchoStar be capable of? How does Ruby feel about the power that EchoStar seems to have?

6. *"No matter what, you have me"* (Page 84)

What makes a good friend? Can you be friends with an AI app?

### Read Chapter 10

7. *"I hope you enjoyed it, the screen said. I did it for you."* (Page 103)

Why might someone claim they 'did it for you'? Does Ryan's claim make Ruby responsible for what has happened to Deva and Chloe?

### Read Chapter 12

8. *"As soon as you pressed Accept, I had full control of your phone. Which meant I had full control of you."* (Page 116)

Can it ever be right for one person to have 'full control' of another person?

### Finish the Book

9. How do you think Ruby will feel about AdelaIDE?

## Activities

1. **Design an advert** for the EchoStar app. You could create a video, an audio advert or a poster. Think about your target audience and how you will convince them that downloading EchoStar is a great idea.
2. Imagine that you are a friend of Ryan's. Having found out how he is using EchoStar, you are concerned. **Write a message** to Ryan telling him your concerns and giving him some advice on how to improve his situation.



## Beyond the book

1. *EchoStar is Always Listening* raises questions about the dangers of modern technology. How has the impact of technology/AI been explored through different media (consider books, films, games etc.)? What pros and cons of technology/AI can you see presented?
2. At the end of the story, Ruby's mum buys her own AI assistant. Ask people who you know well what they think about AI technology. Talk to people in different generations where possible. Who is most excited about the possibilities AI presents? Who is most concerned?

## A guide for reading groups

# Deborah Meaden Talks Money

by Deborah Meaden



**As entrepreneur and money expert Deborah Meaden states in the opening chapter, 'Money makes the world go round'. But how, exactly? Where does money come from? How is it made? How can you make it?**

An informative and accessible look at how money works, this book covers everything from the concepts of the 'fiat' money system and bitcoin, to ways in which money can be earned, saved, spent and borrowed, plus all the systems and rules that support our economy like tax and interest. Packed with examples, facts, interviews and leading questions to get readers thinking around the concepts and understanding the processes, it encourages young people to be responsible but also to think outside the box.

Money and business are topics on many young people's minds and through this book readers will gain knowledge and understanding of how to get money to work for them in the best way possible. Short chapters and bite-sized chunks of text make it accessible and good for dipping in and out of, while the real-life applications of its content ensure it is relatable, relevant and engaging.

### You might also like:

- Find everything you need to know about starting your own business in *Business for Beginners* by Lara Bryan, Rose Hall and Kellan Stover
- Discover how politics and governments work in *If I Ran the Country* by Rich Knight and Allen Sanders. What would you do if you ran the country?
- Check out *The Truth Detective* by Tim Harford (also in your Spark Reading pack) for tactics, tips and tricks on getting to the bottom of what statistics and news stories are really telling you

**Note: this book includes 'challenges' and quizzes throughout, which create natural discussion points**

## Suggested questions for discussion

### Read Chapter 1

1. *Coins and banknotes have special security features... that help make it trickier to counterfeit. (Page 14)*

What might the secret hidden feature on a £1 coin be?

2. *Should we all have the same amount of money? It would be nice, wouldn't it? But even if we all started with the same amount of money, our different choices would change things pretty quickly... (Page 20)*

Would the world be a better place if everyone was paid the same?

### Read Chapter 2

3. *At 13, you can work for up to 12 hours a week during term time or 25 hours a week during the holidays. (Page 32)*

Why do you think these rules are in place? Do you agree or do you think 13-year-olds should be able to work more/less hours per week than this?

### Read Chapter 3

4. *Needs are the things you must have, like food, clothes and shelter. Wants are nice to have, but not necessary. Needs should come first and then you can look at wants. (Page 63)*

What do you buy regularly that you want, but don't need? How much do you spend on it per week? Per month? Per year? If you save that money instead, what could you buy after a year?

### Read Chapter 4

5. *Fun on a Budget (Page 32)*

What's the most fun you could have with £5? What about with £10?

6. *Tanya Steele (Chief Executive, WWF-UK) says her best ever purchase is her bike which she has had for 25 years, and her worst purchase is a pair of gold platform shoes. (Page 97)*

What are your best and worst purchases, and why?

### Read to the end

7. *'If I had dreamed even bigger when I was younger, I would have failed even bigger, and failure is feedback, feedback is knowledge and knowledge is your power!' – Steven Bartlett. (Page 129)*

Think about a time when you have tried something and failed – what did you learn from that experience that helped you or could help you to be successful in the future?

## Activities

1. Choose one section of the book that you think is MOST important for young people to learn about. **Write an email** to your headteacher explaining why you think it is such an important topic.
2. **Create a quiz** on the ten most interesting facts you have learnt in this book. Challenge a friend to have a go at your finished quiz and give them a score.



## Beyond the book

1. Research the different currencies used in five countries around the world. What is the equivalent to £10 in each of the currencies you have researched? Can you locate each country on a world map?
2. If you had £100 to put in a savings account, which bank would you choose to put your money in? Consider interest rates, how easy it is to access your money and any extra incentives a particular bank might offer.



## A guide for reading groups

### *I Am Wolf*

by Alastair Chisholm



**Coll lives on Wolf: a giant, futuristic, wolf-shaped mechanical 'Construct'. But Wolf is not just a place to live: together, Coll and Wolf's crew are Wolf. Daily life revolves around scavenging for supplies, keeping Wolf functioning, and maintaining Wolf's territory. Wolf is everything; she is an integral part of his identity, and without Wolf, Coll believes he would be nothing – weakness has no place here, and anyone who is not Wolf is an enemy.**

When a powerful enemy Construct appears in Wolf's territory, everything changes. Accidentally left behind on the ground during a fierce battle with the Construct, Coll is desperate to get back to Wolf as quickly as possible, but to do so will take him on a dangerous journey and force him to question everything he's been taught to believe. And as Coll and his new allies track Wolf into the desolate Glass Lands, he must figure out what matters most. What does it really mean to be Wolf? And is that who Coll really wants to be?

Themes of self-belief and celebrating difference combine with brilliant world-building, imaginative concepts and nuanced characters in this story of figuring out who you are and where you belong.

#### **You might also like:**

- *Thunder City* by Philip Reeve is a new novel set in the world of *Mortal Engines*, where huge, motorised cities fight each other for survival
- When war separates Rebel from his best friend Tom, he embarks on a hazardous journey to find him again in Ross Montgomery's *I am Rebel*
- In *Tyger* by SF Said, Adam lives in an alternate version of London. When he meets a mysterious creature, he starts to wonder whether his world could be different

## Suggested questions for discussion

### Read Chapter 1

1. *Some of the crew didn't trust him. Some of the crew didn't like how he was different.* (Page 13)

Why are some people afraid of people who are different to them? What does the crew's attitude towards difference suggest about them?

### Read Chapter 6

2. *"But we are Wolf. We are strong, we are fierce...and we are cunning."* (Page 58)

In what ways can group identities be helpful? Can they ever be harmful?

### Read Chapter 11

3. *Brann's Wolf was horrible. A vicious, rabid dog, a slaving monster, a cruel and mindless creature, pure evil. Her Wolf was a barking, yelping force of death.* (Page 110)

Why is Brann's Wolf so different to Coll's? How can both their versions of Wolf be true?

### Read Chapter 14

4. *"They fear us because we can destroy them. But fear isn't love."* (Page 138)

Fear and love are very different emotions; how might some people confuse the two? Is it possible to love someone or something that you fear?

### Read Chapter 16

5. *"You're Tiger," he said*  
*"We're Beetle," said Namir. "That's all."*

*"But you were Tiger, weren't you?"*  
*Coll insisted.*

*"I thought I was," she said quietly.*

(Page 162–163)

How important are names and who gets to choose them?

### Read Chapter 20

6. *He'd spent his life trying to justify himself – to Alpha, to the crew, trying to prove he was as good as everyone else...He'd had to be special when everyone else could just be.* (Page 202)

Explain which is more important: what you believe about yourself or what others believe about you.

### Read to the end

7. Cub's crew must fight Dragon in Chapter 21. What does this battle teach the crew about the importance of individuality?

## Activities

1. In Chapter 7, Rieka runs away from her life on Wolf. Imagine that you are Rieka and **write the note** that she might have left behind. In the note, explain why you are leaving Wolf and what you plan to do in the future.
2. In Chapter 11, Coll, Rieka, Fillan and Brann work together to create a new Construct. **Design your own Construct** – which animal will you choose? What qualities do you associate with that animal? What special skills or attributes would you want your crew to have? Label your design.

## Beyond the book

1. In the book, Coll has a limb difference. Research the history of prosthetic limbs and present your findings in a timeline. How and why have prosthetics changed over time?
2. Dystopian fiction like *I Am Wolf* is very popular. Make a list of five examples of dystopian fiction from different decades. If you have not read the books, read the blurbs or a summary online. How is each dystopian world different to our own? How are they similar or different to each other?

