

# King of Nothing

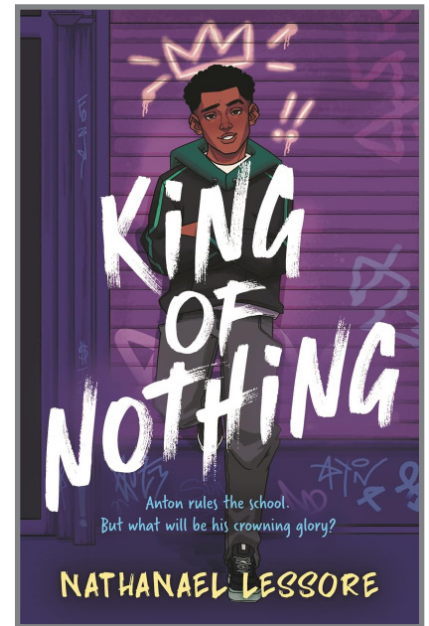
AUTHOR

**NATHANAEL LESSORE**

SCIS: 5490208

ISBN: 9781471413247

**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower Secondary  
(Violence)



## SYNOPSIS

Anton and his friends are the kings of Year 9.

They're used to ruling the school and Anton wears the crown. The other kids run away when he's about, but that's the way he wants it—he's got a reputation to live up to after all.

So, when he gets into serious trouble at school, he doesn't really care, but his mum most definitely does. She decides it's time for Anton to make some new friends and join the Happy Campers, a local activity group. Anton would quite literally rather do anything else, especially when he finds out Matthew, the biggest loser in school, is also a member.

But after Matthew unexpectedly saves Anton's life, Anton figures maybe this kid is worth a shot. Teaching him some game is the least Anton can do to repay the debt.

As the boys strike up an unlikely friendship, Anton finds himself questioning everything he thought was important. Does he want ruling the school to be his crowning glory or should he set his sights on better things?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nathanael Lessore was born in Camberwell, South East London, as one of eight children to French and Madagascan parents. Although, he has spent most of his life in Peckham, Nathanael has also lived in Paris, Strasbourg and Singapore. Nathanael became a marketing executive after graduating from the University of East London, believing, at the time, that a Creative Writing degree destined him for a career in marketing. Nathanael can run 100 metres in under 10 minutes and has trouble finding sunglasses that frame his face properly. He is the author of *Steady for This* and *King of Nothing*, teen novels that allow him to show life in South East London as the funny, warm, adventurous world that wasn't always represented as such when he was a child.

## STUDY NOTES

- Anton tells us how Kehinde 'showed me how to turn that reputation into respect'. What do you think is the difference between 'reputation' and 'respect'? How and why does Anton's view of 'respect' change in the story?
- In the beginning, Anton doesn't like to think about what he might be doing five years in the future or wants to just pick the same school subjects as his friends. Why do you think he might feel this way? Can you relate to those feelings?

- Often, Kehinde expects Anton to put their friendship first, above everything else, but Matthew celebrates and supports Anton when he makes his own choices. What do you think true friendship means? How are Kehinde and Matthew different in their friendships with Anton?
- When Anton accidentally smashes a beaker during science, he is torn between not getting into more trouble and impressing Kehinde. Can you think of a situation when you have felt pressured to do something? What might have happened if Anton had done something different?
- Anton gets defensive about his mum when Kehinde says, 'Females are so weak.' What sort of stereotypes about women is Kehinde drawing on here? In what ways do the women in the story prove these stereotypes wrong?
- Mum tells Anton, 'Life is richer when you step out of your comfort zone, meet a variety of people, experience new things.' Can you think of a time when you tried something new? If not, can you think of a new hobby you would like to try?
- After Anton gets home from detention, his mum bans him from using the internet for a month and the camping trip means he has no signal on his phone. At first, this frustrates Anton, but then he is surprised to find he doesn't miss it. Can you relate to Anton's feelings?
- When Anton is stung by a bee, he doesn't want Matthew to help him. However, Matthew says, 'Real men accept help.' Why do you think Anton believes it's wrong to ask for help? How would asking for help be a good thing?
- During the camping trip, Matthew helps Anton overcome his fear of spiders. Can you think of a time when you overcame something you were afraid of? If not, can you think of how you might face one of your fears?
- The gender equality specialist, Joshua Nikos, tells the Happy Campers that 'kindness is never a weakness.' Can you think of a time when someone has been kind to you? How did that make you feel?
- Matthew is very shy about his feelings for Fernanda at first, so Anton offers to help him approach her. Why do you think Anton's initial 'advice' goes wrong? What helps Matthew in the end?
- After his father is released from prison and Anton meets up with him, he tells Matthew that his father 'was different to how I thought he'd be.' Why do you think Anton's view of his dad has changed?
- Characters like Anton's dad and Kehinde think being a man means only being tough and not showing emotions. What are some examples of male characters in the story showing that they are strong in other ways?
- Anton stands up to Kehinde when he realises 'I'm thinking for myself for once, and I love it.' When was a time you had the confidence to be yourself? If not, can you think of a time you wish you had?

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**CAROLYN WALSH**