

Reading group questions: Chris Walsh's *The Dig Street Festival*

Do you think the relationship between John, Gabriel and Glyn is typical of male friendships?

Do you think friendships between men are under-valued in society?

Do you think John is a clear thinker in a crazy world... or is it the other way round? Is he deluded?

Surreal novels can skate perilously close to being unreadable. Did *Dig Street* pull off its surreality?

Did you prefer the more "realist" aspects of the novel, or the surreal?

What did you think of the way the novel highlighted the issues of poverty and low-paid work?

There are many references to polar exploration in the book, particularly names. How many did you spot?

The author has been quoted as saying *Dig Street* is a serious book. Do you agree? Can comedy be serious?

One aim of the novel is to portray and describe an area's gentrification process. Do you think the author achieved this?

Do you think all of the characters can be forgiven, however bad their behaviour? Is there such a thing as an evil human being, or are we all products of our experiences?

The author finished the first complete draft of *Dig Street* in 2014, and the book is set in 2006. How many presages of Brexit can you spot?

What do you think Glyn's nocturnal visitors mean?

Do you think *Dig Street* can be equally enjoyed by both men and women?

How do you think *Dig Street* deals with the theme of Britain's post-colonial economic decline?

One limitation of first person is that all action needs to be reported through John's eyes, mind, and ego. Do you think this approach works well in this case?

Do you think it's important that the novel has a happy ending, and did the ending satisfy you?