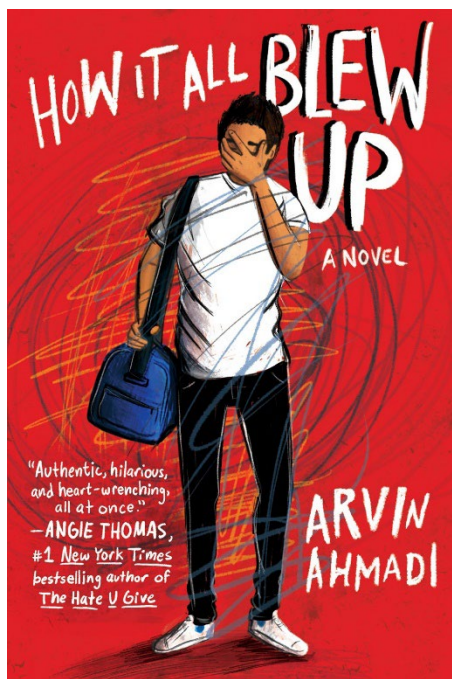


# PFLAG



Read with Love Book Club  
Discussion Guide:  
*How It All Blew Up*  
by Arvin Ahmadi





## Welcome!

### PFLAG Bookworms, welcome to the club!

In a time when books are being banned at an alarming – and historic – rate, finding ways to elevate the **creative** work of LGBTQ+ authors is more important than ever, so we're glad you've joined us.

This guide is meant to be a companion piece to our Read With Love Book Club meetings. Whether you were able to join us for the live book conversation or you're reading this after the meeting, we hope that this guide will be a great way for you to host a book club conversation with your PFLAG chapter.

#### *How do you get started?*

1. **Assign the book!** Let members know you'll be hosting a book club for the chapter and that *How It All Blew Up* will be your first selection. We encourage members to purchase their copy of the book from our friends at [ShopQueer.co](https://shopqueer.co) where a portion of sales will be donated back to PFLAG.
2. **Pick your book club date and promote it!** Be sure to give people enough time to order and read the book.
3. **Talk about it!** This guide has the questions that we used for our discussion. Inside you'll find quick opinion multiple choice questions, knowledge check questions, and four deep-dive questions for conversation. This is just a start – do you have specific questions you want to ask? Add them to the conversation. Be creative.

Thanks for participating and for everything that you're doing in your community to both lead *and* read with love!



## Multiple Choice Opinion Questions

1. **What theme did you come away with most from *How It All Blew Up* ?**
  - a. Found family
  - b. Religion and faith
  - c. Family acceptance
  - d. Self-discovery
  
2. **Did you feel that Amir was in the right to run away and then avoid his family?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure/partially
  
3. **Did you feel like you could relate to Amir? How?**
  - a. Sexual orientation
  - b. Faith
  - c. Similar family experiences
  - d. I didn't personally relate to Amir
  
4. **Do you feel like Amir's family made proper amends by the conclusion?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Maybe a little
  - d. Not sure



## Multiple Choice Knowledge Check Questions

**1. What city did Amir run away to?**

- a. Paris
- b. Florence
- c. Madrid
- d. Rome

**2. How did Amir make enough money to be able to run away?**

- a. Worked as a waiter in a local restaurant
- b. Managed Wikipedia pages
- c. Worked at a shop in the local mall
- d. Assisted his mom in her office job

**3. Why did Jahan and his friends think Amir ran away?**

- a. He was kicked out of his home
- b. He was blackmailed
- c. He got lost and couldn't afford a ticket home
- d. He fell in love



## Discussion Questions

1. One major focus of this book is about found family and queerness. Have you ever been part of a found or chosen family? How did Amir and his new friends in Rome learn from one another? How can queer people and allies in found families work together to teach each other and learn from each other?
2. Amir ran away from home after being blackmailed in a particularly heinous and invasive way. However, much of his anxiety came directly from worries about how his family would treat him. Were you surprised by how members of Amir's family reacted as they learned more about his identity? Why or why not? Did it challenge any stereotypes you may have held? How can parents make amends for previous mistakes they have made when it comes to their childrens' identities?
3. One of the themes that runs throughout the book is how elements of queer culture are shared. Can you name some examples of things in the book that Amir was taught about by his friends in Rome (e.g., movies, books, etc.)? Did you notice this theme while you were reading the book? What are some examples of queer/camp culture that you've learned being in LGBTQ+ spaces?

### **Bonus discussion!**

*How It All Blew Up* is a Young Adult novel that covers more mature topics. Some districts and groups are pushing to have this book banned because of its subject matter. How should allies push back on book bans like this? Who would you recommend this book to? What age groups do you think could learn most from this story?