

Book Review: The Crush by Scott Monk

By Rachel Loveday

The first rule of writing is to write what you know and Australian author; Scott Monk has abided by this rule to a T, using his own high school and journalism experiences to write his novel; *The Crush*.

The Crush is the story of fifteen year old; Matthew Cassidy. An up-and-coming and passionate rugby star who lives with his single mother in a small unit above a fish-and-chip shop on the poor side of town. He wants a dad more than anything else in the world and he also has a crush on a beautiful girl; Kelly Sinclair who is dating his mortal and sporting enemy; Aaron Blackwell.

Matthew dreams of playing in the National Rugby League, having a relationship with his father and dating the girl of his dreams. But he knows from living a poor life that you can't always have what you want. It is noticeable at the beginning of the novel that Matthew is a very talented rugby player however his chances at making the League are almost destroyed as his reputation is tarnished when ecstasy is planted in his school locker. And when he opens his mother's mail out of curiosity, he discovers that his father is alive and tracks him down immediately and they form a bond quickly. He finally finds some happiness with this new relationship only to discover that his father is not the man he thinks he is.

Meanwhile, Matt and Kelly meet at a petrol station and become fast friends. Kelly encourages him to form a relationship with his father and Matt encourages her to stand up to Aaron and leave the abusive relationship that she is in. Love is in the air around these two but Matt unfortunately loses Kelly just as things look hopeful for them.

Scott Monk's novels are famous for touching on controversial topics that are present in adolescent and adult life. Such as; class differences, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence, crime, puberty and unrequited love which gives the story and its characters more depth and keeps it real.

His novels are also famous for its target audience, teenage boys. It is very rare these days to see novels for teenage boys on the bookshelves in stores, let alone books written especially for teenage boys by a male author who utilises his own teenage experiences in his writing. Scott's ability to do this is easily noticed and makes the novel an enjoyable read.

However, as much as I enjoyed *The Crush*, I didn't feel that I was the right person reading the novel. *The Crush* is better suited to its target audience, teenage boys. In particular boys aged thirteen to sixteen.