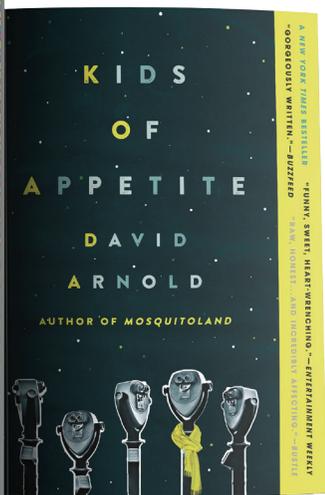
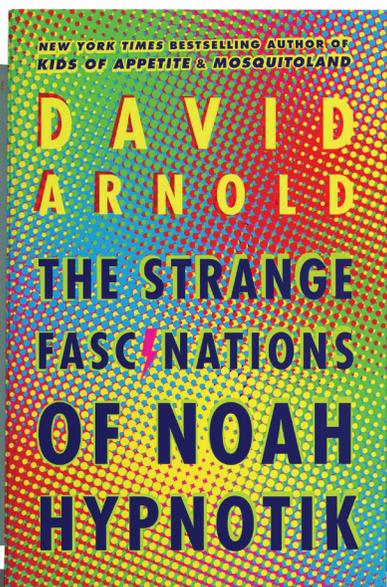
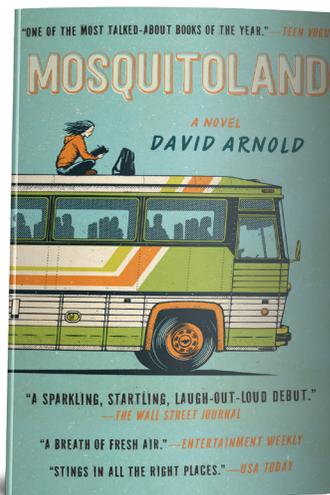
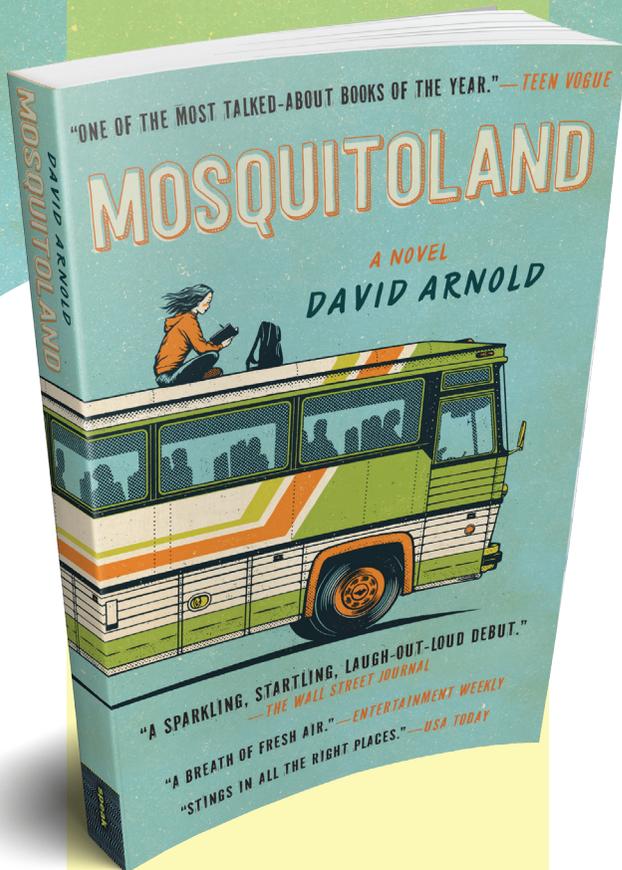


**A
DISCUSSION
GUIDE
TO THE
WORKS OF**



**DAVID
ARNOLD**





MOSQUITOLAND

Mim Malone *knows* that her mother is sick and she knows that her father and step-mother are hiding it from her. The only thing left for her to do is to run away from the “wastelands” of Mississippi to be by her mother’s side in Cleveland. When her journey north is unexpectedly derailed, her detour leads her to some people who are quirky, some who are scary, and some who are genuinely kind. From bestselling author David Arnold, this modern epic is for anyone looking to understand their place in the world.



PRAISE

★“Arnold pens a **stunning debut**, showcasing a cast of dynamic characters. . . **Mesmerizing.**”

—Kirkus, starred review

★“Arnold boldly tackles mental illness and despair, and sexual assault and sexual identity, without ever once losing the bigheartedness of the story. . . In the words of one of Mim’s Greyhound seatmates,

Mosquitoland **has pizzazz—lots and lots of it.**”

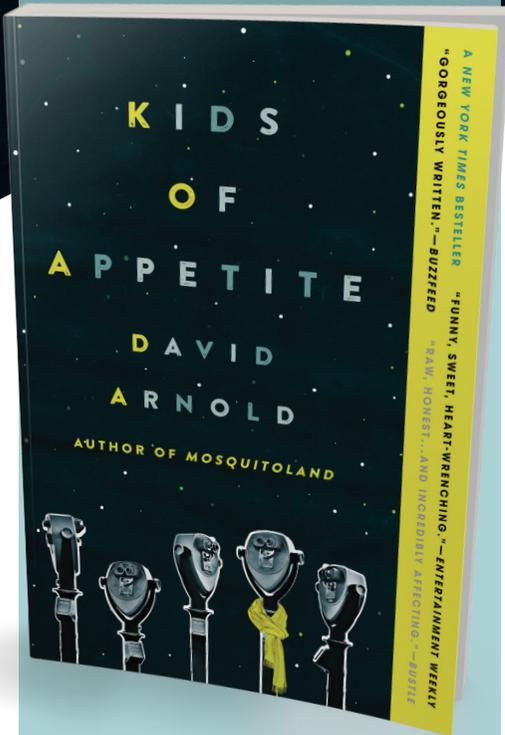
—Booklist, starred review

“David Arnold’s writing is both **heartfelt and hilarious**. You will fall in love with Mim, even as her grand journey will keep you guessing. *Mosquitoland* reminds us that sometimes imperfect is just perfect.”

—Ruta Sepetys, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Salt to the Sea*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mim is an unreliable narrator—the entire reason she runs away is based on a false idea of who her mother is—at which point in the book did you realize that Mim’s perspective might be limited?
2. After the bus accident, Mim decides to find Ahab, so she can give him Arlene’s box. The decision to take this detour makes her trip more difficult and dangerous, so why does Mim do it?
3. Despite their age difference, there’s a connection between Mim and Beck and it’s hinted that it may lead to something more in the future. Given the circumstances—difference in age and location—would it work out between them? How do you interpret their connection? What draws you to form bonds with new people?
4. Mim meets many different kinds of people on her journey. Some are antagonists, some allies, and some are fleeting encounters. Of all these people, who would you say is the most important? Why?
5. “People say home is where the heart is, but I think maybe home is the heart. Not a place or time, but an organ, pumping life into my life.” Mim writes this in her last letter to Isabel, after realizing that the home she thought she could have with her mother isn’t possible. What does home mean to you? Is it a place or, as Mim describes, an organ? Or is home other people?
6. Mim tells her sister to be a “kid of appetite.” David Arnold used this phrase as the title of his next novel. Based on what we’ve seen of Mim Malone, her journey, and her personal philosophy, how can a person be a “kid of appetite?”
7. Should Mim’s mother have told her about going to rehab? What may have been different for Mim if she knew the truth? Would she have run away?
8. Mim often uses her mother’s lipstick to apply “war paint” to herself, justifying this action by citing Cherokee heritage. Later in the novel she says, “...the war paint helped get me through a time when I felt like no one else cared about what I wanted, or who I was. Maybe I could muster the courage to speak those words so few people are able to say: I don’t know why I do the things I do. It’s like that sometimes.” Does Mim’s understanding of her actions justify her problematic behavior?
9. On her journey, Mim learns quite a lot, yet near the end of the book she still says, “I am a child. I know nothing about anything. And even less about everything.” What does she mean? Is she being too hard on herself?
10. At the end of the novel, Mim decides to stop taking her medication. Do you agree or disagree with her decision? Why or why not?



KIDS OF APPETITE

Vic Benucci doesn't have much left of his father except for a love of "The Flower Duet" and an appreciation of asymmetry. When his mother's new boyfriend proposes at dinner, Vic takes his father's urn and runs away. With the help of a motley group of orphans and runaways—Congolese brothers Baz and Nzuzi, foul-mouthed Coco from Queens, and Mad, beautiful and obsessed with *The Outsiders*—Vic embarks on a journey across two states to scatter his father's ashes. David Arnold, bestselling author of *Mosquitoland*, once again weaves an intricate tale about grief, friendship, and becoming the author of your own story.

PRAISE

YALSA Best Fiction for
Young Adults 2017

A *New York Times* Bestseller

★ "Showcases a memorable cast of outsiders carving out space for themselves . . . Arnold writes with a **Hinton-esque depth and rawness.**" —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

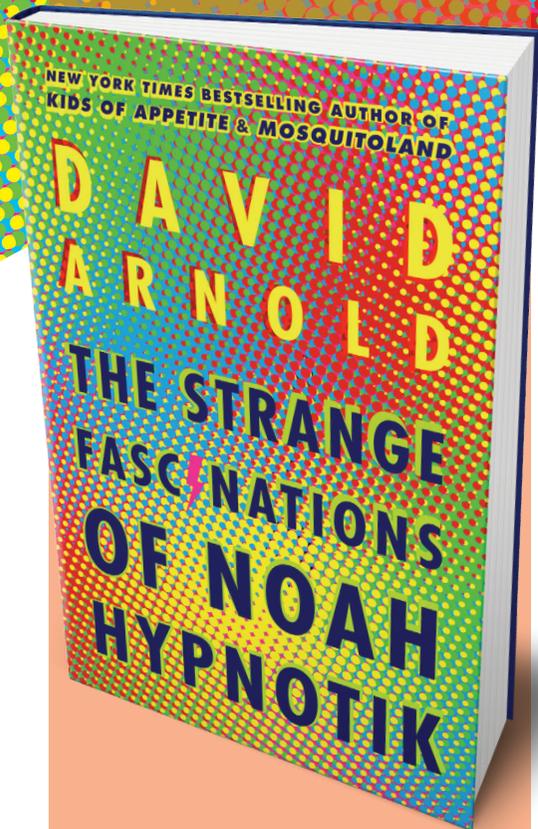
★ "Beautifully written with compelling voices, evocative allusions and metaphors, and pithy aphorisms, this offers the sentimental cleansing (the kind that comes with tears) that books do best, admirably living up to Mad's own favorite book, *The Outsiders*, in its path through tragedy to blessing." —*BCCB*, starred review

"A **gorgeous, insightful, big-hearted** joy of a book. *Kids of Appetite* made me fall in love with the world a little bit more." —Nicola Yoon, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Everything, Everything*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In David Arnold's debut novel, *Mosquitoland*, the protagonist Mim Malone tells her sister to be a "kid of appetite." Mim's encourages her sister to "Live your effing life. Do so with gusto, because my God, there's nothing sorrier than a gusto-less existence. Know yourself. Love yourself. Be a good friend. Be a kid of hope and substance." How is this philosophy similar or different to what you think it means to be a "kid of appetite" based on this novel?
2. One of the consequences of Vic's Moebius syndrome is that he has partial facial paralysis. He experiences many complex emotions but they rarely play across his face. After he and Mad kiss at the end of the book he says, "My smile. I wanted you to feel it." Other than the literal meaning, what is Vic saying to Mad about his feelings for her?
3. The Kids of Appetite "adopt" Vic and help him on his quest to scatter his father's ashes. Do you think he would have found all of the locations and scattered the ashes without their help?
4. Grief is a common thread connecting all of the characters, especially Vic and the Kids of Appetite. How does grief motivate and influence each character's actions in the novel?
5. Just as "The Flower Duet" helps Vic feel close to his father, do you have a song that reminds you of an important person in your life? Why is it significant to you?
6. "Memories are as infinite as the horizon," is a motif throughout the novel that Vic's mother says at the end when they scatter his father's ashes together. How is this quote significant to Vic's story and how he will look back on this time with the Kids of Appetite?
7. The novel is written from Vic's and Mad's points of views; however, how might the narrative be different if it were from Baz's and Nzuzi's perspectives? Would the interrogation scenes take on a different tone? What would Vic's grief and quest to scatter his father's ashes look like from the outside?
8. The novel has a complex narrative structure, alternating between Mad's and Vic's perspectives as well between the past and present. How does the structure contribute to the mystery of who killed Uncle Lester?
9. Mad's favorite book is *The Outsiders*; she's constantly re-reading it and it has informed her Madifesto. Is there a book in your life that you feel has influenced you as much as *The Outsiders* has influenced Mad?
10. Baz says, "We are all part of the same story, each of us different chapters. We may not have the power to choose setting or plot, but we can choose what kind of characters we want to be." How do we see this philosophy in each Kid of Appetite? What does this quote mean to you?



THE STRANGE FASCINATIONS OF NOAH HYPNOTIK

In his senior year of high school, Noah's unsure of a lot of things; the future, his friendships, and whether or not he's ever going to swim again. He has a few strange fascinations though, and their presence in his life might be the only anchor he has when he finds that an unexpected hypnosis may have turned his life upside down. Bestselling author David Arnold creates an utterly unique story about friendship, honesty, and what it means to truly connect with another person.

PRAISE

"The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik is an epic wonder that only David Arnold could have dreamed up. You'll marvel at every glowing page as powerhouse Arnold tells a blazing, transporting story of love and history and mystery and more."

—Adam Silvera, *New York Times* bestselling author of *More Happy Than Not* and *They Both Die at the End*

"A breathtaking, mind-bending tour de force that probes fate and forgiveness, history of the human connection, and what it means to live. Ambitious, wise, hilarious and yearning, The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik is David Arnold at his exuberant best."

—Kelly Loy Gilbert, author of *Picture Us in the Light* and Morris Award finalist *Conviction*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Noah's friendship with the Rosa-Haas twins, Alan and Val, is described as "the delicate triangle." Do you think a romantic relationship between Val and Noah would have disrupted the balance in their friendship or is the trio as fragile as Alan believes?
2. Noah fakes his back injury in order to avoid telling his parents that he doesn't want to swim anymore. In your opinion, why did he have to lie to Alan and Val as well? Do you think they would have supported his lie or would they have encouraged him to tell his parents the truth?
3. All of Noah's "strange fascinations"—Mila Henry, Old Man Goiter, Philip Parish, and the Fading Girl—are alone or lonely. How does Noah's loneliness compare and contrast with that of each of these people?
4. The histories that Noah writes connect seemingly unrelated events, people, places, and things. He says, "I often wonder about the subtle connectors of the universe stretching through time and space..." Is there meaning in the connections that Noah finds? Or are they coincidences to which Noah is assigning significance?
5. Noah is occupied throughout the book with the thought of "pathological authenticity." He refers to David Bowie as being "pathologically authentic" and states to Penny, "that's the goal." How does Noah's goal of being "pathologically authentic" influence his own decision making? What does it mean to be "pathologically authentic" and is it an achievable goal? Is authenticity perception or reality for Noah?
6. While he's "Under" Noah notices subtle differences in his friends and family: his mother has a prominent scar on her face; Val's passion is music, not movies; and his dog is active and healthy rather than lethargic. Examine each of the differences and their significance.
7. Although only briefly mentioned, Circuit and Sarah's father is an important figure in the plot. It's his invention that Circuit uses on Noah. Do you think Circuit's experimentation with the device was his way of connecting with his late father? Why or why not?
8. Penny, Noah's sister, is obsessed with *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, until an Asian-American friend at school explains why she finds it offensive. Penny can never look at the film the same way. Describe a time when one person's perspective dramatically changed your deeply held beliefs or interests.
9. Noah resolves to learn from the time that he was "Under" and finally reconnects with his family and friends. Are there people you would treat differently if you could redo the past three months?
10. In the end, Noah encourages Val to break up "the delicate triangle" so she can go explore her photography at the best college for it, not just the one that's close and safe. What inspires him to tell her this?



DAVID ARNOLD lives in Lexington, Kentucky, with his (lovely) wife and (boisterous) son. He is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Kids of Appetite*, *Mosquitoland*, and *The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik*, and his books have been translated into over a dozen languages.

Learn more at davidarnoldbooks.com and follow him on Twitter [@roofbeam](https://twitter.com/roofbeam) and Instagram [@iamdavidarnold](https://www.instagram.com/iamdavidarnold).

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