



NO FIXED ADDRESS



A NOVEL BY SUSIN NIELSEN
DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Felix Knutsson is nearly thirteen, lives with his mother and pet gerbil, and is brilliant at memorising trivia. So far, pretty normal. But Felix and his mom Astrid have a secret: they are living in a van. Astrid promises it's only for a while until she finds a new job, and begs Felix not to breathe a word. So when Felix starts at a new school, he does his very best to hide it from his friends. But Felix has a plan to turn his and Astrid's lives around: he's going to go on his favourite game show *Who, What, Where, When* and win the cash prize. All he needs is a little luck and a lot of brain power . . .

ABOUT SUSIN NIELSEN

Susin Nielsen got her start feeding cast and crew on the popular television series, *Degrassi Junior High*. They hated her food, but they saw a spark in her writing. Nielsen went on to pen sixteen episodes of the hit TV show. Since then, Nielsen has written for many Canadian TV series.

Her young adult novels have received critical acclaim. She lives in Vancouver with her family and two extremely destructive cats.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

No Fixed Address opens with Felix agreeing to tell his story up until now to Constable Lee, on the November night before he is due to go to the hotel. The story then goes back in time to the previous summer. How does this affect your expectations as you read the book? Can you think of other examples of stories (whether novels, films or television) where this device is used?

Felix tells the story of Astrid's childhood and her life up till now. What events from her past do you think have contributed to her situation in the novel? What could she have done differently, if at all?

The novel is told from Felix's point of view. Discuss the reasons why the author, Susin Nielsen, chose to tell the story in this way.

Felix makes lists in his mind as a coping mechanism for his difficult and lonely life. Look at the different kinds of lists that appear in the book, for example in the chapters 'A Brief History of Homes' and 'Astrid's Guidebook to Lies'.

We aren't told until half-way through the full story of Felix's dad, Daniel. Why do you think Felix takes so long to tell the reader about him?

Discuss Dylan and Winnie, Felix's two very different friends. In what ways are they similar and different?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

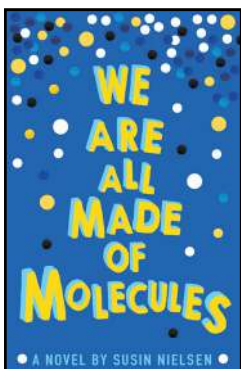
Felix finds Winnie deeply annoying when he first meets her at school, and tries to avoid including her to begin with. Discuss how his feelings towards her change throughout the book.

No Fixed Address has many characters who turn out to be very different to what Felix or the reader thinks at first. Compare one main character and one minor character and the ways in which they defy expectations when we learn more about them.

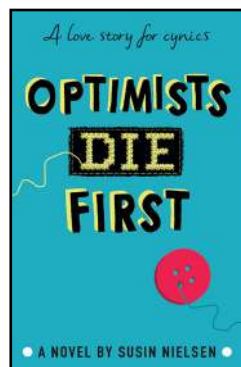
Discuss the themes of shame and guilt in *No Fixed Address*.

No Fixed Address takes a look at the lives of the ‘hidden homeless’ – the people who are without a permanent home and are just about finding alternatives to sleeping rough on the streets. What aspect of Felix’s precarious existence would you find hardest to deal with?

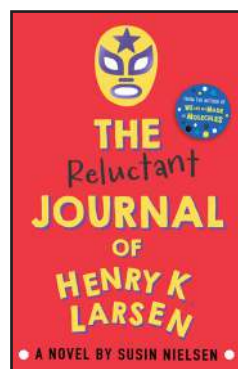
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