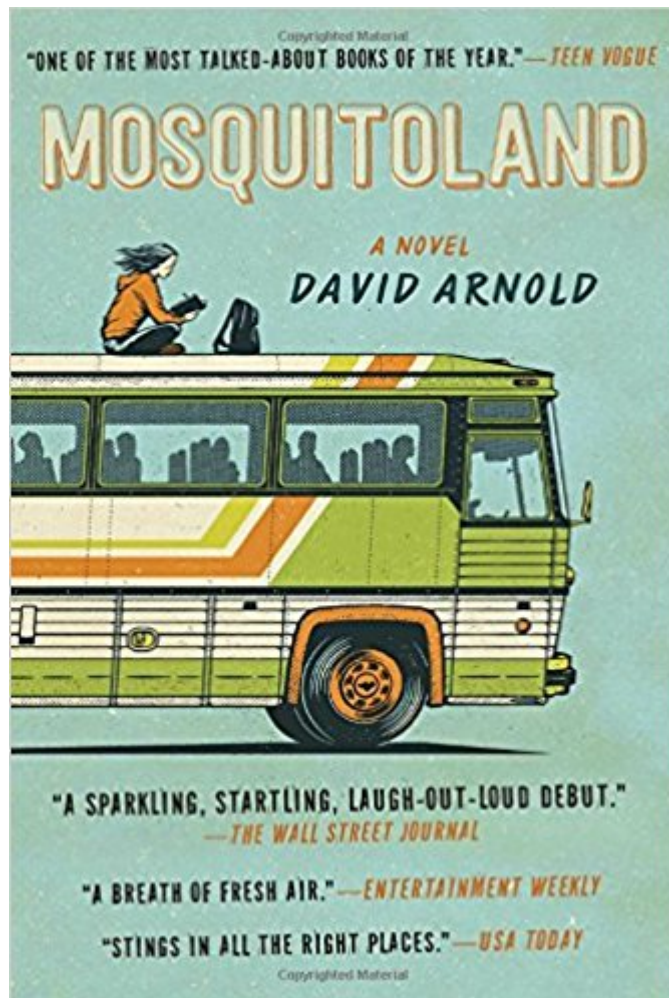




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# Mosquitoland



## Synopsis

“Top-notch” • USA Today “Illuminating” • Washington Post “A breath of fresh air” • Entertainment Weekly “Memorable” • People “After the sudden collapse of her family, Mim Malone is dragged from her home in northern Ohio to the “wastelands” of Mississippi, where she lives in a medicated milieu with her dad and new stepmom. Before the dust has a chance to settle, she learns her mother is sick back in Cleveland. So she ditches her new life and hops aboard a northbound Greyhound bus to her real home and her real mother, meeting a quirky cast of fellow travelers along the way. But when her thousand-mile journey takes a few turns she could never see coming, Mim must confront her own demons, redefining her notions of love, loyalty, and what it means to be sane.\*Includes a discussion guide, exclusive author interview, and music lyrics written by David Arnold

## Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (March 1, 2016)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 187 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #23,701 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Marriage & Divorce #8 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Marriage & Divorce #16 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up “Mary Iris Malone, aka Mim, has moved from Cleveland to Mississippi (or Mosquitoland as Mim derisively calls it) with her father and new stepmother, who want her to forget her old life and even her mother. Mim is already struggling, but when she becomes convinced that her stepmother is keeping them apart, the teen steals money and hits the road to Cleveland to save

her mother. The journey has bumps along the way— from a bus crash to unsavory characters. There are allies too, including romantic lead Beck and Walt, a homeless young man with Down syndrome. Mim grows on the trip and is forced to confront hard truths. Debut author Arnold's book is filled with some incredible moments of insight. The protagonist is a hard-edged narrator with a distinct voice. There is a lot for teens to admire and even savor—but there are also some deeply problematic elements. There's cultural appropriation: Mim uses lipstick to paint her face to soothe herself, calling it "war paint" and assuring readers that this is fine because she's "part" Cherokee. Walt's characterization veers close to stock, being only an inspiration for Mim. She and Beck have to take Walt to a veterinarian during a medical emergency. They joke that he is "kind of our pet." The revelations about Mim's mother's mental health, and her own mental health, arrive without clear foreshadowing and feel somewhat disjointed— particularly Mim's ultimate decision about her own medication. Recommended for larger collections, this is a readable, original story with strong writing, but the issues cannot be ignored.—Angie Manfredi, Los Alamos County Library System, NM --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Accolades for *Mosquitoland*: "Arnold proves his worth as a top-notch storyteller on his first literary go-round, which is reminiscent of Ferris Bueller's Day Off— if done by John Hughes with Jack Kerouac. . . *Mosquitoland*— stings in all the right places, which is why it will no doubt be many teenagers' new favorite book and win over the crustiest old-timer, too." —USA Today "David Arnold combines brio with compassion in this captivating first novel, which holds surprises, big and small, right to the end. . . Illuminating" —The Washington Post "David Arnold's sparkling, startling, laugh-out-loud debut. . . speaks to the sweetness of life, the courage of love and the blinkers that adolescents may need to remove to see what is truly around them." —Wall Street Journal "It's a breath of fresh air when a novel like David Arnold's— *Mosquitoland* bucks the usual classifications and stands defiantly alone. . .— like any odyssey worth embarking on, what the heroine— and the reader— finds along the way is far more interesting than we ever could have expected.—" —Entertainment Weekly "Memorable" —People "One of the most talked about books of the year"— Teen Vogue "In *Mosquitoland*, David Arnold has created one of the most unique narrative voices to show up in the world of young adult fiction. I don't remember life before Mim, and I don't want to. *Mosquitoland* is equal parts sharp, sad, and surreal. — This book is genius, war paint and all." —John Corey Whaley, — Printz-winning author of *Where Things Come Back* — "David Arnold—,cs 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 *Between Shades of Gray*

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

•Kirkus, starred review

“Wholly enjoyable. . . There is no shortage of humor in *Mim*’s musings, interspersed with tender scenes and a few heart-pounding surprises. *Mim*’s triumphant evolution is well worth the journey.

•Publishers Weekly, 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

“Arnold’s characters are captivating and believable. . . This is a very engaging and compelling story about individuals who succeed or fail to manage life’s challenges. An action-packed thriller with a touch of humor and romance.”

•School Library Connection, starred review

“Arnold skillfully sets up doubts in readers’ minds about how reliable *Mim*’s impressions are, even as her razor-sharp humor and intelligence make us want to believe her. David Arnold is a write to watch.”

•Shelf Awareness, starred review

“A YA road trip novel that takes you across the country, with a protagonist on her way to visit her hospitalized mother. And can we talk about that gorgeous cover for a second? My goodness. Get me a poster, right now.

•The Huffington Post “A wacky road trip. . . [Mim’s] voice is so singular and full of heart”

•The Horn Book “A strong emphasis on personal alienation and the saving grace of community permeates this voice-driven novel, and the whip-smart narration is seductive and powerful.”

•Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books “A classic road trip narrative. . . written with tenderness”

•National Post (Canada)

“First-time novelist David Arnold has uncannily captured the voice of a 16-year-old girl with beauty and style in *Mosquitoland*. . . Arnold’s prose is delicious as he peels back each of *Mim*’s layers on her long ride.

•BookPage

“You know those books that, despite being realistic contemporary, just transport you into another world entirely? That’s exactly the experience of reading Arnold’s debut. . . This book makes me wish I were a school librarian, just so I could buy ten copies for my collection.

•Barnes & Noble Teen Blog

“Arnold has already been chosen with nine other debut novelists for the ABA Indies New Voices list, and that’s not an honor given lightly, so it’s definitely a book to keep your eye on.

•Bustle- Kids’ Indie Next List “Top Ten” Pick (Spring 2015)- ABA Indies

Introduce Debut Authors and New Voices title- A Junior Library Guild selection- 2015 Great Lakes Great Reads award winner- A Publishers Weekly Spring 2015 Flying Start Booklist Editors' Choice 2015- A Booklist Top 10 First Novel for Youth: 2015- A Kirkus Unforgettable Debut 2015- An Best Book of the Year 2015- An NPR Book Concierge Best of 2015- A BookPage Best Teen Book of 2015- A Bustle Best YA Book of 2015- A Paste Magazine Best YA Book of 2015- A Buzzfeed Best YA Book of 2015- A Hudson Booksellers Best Book for Young Readers 2015 From the Hardcover edition.

Rating: 4.5 Stars I read *Kids of Appetite*, and fell in love with Arnold's writing. *Mosquitoland* has more of that beautiful writing, which just wrapped around me and brought me into Mim's world. Because I am Mary Iris Malone, and I am not okay. Mary, aka Mim, had been relocated, and in a blink of an eye, her recently divorced father was remarried. Then something happened, we don't know what, but this "event" turned Mim's life inside out, and she fled her home in search of her mother. Sometimes you walk into a room one person and when you come out the other side, you're someone else altogether. I greatly enjoyed this journey of self discovery that I took with Mim as she fled from one truth to find another. Along the way, she made some wonderful friends. Each of these friends was unique and special, and helped Mim along the way. I'm done roaming hillsides. I've scoured the corners of the earth. And I've found my people. This being my second Arnold book, solidified in my mind what a wonderful wordsmith he is. I quite love his writing style, and the characters he writes! They are all poetically flawed, but overall perfect. He deftly took me through just about every emotion, and I cared. I cared so much about these people, and their lives, and how it was all going to turn out. He also always has these inspiring moments in his books. Live your effing life. Do so with gusto, because my God, there's nothing sorrier than a gusto-less existence. Know yourself. Be a good friend. Be a kid of hope and substance. Be a kid of appetite. See what I mean?" and *twas and always thus* another great book from David Arnold, which is leaving me wanting more of his work.

A sure sign of a great book is the feeling of emptiness that comes over you when it ends. This is how I felt turning the final page of David Arnold's debut novel, *Mosquitoland*. I was turned on to this novel after reading a book review that made the claim that this story would be the next big thing in young adult literature. I'm sure that a wide range of audiences will enjoy this book, but it will also go right over the heads of many-a young person looking for more predictable teen drama. *Mosquitoland* centers on a 16-year-old sass-a-frass named Mim. Mim is the

type of girl that meets the world head on. She says exactly what is on her mind and thinks she can size a person up just by knowing their name. Mim, of course, decides to run away from home because her mom is living in Cleveland and has come down with a mysterious illness that Mim overhears her dad and stepmom talking about. Without a second thought, Mim hops on board a dirty Greyhound bus and meets a variety of interesting characters along the way. The book review that I read compared *Mosquitoland* to the cult-classic, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, but I completely disagree. *Mosquitoland*'s journey is one of self-discovery that is at once both depressing and inspiring. I was also impressed by the fact that the plot had some surprises in store for me because I am rarely caught off guard by a young adult novel. I'll admit, there were times that I was frustrated with Mim as a character, but you couldn't help but respect her straightforward observations about life. Wordsmiths will also be treated to several lyrical nuggets that highlight Arnold's true gift with language.

Mim is spunky, courageous, and on a road trip to burgeoning adulthood. the book has received much praise, and much criticism. I agree with all the praise, not so much the criticism. \*\*\* spoiler alert - don't read further if you haven't read the book \*\*\*\* A 16 year old could feel a love attraction with a 20 year old is possible, and not creepy - especially with how it is dealt with here. Exaggerating her Native-American blood? classicly funny from an adolescent point of view and she was not given the award so I deem that adeptly handled. Making snap judgements about names? Hilarious and oh so adolescent. All the politically correct objections would make the book proper, but not funny. I confess to being a bit dissatisfied with the details of the divorce, marriage, pregnancy and mental illness but then again, these items were there to flesh out Mim's story, not the point of her story. And, the projectile vomit scene is.... awesome.

In a quick-moving chain of events, Mim's parents divorce, her father remarries, and Mim is moved nearly 1000 miles south from her mother. After overhearing that her mother is ill, and being convinced that her step-mother is keeping them apart, Mim makes a snap decision to take a Greyhound to Cleveland and help her mom. *Mosquitoland* follows Mim's journey, both physically and emotionally, as she makes friends, faces tough decisions, and learns a good deal about herself. Arnold's debut novel is smooth and polished, with a plot that flows well and nicely defined characters. It is also funny, and heartbreaking. With a few exceptions, Mim finds herself in situations that are realistic, and the choices she makes are also believable--even the bad ones. On a side

note, as a former special educator, I am in awe with Arnold's beautiful treatment of , and discussions about, atypical children. I hope this lesson will be embraced by all who read it. Mosquitoland is memorable, touching, and an overall good novel.

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Mosquitoland

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