

## Book Club Discussion Guide



*No Fixed Address by Susin Nielsen, Page 1 (May 2022)*

# No Fixed Address

By Susin Nielsen

## About the author:

I've always wanted to be a writer. Well, aside from a few years when I wanted to be an actor. Specifically I wanted to play Anita in West Side Story. There were only three problems: I couldn't sing; I couldn't dance; and I could only passably act.

I turned my sights to TV and got my start feeding cast and crew muffins and bologna sandwiches on the award-winning television series, Degrassi Junior High. They hated my food (a fact that's memorialized forever in a poem the cast wrote: "An ode to Susin, the Bran Muffin Queen, we eat them, we die, then we turn green"). But luckily for me, they saw a spark in a spec script I wrote, and I went on to pen 16 episodes of Degrassi Junior High and Degrassi High. I also got my first crack at novel writing when I wrote Shane, Wheels, Snake and Melanie – four books in the Degrassi series. I vowed that one day I would write an original young adult novel; it just took me a really long time!

In the meantime, the TV world kept me busy. I've written for a lot of Canadian TV shows, and still do. If you're curious, you can see my full list of TV credits on IMDB. And yes, I've met quite a few Canadian celebrities. But no, I have not met Drake.

Finally I got off my butt and wrote that young adult novel, Word Nerd. It was published in fall 2008 by Tundra Books. My second novel, Dear George Clooney: Please Marry My Mom was published by Tundra in fall 2010, and The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen was published in fall 2012. In spring of 2015 my novel, We Are All Made of Molecules, was published in Canada, the US and the UK,

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followed up by *Optimists Die First*, which was published in 2017. *No Fixed Address* came out in September, 2018.

My books have been translated into French (European and Quebec editions), German, Italian, Korean, Polish, Dutch, Portuguese, Norwegian, Swedish, Romanian, Turkish, Spanish, Japanese and Ukrainian. You can check out some of the foreign covers (including the wonderful UK covers) here.

I live in Vancouver, Canada, with my family and two destructive, naughty cats. When I'm not writing, I love to road bike, swim badly, be in the great outdoors, read and travel. And I've been known to laugh at my own jokes.

Source: Author's website: (<https://susinnielsen.com/>)

### About this book:

12-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia, and his favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he's even named his gerbil after the host. His mom Astrid is loving, but can't hold onto a job. When they get evicted from their latest apartment, they move into a Westfalia van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and placed into foster care.

As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of *Who What Where When*. He is determined to get a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But what happens isn't what he expects...

Source: Author's website: (<https://susinnielsen.com/>)

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### Discussion Questions:

1. *No Fixed Address* opens with Felix agreeing to tell his story to Constable Lee, on the November night before he is due to go to the hotel. The story then shifts 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 from novels, films, or television) that are told in this way?
2. Felix tells the story of Astrid's childhood and her life 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?
3. The narration is from Felix's point of view. Why did the author, Susin Nielsen, choose to tell the story this way?
4. Felix makes lists in his mind as a coping mechanism for his difficult and lonely life—for example, in the chapters "A Brief History of Homes" and "Astrid's Guidebook to Lies." What do the different kinds of lists suggest?
5. The reader isn't told the full story of Felix's dad, Daniel, until halfway through the book. Why do you think Felix takes so long to tell the reader about him?
6. Discuss Dylan and Winnie. In what ways are they similar and different?
7. Felix finds Winnie deeply annoying when he meets her at school, and tries to avoid including her in plans. How do his feelings toward her change throughout the book?
8. *No Fixed Address* has many characters who turn out to be very different from 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.

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9. Discuss the themes of shame and guilt in *No Fixed Address*.
10. *No Fixed Address* takes a look at the lives of the “hidden homeless”— people without a permanent home who must find alternatives. If you were Felix, what aspect of your precarious existence would you find hardest to deal with?

Source: Author's website: (<https://susinnielsen.com/>)