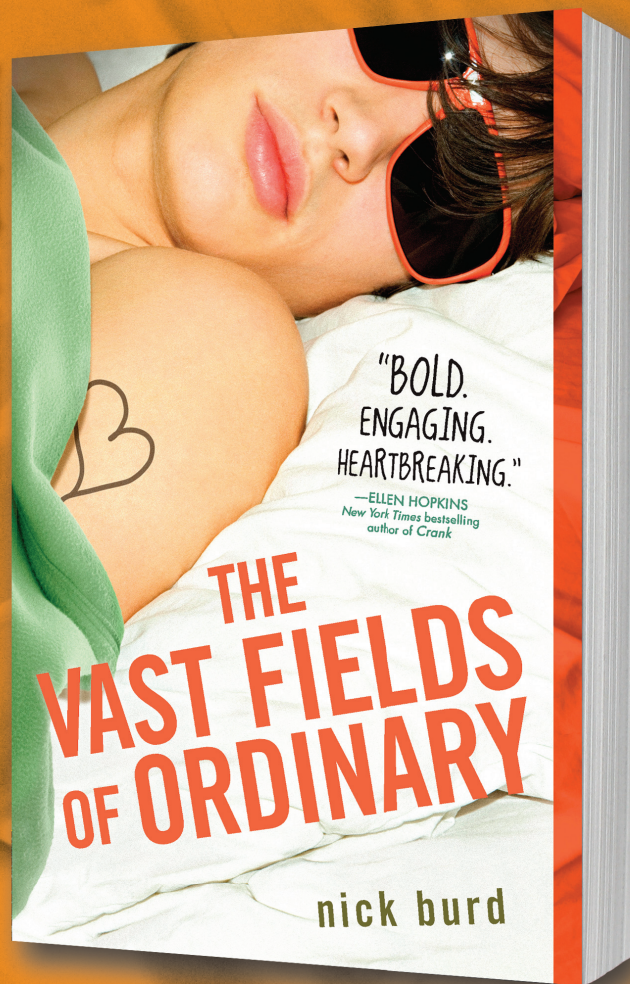


A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR *THE VAST FIELDS OF ORDINARY* BY NICK BURD

978-0-14-24-1820-8 (PB) • \$8.99 • Ages 14 up • Grades 9 up



ABOUT THE BOOK

AN AWARD-WINNING, CRITICALLY
ACCLAIMED DEBUT TEEN NOVEL

It's Dade's last summer at home, and things are pretty hopeless. He has a crappy job, a "boyfriend" who treats him like dirt, and his parents' marriage is falling apart. So when he meets and falls in love with the mysterious Alex Kincaid, Dade feels like he's finally experiencing true happiness. But when a tragedy shatters the final days of summer, he realizes he must face his future and learn how to move forward from his past.

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF 2009

AN ALA STONEWALL YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE AWARD WINNER

A KIRKUS REVIEWS BEST CHILDREN'S & YA BOOK OF 2009



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NICK BURD attended the University of Iowa and received his MFA from the New School. His debut novel, *The Vast Fields of Ordinary*, received starred reviews from *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Journal Library*, and *Booklist*. Nick lives and writes in Brooklyn. Visit him online at www.nick-burd.com.

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- How does the quote by E.E. Cummings relate to Dade's struggle throughout the book?
- Why does Dade tell inanimate objects in his house that he is gay but not his parents? What do they do for him that real people cannot? Why is the fact that "the world went on as ever" important?
- How would you feel if you had to hide an important part of yourself from people? Why would you hide it in the first place? In the long run, is keeping it a secret better than just telling someone?
- What is significant about Dade's father's description of Vicki? Do you think that he is hypocritical? Why or why not? Why does Dade feel a little bit of guilt when he finds out that his father met Vicki at a poetry class?
- What does Pablo mean when he says that he wants a "normal life"? Pablo hides who he really is from the rest of the world. Why is he also dishonest with *himself*? How would you describe Pablo to someone who did not know him?
- Why does Dade call himself a "fag" in private but tells Alex that he does not like that word? How is calling yourself something different from someone else calling you the same thing?
- Describe Dade's relationships with Pablo, Lucy, and Alex. How are they different? What do they represent for Dade?
- Why do you think Dade chose to stand up for himself to Pablo?
- Dade says that "... getting attached to people is pointless" and that "people care too much about everything." Do you agree with this statement?
- How did Dade's parents react when he told them that he was gay? How did they treat him differently as time went on?
- Why do you think Pablo changed his mind and started pursuing Dade? Was Dade right to ignore Pablo? Do you think that Dade is responsible for what happened to Pablo?
- What does Dade mean when he says that "the house felt more like home than it ever had before"?
- Why don't Lucy and Dade talk about Pablo when Lucy comes to visit Dade at college? What does Dade mean when he says, "[Pablo] was there . . . a ghostly listener . . . who finally understood all the things he couldn't when he was alive"? What do you think Pablo has learned?
- Why is Dade obsessed with Jenny Moore and her disappearance? Where do you think she was that whole time?



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