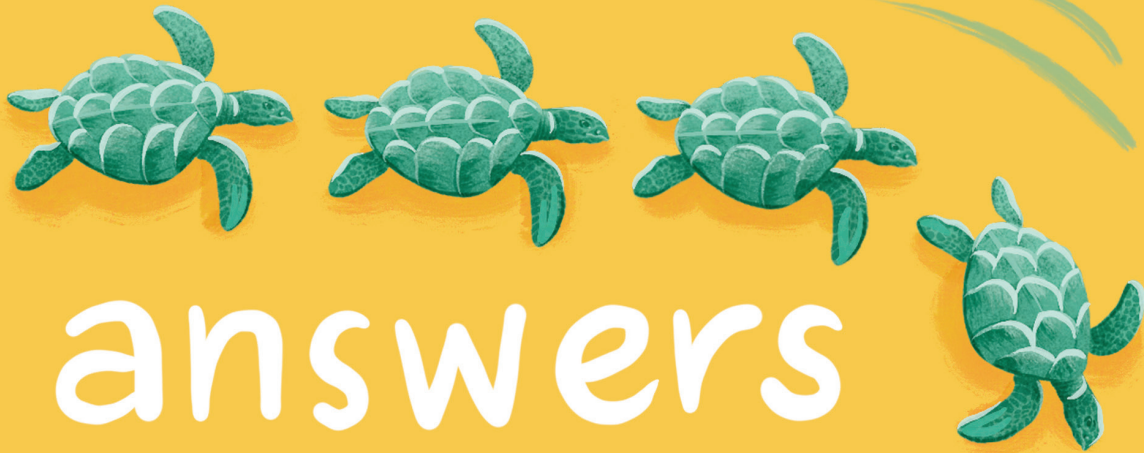
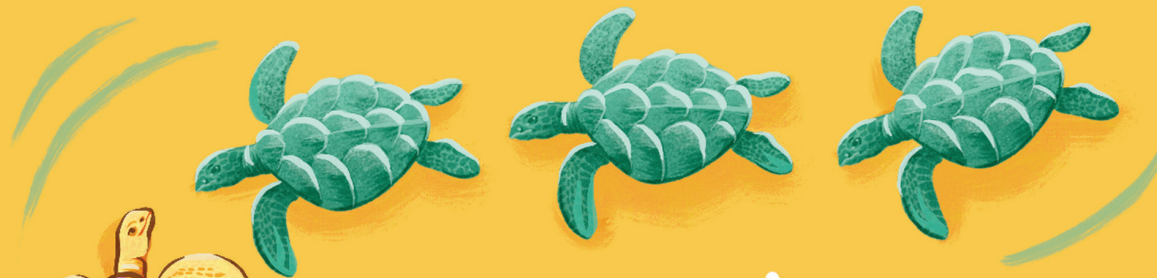


New York Times bestselling author of *EVERY DAY*

DAVID LEVITHAN



answers



in the



pages

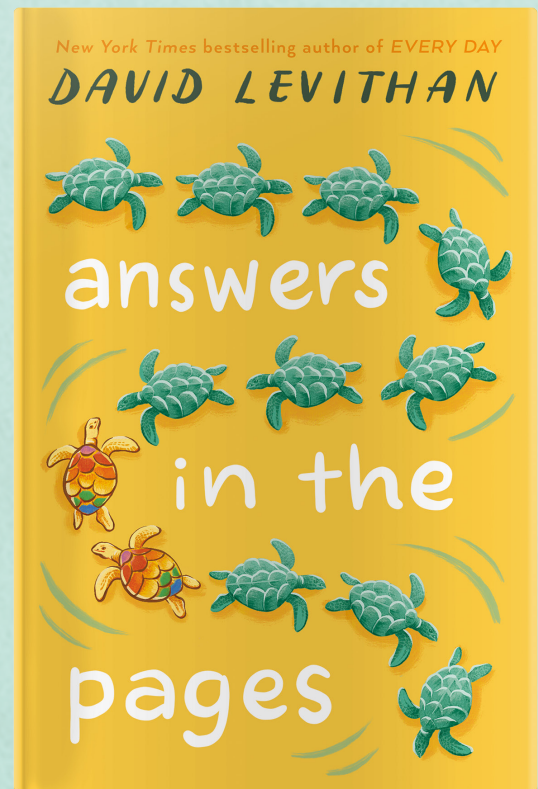
DISCUSSION GUIDE

RHTeachersLibrarians.com

About the Book

When Donovan left his copy of *The Adventurers* on the kitchen counter, he didn't think his mom would read it—much less have a problem with it. It's just an adventure novel about two characters trying to stop an evil genius, right? But soon the entire town is freaking out about whether the book's main characters are gay, Donovan's mom is trying to get the book removed from the school curriculum, and Donovan is caught in the middle. Donovan doesn't know if the two boys fall in love at the end or not—but he does know this: even if they do, it shouldn't matter. The book should not be banned from school.

Interweaving three connected storylines, David Levithan delivers a bold, fun, and timely story about taking action (whether it's against censorship or deadly alligators), being brave, and standing up for what's right.



Grades 3–7

HC: 978-0-593-48468-5

GLB: 978-0-593-48469-2

EL: 978-0-593-48470-8



Photo credit: Jake Hamilton

About the Author

Some of David Levithan's many acclaimed novels and story collections include *19 Love Songs*, *Every Day*, *Two Boys Kissing*, and *Boy Meets Boy*. His bestselling collaborations include *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist*, *Dash and Lily's Book of Dares*, and *The Twelve Days of Dash & Lily* (written with Rachel Cohn) and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (written with John Green). David was the recipient of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for his contribution to YA literature. You can learn more about him at davidlevithan.com and follow him on Twitter at @loversdiction.



Pre-Reading Activity

Two important terms come up in the novel: *book challenge* and *book ban*. Ask students to define *challenge* and *ban*. Have them write two paragraphs that discuss the difference between a book challenge and a book ban, including why it's important to understand the difference.

Discussion Questions

- Mr. Howe's class is reading *The Adventurers* by G. Bright. Donovan's mother picks up his copy of the novel and reads: "At that moment, Rick knew just how deeply he loved Oliver." (p. 1) Why is she concerned by what she reads? What is the context? What does it mean to take something out of context? Why is context so important?
- Describe Donovan's parents. Debate whether Donovan's mother's rules are unreasonable. She calls other parents to persuade them to support her efforts to get *The Adventurers* banned. Explain why she calls this "rallying the troops." How does this make her an instigator? Why doesn't she call Allison's or Kira's parents?
- Donovan's mother orders him not to read *The Adventurers*. She says it contains "inappropriate" content. How might Mrs. Johnson define *inappropriate*? What does *subjective* mean? Talk about how appropriateness is subjective.
- Donovan borrows the book from the library after his mother confiscates his copy. Why do you think kids gravitate toward books that are forbidden? Why does Donovan go immediately to the last sentence? Why does this make him want to read the entire novel?
- Explain the purpose of the three parallel stories. How are they connected? Compare Gideon's mother to Donovan's mother. At the end of the novel, there is an element of surprise about Gideon and Roberto's story. Identify the surprise. What is significant about G. Bright, the author of *The Adventurers*, wearing purple socks?
- Ms. June, Gideon and Roberto's teacher, made a mistake early in her career when she asked her students to spy on someone after they read *Harriet the Spy*. Explain why this was a questionable assignment. How did she learn from her mistake? What message did she send her students when she told them what she had done? How does this make her a good teacher?
- Discuss Allison's defense of Donovan after Kira says, "Well, I guess now I know why you didn't have your book yesterday." (p. 43) Is this comment fair? Why or why not? How do the other students react to Donovan?
- Curtis, one of the students in Donovan's class, shares that he is gay. Discuss Mr. Howe's response: "Feels good to say it out loud, doesn't it?" (p. 66) Return to the story of Gideon and Roberto. Roberto's mother knows what is going on between the boys and accepts it. Why doesn't Gideon share his sexuality with his parents? Compare Curtis's parents to Roberto's mom.
- Describe Principal Woodson. Discuss how she handles the book challenge. Why is Allison's mom certain that Principal Woodson will "show some spine"? (p. 41) What makes Donovan think the principal is on the side of Mr. Howe, the students, and the book?
- In accordance with the school district's policy, study of *The Adventurers* is paused until the book challenge is resolved. How do Mr. Howe's students express their feelings about the situation?



- Donovan feels guilty for leaving the book where his mother could find it. How does Mr. Howe help Donovan see that none of this is his fault? Donovan gains the courage to speak up for himself and the book after his talk with Mr. Howe. Have you ever had to stand up to someone older or more powerful than you? What happened?
- Donovan attends the school board meeting with his parents but sits with his friends. People on both sides of the issue speak. Discuss Donovan's surprise when his mother doesn't go to the microphone. What changed her mind? Explain why Curtis receives a standing ovation after he speaks. Discuss which other characters make a difference at the board meeting. How do Curtis and the nonbinary high schooler prove that students have a right to be acknowledged and heard?

Curriculum Connections

- Mr. Howe explains that meaning in literature "comes from the combination of what the author puts in and what the reader takes out." (p. 67) Write a short paper that discusses the meaning of *Answers in the Pages*. Cite specific scenes and quotes from the novel.
- One woman who speaks out against the book at the school board meeting says, "I don't need to read this book to know it's evil." (p. 143) Write a newspaper editorial about whether people who haven't read something can have an opinion on it.
- Melody, one of the characters from *The Adventurers*, says, "You can't have freedom if you're not willing to defend it from the people who want to take it away." (p. 90) Write a spine poem from Donovan's point of view, using FREEDOM TO READ as the spine words.
- Write the article that the *Sandpiper Gazette* publishes with the headline "Mother Challenges Homosexual Book in Local

Classroom." Remember to include who, what, when, and how. Include a quote from Mrs. Johnson, Allison's mother, and Principal Woodson.

- Tape a local television interview with Mr. Howe, Curtis, Donovan, Kira's moms, and Principal Woodson about the results of the hearing. Students should write a script, including an introduction to the controversy.
- Explore the websites of these free speech organizations.

- American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom: ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif



- National Coalition Against Censorship: ncac.org

Write a letter to one of the organizations asking for help dealing with the challenge to *The Adventurers*.

- An older man who has been with his husband for over forty years speaks at the school board meeting. He says, "We haven't wrestled any alligators or escaped from any cages, but we have had to wrestle against a world that has told us our love doesn't count and we have had to escape through the bars of other people's prejudices." (p. 150) Make an annotated bibliography of ten books in your library that embrace and celebrate all kinds of love.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary in the novel isn't difficult, but students should jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them taking clues from context. Such words may include:

unobtrusive (p. 19), *monumentally* (p. 20), *blasphemy* (p. 26), *confiscated* (p. 62), *humiliating* (p. 92), *homophobic* (p. 97), *indoctrinated* (p. 141), *abomination* (p. 142), *smite* (p. 142), *reiterate* (p. 143), and *infiltrated* (p. 150).

Dealing with Challenges

Most school districts have policies that address controversial materials in the library and classroom. This includes a process for a citizen to file a formal challenge. Here are ways that school personnel might deal with challenges.

- Know your school district's policy and discuss it with your administrator.
- Meet with the concerned parent or parents and let them know why the book was selected, the themes to be discussed with students, and the nature of any planned writing assignments.
- Offer an alternative title that addresses similar themes. Assure parents that their student may leave the classroom and complete another assignment when the class is engaged in discussion of the challenged novel.
- If the issue is unresolved in the meeting, give the complainants a copy of the school board policy and the instructions for filing a formal request for reconsideration. This should include:
 - A statement declaring that they have read the entire book
 - Reasons for the challenge (language, sex, violence, religious viewpoint, etc.)
 - A statement regarding the literary merits of the book
 - Suggestions of other titles with similar themes that they deem more appropriate for their child
- Assure parents that the school and school district's materials review committee will read the novel and address the complaint. The committee will then make a recommendation to the school board.
- Spread the word to colleagues and friends that a book challenge is in progress. They may engage in recruiting others to speak for the book in their neighborhoods, in local media, and on social media.
- Don't hesitate to contact the American Library's Association Office for Intellectual Freedom and the National Coalition Against Censorship for help. You can contact them anonymously if you prefer.
- Be honest with students should they ask about a book challenge. Word spreads and they are likely to know about it. Do not reveal which parents have complained. Never make a student feel guilty for the actions of their parents.



Guide written by Pat Scales, children's literature consultant

For resources and suggestions on facilitating discussions of censorship in your classroom, library or community, visit bit.ly/supportchallengedbooks.



Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.rhteacherslibrarians.com), your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!



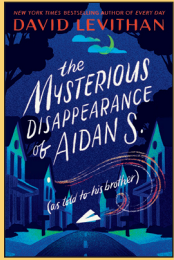
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More from David Levithan

Middle Grade



The Mysterious Disappearance of Aidan S.

8-12 years
Grades 3-7

HC: 978-1-9848-4859-8
TR: 978-1-9848-4862-8
EL: 978-1-9848-4861-1
GLB: 978-1-9848-4860-4

Aidan disappeared for six days. Six agonizing days of searches and police and questions and constant vigils. Then, just as suddenly as he vanished, Aidan reappears. Where has he been? The story he tells is simply. . . impossible. But it's the story Aidan is sticking to. When the kids in school hear Aidan's story, they taunt him. But still Aidan clings to his story. And as he becomes more of an outcast, Lucas becomes more and more concerned. Being on Aidan's side would mean believing in the impossible. But how can you believe in the impossible when everything and everybody is telling you not to?

Download a [discussion guide](#).

Young Adult



Take Me With You When You Go

David Levithan and
Jennifer Niven

From the *New York Times* bestselling authors of *All the Bright Places* and *Every Day* comes a story of hope, siblinghood, and finding your home in the people who matter the most.

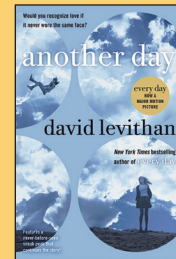
HC: 978-0-5255-8099-7
GLB: 978-0-5255-8100-0
EL: 978-0-5255-8101-7



19 Love Songs

Born from Levithan's tradition of writing a story for his friends each Valentine's Day, this collection brings all of them to his readers for the first time. With fiction, nonfiction, and a story in verse, there's something for every reader here.

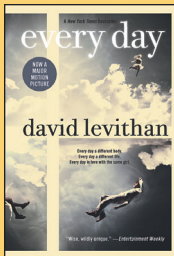
HC: 978-1-9848-4863-5
TR: 978-1-9848-4866-6
GLB: 978-1-9848-4864-2
EL: 978-1-9848-4865-9



Another Day

The eagerly anticipated sequel to the *Every Day*. Readers experience the same story from Rhiannon's perspective, as she seeks to understand A's life and discover if you can truly love someone who is destined to change every day.

HC: 978-0-385-75620-4
TR: 978-0-385-75623-5
EL: 978-0-385-75622-8



Every Day

A heartrending, genre-bending account of how love can make anything possible—even the impossible.

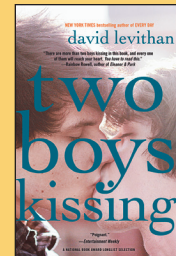
HC: 978-0-307-93188-7
TR: 978-0-307-93189-4
EL: 978-0-307-97563-8



Boy Meets Boy

Considered groundbreaking upon its publication in 2003, *Boy Meets Boy* is now 10 years old and David Levithan's debut about two teenage boys finding love is still in print and still as heartwarming.

TR: 978-0-375-83299-4
EL: 978-0-307-48244-0



Two Boys Kissing

In his follow-up to the bestselling *Every Day*, Levithan again employs his trademark sharp wit in this warm-hearted tale of teenage love.

TR: 978-0-307-93191-7
EL: 978-0-307-97564-5