

# A READER'S GUIDE

“I devoured it.” —Kelly Link, author of *Magic for Beginners*

# SINKHOLE

A NOVEL

DAVIDA G.  
BREIER

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS PRESS

# About the Book

Lies from the past and a dangerous present collide when, after fifteen years in exile, Michelle Miller returns to her tiny hometown of Lorida, Florida. With her mother in the hospital, she's forced to reckon with the broken relationships she left behind: with her family, with friends, and with herself.

As a teenager, Michelle felt isolated and invisible until she met Sissy, a dynamic and wealthy classmate. Their sudden, intense friendship was all-consuming. Punk rocker Morrison later joins their clique, and they become an inseparable trio. They were the perfect high school friends, bound by dysfunction, bad TV, and boredom—until one of them ends up dead.

Forced to confront the life she turned her back on fifteen years ago, she begins questioning what was truth and what were lies. Now at a distance, Michelle begins to see how dangerous Sissy truly was.

An ingenious debut from editor and publisher Davida Breier, *Sinkhole* is a mesmerizing, darkly comic coming-of-age novel immersed in 1980s central Florida. A disturbing and skillful exploration of home, friendship, selfhood, and grief set amidst golf courses, mobile homes, and alligators.

## Questions for Discussion

- ❖ *Sinkhole* is largely set in the mid-1980s. We experience shopping malls and calling for movie showtimes, but we also see social isolation and homophobia. Is it nostalgic? Or anti-nostalgic? Or both?
- ❖ How is the novel structured? Why is that important for the main character's development?
- ❖ At the start of the novel, when Sissy and Michelle meet, Michelle says, "Already she had told me three lies." What does Michelle mean by that?
- ❖ Michelle says of Sissy, "I knew she lied. I learned to lie by watching her." Does Sissy ever tell the truth?

- ❖ Who are some of the father figures in *Sinkhole*? How do they impact the main characters?
- ❖ Characters go by given names, chosen names, and nicknames. How are names important in the novel?
- ❖ Set in the mid-1980s, it takes place at the height of the AIDS epidemic. How is that reflected in the novel?
- ❖ Wild Florida, specifically the area near Lake Istokpoga, is a main setting. How does the setting play into the story?
- ❖ What are some of the themes in *Sinkhole*?
- ❖ How and why is class important in the novel?
- ❖ Did you relate to any of the characters? If so, who and how?
- ❖ Why was Sissy's hold over Morrison stronger than her hold over Michelle?
- ❖ What is the most dangerous animal in Florida?

## About the Author

Davida G. Breier was born in Miami, FL. She's spent the last two decades in various roles within the book industry and currently works for Johns Hopkins University Press. Davida lives in Maryland with her family, a pack of wee rescue dogs, a rescue tortoise, and two companion chickens.



## Book Details

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