

# BOOK CLUB

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BOOK CLUBS

## Wendy's Ever After

*JULIE WRIGHT*

1. As a child, J. M. Barrie experienced a terrible loss when his older brother died. The theme of loss is present in the original *Peter Pan* and continues in *Wendy's Ever After*. Wendy has lost her father, Liam has lost his mother, Mrs. Connolly has lost her son and husband, Peter Pan lost his best friend, and Hook lost his wife—and then his best friend as well. In what ways does the theme of loss lead to hope as the story progresses?
2. How well do you know the original story of *Peter Pan*? The play, which Barrie later published as a novel, has been adapted many times. Some versions stay close to the original, while others introduce new settings, themes, or characters. What do you think makes a good adaptation? Should it stay faithful to the original, or is it more important to bring something new to the story? Why do you think *Peter Pan* has been adapted so many times? What themes or characters make it timeless?
3. When Wendy sees the time-twister vines, she wonders if Peter traveled through them and saw his face as an old man—and if that image made him decide he didn't want to grow up after all. What do you think? What made Peter Pan decide to remain Peter Pan?
4. Much of this story explores the contrast between childhood and adulthood. Wendy decides by the end that she's glad to grow up, while Peter insists it's better not to change. Who do you think is right? Are there things children do better—or more intuitively—than adults? What benefits come with aging?
5. Wendy vacillates between her affection for Peter and her affection for Liam. Discuss the complexities of Wendy's feelings for both. How do love and loyalty influence her decision to stay or leave Neverland?

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6. What does Neverland symbolize for Wendy, Liam, Hook, and Peter? How does this magical place shape their views on reality and imagination? How does it help some (Wendy and Liam) cope with loss, while allowing others (Peter and Hook) to deny that loss is a part of life?
7. How is the struggle between good and evil portrayed through Peter Pan and Captain Hook? How does Liam's relationship with his uncle complicate this dynamic? How does Wendy's relationship with Peter influence it? Is anyone ever entirely good or evil? What complexities shape our perceptions of good and evil?
8. How do Peter Pan's and Captain Hook's perspectives on life differ from Wendy's and Liam's? What lessons, if any, do Peter and Hook learn by the end of the story? What about Liam and Wendy?
9. In the original Peter Pan, Wendy serves as a pretend mother to Peter, the Lost Boys, and her brothers. In what ways do you see Wendy stepping back into that role now that she's returned to Neverland?
10. Finally, a few fun facts: The Joy hand buzzer wasn't actually invented until 1928 by Danish inventor Soren Sorensen Adams. I'd love to take credit for this fun fact, but my editor, Kristen Evans, pointed it out. We decided that since Neverland is a place where time runs amok, it was okay for one of the Lost Boys to own the gag toy.
11. In the original Peter Pan (both the play and the book), Tinker Bell is a fairy, and her dust is fairy dust. The term "pixie" came into use with Disney's adaptation. As a nod to both versions, I used the terms interchangeably. I hope that doesn't cause too much twitching for those who prefer one over the other.
12. Some people credit J. M. Barrie with inventing the name Wendy, but it was already in use. What Barrie did was popularize the name for baby girls around the world—all because of Wendy Darling. Now you know the facts in case anyone asks.