

Book Club Discussion Guide: The Never: A Tale of Peter and the Fae

This guide is designed to help readers explore the themes, characters, and unique mythological world of Don Jones's "The Never: A Tale of Peter and the Fae," a dark, adult reinterpretation of the classic Peter Pan story.

Part I: Setting the Stage (The Retelling & World-Building)

1. **Reinterpretation vs. Retelling:** The book is described as a "thoughtful reinterpretation" of Peter Pan. In what ways did the author stay faithful to the core elements of J.M. Barrie's original story (e.g., specific characters, concepts like flying, or the idea of perpetual childhood)? Where did the author depart most drastically from the original tale?
2. **The Fae and Creativity:** The snippet mentions the author's ideas about the "power of creativity and the relationship between the Fae and inspiration." How is the Fae realm (The Never) sustained, or how does it interact with, human creativity, dreams, or stories? Do characters actively create, or are they passive participants in a grander narrative?
3. **The Darker Tone:** This version is noted as a "darker adult take." What was the most unsettling or darkest thematic element you encountered? Did the adult themes enhance or detract from your connection to the source material?
4. **Neverland's Mythology:** How is the setting of Neverland (or "The Never") constructed in this book? Is it a single place, or does it shift based on the imagination of its inhabitants? Discuss the rules of magic and power as they exist within this world.

Part II: Characters and Transformation

1. **Peter:** How does Peter's character change from the classic, mischievous boy? What is his true role or identity in the Fae world? Is his desire to avoid adulthood driven by innocence, or something more complex and potentially sinister?
2. **Wendy and the Darling Children:** Wendy often serves as a bridge between the real world and Neverland. What journey does she undergo in this novel? Do the Darling children represent something beyond typical childhood—perhaps a loss of innocence, the power of narrative, or the constraints of growing up?
3. **Hook and Villains:** How does Captain Hook (or the primary antagonist) function within this revised mythology? Is he simply an enemy of Peter, or does he represent the inevitable forces of change, time, or the adult world encroaching on the Fae?

4. **Tinkerbell and the Fae:** What are the key characteristics of the Fae/faeries in this story? How are their motivations (and Tink's specifically) linked to the survival or structure of The Never?

Part III: Themes and Literary Devices

1. **The Nature of Time and Change:** Discuss the theme of time. The book is an "elegiac tale about attempting to protect one's way of life amid change and destruction." Who is trying to stop time, and who is trying to force things to change? Which perspective do you ultimately sympathize with?
2. **Stereotypes and Manifestation (A Key Point):** The critique notes that "the horrendously stereotypical Indians... are explained as Fae manifestations of childish interpretations of faraway stories." How did this explanation land with you as a reader? Was this device an effective way for the author to comment on or reinterpret problematic elements of the original text?
3. **Memory and Forgetting:** In many Peter Pan retellings, forgetting is a key mechanism. How does memory—or the lack thereof—function as a source of power or vulnerability for the human characters, and the Fae?
4. **The Magic of Language:** The snippet shows a moment where words and runes in a book grant a character a sudden, powerful ability. Discuss the role of language, stories, and written/unwritten rules in driving the action and defining the characters' abilities.

Part IV: Final Thoughts

1. **The Ending:** How did you interpret the final chapter and the resolution of the central conflict? Did the ending provide closure, or did it leave certain questions about the characters' futures deliberately open-ended?
2. **Reader Recommendation:** If you were recommending this book, who would you say the target audience is? (e.g., fans of dark fantasy, readers interested in mythology, people who love Peter Pan retellings).
3. **One Question for the Author:** If you could ask Don Jones one question about the book, what would it be?