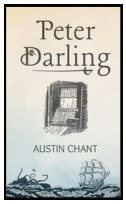
The Queerly Beloved BOOK CLUB



THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 6.30PM

Theme: Queer Retellings

Book: *Peter Darling* by Austin Chant

Blurb

A queer, transgender retelling of Peter Pan in which Pan returns to Neverland after a decade in the real world.

The Lost Boys say that Peter Pan went back to England because of Wendy Darling, but Wendy is just an old life he left behind. Neverland is his real home. So when Peter returns to it after ten years in the real world, he's surprised to find a Neverland that no longer seems to need him.

The only person who truly missed Peter is Captain James Hook, who is delighted to have his old rival back. But when a new war ignites between the Lost Boys and Hook's pirates, the ensuing bloodshed becomes all too real - and Peter's rivalry with Hook starts to blur into something far more complicated, sensual, and deadly.

Themes / Discussion Points

- The importance of queer retellings
- Peter Darling when considered as a piece of literature vs a queer #ownvoice story
- Authenticity of the trans experience
- Authenticity of trans experience in a fantasy setting
- Expansion of themes in original Peter Pan story in relation to Neverland being an escape from the real world and the realities of life as an adult
- Reframing of the story as a trans narrative
- Wendy vs Peter vs Pan and James vs Hook
- Narrow (and sometimes toxic) ideas of what it is to be a boy - growing up and learning what it is to be a man
- Peter's contradictory experience of being someone who loves and values his family but torn between that and loyalty to himself
- What does it take to be a villain?
- Peter's identity in relation to his relationship with James and Hook
- Focus on the physical body in trans narratives

Trigger Warnings

- Transphobia
- Misgendering

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

General

- What format did you read *Peter Darling* in?
- What did you like about the book?
- What did you dislike about the book?
- What will you remember about this book a year from now?
- Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?
- Would you re-read it? Why or why not?

Retellings

- Do you generally like retellings? If yes, why?
- Have you read the original Peter Pan? Are you a fan?
- How important is it to have read an original story when reading a retelling do you think?
- Have you read any other Peter Pan retellings that you enjoyed?
- What do you think of queer retellings? Do you think they have a part to play in amplifying queer voices and stories?
- Was there anything you liked about this version when compared to the original?

Plot / Setting / Story

- What did you think of the general story and plot of Peter Darling?
- Was there anything you would have done differently?
- What did you think of Austin Chant's reframing of Neverland as both a real place and a fantasy creation?
- How important was the setting of Neverland as a vehicle for the development of Pan and Hook vs Peter and James' characters?
- As a queer person, how relatable were Peter and James's stories?
- If you are trans, what did you think of Austin Chant's portrayal of Peter's journey as a trans man?
- Were there any quotes, paragraphs or parts of the story that you loved?

Characters

- What did you think of Austin Chant's take on the characters of Hook and Pan?
- Did you like what happened to the characters? What would you have done differently?
- As a queer person, how relatable did you find the characters of Pan and Hook vs Peter and James?
- Who was your favourite character? What did you like about them?
- Were there any characters that you disliked? What did you dislike about them?
- Did your opinion of the characters change throughout the story?