

PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS

By Dave Barry & Ridley Pearson

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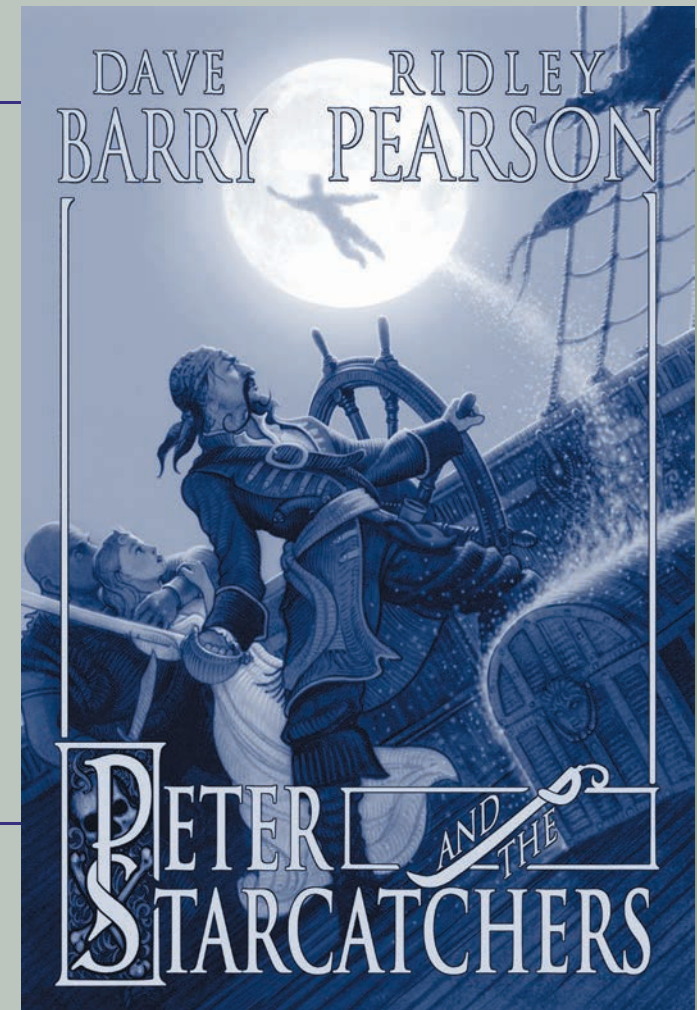
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide includes discussion questions, a comprehension check, and projects intended to extend the use of the novel into classrooms, book clubs, and literature circles. It should promote discussion on the themes of the novel, including friendship, courage, and corruption.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Don't even think of starting this book unless you're sitting in a comfortable chair and have lots of time. A fast-paced, impossible-to-put-down adventure awaits as the young orphan Peter and his mates are dispatched to an island ruled by the evil King Zarboff. They set sail aboard the *Never Land*, a ship carrying a precious and mysterious trunk in its cargo hold—and the journey quickly becomes fraught with excitement and danger. Discover richly developed characters in the sweet but sophisticated Molly, the scary but familiar Black Stache, and the fearless Peter. Treacherous battles with pirates, foreboding thunderstorms at sea, and evocative writing immerse the reader in a story that slowly and finally reveals the secrets and mysteries of the beloved *Peter Pan*.

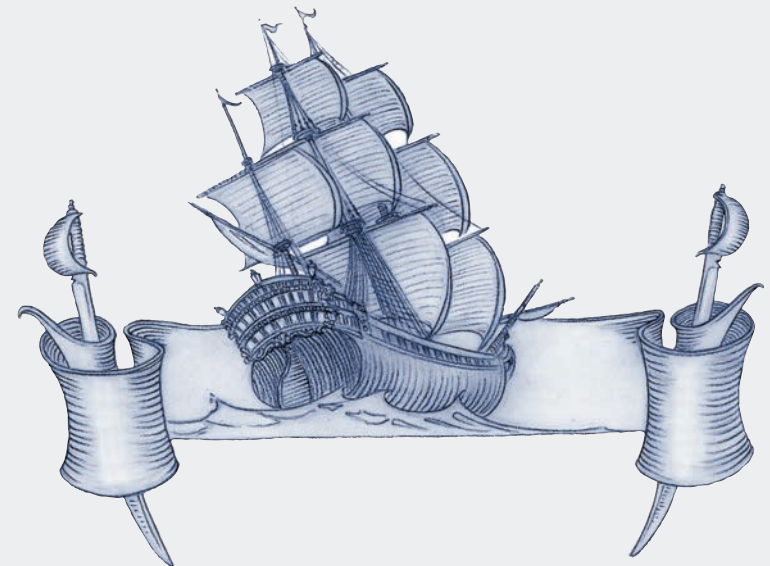
PREDICTION

What is a prequel? Have you ever seen or read one before? What do they do? Have you ever heard of Peter Pan before? What do you know about him? What do you think this adventure will be about?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At the beginning of the novel, Peter is powerless to affect his own destiny and is a virtual prisoner aboard the *Never Land*, unable to escape or even feed himself properly. How does he gain power over his own life by the end? What can we learn from Peter and his actions?
2. Peter takes risks for the safety and well-being of his friends. Do they reciprocate his honorable actions? Who is the better friend? How do people prove their friendship to one another? Who do you think are the best examples of friends in the story? Why?
3. Molly understands the power of the starstuff and yet she acts anyway; but Peter gets involved when he has nothing to gain for himself. Who do you think displays the most courage in the book? What is courage? Who else displays courage in the novel? Why do you think so? Who does not?
4. Starstuff gave ordinary people the ability to "...appear to be gods; they inspired fear; they were worshipped; they were obeyed absolutely." (p. 160) How does this kind of power corrupt people? What are examples of people throughout history who abused their power? Why do you think humans are able to succumb to this kind of corruption?
5. Discuss the following quote by Fighting Prawn: "We're not savages here... I know. I've seen savagery. I saw it often when I was a...guest of the British Navy. I experienced it many times myself, at the wrong end of a whip." (p. 281) Alf assumes that the natives cannot even speak English and tries to communicate using only the word "How!" What are the authors poking fun at here? What attitudes have changed since the original *Peter Pan* was written? What is savagery? What was Fighting Prawn talking about in this quote?
6. This is an action packed high-seas adventure. Which scenes of the book were your favorites? Why? How do the authors develop and sustain the suspense of this long novel? What can you learn from Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson that you can apply to your own writing?
7. Authors can reveal a character's personality in several ways—by what they say, what they do, and how others react toward them. How do the authors reveal Peter's and Molly's characters using these different techniques? Which of the minor characters is your favorite? Why?
8. A unique aspect of *Peter and the Starcatchers* is the cast of not one nemesis, but two! Describe Stache and Smee and compare them to the other antagonists in the story, Slank and Little Richard. Which pair frightened you more? Why? What qualities did they have in common?
9. What do you think Peter's life is like on the island after Molly and the others depart? What will he do to fill his days? What adventures might he have? Would you like to be on that island?
10. How do Barry and Pearson connect this story to the original *Peter Pan*? What elements and details are kept and which ones are spared? What do you think was important to maintain in creating a prequel? Were there any questions you were excited to learn the answers to by reading this book? What were they?



PROJECTS

Language:

Write a prequel to a folktale or fairy tale of your choice. Be sure to stay true to the original characters and don't get bogged down explaining yourself, just begin with an exciting scene as the authors do in *Peter and the Starcatchers*!

Logical:

Create a timeline or map of the location of the trunk and the starstuff for the whole book. Your graphic should make clear not only the location of the trunk, but who controls it.

Art:

Scope out locations for at least three scenes for the movie adaptation of the novel and explain in detail why you think they would work. You must provide either sketches for the director to view or pictures of the actual places.

Drama:

Using only dialogue, write a scene between Peter and Molly after the close of *Starcatchers* and before the original *Peter Pan* opens.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Raul Rubiera/Miami Herald



DAVE BARRY is the Pulitzer Prize-winning, nationally syndicated humor columnist for the *Miami Herald*. He is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Dave Barry's Complete Guide to Guys*, *Dave Barry Slept Here*, *Big Trouble*, and *Dave Barry Hits Below the Beltway*.

Jacques Bailhe/Jimmy Malecki



RIDLEY PEARSON is the best-selling, Edgar Award-winning author of seventeen novels, including *Cut and Run*, *The Body of David Hayes*, *The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer*, *The Middle of Nowhere*, *The Pied Piper*, *Beyond Recognition*, *No Witnesses*, *The First Victim*, *Undercurrents*, and *Parallel Lies*. He was the first American to be awarded the Raymond Chandler/Fulbright Fellowship in Detective Fiction at Oxford University.

About the author of this guide

Tracie Vaughn Zimmer is a reading specialist and author of the poetry collection *Sketches from a Spy Tree*. Visit www.tracievaughnzimmer.com