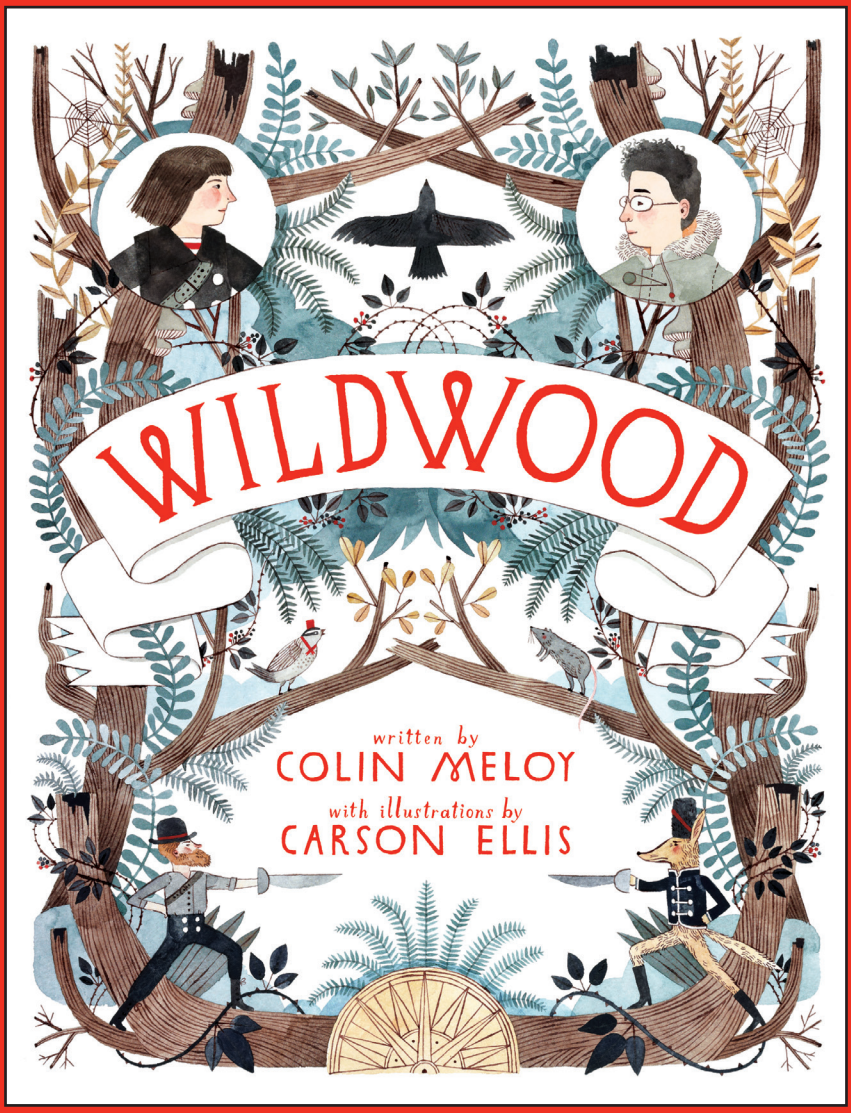
WILDWOOD

DISCUSSION GUIDE



A FORBIDDEN WILDERNESS
AN EPIC JOURNEY
A NEW CLASSIC

ABOUT THE BOOK

Prue McKeel's life is ordinary. At least until her brother is abducted by a murder of crows and taken to the Impassable Wilderness, a dense, tangled forest on the edge of Portland. No one's ever gone in—or at least returned to tell of it. So begins an adventure that will take Prue and her friend, Curtis, deep into the Impassable Wilderness. There they uncover a secret world in the midst of violent upheaval—a world full of warring creatures, peaceable mystics, and powerful figures with the darkest intentions. And what begins as a rescue mission becomes something much greater, as the two friends find themselves entwined in a struggle for the very freedom of this wilderness. A wilderness the locals call Wildwood.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Prue's father tells her: "There are places in the world where people just don't end up living . . . the forest was too deep and the hills were too steep." How does this description compare with what Prue learns about the wilderness?

2. Why doesn't Prue tell her parents about Mac's disappearance? What does this tell you about Prue's personality? How would you describe Prue at this point in the story?

3. Why does Prue try to discourage Curtis from coming with her? Why does Curtis insist on joining her? What would you have done in that situation?

4. When Prue first enters the Impassable Wilderness, she finds it a "welcoming and serene place, full of life and beauty." How does this feeling compare with what she encounters later in the story? Are there other times when she feels "serene" in this place?

5. How does Prue know that she can trust Richard, the mailman? What does Richard mean when he says: "I tend to think you're here for a reason, Port-Land Prue . . . I just don't think we know what that reason is yet." Do you believe Prue has a mission in this country other than rescuing her brother?

6. Why does Curtis trust Alexandra, the Dowager Governess, when he first meets her? Why does Alexandra want to keep him close to her? How does Curtis learn about Alexandra's true nature?

7. Does Prue trust Lars Svik, the Governor-Regent, when she meets him? Why does the government of South Wood set a guard to watch her? How does she know she can trust Owl Rex?

8. Compare the character of Brendan, the Bandit King, to Lars Svik, Alexandra, and Owl Rex. How do they each rule their territory and those they are leading? Write a brief character sketch of each of them.

9. Why is Curtis so happy to be a part of the coyote band at first? How does this experience compare to "the aching anxiety with which he faced every school day" back home? What is "Curtis's Conundrum" (the title of Chapter 12)?

10. Owl Rex is captured by SWORD (South Wood Office of Rehabilitation and Detention). Compare the actions of SWORD to other secret police you have learned about in history. What historical events and governments do the South Wood politics bring to mind?

11. Colin Meloy, the author, is also a musician and singer. He added songs to this story, particularly when the bandits and Curtis are imprisoned. What songs from your world would you share with the bandits if you had been imprisoned with them? What effect do the songs have on the spirits of the prisoners?

12. Why does Prue leave the woods? Why does Alexandra let her go? What important information does Prue learn from her parents, and why do her parents let her go back?

13. What is the importance of Septimus and Enver in the story? How are they essential to Curtis's and Prue's success in their mission?

14. What is the difference between the inhabitants of North Wood and those of South Wood? Why are the North Wood Mystics reluctant to get involved in the struggle, and how does Prue convince them?

15. What does Iphigenia mean when she says to Prue: "We break our own hearts imposing our moral order to what is, by nature, a wide web of chaos. It is a hopeless task." Do you agree?

16. Why do the bandits ask Curtis to take the bandit's oath? Why does he agree to take the oath? What does it mean for Curtis's future?

17. Why is it so hard for the North Wood inhabitants and the bandits to join forces at first? How do Curtis and Prue help them to work together? What is the importance of Brendan's and Iphigenia's leadership in creating the Wildwood Irregulars?

18. Mac's rescue in the end is a joint effort between Brendan, Iphigenia, Prue, and the trees. Discuss how this rescue comes about from all the disparate characters working together. Can you relate this effort to similar events in history, or in your own experience?

19. Why do the residents of South Wood welcome the army of the Avians and Wildwood Irregulars and join them to bring down the government? Why do they call it the "Bicycle Coup"?

20. Why does Curtis choose to stay in the Impassable Wilderness? Why does Prue choose to return home? What do you think might happen in a sequel to this story?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



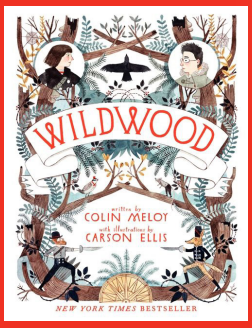
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COLIN MELOY is the author of *The Stars Did Wander Darkling* and *The Whiz Mob and the Grenadine Kid* as well as two picture books: *The Golden Thread: A Song for Pete Seeger and Everyone's Awake*. He is also the singer and songwriter for the indie rock band the Decemberists.

CARSON ELLIS is the illustrator of a number of books for children and is the author and illustrator of the picture books *Du Iz Tak?*, a Caldecott Honor Book; *Home*; and *In the Half Room*.

Colin and Carson also collaborated on the second and third books of the Wildwood Chronicles, *Under Wildwood* and *Wildwood Imperium*. They live just outside Portland, Oregon, with their family.

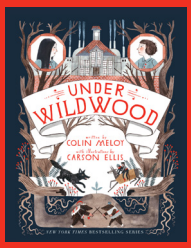
ENTER THE WORLD OF WILDWOOD







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