

THE LIGHT BETWEEN WORLDS

by Laura E. Weymouth



BOOKTALK

Desperate to escape the London bomb shelter where she's hiding with her siblings, Evelyn wishes to be anywhere else in the world—a wish answered when she, along with Jamie and Philippa, are magically swept away to the strange and secret kingdom of the Woodlands. There, in a world completely unlike her own, Ev finally feels like she belongs. When the Woodlands are threatened by their own impending war, the siblings vow to protect them at any cost. But when Evelyn, Jamie, and Philippa finally return to postwar London as if no time has passed, they find that walking between two worlds comes with its own price to pay. Homesick for her beloved Woodlands, Evelyn knows she'll never be at peace in this world, but Philippa can't let her sister go. When Ev goes missing from her boarding school, Philippa knows that only she can find her sister, but the search will force her to confront painful memories, secrets, and truths she's hidden for years, even from herself. As Ev and Philippa each seek her own healing, the sisters will find how far they can stretch the bonds of friendship, family, and love before they break.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

BELONGING. While in the Woodlands, Philippa worries, “I don’t know where I belong...Here, or the world I came from” (p. 136). In contrast, Evelyn is confident that “This is where I belong” (p. 174). How does each sister struggle with feeling a sense belonging in each of their two worlds? What does the struggle to belong reveal about each girl’s character? Is it ever possible to belong to two worlds at the same time? Can you name times when you felt like either Phil or Ev describe in the quotes above?

IDENTITY. Evelyn confesses to Tom, “I don’t always like who I am” (p. 80). Later, she worries, “I’m afraid of who I’m becoming” (p. 115). How does Evelyn’s struggle with her own identity affect her, and the relationships in her life? How do those around her respond to Ev’s identity crisis? Do you think that by the end of the novel, Ev has found her identity and made peace with it? Why or why not? Can you relate to Ev’s uncertainty about who she is, and who she is becoming?

HOPE. Evelyn observes, “Hope doesn’t make parting less bitter. It doesn’t lessen the sting of loss. It is, in itself, a sort of pain, but one I would break without” (p. 5). How does hope shape both Evelyn and Philippa throughout the

novel? What is each sister hoping for, and how do they cope with loss and grief? Why does Phil conclude, “I have always been a fool to hope. I see that now” (p. 262)? Do you think Phil eventually changes her mind about hope? Can you think of a time in your own life when you hoped for something the way Ev describes?

POETRY. When Philippa finally reads Evelyn’s letters, she finds that “There are pages upon pages of poetry—every letter a window made of words” (p. 275). What role does poetry play in Evelyn’s life? Why do you think Evelyn chooses to communicate with Philippa through poetry rather than her own words? What is the significance of the poem that Evelyn chooses to recite before she goes missing? Do you have a favorite poet or poem that resonates with your life?

CHOICE. Evelyn explains to her brother, “I have to choose, Jamie...And I choose the Woodlands” (p. 120). Why does Evelyn feel that she has to choose, and do you agree with her choice? How do Ev’s choices affect those around her? How is Ev affected by the choices of others? What are the things over which Ev has no control? Has there been a time when you had to make a hard choice?