

BOOK CLUB KIT

Dream out loud. . .

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE WISH*

NICHOLAS SPARKS

A NOVEL

DREAMLAND

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Early in the novel, Colby observes: “We don’t always get to choose our paths in life; sometimes they choose us.” Discuss this sentiment. How does it relate to Colby’s life? Have you personally experienced this feeling? If so, please share.
2. A great thrill in *Dreamland* is watching two characters meet and fall in love. Colby notes: “Our lives were entirely different, and yet, somehow, we’d just seem to click.” If you have experienced an instant attraction in your life, what were the signs that it was *more* than a chance encounter, a mere introduction, or a date?
3. Morgan asks Colby to describe his sister in three words. How would you describe Colby in three words? And Beverly? How did you come to those three words?
4. What do you consider the major themes of *Dreamland*?
5. Which character were you drawn to most, and why?
6. Nicholas Sparks writes *Dreamland*’s two narratives in different ways: The Colby sections in first-person, the Beverly section in third-person. Why do you think the author chose these POVs? How does it enhance the reading experience?
7. At one point, Colby wonders: “Did love carry with it the power to make a person question everything? Did love make a person want to become someone new?” What do you think? Please explain.
8. Did you figure out the connection between the two stories before it was revealed? If so, how did you come to your conclusion? If not, what were some of your early theories that didn’t pan out?
9. How would you define the concept of “dreamland”? Describe your ideal dreamland.
10. If *Dreamland* were made into a movie, who would you cast in the major roles?
11. Have you ever read Nicholas Sparks before? If so, what have been your favorite novels, and why? If this is your first time with Sparks, did anything surprise you about the read? What did you think of the ending?



A Q&A WITH NICHOLAS SPARKS

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BOOK?

A. *Dreamland* follows Colby Mills, who—when the novel opens—has more or less abandoned his early dreams of becoming a professional musician in order to run his family farm in North Carolina. When he spontaneously agrees to a one-off gig playing at a bar in St. Pete’s Beach, Florida, he meets Morgan Lee, an ambitious fellow musician who has aspirations of moving to Nashville and becoming a star. As romance blossoms, they find inspiration in one another, making Colby question his decision to forsake the dreams he left behind. In a mysterious parallel narrative, we follow the story of Beverly, a single mother who is on a more tumultuous journey. After fleeing an abusive husband, she is trying desperately to piece together a life for herself and her son in a small town far off the beaten track. Over the course of a week these three lives weave together in fateful ways, reminding us of how chance encounters can sometimes lead to life-altering events.

Q. WHAT INSPIRED THIS BOOK, THIS TITLE?

A. Specific dreams and ambitions may differ widely from person to person, but to nurture a dream is such a universal experience. I wanted to capture the powerful allure of following your heart, and the sometimes painful cost of doing so. Most of all, I wanted to illuminate how our own versions of “*Dreamland*” can be found within ourselves and in our most precious relationships.

Q. ARE THERE ANY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES IN THIS BOOK?

A. Having built my career as an author, I certainly channeled some of my own experiences of pursuing a dream that didn’t always feel achievable. Like Colby, before committing to my dream (in my case, of being a writer) I tried other industries and jobs, but was always drawn back to my passion. The settings are also extrapolated from my life—I live in North Carolina and have set most of my stories there; St. Pete Beach also has a soft spot in my heart, as I visit the Don Cesar almost every year and cherish my time there.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL ROUTINE WHEN YOU WRITE (A CERTAIN PLACE, MORNINGS, ETC.)?

A. When I am working on a novel I typically write three to four days per week, usually between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., though sometimes if I am caught up in the story, I will spend more time on it depending on the day. I generally work at home, but can write almost anywhere—on a plane, in a hotel room, or while staying with friends.

Q. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK? IS THIS NORMAL?

A. I wrote this book in about eight months, which is fairly typical for my process. I usually start with an idea that I will ruminate on for two or three months, thinking through the story and characters, and then I write the novel in the six months or so following that.



A Q&A WITH NICHOLAS SPARKS

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK READERS RELATE TO YOUR CHARACTERS?

A. When I write, I am often drawing upon elements from experiences of my own and those around me. I think that translates to the reader experience—while the stories are original, they are rooted in everyday authenticity, such that readers can hopefully identify with the characters and their longings. In my novels I also try to capture the full range of emotions that ordinary people experience, so that readers recognize their own journeys through joy, grief, passion, attachment, and loss.

Q. WHAT'S UP NEXT FOR YOU?

A. I am working on my next novel (always!). I also just announced a three-picture partnership with Anonymous Content and Universal, which will see my last novel, *The Wish*, *Dreamland*, and my next novel adapted into feature films. Beyond that, I have some personal travel I am looking forward to and of course am very excited about the upcoming *Dreamland* tour.

Q. HAD YOU ALWAYS PLANNED TO BE A WRITER?

A. I was always a voracious reader, but I didn't contemplate writing a novel myself until I was sidelined by an injury one summer in college. It was a fun exercise—and taught me that I was able to complete a novel (even if it was terrible)—but it was hard to imagine how I would be able to forge a career as a novelist long term. After graduating I worked in several different industries and even started my own small manufacturing business; once married with children, I took a job selling pharmaceuticals to pay the bills. But at twenty-eight, recalling my early attempts to write a novel, I committed seriously to following my dream and have been in "Dreamland" ever since.

Q. WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT WRITING?

A. I like to spend time with my grown children and dogs in New Bern, NC, where I live and, when I am able, I love to travel. I am lucky to have travelled to a multitude of places in the past 10 years, and it has become a passion of mine to visit as many corners of the world as possible.

PLACES

The Don CeSar



Fort De Soto Park



THE CHARACTERS

Meet the unforgettable characters of *DREAMLAND*

Colby



Down-to-earth and grounded

Colby is an introspective, searching soul. A musician at heart, Colby gave up his career in music to help save his family's small farm in North Carolina. A chance encounter during his vacation in Florida will change his life.

Morgan



Spirited and spontaneous

Morgan is a recent grad from a prestigious music school. She's on a trip to the Sunshine State to celebrate before moving to Nashville and trying to make it big. Is there room in her dream for falling in love?

Beverly



Cautious and determined

Beverly is a troubled woman fleeing an abusive husband with her six-year-old son. She's trying to piece together a life for them in a quiet town—safe and off the grid. She's trying to move forward, but she can't outrun the truth.

“DREAMLAND”

*There's a place that I know
Where only you and I can go
Far from the darkness of the past
Where love can bloom at last*

*Hold on to Dreamland
Forever, not just today
Someday Dreamland will be ours
Hold fast, don't fall away*

*In my mind we're living there
In that place we're meant to share
No more talk of what we owe
Just what our hearts already know*

*In Dreamland, down in dreamland
Hold fast, don't fall away . . .*



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO "DREAM OUT LOUD"

Please write your own 4-line verse that encapsulates your own Dreamland