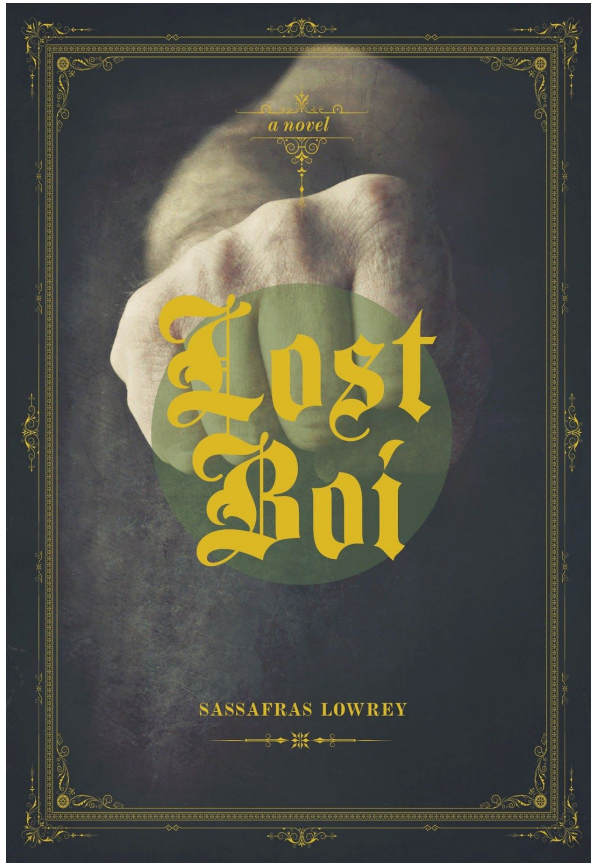


LOST BOI Conversation Starter:

Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Fiction - Finalist

Rainbow Award - Honorable Mention

The American Library Association's "Over The Rainbow" list of Top LGBTQ books



★★

Prepare to be swept overboard into the world of *Lost Boi*, the queer punk reimaging of the Peter Pan story in which orphaned, abandoned and runaway bois of the street have sworn allegiance and service to Pan, the fearless leader of the Lost Bois Brigade.

Told from the point of view of Tootles, Pan's best boi, the Lost Bois create their own sense of family in home, a squat called Neverland. But despite their loyalty to Pan, their refusal to join ranks with Hook's leather pirates, or the needle-fueled Crocodile, nothing has prepared the bios for the arrival of newly-corrupted Mommy Wendi and tomboy John Michael.

Like a fever-pitched dream, *Lost Boi* weaves a children's fantasy within a subversive alternative reality, chronicling the search for belonging, purpose and the struggle against the biggest battle of all: growing up.

About Sassafras

Pronouns: ze/hir

Sassafras Lowrey is a teenage runaway who grew up to become the 2013 winner of the Lambda Literary Emerging Writer Award. Hir books—*Lost Boi*, *A Little Queermas Carol*, *Roving Pack*, *Kicked Out* and *Leather Ever After*—have been honored by organizations ranging from the American Library Association to the Lambda Literary Foundation. Sassafras' literary work focuses on themes of queer youth homelessness, the creation of chosen (queer) family, and genderqueer identities. Ze lives and writes in Brooklyn. Learn more at

www.SassafrasLowrey.com



Author Q&A

“For marginalized queer folks, the experience of seeing ourselves, or relationships, and our worlds depicted in books remains extremely rare. As an author, I’m committed to changing that; to write the kinds of books that I went looking for, but couldn’t find....”

-Sassafras Lowrey

Q. The tale of Peter Pan is beloved as a classic children’s story about adventure, fantasy and never growing up. What was it about this tale that inspired you to re-shape it into a gritty , queer punk novel for adults?

A. I’ve always loved fairy tales and classic children’s literature. I also write really queer stories, so the idea of blending those two passions into a queer fairy tale for adult audiences felt natural for my next book. While I was writing, I thought a lot about the ways in which the Peter Pan story is embedded into our cultures, and how I could expand upon those themes and rework this story into a book that’s equal parts whimsy and gritty.

Q. The struggle of homeless youth is among the most prevalent and heart-rending themes of Lost Boi, and is made all the more palpable by your personal experience as a homeless teen and your current work with homeless youth. How have these experiences - both past and present - influenced your story telling?

A. 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ, and teen homelessness is a theme that tends to be at the forefront of most of my writing. Lost Boi is no exception. As someone who left home at seventeen, what first drew me to the Peter Pan story was the way in which is this really culturally recognizable representation of runaways. I’ve always found the lost bois to be the most interesting part of JM Barrie’s work, and even as a child had a lot of questions about what their life was like and what might drive them to make the decision at the end of the book to leave Neverland. The banding-together of the lost bois in a world of their (and Pan’s) creation mirrored the kinds of relationships and families that I built a sa homeless queer kid.

In terms of the ways in which my own experience of running away influences my work, writing and my experience of homelessness are totally intertwined. I actually didn’t start writing until I was a homeless teenager: the experience of having to start over on my own at a really young age, of being rejected from my community and losing my home and family was what first drove me to start writing.

Q. *Lost Boi* is your fourth title, following the award-winning successes of *Kicked Out*, and *Roving Pack*. Have your previous works informed the making of this story?

A. In many ways I feel like my previous books were laying groundwork for me to write this novel. *Lost Boi* builds on so many of the themes that I have worked with in my previous books. The story is a layering of key themes that continue to interest me and drive my work: abandonment, community building, chosen family, and failure among others. I spent almost a year just outlining and brainstorming this book, so when it came down to actually putting it together the writing just flowed. The characters became very real to me and I spent a lot of time getting to know them and figuring out how to portray their world within the pages of this story. Now that the book is done, I miss them all terribly in a way that I never have with other work!

The core theme that has run through all of my previous work is the ways in which marginalized communities work to save one another, and the ways in which sometimes despite best intentions we fail one another. These are themes that are also central in *Lost Boi*, but unlike my previous fiction, in this story there is more of a sense of hope towards a future. *Lost Boi* is also the first time that one of the characters I've written has been given the opportunity to grow up.

Q. As a writer, you have shined light on many subcultures within the queer community that remain largely underrepresented and misunderstood in mainstream literature. What might mainstream readers learn from reading *Lost Boi*?

A. As a writer, the best compliment I can receive is when a queer reader writes to me to say that they were able to see themselves accurately reflected in one of my books. For marginalized queer folks, the experience of seeing ourselves our relationships and our worlds depicted as main characters in books remains extremely rare. As an author I'm committed to changing that, to write stories that depict the worlds that I have called home, and to write the kinds of books that I went looking for, but couldn't find. I want to write queer subcultures into fiction because I believe representation matters.

Q. Can you talk about the role of sexuality in your work?

A. I'm really interested in writing books that depict the diversity of ways that LGBTQ people build intimate, and romantic relationships, as well as the different kinds of attractions and relationship structures. *Lost Boi* deals with some mature themes everything from substance-use to sex, and the intersection with the characters interpersonal relationships. The characters of *Lost Boi* are grappling with consent, desire, boundaries which are many of the same themes I remember my peers and I navigating as a young adult.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the gender of your characters and the influence of genderqueer and transgender identities in your writing?

A. I mostly write novels that feature characters whose lives and identities exist outside of the gender binary, and to write characters who have a variety of gender identities, expressions, and pronouns. My writing also includes characters who use lots of different pronouns not only because visibility of genderqueer and transgender characters is important to me, and but also because I think it's good practice for people to get used to reading and interacting with non binary pronouns so that they can better support nonbinary people they will encounter in the world.

Pronoun Guide:

Pronouns:	In a sentence:
she/her/hers	She wants you to use her pronouns.
he/him/his	He wants you to use his pronouns.
ze/hir	Ze wants you to use hir pronouns.
they/ them/ theirs	They want you to use their pronouns.
co/cos	Co wants you to use cos pronouns.
No pronoun/name (use the person's name instead of a pronoun)	____(name) wants you to use ____ (name) pronouns.
xe/xem/xyr	Xe wants you to use xyr pronouns.
hy/hym/hys	Hy wants you to use hys pronouns.

Sample Discussion/Reading Questions:

- ★ How do the different characters in Lost Boi create their own families?
- ★ This book is a retelling of Peter Pan - why might someone queer or rewrite a classic story?
- ★ What do you think the idea of ‘growing up’ means to the characters? What does growing up mean to you?
- ★ Why do many of the characters in Lost Boi feel like the adults in positions of authority haven’t understood or protected them?
- ★ What do you think the characters in Lost Boi are looking for? Do they find it?
- ★ What are some parts of the original Peter Pan story that are included in Lost Boi - what parts of Peter Pan aren’t included? Why do you think the author made that decision?

Resources:

- ★ Glossary of LGBTQ terms: www.pflag.org/glossary