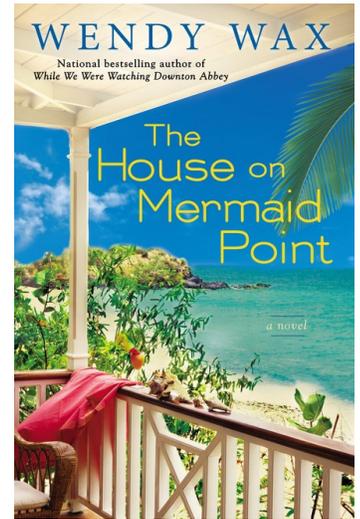


# Wendy Wax's *The House on Mermaid Point*

## Discussion Questions



- We see William Hightower's house transform in the hands of the *Do Over* crew: from cleaning the floor-to-ceiling windows to making the house amenable to guests. How does William's transformation mirror the changes of his house? How much of this is a result of the crew?
- The book's setting almost functions like the layers of an onion: the American South, the Florida Keys, Mermaid Point, and Hightower's home. How does the mood change and tension increase as the team travels through these "layers?"
- On the houseboat one night, Avery is ruminating on the nature of the team's trials: "Success wasn't necessarily about crossing the finish line first. Sometimes success was about managing to stay afloat." At what points in the story is the team trying to "stay afloat?" What challenges threaten this ability?
- As Maddie's romance with William Hightower develops, we often hear her inwardly worrying about her physical appearance. How are romance and physicality different for middle-aged women than they are for men of the same age? How have society, and other influences, affected Maddie's body image?
- Hightower's song about a "mermaid who'd left him to return to sea" is referenced several times in the story. What female characters are most like Hightower's mermaid who "left" him?
- When Maddie runs the boat aground on the way home from dinner, the women spend the night in the boat. They later realize that the men knew and chose to remain uninvolved. Hightower calls it an "important rite of passage." What emotions did that episode evoke? Did you think it was all right to leave the women stranded? Were there other "rites of passage" on the island?
- The cyclical nature of sunrise and sunset offers a natural, rhythmic structure for the novel. What might the importance of sunrise and sunset indicate about the characters' lives?
- Consider how William and Tommy's relationship has similarities to the parent-child dynamic between Avery and Deirdre. What is the arc of these parent-child relationships, and how does redemption factor into their stories?
- The characters in the book have a fraught relationship with exposure and celebrity because of their jobs on *Do Over*. How do we all, in the age of the Internet, have a changing relationship with exposure and celebrity? How does the possibility of "being exposed" affect the characters' behaviors—Kyra and Nicole in particular—and our own?
- During her time alone with William, Maddie observes the beauty of her surroundings and comments: "I can understand why you wouldn't want to give this up or share it with strangers." How is he able to eventually find peace with the new plan for his home?
- *Do Over* is the show at the core of the story. Full of absurdities and frustrations, it also is a source of a great sense of accomplishment and bonding for the crew. What characters are experiencing a "do over" of their own in *The House on Mermaid Point*?
- 

[www.authorwendywax.com](http://www.authorwendywax.com) • [facebook.com/AuthorWendyWax](https://www.facebook.com/AuthorWendyWax) • [@Wendy\\_Wax](https://www.instagram.com/Wendy_Wax)

THE HOUSE ON MERMAID POINT by Wendy Wax  
A Berkley Trade Paperback Original/Fiction/978-0-425-26332-7