Pennyroyal Academy
by M.A. Larson

A girl from the forest arrives in a bustling kingdom with no name and no idea why she is there, only to find herself at the center of a world at war. She enlists at Pennyroyal Academy, where princesses and knights are trained to battle the two great menaces of the day: witches and dragons. There, given the name “Evie,” she must endure a harsh training regimen under the steel glare of her Fairy Drillsergeant, while also navigating an entirely new world of friends and enemies. And with the witch forces moving nearer, she discovers that the war between princesses and witches is much more personal than she could ever have imagined. Set in Grimm’s fairytale world, Pennyroyal Academy masterfully combines adventure, humor, and magical mischief.

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Discussion Questions:

1. What did the word “princess” mean to you before you read this story? Did that meaning change once you finished reading?

2. Do you think the four core princess values (courage, compassion, kindness, discipline) are important in everyday life? What other values might a princess or knight embody?

3. Do you think you would be a good Pennyroyal princess or knight?

4. Several of the princesses mentioned in Pennyroyal Academy might be familiar to you from popular fairytales. In what ways do they exhibit Pennyroyal standards?

5. How is Evie’s story different from a traditional fairytale? In what ways is it similar?
6. Lieutenant Volf says that “The witch hates you because she must.” What might this imply? Does this change your opinion of witches?

7. A Pennyroyal princess engages in conflict with witches and other menacing forces in her kingdom. In what ways are the Pennyroyal cadets struggling with conflict inside the Academy? How do you deal with conflict within a team, classroom, or group of friends?

8. What is the importance of fate and destiny for Evie and her friends? Do you believe it’s possible to change fate?

9. When Evie avoids dismissal from the Academy, she is relieved and thinks, “I may yet be sent away, but at least it will be because I’m not good enough, and not because I was too scared to try.” Discuss the significance of this. Do you agree with Evie?

10. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had no idea how you were supposed to act? How did you feel? What did you do?

11. Do you find it easier to understand someone’s hurtful behavior if you know they’re dealing with family issues or other problems?

12. Discuss a time when your words and kindness were stronger than actions or fear.

13. Evie is caught between her identity as both a princess and a dragon. Have you ever felt caught between two identities?

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- If you liked Princess Academy, you might also enjoy Ella Enchanted (http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9780064407052)