



J. M. Barrie
Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens
and Peter and Wendy

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Peter Pan, the boy who refused to grow up, is one of the immortals of children's literature. J. M. Barrie first created Peter Pan as a baby, living in secret with the birds and fairies in the middle of London, but as the children for whom he invented the stories grew older, so too did Peter, reappearing in Neverland, where he was aided in his epic battles with Red Indians and pirates by the motherly and resourceful Wendy Darling.

With their contrary lures of home and escape, childhood and maturity, safety and high adventure, these unforgettable tales are equally popular with children and adults.

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Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy Details

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From Reader Review Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy for online ebook

Indah says

"To die would be an awfully big adventure."

Peter Pan is one of these stories that means a lot to me, meant a lot to me and always will mean a lot to me. It's the story my dad read to me about a billion times for a bedtime story, the sequel of the Disney movie was my first ever movie I saw in a cinema.

And my dad always says that it was so important to him because it's a story for children and their parents, with so many layers. And now I'm 16 and a little closer to 'adulthood' than I was than when he read the story to me, I guess I see what he means.

It's a story about children, reveling in life and going on adventures. There is no bigger adventure than life: it's our adventure, we should go out and live it.

It's a story about a boy who is young and proud of it, but secretly longs for someone to take of him. It's a story of a man who is so afraid of death: ever since it took his hand, he hears it coming with every step he takes.

It's a story about mermaids, pirates, indians and fairies (I *do* believe in them and so should you!).

And it reminds me of joy and being happy; of living life to the full; of doing weird things that make you smile. Because people don't care, you can only make them smile.

This story is also my personal reminder that I should remain joyful and imaginative my whole life, never to lose that, something that's quite important to me as an aspiring writer.

I am beyond glad I read the original story as it was written down by J.M. Barrie himself, including the story Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, which I also thoroughly enjoyed. I really want to visit it now.

"To live would be an awfully big adventure."

All the stars

Marley says

Like the best children's books, especially children's fantasies (meant in its most expansive definition), much darker and thornier than the versions everyone remembers. The novel is even a couple steps darker and more poignant than the play, with a would-be murderous Tinker Bell (two words, okay?!), Wendy getting seriously confused over whether she's a child or adult, the constant description of youth as "gay, innocent and heartless", the mass death of most of the Indians, and the incredible callousness of Peter as time starts to pass. Barrie knew that the passage into adulthood was necessarily tragic -- but not doing so would be heartbreakingly tragic in its own right -- and he didn't downplay that for one second.

Not to say this is unremittingly dark; it's constantly witty and the narrator is friendly, sometimes the consequences you expect are hilariously smaller and more like pretend-play than you might have been waiting for, and there's some great parody of other "Boys' Books" material in there.

If anything, though, it's an amazing companion to *The Neverending Story*: a really cool look at the way imagination works on the mechanical level, and why we should bother, and what about it we should keep an eye on. And in the meantime giving us characters we can hope and fear and cry for.

MJ Nicholls says

Peter Pan or, *How one man's repressed paedophilia captured children's imaginations for a century*, was a cheery wee book. My reason for reading this as an adult? I have not grown up. I remain frozen in childhood. Whenever I find myself in adult surroundings, like an estate agent office, I wiggle in my chair and fight back the urge to say things like "how can you do that, pretend to wear the suit and act all grown up?" as I suck on my lollipop. Yes. Your humble reviewer might be able coast through a Dickens in a few days, but when it comes to social interaction he'd be better off in the crèche. Anyway, I found both books a disappointment. I'm in Team Alice, not Team Pan. Does this still enchant kids? I wonder. The recent Jason Isaacs version was nice. It's late. I ramble.

Jersy says

A book that can be enjoyed by children as well as by adults.

While the plot and the several events in this book are written to cater to a kid's imagination, it includes jokes and references (e.g. to history, other books...) that are probably more suitable for the enjoyment of their parents. Such clever hints were my greatest joy while reading, and best of all you don't have to get them all yourself because, in my edition at least, they are explained in a glossary, so everyone can enjoy the book without prior knowledge.

Barrie includes some interesting themes in this like the innocents of childhood and the importance of mothers. The characters acted mostly understandable as their actions and feelings were explained with great wit. Wendys excitement for motherhood seems as a staple of the time the book was published in at first, but than I remembered that little girls today still like to play mother, so it holds up.

As much as I liked these aspects of the book and wanted the love the whole story, it did not intrigue me as much as I hoped. Maybe it was the lack of a cohesive storyline, with only some events happening that kind of fit together and tell of the time in Netherland. Maybe it was that the language Barrie uses might be quite poetic but still not as fluent as you would wish from a child story. I read this in a bilingual edition and as much as I wanted to read the English original text, I tended to enjoy the modern translation much more.

So I acknowledge that this is a great masterpiece but I never got perfectly in to it, therefore I personally can't give more than 3 stars.

Joana Veríssimo says

I read *Peter and Wendy* just a few months ago and it became my favorite classic and today it's one of my favorite books, so I bought this edition. But I'm not rereading the story now, but reading *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* and the play "The Boy who would never grow up" which I found online in Gutenberg Australia

Starting with the play, the dedication was so beautiful and then again the stage directions were so well done and hilarious how things were put. The story was very much the same as the novel, so not really something new, but it's still so much fun and such a good story, and the stage directions do make a difference

Then moving to *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, it's a very interesting introduction to Peter Pan, who in here is very different from the image we get from the novel, but it still has those very funny lines - the voice of the narrator is excellent, so quick, smart and funny!! It just explains things so well, day-to-day things are explained

Really the only way to conclude this is to tell you to go read it!!! READ IT NOW!!! It's free, it's so funny (probably some of the funniest books I've read), just go read Peter Pan!!!

Mariel Zani Begoña says

Peter Pan was AWFUL. Gave it 1? But I rather enjoyed *Peter Pan In Kensington Gardens* (3?). So, overall 2?

Ayu Palar says

I first knew Peter Pan from that Disney's film, and after knowing the boy for many many years, I finally got into the original text written by J. M. Barrie. I am really impressed since I never thought that the story is much complicated and philosophical. That made me wonder whether Barrie wrote this book for kids or not (from *Finding Neverland*, he wrote it for kids). I also found this heartbreak tone in *Peter Pan*, especially the scene when Peter finally finds that Wendy has grown up. Is it a feel-good novel? I don't really think so. It's a touching story about the pain of growing up in the way. Suitable for kids and adults at the same time.

Five stars, no doubt.

Jolene says

2 stars for the last 1/3 of the book, no stars for the first 2/3.

I think I would have liked this book more if I had skipped the introduction. I may have ended up seeing things that weren't really there. After reading the intro, I saw this book as nothing more than Barrie writing this story to get over mommy issues.

I honestly found nothing likeable about Peter. He was a sadistic bully who found joy in murdering anyone he felt like. We're told while Peter is away, Neverland is a happy place. Everyone keeps to their selves and there is no fighting.

In his absence things are usually quiet on the island. The fairies take an hour longer in the morning, the beast attend their young, the redskins feed heavily for six days and nights, and when the pirates and lost boys meet they merely bite their thumbs at each other

As soon as he gets close to Neverland, all hell breaks loose.

But with the coming of Peter, who hates lethargy, they are all underway again

I just don't understand why all the inhabitants worship him.

Wendy was too perfect to be believable. If she had had even one or two small flaws, I think I would have liked her more. The Darling boys didn't really add anything to the story or make much of an impression. The only thing that stands out was a scene with Michael towards the end.

"Let me see father." Michael begged eagerly, and he took a good look. "He is not so big as the pirate I killed" he said with such frank disappointment that I am glad Mr. Darling was asleep

This really took me by surprise. I know they did crazy things in Neverland, but assumed it was something in the water that made everyone believe these horrible acts were ok. But for this kind of thinking to be in the real world shocked me.

I hated the narrator. I believe a narrator should pop in here and there as needed. They should play the role of a minor character at best. I'm pretty sure this narrator probably had more page time than Peter. I found him over opinionated and condescending.

Surprisingly, Hook was the only character I really liked. He was the only one who was flawed enough to come off as somewhat believable. He was the only one in all of Neverland that actually had something to be upset about.

I have loved every movie and stage show version I've ever seen of Peter Pan. I was expecting the fun little care free boy I see in those. I'm hoping this book hasn't ruined future movie versions for me

Sinead says

Some books will always remain classics. Harry Potter, the Chronicles of Narnia, Lord of the Rings. They will be remembered for years to come. So will Peter Pan. Most people know it as the 1956 Disney movie, which is what I knew it as too. Then I watched the 2003 real-life film, and Finding Neverland (the retelling of how Barrie was inspired to write Peter Pan). Watching all those movies got me a little obsessed with Peter and the wonderful and exciting world of Neverland, where mermaids, pirates, Indians and the wonderful ability to fly are made real. Obviously I had no other choice but to buy the book and experience the real thing.

This complete edition shows clearly why J.M. Barrie was considered one of the great geniuses of English literature. While the writing is a little outdated (it was written over a hundred years ago) it's still beautifully written and will capture your heart. It's the perfect story of childhood fantasies and adult nostalgia.

It tells the story of Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up. For "all children grow up, except one." He visits

the Darling family every night to listen to Mrs. Darling tell stories to her three children, Wendy, John, and Michael. Then he goes back to Neverland to repeat the stories to the Lost Boys, (children which were separated from their parents). One night, Nana, the dog who is the children's nanny, sees Peter's shadow peeking in from the window and grabs it before he can get away. This, of course, gives Peter the perfect excuse to come into the children's nursery with his fairy best friend Tinker Bell and search for his shadow, which Mrs. Darling had hidden away. When he finds it, being a boy, he cannot stick it back on. He gets upset and starts crying, which in turn wakes Wendy. She sews his shadow back on, and being a particularly forgetful and self-absorbed child, he disregards Wendy's input and believes it was all his doing "Oh, the cleverness of me". The two talk for a while and Peter tells Wendy all about Neverland, trying to lure her away where she'll always be able to tell him stories. Wendy agrees, but only if her brothers come along too.

And so begins numerous adventures filled with pirates, Indians, and mermaids. Wendy becomes the boys' mother, telling them stories and putting them to bed. It ironically makes her realize that she is ready to grow up. But between the adventures with Indians and mermaids, Captain James Hook, Peter's archenemy, is planning his demise after Peter cut off his right arm and fed it to the crocodile. He captures the Lost Boys and Wendy, luring Peter into a final match to the death. Like all villains though, he doesn't win. After taking control of his ship, Peter sails Wendy and her brothers' home. But, after seeing what it was like to have their own mother, the Lost Boys want to grow up too.

Peter watches as all the children are reunited with their overjoyed parents, deciding that "to live will be an awfully big adventure." However Wendy isn't ready to say goodbye to Peter and they decide that she will go with him to Neverland for a week every spring. But Peter was a very forgetful boy, and came for Wendy very infrequently. Many years later he's distraught to find that she has grown up without his permission. But a new tradition begins when he sees Wendy's daughter Jane, sleeping in her bed. He takes her to Neverland with him instead with Wendy's blessing and the same with Jane's daughter, "and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless."

This book was a joy to read. It gives anybody, young or old, reasons to believe that the impossible is possible as long as you have "faith, trust and pixie dust." I recommend Peter Pan to anybody as every now and then we need a reason to step into a land of make-believe. I know that I will always be looking out my window waiting for Peter Pan to come and take me to Neverland, as will anybody else who reads this book.

Jolanda says

Oh that was marvelous. Where to start? I've been familiar with the story of Peter Pan for most of my life. As so many of you, I grew up with the Disney film. I must admit that it wasn't one of my favourites, but I remember the mermaid-scene vividly. The film and novel aren't that different from one another plot-wise(as far as I remember. Cut me some slack on this one, it's been at least 10 years since I've last seen Peter Pan), but what struck me most about the novel is how vastly different the mood of the original novel is in comparison to the film. The film always struck me as whimsical, while the entire feel of the novel is a lot darker.

Perhaps darker isn't the right word, I've heard the term 'bittersweet' to describe Peter Pan, and I suppose that comes closest to it. Neverland is a very dark place, it is a place of dreams, where everything is possible. And I suppose, much like our dreams, not everything is fun and games. Neverland and its inhabitants are much the same. The adventures Peter and the Lost Boys have are rousing, but the pirates, redskins and Lost boys will all kill each other without batting an eyelid. Peter Pan, besides being an amazing child, is also selfish

and cocky, perhaps even a bit tyrannical. But he's also sweet and will do the right thing in the end. I'm amazed at the emotional depth of the novel. I've never felt so sorry for every character in a novel in my life, and this is supposed to be written for children. The last chapter especially is beautiful. My heart cries for Peter and Wendy. Peter Pan is true to life in teaching us that we can never have everything our heart desires. Peter can never have a mother, but the children who decided to grow up can never have his carefree life. Gosh, I'm speechless, this was just gorgeous. The language is beautiful, the characters are beautiful and the story is beautiful.

I would recommend this to everyone. If I ever have children (that's a very big 'if', by the way), I will be reading this to them, just like 'the Hobbit'.

Stephanie says

Reading this, you can easily tell it is meant to be read aloud. The flow of the words, the pacing, and even the narrator's little asides all lend themselves beautifully to being read aloud. And J. M. Barrie's tale of a timeless boy is a timeless tale for all to read and enjoy.

Like many, I was first familiar with Peter Pan through the Disney adaptation. While good in its own right, the book has so much more depth and so many more layers to Peter Pan and the Neverland than Disney was able to touch on. Despite the whimsicality of Peter and his adventures, there are some dark undercurrents too, like references to the thinning out of the Lost Boys. It is innocence and gaiety wrapped up prettily with a bow which shimmers at one angle and absorbs light in another angle.

This was the first time I had read Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, and I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Peter's origins and how he came to be the boy we know from Peter Pan and Wendy's story. We had inklings of what happened from their story, but there is really so much more to Peter than just he flew away from home for so long that when he finally went back his mother had another child and the window was barred instead of open.

Between both stories, the narrator occasionally makes a moral remark regarding the behavior of children or of mothers, or others. But then he would also say such things as, "There is almost nothing that has such a keen sense of fun as a fallen leaf." (page 187)

"Every living thing was shunning him. Poor little Peter Pan! he sat down and cried, and even then he did not know that, for a bird, he was sitting on his wrong part. It is a blessing that he did not know, for otherwise he would have lost faith in his power to fly, and the moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease for ever to be able to do it. The reason birds can fly and we can't is simply that they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings." (page 203)

Unless, of course, you have faith, trust, and pixie dust - and as long as children are gay and innocent and heartless.

Charlotte May says

3.5 stars!

My copy is split into the two stories, Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy, and they are so

different!

Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens.

"The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it. The reason birds can fly and we can't is simply that they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings."

This story focuses on the origin of Peter Pan. A young child of only 7 days falls out of his pram and lives with the birds and the fairies in Kensington Gardens. This is a sweet story of how he grows accustomed to life in the gardens and as he takes on the task of burying young children who also fall out of their prams and fail to survive the night. Certainly a slightly darker tale than I expected.

Peter and Wendy

"Keep back, lady, no one is going to catch me and make me a man."

Peter and Wendy is more the story we are all accustomed to with all the recognisable characters including Captain Hook, Tinkerbell and the Lost Boys.

The Peter Pan from this story is quite a jump from the Peter in Kensington Gardens. He is older, and has relocated to the Neverlands

The characters aren't as nice and squeaky clean as Disney leads us to believe. They are harsh and real, which makes them sometimes difficult to like.

I enjoyed these two stories, I love to experience the books where classic characters originate and to see how they have been adapted and grown in different interpretations as time as passed.

Peter Pan is an iconic character, the boy who never grew up will live on in all childhoods, it's a privilege to have experienced J M Barrie's world as he originally created it.

"To die would be an awfully big adventure."

Alina says

Barrie says of Peter somewhere: "Oh, he was merry! He was as much merrier than you, for instance, as you are merrier than your father." With all due respect, he could not have made a worse choice of adjective. Merriment is joy grounded in something solid; Peter is certainly gay, but there is nothing merry about him, nor about his world.

Now, I don't dislike the world of Peter Pan for being magical; if anything, it is not magical enough. The hallmark of a really magical world is that everything matters. One ring - or one word - or one fox - or one talking spider - is not replaceable by another.

Not so in Peter Pan. The prerequisite to being "gay and innocent and heartless" is a kind of anterograde amnesia. We see this in a touching moment when Peter is dumbfounded by Captain Hook not playing fair because he has forgotten ever having encountered injustice before. We also see it, however, in the fact that the pieces of Peter's world all seem to be disposable.

The Lost Boys are an obvious example: "The boys on the island vary, of course, in numbers, according as they get killed and so on; and when they seem to be growing up, which is against the rules, Peter thins them out."

Now, I'm sure we've all "thinned out" plenty of imaginary friends when we were kids; but that is exactly what made them imaginary, as opposed to magical.

Wendy, too, is replaceable - by her daughter, and then by her grand-daughter. So is Tinker Bell. "Who is Tinker Bell? There are such a lot of them. I expect she is no more." Even Captain Hook is soon forgotten. "I forget them after I kill them". Incidentally, Captain Hook has his faults, but at least he remembers his Eton days!

Nor is Peter the only one who forgets. The children start to forget their parents as soon as they leave London and - most poignantly - when Wendy is grown up we are told in passing that "Mrs. Darling was now dead and forgotten". Adults forget, too, you see.

All this makes Peter Pan far more like our own vague and, ultimately, dreary memories of childhood fantasies than like a real magical tale. No wonder adults like Peter Pan better than kids do. We like to wallow in our own thoughts; they want the real thing.

That said, as adult self-absorbed fantasies go, this one is superb. The language is perfect, the images delightful and there is much that an adult can relate to. After all, each of us has a ticking crocodile of our own.

The bottom line, I think, is that whoever first marketed Peter Pan as a heart-warming children's story did the book a disservice. It is as chilling as it is good.

Siv30 says

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Samantha Jayne Grubey (ABookHaven) says

Still totally in love with Peter Pan but definitely prefer the movie rather than the book!
