 Book report

Title: Peter Pan

Author: J.M.Barrie

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First published in 1911

Published by Puffin Books in 1967

Reissued in this chalk edition in 2013

Points: 2

A. The book is called Peter Pan because the main character is called Peter Pan. Peter Pan is a special boy who lives in Neverland and never grows up.

B. J.M. Barrie was born on May 9, 1860, in Scotland. J.M. Barrie was a Scottish writer, best known for writing *Peter Pan* in 1904, or *The Boy Who Would Never Grow Up*. He wrote a book based on his play called *Peter and Wendy*, which was published in 1911. He moved to London to pursue his interest in playwriting. In London in 1897 he met the Llewelyn Davies boys who inspired his masterpiece. Based on Barrie's characters, Disney created the animated classic, *Peter Pan*, in 1953. Barrie continued writing mostly adult plays after Peter Pan until death. J.M. Barrie died in 1937 due to lung cancer. When he died they discovered he gave the author rights to the Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. They provided from the rights until 2007. I used <http://www.biography.com/people/jm-barrie-9200058>, <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/J.M._Barrie> and <http://www.britannica.com/biography/J-M-Barrie> for this information.

C. The story takes place in Neverland, an adventurous island where you don’t grow up, but the story starts at the Darling family’s house in England. The story is probably set in the beginning of the 20th century or in the end of the 19th century. I think the story covers about ±50 years because Wendy is a child in the beginning then she gets married and has a child called Jane and Jane gets a daughter called Margaret.

D. Main characters

Peter Pan: Peter Pan is a special boy who lives in Neverland. Peter is the boy who never grew. He is described as a young childish boy, who still has all his first teeth, his clothes are made of skeleton leaves and the juices that ooze out of trees and he plays the pipes. He is the only boy who can fly without golden fairy dust and is afraid of nothing except of growing up and parents. He loves Wendy very much but in a motherly way not in a girlfriend or love type of way. Peter does not change throughout the whole story.

[Wendy Darling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendy_Darling): Wendy is the eldest of three, the only daughter. She wants to become a mother and tell her own children bedtime stories. She has a very motherly character towards the lost boys and Peter. Wendy does not like the fairy Tinker Bell, the fairy is bad-mouthing her throughout the whole story and even has attempted to kill her. At the end of the story, she is a married woman with a daughter (Jane) and a granddaughter (Margaret), we do not know who her husband is. While it is not very clear whether or not she is in love with Peter, you can assume that she does have some sort of feelings towards him. Wendy is often seen as the "mother" of the Lost Boys and Peter also considers her to be his "mother" but he also plays the "father".

E. Peter pan is the boy who never grew up and lives in Neverland with the Lost Boys. One special evening Peter flies to the house of the Darling family. The darling family live in England with 3 children and a dog called Nana, who is also the ‘’nurse’’ of the children.  
When he came to the house he lost his shadow and Mrs. Darling found it. When Peter came again to retrieve his shadow but only the children and nurse were home. Peter could not find his shadow and started to cry, Wendy woke up from the crying and helped Peter by sewing his shadow to his foot. Peter took the children to Neverland by flying, when they arrived Wendy was shot and the lost boys took care of her. Sometime later the children except Peter were kidnapped by pirates and their captain, Hook. Captain Hook left his ship, the Jolly Roger, and went to the sleeping Peter in their underground home. He did not like Peter one single bit because Peter was the reason that Hook lost his arm to the ticking crocodile. Captain Hook poisoned Peter’s medicine. Hook went back to the pirate ship after he poisoned Peter. When Peter awoke, Tinkerbell told him the whole story and he went to the ship to save the others.

Peter Pan copies the ticking of the crocodile to scare Hook. When Captain Hook heard the ticking he was very shocked and after this Peter Pan got onto the ship. When Peter got onto the ship he started fighting Captain Hook with his dagger.   
The fight was very long but in the end Peter won. Captain Hook jumped in the ocean after his loss but what he didn’t know was that the real ticking crocodile was waiting for him. The crocodile ate Captain Hook. The children went home to England after they finished the job. Mr. And Mrs. Darling adopted all the lost boys.   
Wendy saw Peter one last time when he came to say goodbye after that she saw him only after she had grown up. When Peter came back Mr. and Mrs. Darling and Nana had died and Wendy was a married woman with a daughter called Jane. Peter had forgotten about his and Wendy’s adventures and took Jane as his new ‘’mother’’.

F. The novel is chronologically written and begins peacefully in England and builds up to the adventurous times in Neverland with the lost boys and then ends with a happy/sad ending in England.

G. The novel is a third-person point of view and is an indirect narration. Barrie used a free indirect speech and the past tense to write this novel.

H. One of the main theme’s in this book is gender roles, Barrie describes how men and women are having a different look towards parenthood and growing up. Another one is innocence and youth, Peter clings to his youth because he hates adults and he also doesn’t like to be touched which points to the innocence in the story.

I. The climax is when Peter saves Wendy from the walking plank and goes onto the Jolly Roger to save the rest of the children. A fight between the lost boys and pirates breaks out and Hook fights Peter. After a long fight Peter wins and Hook gets eaten by the ticking crocodile. (page 166-179)

J. The novel begins with Mr. and Mrs. Darling's marriage, shortly followed by the birth of their children. The early scenes take place in the nursery where Mrs. Darling worries about her children's fascination with a mysterious boy named Peter Pan. She has heard rumors of a strange boy who lives with the fairies and has found disturbing evidence that he has visited the nursery. She shares her concerns with Mr. Darling but he is selfish and unconcerned. This sets the stage for Peter to swoop in later that night and convince Wendy to run away. He teaches the Darling children to fly, and they head out the window to Neverland.

Once there, Wendy becomes the surrogate mother of the Lost Boys. Wendy is thrilled with a traditional domestic role. She does the household chores and fusses lovingly over the boys. She encourages Peter to do the same, calling him the father of the group. He is willing to play along but only up to a point. Peter needs reassurance that it is all make-believe.

However, all is not peaceful on the island. In addition to the Lost Boys, there are wild animals, Indians, and pirates. Captain Hook is the main antagonist of the novel and is the leader of the pirates. Hook is a foil for Peter, a character who is a direct opposite of the main character. Hook is angry and obsessed with others' opinions of him. Most importantly, Captain Hook is vengeful; he wants revenge against Peter because in an earlier sword fight, Peter cut off Hook's right hand and flung it to a passing crocodile. In contrast, Peter is innocent; he doesn't really understand the concept of evil. He also forgets the wrongs that are done to him almost as soon as they happen.

Throughout the novel, Wendy preaches about the importance of a mother's love, convincing the boys that Mrs. Darling will leave the nursery window open, waiting for them forever. Peter doesn't understand this kind of devotion and makes the mistake of convincing the others that it's not true. His own mother, he claims, had forgotten all about him. She'd even had another son to replace him. He says this to convince them to stay in Neverland but his plan backfires. Wendy immediately decides to return home, and all the boys beg to come with her.

In the end, Wendy's faith is justified. The nursery window is open, and Mrs. Darling is not only overjoyed to see her children, she offers to adopt the Lost Boys without a second thought.

To really understand *Peter Pan*--both the book and the character--it helps to take a look at the themes in the book. Let's look at a couple of the main themes, gender roles and innocence.

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/peter-pan-by-jm-barrie-summary-analysis.html>

K. I always liked Peter Pan when growing up and wanted to read the grown up version instead of the children’s version. I actually found the novel quite difficult to read because of words I had never seen before, the length of certain sentences and because the fact that I have a very limited vocabulary even in Dutch. Aside of that I found it a very beautiful novel, it was different from what I had in mind but it was actually better and exceeded my expectations. What I love the most about this novel is the plot because as a child I would want Peter to come and take me and it boosts your fantasy even when your older.