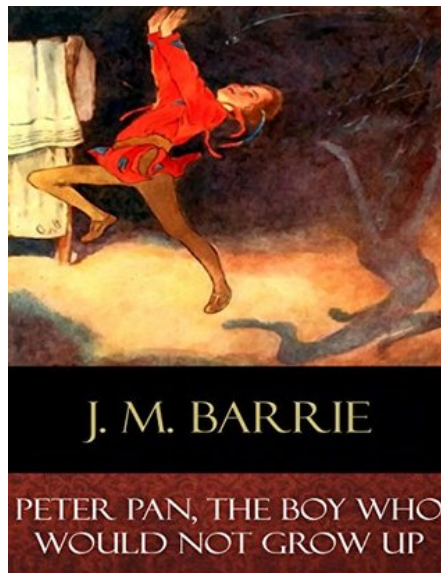




Peter Pan, The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up: Illustrated

J.M. Barrie

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Peter Pan is a character created by Scottish novelist and playwright J. M. Barrie. A free spirited and mischievous young boy who can fly and never grows up, Peter Pan spends his never-ending childhood having adventures on the mystical island of Neverland as the leader of the Lost Boys, interacting with fairies, pirates, mermaids, Native American Indians, and occasionally ordinary children from the world outside Neverland. In addition to two distinct works by Barrie, the character has been featured in a variety of media and merchandise, both adapting and expanding on Barrie's works.

J. M. Barrie first used Peter Pan as a character in a section of *The Little White Bird* (1902), an adult novel where he appears as a seven-day-old baby in the chapter entitled *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*.

James Matthew Barrie, (1860–1937) was a Scottish novelist and playwright, best remembered today as the creator of Peter Pan. He was born and educated in Scotland but moved to London, where he wrote a number of successful novels and plays.

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From Reader Review Peter Pan, The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up: Illustrated for online ebook

Doug says

Having seen the Disney adaptation of *Peter Pan* countless times as a young boy, and being very familiar with the Peter Pan mythos in general, I was pleasantly surprised upon reading the original version of J.M. Barrie's story to discover some new things I had not been aware of. For those who don't know (I didn't until recently), Barrie originally wrote the story of *Peter Pan* not in novel form but in the form of a play for the stage.

I was startled to find this story, while still fanciful and youthful, to be much darker than I had expected it to be. Barrie seems to really hit his stride here writing the story in the form of a play. Peter Pan is a much, much more ambiguous character than I remembered. He's still the child who never wants to grow up, but a lot is left unexplained with regards to his actions and his attitude towards characters like Wendy. He isn't unlikeable, more just rather dark and mysterious. It's never a frustrating lack of explanation, however - it's more of just a vague sense of foreboding and even sadness that permeates Neverland and Pan's character. The dialogue really stands out in general here, and Barrie has hidden little quizzical gems for the audience to digest and mull over. "To die will be an awfully big adventure." "One girl is worth twenty boys."

I do have one critique for this, and that is that I am no playwright nor have I ever been in the business of plays or directing them, but I have absolutely no idea how this thing was/is supposed to be pulled off well. Barrie devotes entire paragraphs describing battles, magical journeys, lagoons, etc. I have no idea how this could be pulled off on a stage and apparently this version of the play is rarely if ever acted out now but I can only imagine it would have to be from a top-notch studio with a tremendous budget for props and effects to even begin to do *Peter Pan* justice.

To be certain, this play was written well over a hundred years ago. Were this to be written today, it would immediately be tossed into the nearest trash bin due to antiquated depictions of characters - particularly female characters and the Indian characters like Tiger Lily - that would most likely be categorized as racist and sexist in our modern times. Nevertheless, the age of the book and the antiquarian notions it contains does not detract from the magic of the story in the slightest. It's a powerful story of youth, adulthood, hubris, and fear of the unknown hidden within a magical place where children never grow up. I would wholeheartedly recommend that at least once in your life you read the *original* version of Barrie's work written in play form - I had quite a bit of fun exploring the wonders and darkness of Neverland, and I hope you will too.
