CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Peter Pan (Peter and Wendy)

J. M. Barrie · *1911 (as Peter and Wendy; play 1904) · original English text*

All children, except one, grow up. Peter Pan comes for Wendy and her brothers, and they fly to the Neverland, where Lost Boys, pirates, and a jealous fairy make a story that will not stay only a game. The cost of never growing up is real, and so is the courage of going home.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Is it a blessing never to grow up, and what does Wendy owe to the boys, to her parents, and to a boy who will not come with her?

"All children, except one, grow up."

Chapter I, the book's first sentence

Peter wants always to be a little boy and to have fun; he is brave, forgetful, and unable to keep a mother. Wendy plays the mother and loves the adventure, then knows she must go home. Tinker Bell nearly dies for him; the children clap because they still believe. The last chapters show Wendy grown, and Peter coming back for a new child. The book is tender and sharp at once.

KEY CHARACTERS

Peter Pan
The boy who will not grow up: brave, forgetful, and in need of a mother he will not become a man to keep.

Wendy Darling
The eldest Darling child; she tells stories, plays mother, and chooses to go home.

John and Michael
Wendy's brothers, who take to the island's games and must also return.

Tinker Bell
A fairy, jealous and loyal; she drinks the poison meant for Peter.

Captain Hook
The pirate chief, educated and cruel, hunted by the crocodile that took his hand.

the Lost Boys
Children who fell out of their prams and were not claimed; they want a mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Darling
Parents who nearly lose their children; the open window is their faithfulness.

Nana
The dog nurse, more careful of the children than Mr. Darling is, the night they leave.

GROW UP, AND REMEMBER

> *"All children, except one, grow up."*
>
> Chapter I, opening sentence

> *"To die will be an awfully big adventure."*
>
> **Peter Pan** · Chapter VIII

Grades 3–5
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

The Darling Nursery

CHAPTERS I–III

The Darling children have a Newfoundland nurse, Nana. Peter Pan loses his shadow, Wendy sews it on, and he teaches them to fly.

- Mrs. Darling has seen Peter in the children's minds; she bars the window too late.
- Tinker Bell is jealous of Wendy from the first.
- The way to the Neverland is "Second to the right, and straight on till morning."

> *"Second to the right, and straight on till morning."*
>
> **Peter Pan** · Chapter III, Come Away, Come Away!

02

The Island Come True

CHAPTERS IV–VII

They fly a long way. The Neverland is a map of children's games made real: Lost Boys in a home under the ground, a little house built for Wendy.

- The Lost Boys shoot Wendy out of the sky at Tink's prompting, then build her a house.
- Peter is their captain and will not be a father; he wants a mother for the boys.
- The underground home has a tree for each child and a life of stories and pretend meals.

03

Mermaids, and the Never Bird

CHAPTERS VIII–IX

At the mermaids' lagoon, Peter and the children clash with Hook. Peter is stranded on a rock and is saved when the Never bird gives up her nest.

- Wendy and Peter watch mermaids; the lagoon turns to a fight.
- Peter's famous word on the rock is that to die will be an awfully big adventure.
- The bird's nest becomes a boat; Peter's cheer is not the same thing as wisdom.

> *"To die will be an awfully big adventure."*
>
> **Peter Pan** · Chapter VIII, The Mermaids' Lagoon

04

Do You Believe in Fairies?

CHAPTERS X–XV

The children are carried to the pirate ship. Tinker Bell drinks Peter's poisoned medicine and is dying; Peter calls on children to clap. Then it is Hook or him.

- Hook is a gentleman-pirate with a hook and a fear of the crocodile that ate his hand.
- Peter's call is: if you believe, clap your hands; don't let Tink die.
- The fight on the ship ends Hook's reign; the crocodile is waiting.

> *"If you believe," he shouted to them, "clap your hands; don't let Tink die."*
>
> **Peter Pan** · Chapter XIII, Do You Believe in Fairies?

05

The Return Home, and After

CHAPTERS XVI–XVII

The Darling children go home; the Lost Boys are adopted. Peter will not stay. Years later he comes back, and Wendy has grown up.

- Mr. and Mrs. Darling have left the window open; the reunion is a mercy.
- Peter will not be adopted; he wants always to be a little boy and to have fun.
- The last chapter is not only victory; it is time, and a child named Jane.

> *"I want always to be a little boy and to have fun."*
>
> **Peter Pan** · Chapter III, when he first tells Wendy why he ran away

Growing Up | Home and Loyalty | Courage | Belief | Memory and Forgetting

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 3–5

1. The hosted text is Peter and Wendy (1911), Project Gutenberg #16, not the 1904 play. Dialogue and chapter divisions follow the novel.
2. The opening sentence is "All children, except one, grow up."
3. Peter's direction is "Second to the right, and straight on till morning."
4. The clap is not the proverb "Do you believe in fairies?" alone. Peter shouts: "If you believe," he shouted to them, "clap your hands; don't let Tink die."
5. The book is both a children's adventure and a sharp picture of selfishness in Peter and of love in Wendy and her parents. It is not only whimsy.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #16, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/peter-pan/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.