

J.M. Barrie & the Lost Boys Study Guide

J.M. Barrie & the Lost Boys by Andrew Birkin

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Plot Summary

The prologue of Andrew Birkin's "JM Barrie and the Lost Boys: The real story behind Peter Pan," begins by discussing the death of Peter Llewelyn Davies. Davies was the leader of a London publishing house and was often referred to as an artist among publishers. In 1960 Davies stepped in front of an oncoming train. Davies was 63 years old. The author states that although such a death would normally warrant only a small obituary in the London Times, the fact that Peter Davies was part of the inspiration for JM Barrie's "Peter Pan" made the death headline news around the world. In fact, Peter Davies and his brothers, George, Jack, Michael, and Nico, were all dubbed as "Peter Pan" in the press and every time one of them was involved in some newsworthy event such as being fined for speeding or getting married, the news made headlines. Understandably, the brothers began to hate the association with Peter Pan. The author states that while the five boys were used as influence for Peter Pan, the lost boys were also based on the five brothers.

According to Barrie, the idea for "Peter Pan" and the Lost Boys was created from parts of each boy. Barrie said, "I made Peter by rubbing the five of you violently together, as savages with two sticks produce a flame. That is all he is, the spark I got from you" (Prologue, page 2).

That spark created the boy who never grew up. The mischievous and brave Peter who taught Peter, Michael and Wendy to fly by thinking good thoughts, who cared for the magical place called Never Never Land, enjoyed the company of talking animals and mermaids, and fought against the dastardly Captain Hook.

Peter Pan started out as what Barrie referred to as his dream child but turned into something entirely different. Peter Pan gave Barrie his life - from the immense financial success to the lifelong relationships with the Lost Boys.

Birkin follows Barrie from the time of his birth in Kirriemuir, Scotland in 1860 through to the death of Peter Llewelyn Davies in 1960. The main part of the book is devoted to the years in which Barrie was an integral part of the lives of George, Jack, Michael, Peter, and Nico, plus the formation and development of Peter Pan. Although Barrie was well known for other works in the literary and theatre worlds, it would be Peter Pan that would solidify the author's place in eternity.

Barrie's adoption of the Llewelyn Davies' boys seemed to give the author his life's purpose. Barrie doted on the children. While Barrie was a godsend, he was also a curse, as the Llewelyn Davies boys would forever be tied to Peter Pan, a fact which often overshadowed their careers and personal lives.

Also included are tales of Barrie's family, failed marriage to Mary Ansell, and various friendships and business connections, including people such as Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, Winston Churchill, Charles Froham, Maude Adams, and perhaps most

importantly, the relationship between Barrie and Sylvia du Maurier Llewelyn Davies, mother to the children that would inspire Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.



Prologue; Chapters 1-3

Prologue; Chapters 1-3 Summary and Analysis

Prologue; Ch 1-3

The prologue begins by discussing the death of Peter Llewellyn Davies. Davies was the leader of a London publishing house who was often referred to as an artist among publishers. In 1960 Davies stepped in front of an oncoming train. Davies was 63 years old. The author states that although such a death would normally warrant only a small obituary in the London Times, the fact that Peter Davies was part of the inspiration for JM Barrie's Peter Pan made the death headline news around the world. In fact, Peter Davies and his brothers, George, Jack, Michael, and Nico, were all dubbed as Peter Pan in the press and every time one of them was involved in some newsworthy event such as being fined for speeding or getting married, the news made headlines. Understandably, the brothers began to hate the association with Peter Pan. The author states that while the five boys were used as influence for Peter Pan, the lost boys were also based on the five brothers.

Chapter 1 1860-1885

This chapter begins with James Barrie's birth in Kirriemuir, Scotland on May 9, 1860. Barrie was the seventh child to David Barrie and Margaret Ogilvy. By all accounts, Margaret was the driving force in the family. Like many authors Barrie later embellished his childhood to give the impression that the Barries were poor. This is untrue. David Barrie was a weaver and made an above average income. The focus in the Barrie household revolved around educational ambition. When James was six years old his oldest brother Alexander had already graduated from Aberdeen University with honors in Classics and became headmaster of a private school in Lanarkshire. The second eldest son, David, was the golden apple of Margaret's eye. The great hope was that David would become a minister. It is understandable that Barrie would live in David's shadow until the boy's death at age 14 from the skating accident. David was everything that James was not. David was tall, handsome, athletic, and intelligent. James was the runt.

The effect of David's death on Margaret was beyond measure. Barrie, who does not remember much of the incident, wrote about his mother's condition in the book "Margaret Ogilvy."

"She was always delicate from that hour, and for many months she was Barrie ill. I peeped in many times at the door and then went to the stair and sat on it and sobbed" (Chapter 1, page 4).

Barrie's sister, Jane Ann, recounts episodes during which she would lay in her mother's arms while Margaret wept. One of the few things that seemed to console Margaret was



that David would remain a boy forever. It is surmised that this was the beginning of the inspiration for Peter Pan.

It was about this time that Barrie started engaging in theatricals at home, while attempting to live up to the memory of David.

The author discusses Margaret's childhood. Margaret grew up in a leading community prior to the Industrial Revolution. There are many stories about old Scotland, including those of the Auld Lights (Old Lights), a religious organization Margaret had belonged to before she married David Barrie. James was always enthralled by these tales and they fueled the boy's rich imagination. In Barrie's imagination Margaret evolved into many different women.

"But it was the image of the substitute mother that was to take the deepest root: the memory of his own mother as a little girl, refashioned and remoulded into numerous heroines, epitomized as Wendy mothering The Lost Boys and Peter Pan in Never Land" (Chapter 1, page 6).

Barrie also used Margaret's tales to inspire him in his other works. Barrie said that the only way he could write from that point forward was to imagine a little girl, the little girl inspired by Margaret, wandering confidently through the pages.

Although Barrie still lived in David's shadow, it was the relationship with his younger sister Maggie that helped James to gain much-needed self-confidence. Maggie idolized James. The one person that seemed to have had the least amount of influence in James' life was his father.

David Barrie did bring literature into the life of young James. The family read many books together, bought or borrowed. James also saved up to earn a subscription to a comic series. James' favorite was "Penny Dreadfuls," a comic book that could be considered to be the basis of many adventure comics. This influence would also be seen in Barrie's later work.

Things began to change when James became a teenager. "At the age of 13, Barrie 'put the literary calling to bed for a time, having gone to a school where cricket and football were more esteemed'. His childhood was over" (Chapter 1, page 7).

Although James proclaimed that he was now a man he continued to live out the literary fantasies in secret. While one would think that spending five years at Dumfries Academy would have been difficult considering James' personality and creative bent, the author referred to them as being the happiest years in his life.

It was a meeting with a school friend named Stuart Gordon that gave Barrie some relief, as Gordon was also interested in adventure comics. Barrie continued to be enthralled by pirates, based on a tale of a boy in one of the Penny Dreadfuls issues. Gordon and Barrie even adopted names for their new personae. Gordon was "Dare Devil Dick" and Barrie was "Sixteen String Jack." When Dare Devil Dick invited Sixteen String Jack to join his own band of pirates, Barrie eagerly accepted.



During this time, Barrie kept a journal of the activities and daydreams involved in the pirate escapades. Later Barrie said, "We lived in the treetops, on coconuts attached thereto, and that were in a bad condition; we were buccaneers, and I kept a log-book of our depredations, an eerie journal, without a triangle in it to mar the beauty of its page. That log-book, I trust is no longer extant, though I should like one last look at it, to see if Captain Hook is in it" (Chapter 1 page 8).

Barrie was shy and reserved later in life, but no signs of those traits appeared during his tenure at Dumfries Academy. The author details various activities at Dumfries Academy, including membership in the debating society, playing football, fishing expeditions, and visits to the local theatre. The theater seemed to be the thing that intrigued Barrie most. Barrie's frequent trips to the theater prompted to write his first play, "Bandalero the Bandit." The play, which only ran half an hour, was an amalgam of all Barrie had seen on stage and in his favorite characters in books.

Later, Barrie would lament that he hadn't written anything daring or shocking. However, a local clergyman disagreed. After seeing "Bandalero the Bandit" the clergyman denounced the play in a local newspaper, referring to it as grossly immoral. Barrie was delighted.

The notoriety served Barrie well for a time. Barrie's small stature tended to plague him. At age 17, Barrie was just five feet tall and it seemed that he would grow no more. In many ways, Barrie was still a boy. This distinction actually played in Barrie's favor when he met James McMillan, "a thin, frightened looking boy, poorly clad and frail" (Chapter 1, page 10). McMillan, like David, would forever remain a boy by dying young. It was during this time that Barrie began to write about school life in "by Didymus."

At age 18 Barrie left Dumfries Academy. Barrie wanted to return to Kirriemuir and become a writer. Barrie's parents insisted that their son once again follow in the plan created for David by going to university. Barrie enrolled at Edinburgh and soon found that his initial instincts were correct. University was not for James.

Barrie was described by fellow student Robert Galloway, who recalled Barrie as being "exceedingly shy and diffident, I do not remember ever to have seen him either enter or leave a classroom with any companion."

"Yet I remember him distinctly - a sallow-faced, round shouldered, slight, somewhat delicate looking figure, who quietly went in and out amongst us, attracting but little observation, but observing all and measuring up men and treasuring up impressions" (Chapter 1, page 12).

Edinburgh turned out to be the loneliest years of Barrie's life. He began to write more during this time. Barrie's brother, Alexander, married and had two daughters, with whom Barrie became Barrie close. It was obvious that Barrie was much more at home with children than adults.



In 1882 Barrie returned to Kirriemuir with his M.A. degree. Although the university experience had not been entirely positive, it was proven that Barrie's parents were correct in that obtaining a university education would help him later in life.

It was Jane Ann who helped Barrie get his first literary job. The job was to be a lead writer for The Nottingham Journal, an English provincial newspaper. Barrie got the job and was to be paid an astounding three pounds per week. The university experience would pay off once again, when Barrie was charged with writing articles about topics that were incredibly boring, turning them into entertainment. Unfortunately many of Barrie's readers did not get his sense of humor. In October 1884 Barrie returned to Kirriemuir, jobless. Barrie was not discouraged. The job at The Nottingham Journal was nothing more than a steppingstone. Using that experience Barrie set his sights on Fleet Street journalism and began to bombard London publishers with unsolicited material. Although the work began to pay off, Barrie may have acted prematurely when he packed his bags and moved to London.

Chapter 2 1885-1894

Chapter 2 begins with Barrie talking about his love of hard work. Barrie says he does not know where this love came from as it was certainly not cultivated in childhood. Once Barrie found hard work it became the most important thing in his life. The author says that for once, Barrie's comment was not an exaggeration. Hard work also helped to keep Barrie's mind active during his mounting bouts of depression.

Barrie continued to work in the commercial journalism field, although it was clear that his head and heart were both devoted to literature. By 1887 Barrie was contributing articles regularly to every prestigious publication in the UK including The National Observer. Barrie was among good company, namely Thomas Hardy, H.G. Wells, W.B. Yeats, and Rudyard Kipling.

In 1888, Barrie self published his first novel titled, "Better Dead." Much like Barrie's earlier columns in The Nottingham Journal, Better Dead was too cerebral for the general reader. One critic referred to it as being a combination of Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Years later Barrie would refer to Better Dead as being just that.

Not long after the publication of Better Dead, Barrie began to publish stories about the house in Kirriemuir, along with Margaret's experiences in the old town, which would eventually become known as Thrums.

The third book in the Thrums series, "The Little Minister" was published in 1891. The coveted National Observer referred to it as "A Book of Genius" (Chapter 2, page 18).

Perhaps the highest point at this time in Barrie's life however was the beginning of a lengthy correspondence with his hero, fellow Scotsman Robert Louis Stevenson. The two men would never meet face to face but spent many years writing letters to one another. Any amount of praise received from Stevenson was better than the best book review.



Barrie continued to make valuable friendships within the literary community, but undoubtedly, the writer's closest friends were Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. One friend, six year old Margaret Henley, can be credited with creating the name Wendy. Henley often referred to Barrie as "my Friendly" but because she had a lisp it came out as "my Wendy." This was significant because the name Wendy did not exist at that time.

Barrie's nephew Charlie was the impetus for Barrie's creation of a character named "Peterkin." The author writes: "Charlie was exceptionally good-looking and intelligent, which appealed to Barrie; he was also extremely destructive and anarchistic, which appealed to him even more" (Chapter 2 page 19).

Barrie dreamed of becoming a ladies man. In 1883, Barrie was a frequent visitor to the theater, where he fell in love with an actress named Minnie Palmer. Although the relationship didn't work out, it did not deter Barrie from pursuing leading ladies. However, Barrie was often seen as being severely inhibited and his relationships rarely went beyond mild flirtation.

Birkin writes: "Several biographers, and numerous psychiatrists, have laid the blame for Barrie's inhibitions at his mother's feet, suggesting that she was excessively prudish and repressive in her views on sex. Certainly, she was a religious woman, as were most of her Victorian contemporaries, but there is little to suggest that she was unduly puritanical" (Chapter 2, page 22).

Things changed for Barrie when in 1892, he met Mary Ansell, an actress who operated her own touring company. Barrie offered Ansell a part in one of his plays, and it was clear that the author was smitten. Ansell would become part of the inspiration for Barrie's novel titled "The Sentimentalist."

Barrie's play, "Walker, London," was a huge success. While it was on the London stage, Barrie took the opportunity to visit friends as well as family. Maggie was getting married and it was going to be a joyous occasion for the whole family. Even though Barrie was now considered to be somewhat wealthy, the family back in Kirriemuir would not take much from him. Barrie did win out over Margaret's objections of hiring a servant to help her at the house in Kirriemuir. Barrie's wedding present to Maggie and her husband, the Reverend James Winter, was a horse. Not long after the wedding Winter was thrown from the horse and killed. Barrie, along with Margaret and Maggie, was inconsolable.

London society began to predict that Barrie would marry Mary Ansell. Barrie, however, would not confirm nor deny the rumors. Although Barrie was in love with the actress, he firmly believed that he was not suited to married life. Barrie chose to ignore his feelings as well as a vivid premonition and proposed to Mary Ansell. Ansell accepted.

Chapter 3 1894-1897

Chapter 3 begins with an interview with Mary Ansell. Although unaware of it at the time, Ansell would soon find that Barrie desperately lacked passion. Ansell seemed to pour her passion into her love for dogs, particularly St. Bernards. The Barries had received a



dog named Porthos as a wedding present. Even though the dog was given to the wife, Porthos developed a deep affection for the husband. Mary seemed to lose out again.

Barrie continued to write thinly veiled autobiographical stories including "Sentimental Tommy." The novel started out as a tale about the life of the man who would become a writer. As Barrie continued to work on the novel he found that once again he had become increasingly fascinated with the man's childhood. The main part of the novel involved Tommy being caught up in various childhood scenes and schemes. Although Barrie seemed to need no help in creating this fictional boy, he was to be inspired further by son of Arthur Quiller Couch's son, Bevil. Bevil soon became known as "The Pippa."

In March 1895 the Barries moved into their first home on Gloucester Road. The house was not far from Kensington Gardens, a place that would quickly become a routine stop on Barrie's daily walks with Porthos.

The Barries were prepared to go to Switzerland for their anniversary when they took a detour to spend time in Kirriemuir with Margaret, who was ill and frail, and Jane Ann who had given up her own ambitions to care for their mother in her declining years. There was no mention of the father.

Margaret was beginning to have delusions, and had convinced herself once more that David was alive. Even though things seemed to be going downhill for Margaret, the Barries went on to Switzerland. Two weeks later Barrie received a telegram from Jane Ann saying that all was well. Shortly after Barrie received another telegram informing him that Jane Ann had died suddenly the night before. Apparently Margaret could not understand that Jane Ann was dead. Barrie was expected to return to Kirriemuir to break the sad news. Margaret Ogilvy died while Barrie was on route from Switzerland. Jane Ann and Margaret were buried in the same grave as young David. It was September 6, 1895, Margaret, 76th birthday.

The author includes a letter from Barrie to W. E. Henley, whose six-year-old daughter, Margaret, had died the few months previous. Barrie informed Henley of the deaths of his mother and Jane Ann.

Barrie decided to write about his mother's existence in the novel, "Margaret Ogilvy." Some Scots believed that Barrie had violated some unwritten code of family privacy. Alexander criticized his brother for exaggerating the family's humble beginnings.

In 1896 the Barries set sail for their first trip to America. Barrie had half finished the stage adaptation of "The Little Minister" and was anxious about his newly acquired agent's idea to cast the young actress Maude Adams in the part of Babbie. Barrie's worried were unfounded. For all intents and purposes the trip to America was a success. Maude Adams was cast as Babbie and Barrie made the acquaintance of Charles Frohman, who was routinely referred to as the "Beaming Buddha of Broadway." According to all reports, Barrie and Frohman would become partners and lifelong friends.



The author writes: "Barrie later claimed to have had only one real quarrel with Frohman - 'but it lasted all the 16 years I knew him. He wanted me to be a playwright, and I want to be a novelist'" (Chapter 3 page 39).

Despite Mary's deep desire to have children, three years into the Barrie marriage the couple remained childless. Mary turned her mothering skills toward Porthos. Barrie turned his paternal instincts toward other people's children. Barrie spent a great deal of time at the Kensington Gardens home of writer Maurice Hewlett, who had two children. It was around that time when Barrie was first introduced to the Llewellyn Davies family: five-year-old George and four-year-old Jack, accompanied by their nurse Mary and baby brother Peter. Barrie hit it off immediately with the children. George worked hard to cultivate the friendship with Barrie.

"To him he was not JM Barrie, the celebrated writer, but a small man with a cough, who could wiggle his ears and perform magic feats with his eyebrows. Moreover, he seemed to be singularly well-informed on the subject of cricket, fairies, murders, pirates, hangings, desert islands and verbs that take the dative" (Chapter 3 page 41).

Birkin details the success of *The Little Minister* and Mary's short-lived return to the London stage and the role of Babbie. By this time, the Barrie was quite famous in the UK and America. Although Barrie typically avoided social functions he accepted an invitation to a much talked about New Year's Eve dinner party at the home of Sir George and Lady Lewis. It was at that dinner that Barrie met Sylvia Llewellyn Davies, who Barrie referred to as most beautiful woman he had ever seen. It didn't take long before Barrie discovered that Sylvia was the mother to his new friends George and Jack.



Chapters 4-8

Chapters 4-8 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 4 The Davies family

Chapter 4 begins with the author speaking about the Darling family who was, in fact, based on the family of Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, parents to George and Jack. The author describes the background of Arthur Davies, who was the son of Reverend John Llewelyn Davies, a theologian and scholar who was destined to be offered a bishopric until he went on a rant in front of Queen Victoria, who was so outraged that she had the reverend transferred to remote regions of Westmorland.

Arthur Llewelyn Davies was one of five sons. Arthur, a young and rapidly rising barrister, met Sylvia du Maurier in 1889 at a dinner party. Arthur was immediately entranced by the lovely Sylvia. By all accounts, Sylvia du Maurier was strikingly beautiful. Dolly Parry, the daughter of a friend, later wrote of Sylvia: "Without being strictly speaking pretty, she is but one of the most delightful, brilliantly sparkling faces I have ever seen. Her nose turns round the corner - also turns right up. Her mouth is quite crooked... her eyes are very pretty - hazel and very mischievous. She has pretty fluffy black hair: but her expression is what gives her that wonderful charm, and her low voice" (Chapter 4, page 51).

Within a few weeks of the meeting at the dinner party, the couple was engaged. Birkin writes: "The engagement came as something of a surprise to their friends, for although Arthur and Sylvia made a spectacularly handsome couple, their families had virtually nothing in common. In contrast to the Spartan austerity of the Llewelyn Davies family, the du Mauriers epitomized the gaiety and bohemian frivolity of the 'nineties" (Chapter 4 page 47).

The author includes correspondence between the betrothed and their future in-laws.

The newlyweds were not rich, although Arthur had received a nest egg from his uncle Charles Crompton. Sylvia had begun to earn money by working for a famous dressmaker. Sylvia's father also gave the couple money derived from the profits of his first novel. After two long years of courtship, the couple married on August 15, 1892.

The births of the Llewelyn Davies boys are chronicled. George was born in 1893; Jack in 1894; Peter in 1897; Michael 1900; and Nico in 1903.

At this time, much of Arthur's work was coming through the office of George Lewis. Because of the business association it was natural that Arthur and Sylvia would be invited to the New Year's Eve dinner party where they would meet Barrie. That meeting was also chronicled in "Peter Pan" when Mr. Darling bemoans the fact that he had not gone to the dinner party the children would not have flown away to Never Never Land. It wasn't long before Arthur echoed the same cry.



Chapter 5 1898-1900

Chapter 5 begins with a letter to Sylvia from Barrie the day before she was to marry Arthur.

As fond of the Llewelyn Davies family as Barrie was, he was disappointed when Mary and Sylvia did not form a friendship.

One of the first references to "Peter Pan" was Barrie's belief that all children were once birds and so there had to be bars on the nursery windows in case the children would forget they could no longer fly. Barrie wrote about Peter, who still had the ability to fly because his mother did not weigh him down at birth. Peter was able to escape through the unbarred nursery window and fly to Kensington Gardens. There are some excerpts from the early stories included in this chapter.

Barrie and Sylvia seemed to grow ever closer. Eventually Sylvia would be referred to by Barrie as Jocelyn. Jocelyn was Sylvia's middle name. The use of such intimated a close personal friendship.

Chapter 6, 1900-1901

The search for a country home had to finally yielded fruit for Mary. Mary had found a house in Surrey, known as Black Lake Cottage. Mary set to work on transforming the house, including a large private study for her husband.

Barrie had been working on the production of "The Wedding Guest," an Ibsen-like play that was nothing like the light hearted comedy, "The Little Minister." Critics were not kind.

Barrie's relationships with the Llewelyn Davies children grew stronger. George, now age 7, remained Barrie's favorite.

During the summer of Michael's first birthday, the Davies family rented a cottage at Tilford, which was a five-minute walk from Black Lake Cottage. Barrie spent more time than ever with the boys, chronicling the children's adventures.

Birkin writes: "Throughout the long summer days of August, Barrie and the Davies boys were inseparable, and he decided to honor them by turning the photographs of their exploits into a book, as he had done for Bevil Quiller Couch seven years before" (Chapter 6, page 85).

This book was more fanciful however, its design fashioned after *The Coral Island*. Barrie named the book "The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island." In this book is the perhaps the first appearance of Captain Hook, who was then known as Captain Swarthy. There also references to the Darling nursery, the ever watchful dog Nana, and Wendy.

Chapter 7 1901-1904



The summer ended and the Davies family returned to London. Barrie stayed at Black Lake Cottage for the few weeks, continuing to write material for "The Little White Bird" as well as castaways scenes that would appear in "The Admirable Crichton."

Birkin follows the next couple of years of Barrie's work on the stage as well as his continuing relationship with the Davies family. The only thing that could dampen Barrie's spirit was death. Within a short amount of time, Barrie lost his older sister Isabella as well as the beloved Porthos.

The beginning chapters of "Peter Pan" had come to fruition. It began to seem obvious that Arthur was not entirely thrilled with his family's involvement with Barrie. It may not have been coincidental that when the Davies family moved to a larger house. It was not one of the homes in London, which were still above Davies means, even as a successful attorney. The house was in Berkhamsted High Street. It made the commute to London easy for Arthur, and perhaps best of all in Arthur's eyes, it was 25 miles from the Barries' doorstep.

Chapter 8 1904-1905

Peter Pan continued to evolve. The first draft of the play was finished March 1, 1904. The working title was "Peter and Wendy." George was not thrilled with the appearance of Wendy, but Barrie felt that the girl was an important addition to the play.

Barrie had a meeting with Charles Frohman regarding "Peter and Wendy." Barrie had some bargaining power with a play he had written earlier titled "Alice Sit-by-the-Fire." Barrie began to tell Frohman about "Peter and Wendy," which he had renamed "The Great White Father," saying that the play would most likely not be successful but that it was a dream child. Frohman took on the play sight unseen. When Frohman read the play he fell in love immediately. It was Frohman that suggested that the title be changed to "Peter Pan." It wasn't long before "Peter Pan" with into production. The play debuted on December 22. The reviews were varied. Some called the play "touching" and "natural" with Barrie being dubbed as a genius. Others were not so kind. Bernard Shaw referred to "Peter Pan" as an artificial freak.



Chapters 9-12

Chapters 9-12 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 9 1905-1906

The Davies family had settled in comfortably to their new country home, Egerton House. By all accounts the house was beautiful. Dolly Posenby, a family friend, had many complimentary things to say about Arthur, including the fact that he was tender and gentle. Arthur would soon find that the 25 miles he had put between Barrie and Egerton House was not enough. Barrie began to make frequent visits and continued to issue invitations to Sylvia and the boys. The author discusses the ongoing relationship between Barrie and the children as well as the intended incorporation of the Black Lake book into "Peter Pan." The latter never happened.

Included in this chapter is correspondence between Barrie and Michael, who was now five years old.

"Peter Pan" continued to be successful, appearing on various stages and the fact that a revival was already being called for by the public.

It was in 1906 that Arthur was diagnosed with a sarcoma on his face. Arthur was 43 years old. It was hoped that surgery would remove the problem, although it was likely that Arthur would be heavily scarred and have a speech impediment for the rest of his life, which could have been devastating for a barrister.

Chapter 10, 1906-1907

Arthur had to spend time recuperating in a nursing home after the surgery. There are letters included between Arthur and the children. Barrie spent a great deal of time at the house over the next few months. Peter would later refer to it as a queer business. Barrie was so completely devoted to Sylvia and the children that it reminded Peter of the loyalty of the dog rather than of a man.

After several months of healing, Arthur found out that the cancer had spread. The doctor was grim, but it was not known if Arthur would be able to live for six months or a year. Toward the end Arthur could no longer speak, and it seemed as if his tenuous relationship with Barrie had improved and involved into fondness. Arthur died in 1907.

Chapter 11, 1907-1908

This chapter begins with a letter from the Sylvia to Dolly discussing the death of Arthur and the grief experienced by Sylvia and the boys.

When Arthur died there was little money left. Sylvia refused funds that had been arranged by Arthur before he died. It was also understood that Sylvia would not take



money from Barrie even though he was more than willing to take care of the family having earned nearly a half million pounds to date from Peter Pan. Eventually Barrie did support the family, along with several fledgling writers.

"Peter Pan" continued to evolve.

Chapter 12, 1908-1910

Barrie had been unable to spend much time with Sylvia and the boys in the summer of 1908 but surprised them with a three-week long ski holiday trip to Switzerland. Mary also joined the party along with Gilbert Cannan, a man with whom Mary was becoming infatuated, unbeknownst to Barrie. The relationship between Cannan and Mary had its benefits. After many years of being excluded from Barrie's work, Mary learned to use a typewriter and was able to perform duties for her husband as well as Cannan, who served as a Secretary to the Committee Seeking the Abolition of the Censor. Cannan was also appointed to the Dramatic League, an organization founded in part by Barrie and dedicated to the creation of a National Theater in England.

Barrie was preoccupied with commissioning a sculpture of Peter Pan as well as staging revivals of the play, working on a new project, and traveling. It should not have come as a surprise when it was discovered that Mary was having an affair with Cannan. The Barries would soon end up in divorce court.

Sylvia had fallen ill and was diagnosed with cancer. The specialists' prognosis was not good. The cancer was located too close to Sylvia's heart to allow an operation. Sylvia began to draft a will. Sylvia died on August 27, 1910.



Chapters 13-16

Chapters 13-16 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 13 1910-1914

Chapter 13 begins with the discovery of Sylvia's will, a copy of which is included in the book. There was a question of what to do with the boys. There were only two choices: divide the boys up among relatives or allow Barrie to become their guardian. While there were many objections from outsiders, Barrie and the boys were happy with the guardianship arrangement. Mary Hodgson, the family's nurse, unhappy with the situation, stayed on and often referred to herself as the boys' substitute mother.

The author speaks of the boys' activities in and out school. Also included are letters to and from Barrie and the boys while they were away at Eton and other schools. Barrie continued to dote on the children by taking them on fishing trips and elaborate summer vacations.

Chapter 14 1914-1915

Chapter 14 begins with the outbreak of war between Germany and Great Britain. George and Peter would be called upon to serve. Barrie was restless and did what he could to help the war effort by donating money to Lord Lucas, the operator of a hospital, the man had created from his family home.

There are more letters included to and from Barrie and the boys.

Barrie continued to write, but was still devoted to the development and promotion of "Peter Pan."

One of the last letters Barrie received from George was one telling his surrogate father not to fear for his safety. It wasn't long before the family received the news that George had been killed on March 15, 1915.

Chapter 15, 1915-1917

Shortly after George's death, Barrie had received great accolades for his work. Charles Frohman was expected to arrive in London in May, but Barrie convinced him to sail earlier, hoping that his partner and friend could offer valuable advice on how to save "Rosy Rapture." Frohman's agreement to change his travel plans proved to be fatal. Shortly before Frohman sailed on the Lusitania, Ethel Barrymore begged him not to sail due to threats of possible attack from German U-boats. Frohman had given his word to Barrie and kept on with the plans. The Lusitania sank on May 7, 1915 after it was torpedoed just off the Irish coast. Frohman was offered a place in a lifeboat, but refused. "Why fear death?' he is reputed to have said. 'It is the greatest adventure in life'" (Chapter 15, page 247).



Barrie continued his work with Lord Lucas at the hospital known as "Wrest in Beds." Barrie continues to take Nico and Michael to Scotland for their annual fishing holiday.

Michael was miserable at school. "Michael's unhappiness at Eton had lasted nearly 2 years, but by the autumn of 1915 he had begun to assume a nonchalant façade that masked his inner feelings" (Chapter 15 page 250).

Nico, on the other hand, seemed to acclimate well to Eton after his tenure at Wilkinson's. Now that Nico and Michael were both studying at Eton, Barrie spent his time developing a one-act play, titled "The Fight for Mr. Lapraik." Excerpts from the play are included in this chapter.

In 1917, Barrie learned that the marriage between Mary and Gilbert Cannan was falling apart. Since the couple's marriage in 1910, there had been rumors that Cannan had seduced the maid and got her pregnant. Cannan ended up with another woman leaving Mary in reduced circumstances. Whenever anyone asked Barrie about the divorce he would avoid the subject. He often referred to Mary as perfection. Barrie had no ill words for Cannan either perhaps because the man had spent several stints in mental hospitals. Barrie wrote a letter to Mary expressing condolences and saying that it would be silly for them not to meet.

Barrie was surprised when Jack announced his engagement to Geraldine "Gerrie" Gibb, the daughter of a Scots banker. Jack had not consulted with Barrie before the proposal and expected that his guardian would not be as happy as the newly engaged. Jack was right. Although Jack was not particularly thrilled when Barrie required the couple to wait for a year, he knew that it was something that had to be done. Jack decided that it would be a wise idea to abide by Barrie's wishes. To go against Barrie would mean there would be no help for the newlyweds.

Chapter 16 1917-1921

Chapter 16 details Barrie's literary efforts, including "Dear Brutus." When Jack was transferred to Portsmouth, Gerrie stayed at Adelphi Terrace with Barrie. It seems that neither was comfortable with the other. Jack explained to Gerrie that Barrie did not know how to talk with women.

It was shocking to Barrie and Mary Hodgson to discover that Peter was having an affair with a woman that was almost twice his age. The disapproval of Mary and Barrie seemed to be one of the few things that they had in common. Although Mary respected and admired Barrie she never approved of Barrie's guardianship of the boys.

In 1916, Mary Hodgson offered her resignation. Barrie was surprised. Jack was not yet married, Michael was at Oxford, Peter was still with the family and Barrie did not like the thought of having to find a replacement to run the house at Campden Hill Square. The boys moved into Adelphi Terrace. It seemed that Mary had rethought her resignation. Mary adjusted herself to the situation, and Barrie put a plan into action that would guarantee Mary's resignation. It is not known if the move was intentional. Barrie put Gerrie in charge of house at Campden Hill Square, with Mary to act as her housekeeper

and assistant. Mary was furious and issued an ultimatum that either Gerrie leaves or she would. Gerrie became so upset that she suffered a miscarriage. Mary resigned.

Included in this chapter are letters between Barrie, Mary and the boys. Also included are excerpts from a play that had been inspired by George, titled "A Well-Remembered Voice."

In 1918, Barrie hired Lady Cynthia Asquith as his secretary. Cynthia, the daughter-in-law of a former prime minister, seemed to merge slowly into Barrie's life until she became as much a part of Barrie's existence as the boys.

The author details Barrie's next several plays, including play: "The Haunted House" and "Mary Rose."

In 1920 Barrie prepared for the 16th revival of "Peter Pan." News arrived that Michael had drowned in the Thames while bathing, an incident that had occurred once before. Barrie immediately went to find Mary Hodgson, who was equally devastated. Michael was buried in Hampstead churchyard on May 23, 1921.

Epilogue

Epilogue Summary and Analysis

The epilogue is devoted to the grief experienced by those who had loved Michael. Included is a letter from Barrie to a friend expressing a dream in which Michael had come back to him. Barrie spent a long time living as a hermit but eventually began to come out of the depression. Barrie began to entertain again, keeping company with some of the era's most famous and infamous celebrities including Charlie Chaplin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mary Pickford, Michael Collins, and Winston Churchill. Barrie also spoke out against Hitler, and made other public political stances. Barrie also became the Chancellor of Edinburgh University and received the Order of Merit. Barrie's relationship with Peter and Nico remained strong. On June 19, 1937 Barrie died at the age of 76, Nico and Peter at his side.



Characters

James Matthew Barrie

James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) was a Scottish author and playwright, best known for his creation, Peter Pan.

James Matthew Barrie was born in Kirriemuir, Scotland on May 9, 1860. Barrie was the seventh child to David Barrie and Margaret Ogilvy. By all accounts, Margaret was the driving force in the family. Like many authors Barrie later embellished his childhood to give the impression that the Barries were poor. This is untrue. David Barrie was a weaver and made an above average income. The focus in the Barrie household revolved around educational ambition. When James was six years old, his oldest brother Alexander had already graduated from Aberdeen University with honors in Classics and became headmaster of a private school in Lanarkshire. The second eldest son, David, was the golden apple of Margaret's eye. The great hope was that David would become a minister. It is understandable that Barrie would live in David's shadow until the boy's death at age 14 from the skating accident. David was everything that James was not. David was tall, handsome, athletic, and intelligent. James was the runt.

JM, as he was commonly known, became involved in theatricals at home, supposedly in part to try and lift his mother's melancholy. While it did not work, Barrie developed a love for theatre. Barrie wrote his first play, "Bandalero the Bandit," while attending Dumfries Academy.

Although Barrie was not especially gifted in an academic sense, the author later claimed that his years at Dumfries Academy were his happiest. Barrie turned his attentions to more linear topics except when he was with his friend, Stuart Gordon, a fellow pirate at heart.

Over the years, Barrie became the boy who would not or could not grow up. The years at Edinburgh University were extremely lonely for Barrie. As was predicted by his mother, however, a university degree did prove to be helpful as Barrie moved into the world of journalism.

The defining moment in Barrie's life came when he became acquainted with the Llewelyn Davies family. It was on the five Llewelyn Davies boys that Barrie based Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

Peter Pan

Peter Pan was the creation of James Matthew Barrie, Scottish author and playwright. Stories differ on the exact inspiration for Peter Pan but it may have begun when Barrie was six years old. Barrie's older brother, David, died in a skating accident two days



before his 14th birthday. The only thing that seemed to console Barrie's mother, Margaret Ogilvy, was the fact that David would forever remain a boy.

As Barrie was growing up, he maintained a love of action comics and pirates. The true creation of Peter Pan seemed to be inspired by the Llewelyn Davies boys - George, Jack, Peter, Michael and Nico. Although Peter was his namesake, the middle Llewelyn Davies child was only one that received much news in the press for being the real Peter Pan. Barrie states that the idea for Peter Pan and the Lost Boys was created from parts of each boy. Barrie said, "I made Peter by rubbing the five of you violently together, as savages with two sticks produce a flame. That is all he is, the spark I got from you" (Prologue, page 2).

That spark created the boy who never grew up. The mischievous and brave Peter who taught Peter, Michael and Wendy to fly by thinking good thoughts, who cared for the magical place called Neverland, and fought against the dastardly Captain Hook.

No matter where Peter Pan came from, the legend of the boy in green tights, accompanied by a small golden fairy, will live on forever.

George Llewelyn Davies

George Llewelyn Davies was the eldest of five sons to Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. George was one of the boys who inspired characters in Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

Jack Llewelyn Davies

Jack Llewelyn Davies was the second of five sons to Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. Jack was one of the boys that inspired characters in Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

Peter Llewelyn Davies

Peter Llewelyn Davies was the third of five sons of Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. Peter was one of the boys who inspired characters in Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

Michael Llewelyn Davies

Michael Llewelyn Davies was the fourth of five sons of Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. Michael was one of the boys that inspired characters in Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.



Nico Llewelyn Davies

Nico Llewelyn Davies was the fifth of five sons of Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. Nico was one of the boys who inspired characters in Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

Arthur Llewelyn Davies

Arthur Llewelyn Davies was the father of the five Llewelyn boys.

Sylvia Llewelyn Davies

Sylvia Llewelyn Davies was the mother of the five Llewelyn boys.

Margaret Ogilvy

Margaret Ogilvy was JM Barrie's mother. Margaret was pure Scots and an avid story teller up until David's death.

David Barrie

David Barrie (Sr.) was JM Barrie's father who introduced books to young James but seemed to have little influence otherwise.

David Barrie

David Barrie (Jr.) was JM Barrie's older brother that died in a skating accident.

Alexander Barrie

Alexander Barrie was JM Barrie's eldest brother.

Maggie Barrie

Maggie Barrie was JM Barrie's younger sister.

Jane Ann

Jane Ann Barrie was JM Barrie's older sister.



Sara Barrie

Sara Barrie was JM Barrie's older sister.

Isabelle Barrie

Isabelle Barrie was JM Barrie's older sister.



Objects/Places

Never Never Land

Never Never Land was the figment of JM Barrie's imagination. The place where children would never grow up had many incarnations of its name, published or not, over the years. They include: Never Never Land; Never Land; Neverland; the Neverland(s); and Peter's Never Never Never Land.

The concept for Never Never Land came from Barrie's idea of a place where children would remain ever young. Supposedly, this idea was inspired by the deaths of Barrie's brother David and friend James McMillan.

Never Never Land became the home to Peter Pan, the Lost Boys, Tinker Bell, and eventually, Wendy, Michael, John and Peter Darling.

Like the name, the concept of Never Never Land changed, depending on the character describing it or the work in which it was contained. All seem to agree that it was some kind of island and the way to get there was to fly to the "second [star] to the right, and straight on till morning."

Some of the places mentioned in Never Never Land include Pixie Hollow, Mermaid's Lagoon, Wendy House, Home Underground, and Neverpeak Mountain. The inhabitants of Never Never Land are many and include: fairies, talking animals, pirates, Indians, and of course, Peter, Tinker Bell, and the Lost Boys.

Old Scotland

The author discusses Margaret Ogilvy's childhood and the life in old Scotland. Margaret was old school Scots, which was proven in part by the fact that she kept her maiden name when marrying David Barrie. Margaret grew up in a weaving community prior to the Industrial Revolution. There are many stories about old Scotland, including those of the Auld Lichts (Old Lights), a religious organization Margaret had belonged to before she married.

By that time, much of old Scotland had disappeared and only came alive through Margaret's colored memory. Undoubtedly the ways of the old Scots were also colored by the fact that Margaret became the mistress of the house at age eight when her mother died. Margaret's memories of her youth in Old Scotland consisted of baking and sewing, scrubbing and mending until it was time to go outside and be like a child playing dumps or palaulays.

Margaret took great joy in sharing stories, or Idylls as Barrie referred to them, about those days with her children. James was always enthralled by these tales and they



fueled the boy's rich imagination. In Barrie's imagination Margaret evolved into many different women.

"But it was the image of the substitute mother that was to take the deepest root: the memory of his own mother as a little girl, refashioned and remoulded into numerous heroines, epitomized as Wendy mothering The Lost Boys and Peter Pan in Never Land" (Chapter 1, page 6).

Lilybank in the Tenements

Lilybank in the Tenements was the house in which JM Barrie and his siblings grew up. It is said that it was the house that became the model for the house the Lost Boys built for Wendy in Never Land.

Kirriemuir, Scotland

Kirriemuir, Scotland was the home town to the David Barrie family. Barrie returned to Kirriemuir after graduating from university and again after losing his job at the Nottingham Journal.

Edinburgh University

Edinburgh University was Barrie's alma mater. Although Barrie graduated with an M.A., the author says that the years at Edinburgh were the loneliest of Barrie's life.

London, England

London, England, along with New York, was at the center of the publishing world. Barrie moved to London to pursue his career as a writer. Years later, Peter Llewelyn Davies would become an icon on the London publishing scene.

The Nottingham Journal

The Nottingham Journal was the newspaper at which Barrie held his first real journalism job. Aberdeen University was the alma mater to Alexander Barrie.

Lanarkshire

Lanarkshire was the town where Alexander Barrie built and operated a private school.



Dumfries Academy

Dumfries Academy was the school where Barrie spent five years of his academic career. Barrie attributed those years at Dumfries as the happiest in his life.

Kensington Gardens, London

Kensington Gardens, London was the home to the Arthur Llewelyn Davies family, a frequent visiting place for Barrie. Today it is the home to a tribute to Barrie in the shape of a statue of Peter Pan.



Themes

Peter Pan

The main focus of the book is the creation of Peter Pan, JM Barrie's legendary creation of the boy who would never grow up. Birkin tells the true tale of Barrie's inspiration, which came in the form of five small boys: George, Jack, Michael, Peter and Nico Llewelyn Davies.

According to Barrie, the idea for "Peter Pan" and the Lost Boys was created from parts of each boy. Barrie said, "I made Peter by rubbing the five of you violently together, as savages with two sticks produce a flame. That is all he is, the spark I got from you" (Prologue, page 2).

That spark created the boy who never grew up. The mischievous and brave Peter who taught Peter, Michael and Wendy to fly by thinking good thoughts, who cared for the magical place called Never Never Land, enjoyed the company of talking animals and mermaids, and fought against the dastardly Captain Hook.

Peter Pan started out as what Barrie referred to as his dream child but turned into something entirely different. Peter Pan gave Barrie his life - from the immense financial success to the lifelong relationships with the Lost Boys.

Unfortunately, Peter Pan was not always a blessing for the Llewelyn Davies boys who would go through life being tied to the fictional boy, regardless of their successes and perhaps more importantly, their failures.

Death

The prologue begins by discussing the death of Peter Llewelyn Davies. In 1960 Davies stepped in front of an oncoming train. Davies was 63 years old. The author states that although such a death would normally warrant only a small obituary in the London Times, the fact that Peter Davies was part of the inspiration for JM Barrie's "Peter Pan" made the death headline news around the world. Peter's death would have a profound impact on the remaining members of the Llewelyn Davies family, just as Barrie's brother David's death had upon the would be writer.

David Barrie, the second eldest son to Margaret Ogilvy and David Barrie, was the golden apple of Margaret's eye. The great hope was that David would become a minister. It is understandable that Barrie would live in David's shadow until the boy's death at age 14 from the skating accident. The effect of David's death on Margaret was beyond measure. The only thing that seemed to console Margaret was that David would always remain a boy. David's death, which took place when JM Barrie was six years old, married with the rich tales told by Margaret Ogilvy, were the seeds that were planted and would eventually grow into one of the most well loved pieces of literature in history.



The death of Barrie's school friend James McMillan nurtured those thoughts in Barrie's mind and sent him forward on his journey.

The deaths that affected the writer most were the deaths of Arthur, Sylvia, George and Michael Llewelyn Davies. Arthur's death, followed by Sylvia's, left the boys in Barrie's unwavering care. The deaths of George and Michael were Barrie's undoing.

Family Relationships

JM Barrie was the seventh of ten children born to David Barrie and Margaret Ogilvy. By all accounts, Margaret was the driving force in the family. David Barrie was a weaver and made an above average income. The focus in the Barrie household revolved around educational ambition. When James was six years old his oldest brother Alexander had already graduated from Aberdeen University with honors in Classics and became headmaster of a private school in Lanarkshire. The second eldest son, David, was the golden apple of Margaret's eye. The great hope was that David would become a minister. It is understandable that Barrie would live in David's shadow until the boy's death at age 14 from the skating accident. David was everything that James was not. David was tall, handsome, athletic, and intelligent. James was the runt.

The effect of David's death on Margaret was beyond measure. Barrie, who does not remember much of the incident, wrote about his mother's condition in the book "Margaret Ogilvy."

Barrie was saved from a life of feeling completely inadequate through the adoration of his younger sister, Maggie. Jane Ann, Barrie's older sister, also played a large part in Barrie's life.

Perhaps the most influential family relationships came when Barrie met George, Jack and Peter Llewelyn Davies, three of the five boys that would become the inspiration for "Peter Pan." Barrie fell in love with the children, perhaps in part because he had no children of his own. Barrie became an integral part of the Llewelyn Davies family, often to the chagrin of Arthur Llewelyn Davies, the boys' father. The bond between Barrie and the boys solidified when Barrie became their guardian after the death of Sylvia.



Style

Perspective

Andrew Birkin (1945 -) is an English writer and director with credits on both the large and small screens.

Birkin was approached to write a 90-minute film on JM Barrie in the 1970s. The job would send Birkin on a journey of a lifetime. Birkin and his researcher, Sharon Goode, set out to find out as much as possible about Barrie and his creations, not realizing that they would encounter one of the most magical stories in literature.

Birkin was not at all familiar with "Peter Pan." Birkin had never seen or read the play nor had he seen the Disney adaptation. Birkin's mother was quite familiar with the play and gave her son a copy to send him on his way.

Birkin admits that the story may not have become as rich as it has, regarding his involvement, had it not been for Mia Farrow. Birkin adored the petite woman immediately. Before long, Birkin and Goode started their exhaustive research which led them to the door of Nicholas Llewelyn Davies, now retired and living in the country. Nico was a joy to Birkin and Goode, sharing anecdotes, stories, letters, and photographs. Nico also kept a copy of what Peter often referred to as the "Family Morgue," a journal that had been kept dutifully until the time of Michael's death.

The 90-minute teleplay turned into a four- to five-hour miniseries for NBC and sent Birkin on his way to writing "JM Barrie and the Lost Boys."

Tone

The tone used in "JM Barrie and the Lost Boys" by Andrew Birkin is objective. It is clear that Birkin has done an exhaustive amount of research in preparing this book, as is shown in the amount of detail along with reprints of letters, playbills, and family photographs.

Although Birkin was not familiar with "Peter Pan" when he accepted the job to write a teleplay based on the life of JM Barrie, the attention to detail clearly shows that Birkin intended to leave no stone unturned in the research aspect of the project.

While the tone of the book is objective, there is an underlying fondness there which gives the reader the sense that Birkin was close to the Barries and/or the Llewelyn Davies family. The details of the story are written about real people, not just about a piece of literature on a dusty shelf. This most certainly comes from the relationship between Birkin, Sharon Goode and Nico Llewelyn Davies. Between the three there were about 600 letters exchanged in the making of the NBC miniseries, plus much time

spent at Nico's house in the country. Those experiences added a sense of richness to the tone of the book that no other could have equaled.

Structure

"JM Barrie and the Lost Boys" by Andrew Birkin is a work of nonfiction. The book is comprised of 299 pages broken down into 16 chapters plus a prologue and an epilogue. Birkin also includes extensive source notes and an index. The shortest chapter is 13 pages in length; the longest chapter is 30 pages in length. The prologue is two pages in length and the epilogue is two pages in length. The average length of the chapters is 19 pages.

Birkin starts out with the family tree of the du Maurier and the Llewelyn Davies families. This is an important inclusion because of the five Llewelyn Davies boys, George, Jack, Michael, Peter and Nico, who would become the inspiration for Peter pan and the lost boys.

Included through out the book are extensive amounts of photographs taken from Barrie's own collection as well as that of Nico Llewellyn Davies and other sources. Most of the photos are of the Llewellyn Davies children, along with important places and scenes from a day in the life of the main characters. Birkin also includes replica of playbills, handwritten letters and other documents, some of which are no longer in existence.

Except for chapter 4, "The Davies Family," the chapters are numbered in chronological order from 1860 - 1921.



Quotes

"Barrie's sense of rejection and inferiority, suffered while in the shadow of David, was largely dispelled by his younger sister Maggie."

Chapter 1, page 6

"At the age of 13, Barrie 'put the literary calling to bed for a time, having gone to a school where cricket and football were more esteemed'. His childhood was over."

Chapter 1, page 7

"In 1878, at the age of 18, Barrie left Dumfries Academy and returned home to Kirriemuir with the intention of becoming a writer. But his parents had other plans."

Chapter 1, page 11

"Although Sentimental Tommy was to be largely based on his own boyhood in Kirriemuir, Barrie found that the companionship of a real boy helped to bring the memories swinging back."

Chapter 3, page 32

"Whatever Mary's thoughts might have been as she read her husband's work, they have not been recorded."

Chapter 3, page 40

"Just as Tommy and Grizel chronicled Barrie's failing marriage and his own inability to grow up, so the Little White Bird follows his relationship with George and his own profound yearnings for fatherhood - or, perhaps, motherhood."

Chapter 5, page 57

"While the oral story of Peter Pan continued to evolve at a leisurely pace, Barrie utilized the bones of the idea in his revisions of Tommy and Grizel."

Chapter 5, page 65

"Barrie finished the first draft of his new play on March 1, 1904. He was still undecided on a title, but had begun referring to it in his notebook as 'Peter and Wendy.'"

Chapter 8, page 103

"It was a heartlessness perceived by Barrie, who wrote in 'Peter and Wendy': 'Peter had seen many tragedies, but he had forgotten them all... 'I forget [people] after I kill them.'"

Chapter 11, page 156

"Barrie continued to work alone at Black Lake, preparing a speech he was due to give before a Government Committee set up to investigate the censorship issue."

Chapter 12, page 175



"The boys may be growing up, but part of their childhood would always remain the same age: Peter Pan, now in its ninth annual revival, and as firmly rooted in the Christmas tradition as Santa Claus."

Chapter 13, page 215

"Michael's unhappiness at Eton had lasted nearly two years, but by the autumn of 1915 he had begun to assume a nonchalant façade that masked his inner feelings."

Chapter 15, page 250

"In his dedication to Peter Pan, Barrie wrote, 'Sometimes... Michael liked my literary efforts, and I walked in the azure that day when he returned Dear Brutus to me with the comment, 'Not so bad.'"

Chapter 16, page 265



Topics for Discussion

How do you think Peter Davies' life might have turned out differently if he had not been linked to Peter Pan?

Do you think Barrie's obsession with pirates and fantasies were the product of an active imagination or a form of escapism?

Explain how the death of David and incessant mourning of Margaret shaped young James' life.

Do you think Barrie was the best choice to become the guardian of the Davies' children after the death of their father? Explain.

Barrie claimed that all five of the Davies' children were the inspiration for Peter Pan and the Lost Boys. In your opinion, was there one (or more) of the children who had more influence on the characters than the others? Explain.

Barrie claimed early on that it was much easier to write about men than boys. What do you think Barrie meant by that statement?

How do you think Barrie's career contributed to the downfall of his marriage? Was the marriage and its failure used as a source for any of Barrie's work? Explain.

Nico was the last surviving member of the Davies family and was still alive when "JM Barrie and the Lost Boys" was first published. What kind of influence do you think Nico had on the book and its content?