***Peter Pan and Wendy***

***Chapter 4***

***The Flight***

***Synopsis:***

The three children are now flying in the sky with Peter to Neverland. They begin to get tired and hungry as the journey progresses, with Peter searching for food by dueling the birds. Peter’s clever yet reckless “pranks” began to frighten Wendy; his constant need to show off is becoming exhausting for John and Michael as well. But Wendy insists that they need to be nice to him if they ever want to return home, because he is the only one who can help them. 6 Eventually, Peter tells the Darling children they’ve arrived in Neverland, pointing out golden arrows that lead to the island. Described as “a familiar friend to whom they were returning home for the holidays,” the island has features the children recognize, such as Michael’s cave, John’s flamingo, and Wendy’s boat. As night arrives, however, the island becomes more sinister. Sensing an ominous evil, Peter implores the Darlings to go on an adventure to kill a pirate. After choosing to have tea first, Peter tells them about the pirates on the island and their captain, James Hook. Recognizing Hook’s name, Michael and John grow fearful. Peter reveals to them that he cut off Hook’s right hand, so the pirate captain now has an iron hook for a right hand. Peter makes John promise him that if they do end up confronting Hook, John “must leave him to” Peter. Observing Tinker Bell’s light, Peter warns that sometimes the pirates can chase him down if they see fairy lights; alarmed, Wendy asks Peter to make her fly away, but he refuses to. They all then agree to carry Tinker Bell in John’s hat. Soon after, the pirates fire Long Tom at them; in hearing Hook’s voice, the three Darlings “learn the difference between an island of make believe and the same island come true.” When “the heavens become steady again,” the children are separated, with John and Michael on land and alone in the dark and Wendy flying with Tinker Bell. Peter has been blown off into the distant sky. In a deceivingly friendly manner, Tinker Bell leads Wendy, who is unaware of the fairy’s hatred for her, “to her doom.”

***Critical Analysis:***

The children fly nonstop for several days. Although [Peter Pan](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Peter_Pan) proclaims again that he knows the route to Neverland, [Wendy Darling](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Wendy_Darling) begins to have her doubts. The narrator agrees, saying that no one could have got to Neverland following his directions. "Peter, you see, just said anything that came into his head," the narrator relates.

They eat by stealing food mid-flight from the beaks of birds. Tired as they are, they dare not fall asleep for the moment they do, they plummet towards the sea. This petrifies Wendy, but Peter thinks it is hilarious. He always saves them right before they hit the water. "You felt it was his cleverness that interested him and not the saving of human life," the narrator observes. By this point, Wendy realizes that they need to treat Peter with kid gloves.

Finally after "many moons" they reach Neverland. Oddly, the children all recognize it. It seems to be made up of their own fantasies, and at first this makes them happy. But Neverland get scarier as it grows dark. Peter points out pirates and casually invites John to help him kill them. Then Peter reveals that his nemesis, the worst pirate of them all, is below. The news that [Captain Hook](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Captain_Hook) is there paralyzes John and Michael with fear. They are especially afraid when Peter tells them that the reason the pirate has a hook is because Peter cut off his right hand.

Even worse, [Tinker Bell](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Tinker_Bell) tells them that the pirates have sighted them after seeing her fairy light. "Tell her to go away at once," the children say. However, Peter loyally refuses. "You don't think I would send her away all by herself when she is frightened!" he says. They decide to hide her under a top hat that John Darling has been wearing, although Wendy takes the hat and wears it instead.

Hiding the fairy doesn't save them, however. The pirates fire their cannon at them, terrifying the children and helping them learn firsthand the difference between reality and make-believe. None of the children are harmed, but they are blown away from each other by the force of the blast. Tinker Bell is alone with Wendy, and she takes this opportunity to lure Wendy to her doom. "Follow me, and all will be well," Tinker Bell says. Wendy believes her and follows.

Peter shares his name with the nature god Pan of ancient Greek mythology. Pan is a satyr, half-man and half-goat, who shows special care for shepherds and their flocks. Peter is fully human, but in many other ways he resembles Pan. Like Pan, Peter is wild and capricious. Yet in his role as "captain" of the lost boys, Peter is very much like a shepherd guarding his flock. Wendy even says that Peter plays the "pipes" to her at night—a kind of flute that Pan is said to have invented.

Both the god Pan and his namesake Peter can be thought of as tricksters. Tricksters are magical beings found in myths and legends around the world. They are studies in opposites: cruel one moment, helpful the next. They get their way with an almost supernatural cunning, often by playing jokes or tricks on others. Some of the best known tricksters are Anansi the spider in Africa, Loki the Norse god in Scandinavia, Coyote and Raven among Native American tribes, and Br'er Rabbit in the stories of African American slaves.

Peter has already exhibited several traits of a trickster in the first four chapters of the book. His magical powers include eternal youth and the ability to fly. He ignores social conventions and shows complete disregard for rules when he breaks into the Darlings' nursery. He loves to play tricks on people that he thinks are hilarious but they think are mean, even cruel.

Wendy and her brothers both fear and admire Peter. This ambivalent attitude toward the trickster is also common in the myths. They never know when they can rely on him. However, Wendy and her brothers also realize that their well-being depends on Peter's special knowledge and power. "What would we do if he were to leave us?" Wendy wonders aloud. Despite the frightening tricks he plays on them, and the times he abandons them, the children stick by Peter.

***Summary and analysis part by part:***

***Summary part 1:***

[Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy), [John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/john) and [Michael](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) fly for many days and nights in the direction of Neverland. They don’t know where they are but they closely follow [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan), who steals food for them out of birds’ mouths. They fly easily, though when they happen to fall asleep they drop straight down. Peter saves them carelessly at the last minute, to show off. They are even a little afraid that he might forget about them and abandon them, and they wouldn’t know how to find their way. He often seems to forget them after going off on an adventure, and they have to remind him who they are.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Peter has many inhuman powers, like the ability to communicate with fairies and the agility to steal from birds. But he also seems to lack many human powers. He likes Wendy and the two boys, but he cannot truly care if they live or die. He has poor memory because he has no sense of ordinary human time. Vast lengths of time contract into just moments for him, and anything but the current moment holds little meaning for him.

***Summary Part 2:***

Finally they approach the shores of Neverland. The sun is setting, and the sun’s rays are directing them to the darkening island. The children recognize the landscapes of their dreams, their huts, caves, and flamingoes. The sun is setting, and the island begins to seem very frightening and dangerous, as it does even at home when it is time to go to sleep. [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) becomes brightly alert in preparation for some violent adventure. He tells the children about the island’s crew of vicious pirates. They obey [Captain Jas. Hook](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/captain-jas-hook), a fearsome pirate with a hook for his right hand, which Peter chopped off once during a battle.

***Analysis part 2:***

Neverland is a place made in many children’s imaginations. What is imagined becomes real there. Since the children recognize many of their own imaginings in the landscape, but also find much unfamiliar, we can infer that Neverland is a composite of all children’s imaginations, a mismatched, possibly endless place. Its dangers are internal dangers, the frightening things that crawl out of the imagination when it is left unguarded.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Tinker Bell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/tinker-bell) tells [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) that the pirates have seen them, and they’ve pulled out a big gun called the Long Tom. If Tinker Bell continues to light their way, the pirates will fire directly at them, but she cannot put out her light except when she is asleep. Finally, the children decide to conceal her in [John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/john)’s hat. But soon enough, the pirates fire at them anyway, and the blast blows them apart. Peter drifts out to sea, [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy) shoots up with Tinker Bell, and the two boys fly somewhere else entirely. Tink decides to play an awful trick on Wendy, and Wendy follows her helplessly.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Neverland welcomes the children by trying to kill them. Children are fascinated by their own deaths, by the possibility of dying violently, and make up all sorts of monsters and villains. They are also fascinated by all games of hide-and-seek, by the possibility of being discovered. As often late at night, they are a tiny light trying to hide from the suddenly dark parts of their imagination.