***Peter Pan and Wendy***

***Chapter 5***

***The Island Come True***

***Synopsis:***

The narrator ascribes a magical sentience to the island of Neverland in the first paragraph of this chapter. The narrator says the island sleeps in [Peter Pan](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Peter_Pan)'s absence but awakens upon his return. Neverland's awakening stirs up what appears to be a perpetual game of hide-and-seek. The six lost boys are looking for Peter and the pirates are looking for them. The native tribe that [J.M. Barrie](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/author/) refers to as the "redskins" are looking for the pirates. The wild animals of the island are looking for the natives. Behind them all lurks a giant female crocodile.

The lost boys hear the pirates singing and disappear like rabbits into their underground home, accessed through holes in the trunks of hollow trees. [Captain Hook](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Captain_Hook) prevents his crew from shooting the lost boys before they reach safety. What Captain Hook thirsts for is Peter Pan's blood, not theirs. "'Twas he cut off my arm," Captain Hook says, pointing to his hook. "I've waited long to shake his hand with this. Oh, I'll tear him!"

Hook's hatred of Peter is heightened by the fact that Peter fed Hook's severed hand to the giant crocodile who trails after them. The crocodile liked the taste so much that she has followed Hook ever since, "licking its lips for the rest of me." Fortunately for Captain Hook, the beast also swallowed a clock, so he can tell when she is close by the sound of ticking. It is the ominous muffled ticking of this crocodile that scares Hook off.

The boys come out of their trees again. That is when one of them, Nibs, sees what he thinks is a large white bird in the sky. It is [Wendy Darling](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Wendy_Darling), sighing her own name out loud as [Tinker Bell](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Tinker_Bell) torments her ceaselessly with savage pinches. This makes Nibs think he is seeing a bird called "the Wendy." When Tinker Bell spots the boys, she lies and tells them that Peter Pan wants them to shoot "the Wendy." Wanting to please Peter at all costs, a boy named Tootles takes aim and brings Wendy down with a single arrow to the chest.

[Barrie](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/author/) launches the book into high gear in this chapter, introducing readers to a cavalcade of vivid new characters. He immediately pits the characters against each other in a series of interlocking conflicts that culminate in a life-or-death moment for the book's female lead, Wendy.

What is striking about this chapter is the almost matter-of-fact way that the characters themselves and the narrator respond to death. These aren't gentle, melancholy affairs. This is premeditated, cutthroat murder, perpetrated not only by villains but also by the native tribe headed by Peter's friend [Tiger Lily](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Tiger_Lily). The lost boys are said to like killing "as a rule." Hook guts one of his own crew with his built-in weapon, just on a whim. Peter himself is said to "thin out" the lost boys when they get too old. This is announced by the narrator casually, without any sense that this should lower anyone's opinion of Peter. Is this a horror story about a budding psychopath? What happened to the carefree children's fantasy about a magical flying boy?

At the time [Peter Pan](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Peter_Pan) first appeared, both on stage and in print, this offhand approach to violent death aroused no comment. It was only later, as the decades passed and cultural attitudes, particularly those about children, changed, that people began to comment about how dark some passages of the book are. Some critics have advised that it's helpful to think of the book as a game, just as Peter does. To him, Neverland is the realm of perpetual make-believe. Peter is playing "let's pretend." Whatever happens is no more real or permanent for him than it is for the players in a role-playing game.

Many lines in the book do support this game logic interpretation of Peter's attitude towards violence. Yet some of the things that Barrie wrote about the character throw this interpretation into doubt. Children, according to Barrie, were "inspired as much by the devil as God." If this is accurate, then Peter's cool attitude towards killing represents what Barrie thought children were like until they were civilized by adults. In Barrie's view children are not innocent because they are free from wrongdoing. Rather, their innocence lies in freedom from awareness of right and wrong.

***Critical Analysis:***

During Peter’s absence, the narrator introduces the various groups on the island—the lost boys, redskins, and beasts—who are going around in circles hunting each other. Peter is the leader of the lost boys, a group of motherless children who, like him, refuse to grow up. As the lost boys hear the pirates’ song in the distance, the pirates—which include Italian Cecco, Bill Jukes, Gentleman Starkey, Cookson, Skylights, Noodler, Robt, Alf Mason, Mullins, and Smee—are introduced. The pirates have all committed various crimes, and their leader is Captain James “Jas” Hook. Hook is described as “cadaverous” and “blackivized,” dressed elegantly, and with a haughty demeanor. The other pirates, who believe his iron hook to be his only flaw, see him as “a man of indomitable courage.” On the other hand, the redskins, whose "naked bodies gleam with paint and oil,” carry the scalps of both lost boys and pirates. Tiger Lily, “a princess in her own right,” stands out from the group for her beauty and confidence. The beasts—“lions, tigers, bears, and the innumerable smaller savage things that flee from them”—then arrive, followed by a giant crocodile. Hearing the pirates arriving, the boys hide by retreating to their cave through the holes of hollow trees. Starkey spots Nibs, but Hook stops him from shooting the boy, apprehensive that the noise will draw the redskins their way. As Hook and Smee speak privately, Hook expresses his overwhelming desire to catch Peter Pan. After recalling that Peter cut off his hand, Hook claims to prefer having an iron hook but adamantly exclaims his desire for revenge. As the pirates try to pull a mushroom out of the ground, they realize it is the chimney of the lost boys’ underground home. Knowing Peter is not with them, they hatch a plan to leave a poisoned cake by the mermaids’ lagoon to lure the boys in. Earlier, Hook explains that the crocodile that ate his hand later swallowed a clock. The pirates then hear a ticking noise, and it turns out to be the crocodile. 7 As the boys emerge from their home, Nibs comes running toward them, followed by a pack of wolves. Faced with danger, they ask each other what Peter would do and decide to charge the wolves, and the wolves scamper off. Nibs then tells them that he saw a beautiful, large, white bird in the sky, which turns out to be Wendy. She and Tinker Bell land, and the boys greet the fiary, who “had now cast off all disguise of friendship.” Tinker Bell tells them that Peter ordered them to kill “The Wendy,” and because they are so accustomed to not questioning Peter’s orders, they get out their bows and arrows. Then, from a tree, Tootles shoots Wendy in the chest.

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

***Summary part 1:***

When [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) is away from Neverland, everything becomes quite peaceful and lazy, and nobody fights very much. But now that Peter has returned, the island has become lively. Everyone is hunting someone else: the pirates hunt the lost boys, the indians hunt the pirates, and the wild animals hunt the indians. “They were going round and round the island, but they did not meet because all were going at the same rate.”

***Analysis Part 1:***

Without Peter, the island is peaceful. If the island is a composite of children’s imaginations, then the island in Peter’s absence is representative of children on average. We can say, then, that even in comparison to other children, Peter is very warlike and violent.’

***Summary Part 2:***

The lost boys, walking quietly in single file, are looking for [Peter Pan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan). There are currently six boys on the island, but the number varies, because every once in a while they die in battle or “Peter thins them out.” The first in line is [Tootles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), who often accidentally misses out on the best adventures. The next in line is [Nibs](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), a carefree boy, and then [Slightly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), who loves to dance and to reminisce about earthly life, though he doesn’t remember any more than the others. The next in line is [Curly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), who tends to get in trouble, and finally the [Twins](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), who confuse Peter, who doesn’t understand why they look exactly the same, and they are therefore always a little embarrassed.

***Analysis part 2:***

The word “Neverland” has in modern culture come to mean something like a children’s paradise. But the Neverland of J. M. Barrie's novel is not paradise at all. For one thing, children are killed there, and sometimes, it seems, Peter himself kills them, just to “thin them out.” Or perhaps he simply sends them back to the real world – it is ambiguous. It is a world both more free and more dangerous than an ordinary child's world because it is a pure child's world, unaffected by the moderation of adults.

***Summary Part 3:***

Next come the pirates, ugly, tattooed, and murderous, and the bo’sun [Smee](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), who is oddly mild and loveable (a bo’sun is a sort of servant). [Captain Hook](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/captain-jas-hook) is awful and handsome, with black hair, blue eyes, and a terrible scowl. He wears somewhat refined clothes, which suit his aristocratic features, smokes two cigars at the same time, and fears nothing except his own blood, “which was thick and of an unusual colour.” He kills easily and often. Right then, he kills one of his crew with his hook – just for bumping against him.

***Analysis Part 3:***

It is often said that childhood was invented in the 18th and 19th centuries, because in earlier periods of human history almost all children had to work just as hard as adults. But when middle-class parents could afford to let their children play and be leisurely, childhood became a more distinct period of life, and children became a topic of discussion. Many people believed that children were sweet, innocent angels.

***Summary Part 4:***

Next come “redskins” of the Piccaninny tribe, carrying many scalps. Their leader is [Princess Tiger Lily](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), a very beautiful girl. All sorts of hungry wild animals follow in their tracks, and the last of them is a huge [crocodile](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/symbols/the-crocodile). Then everything has come full circle, and the lost boys appear again. They talk about [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan), wonder about the ending of Cinderella, and try to remember their mothers – they can’t talk about mothers in front of Peter, “the subject being forbidden by him as silly.”

***Analysis Part 4:***

The Neverland in Barrie’s book is a real children’s world. It is not a paradise for angels, nor a playroom full of silliness and laughter. It is a thrilling, dark place. If there is one thing that characterizes Neverland, it is intensity. The children don’t merely walk, they fly; they don’t “play rough,” they kill; the pirates are as horrible as can be, and the princess as beautiful as can be.

***Summary Part 5:***

Just then the boys hear the pirates singing and quickly disappear into their underground house, which they enter through trees with holes in the trunks. Each boy has a tree of his own – seven in all. The pirates have often tried to discover this house, and this time one pirate sees [Nibs](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) disappearing into the woods (Nibs is going out to investigate). [Hook](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/captain-jas-hook) is determined to find the entrance this time and he tells all the pirates to scour the area.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Yet the violence of the children’s world is distinct from the violence of the adult world. Violence in the adult world is most often arbitrary, senseless, and unfair. The Neverland children believe in fairness, and their violence is subject to a code of honor. That’s why the pirates don’t simply slaughter the children when they see them: they must first outwit them.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Hook](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/captain-jas-hook) is left alone with [Smee](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters), the bo’sun, and he tells Smee obliquely and sentimentally about his life. Hook wants badly to kill [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan), who cut off his arm and fed it to a [crocodile](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/symbols/the-crocodile). To this day, the crocodile is trying to finish the meal. Hook has been able to avoid the crocodile till now, because it has a ticking clock in its stomach that he can hear and therefore avoid, but he states that he will be in trouble once the clock stops ticking.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Though we have already said that Neverland is not a toy-room, the real crocodile with real bloodlust is wonderfully toy-like: its ticking is a fair warning to Hook, a delightful structural fairness. Death is simply a part of the game in Neverland – not, as in life, an incomprehensible end to it.

***Summary Part 7:***

Suddenly [Smee](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) jumps up: he has been sitting on a mushroom that has grown unusually hot. When the pirates uproot the mushroom, they see smoke and hear children’s voices. The boys use the mushroom to plug their chimney when strangers are around. The pirates also notice the seven holes in the trees, and they hear the boys talking about [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan)’s absence. [Captain Hook](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/captain-jas-hook) decides to get them by leaving a very rich and delicious cake on the shore of a lagoon where they like to play; since they don’t have a mother to tell them to eat in moderation, they will eat too much and get very sick and die. The pirates break into celebratory song, but then Hook hears the ticking of the hungry [crocodile](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/symbols/the-crocodile) and they all run off.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The story won’t allow us to forget that Hook, like the rest of the island, is a child’s invention. There is some very large adult evil missing from a pirate who plans to kill children with delicious cake. Hook’s origin in children’s imaginations is significant both with respect to his relative innocence and his capacity for horrific violence, which likewise is children’s handiwork. Hook also reflects the children’s anxieties about mothers: it is fair, to them, that Hook plans to kill them with cake, because they believe their motherlessness to be their weakness.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Nibs](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) runs out of the woods. He is being chased by wolves, and the other boys run out to help him. They chase off the wolves by bending over and looking at them through their legs, because that is what [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) would do in the situation, and the wolves retreat in confusion.

***Analysis Part 8:***

The island’s wolves are also children’s inventions. In the children’s world, confusing behavior is just as effective a weapon as a dagger. A dagger is more innocent there, and strangeness is more potent.

***Summary Part 9:***

When they are safe, [Nibs](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) tells the other boys that he saw a large white bird flying through the sky and calling “Poor [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy).” Soon they see the bird flying toward them, and they see [Tinker Bell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/tinker-bell) scolding and pinching it. Tink tells the boys that [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) wants them to shoot the bird, and [Tootles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) obediently shoots Wendy with an arrow. She falls to the ground, an arrow in her chest.

***Analysis Part 9:***

The boys obey Peter Pan just as blindly and fearfully and admiringly as the pirates obey Hook. It is interesting to note that, in the beginning of the 20th century, J.M. Barrie seemed to believe that hierarchical structures and absolute authority were a natural part of children’s imaginations.