***Peter Pan and Wendy***

***Chapter 6***

***The Little House***

***Synopsis:***

In approaching Wendy’s body, the boys are terrified to realize she is “a lady” and not a bird, and they accuse Tootles of killing the mother figure sent to them by Peter. While ashamed, Tootles stubbornly claims that he sometimes shoots his mother in his dreams. As he starts to leave, the other boys tell him not to, and at that moment, they hear Peter’s crowing sound. Peter is surprised that the lost boys don’t seem more excited to see him. Tootles thus reveals Wendy’s body, and Peter says, “Perhaps she is frightened at being dead.” Peter pulls the arrow out of Wendy’s chest, demanding to know who killed her. Tootles admits to the deed, but Peter can’t bring himself to kill Tootles. However, the boys then realize that Wendy is alive; inspecting her chest, Peter notes that the “the kiss” he gave her stopped the arrow from piercing her heart. When Tinker Bell cries because Wendy survived, the other boys tell Peter what Tink told them, and Peter is furious with her. Wondering what they can do to keep Wendy alive, Peter suggests they build a small house around her, and the boys begin work on it. John and Michael then stumble upon the lost boys and greet Peter, who is busy tending to Wendy’s home. Peter recruits them to help build the house, telling them that because she is a girl, they are her servants. He asks Wendy to sing in her sleep what kind of house she wants, which she does. Peter meticulously sees to it that Wendy’s house has every possible feature; when he feels it is complete, he knocks on the door. She opens the door, and the boys, anxious to see a girl, enthusiastically greet her, telling her that they are her children and she is their mother. While Wendy tells them she is only a girl, she admits that she does have quite a maternal nature and agrees to try and be their mother. She invites them inside to finish telling them the story of Cinderella, which “was the first of the many joyous evenings they had with Wendy.” At nightfall, Peter falls asleep while guarding Wendy’s new home.

***Critical Analysis:***

The lost boys gather around [Wendy Darling](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Wendy_Darling)'s body, their spirits sinking as they realize that Tootles has killed her. Just then [Peter Pan](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Peter_Pan) lands in front of them, saying, "Great news, boys. I have brought at last a mother for you all." Sorrowfully they show him Wendy's body. Peter removes the arrow from her chest and tries to use it like a dagger to kill Tootles, but he cannot bring himself to do it.

Just then, the other boys notice Wendy Darling moving. She had only fainted, the arrow having struck not her flesh but Peter's acorn button "kiss" that she wore on a chain around her neck. From overhead, [Tinker Bell](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Tinker_Bell) wails when she sees Wendy is still alive. The boys tell Peter Pan of Tink's dastardly betrayal and at first Peter is deeply angry. "Be gone from me forever," he tells her. But Wendy intercedes on Tinker Bell's behalf and Peter reduces the banishment from eternity to just one week. The fact that Peter would go easier on Tink because Wendy asked him to just makes the fairy angrier.

Wendy Darling is very weak, and out of respect the boys won't touch her in order to carry her into their underground home. Instead, they build a little house around her where she lies. Wendy is delighted with her new home. "Oh, Wendy lady, be our mother," the boys plead. She worries that she doesn't have enough experience, but agrees to do her best. She starts right away. "Come inside at once, you naughty children," she says. "I am sure your feet are damp." She tells them the story of Cinderella and tucks them away in their own beds.

There is a remarkable moment in this chapter, which confirms the game theory critics suggest for reading the book. That is, the book should be read in the light of the games children play, which are make-believe, not real, permanent, or with full adult consciousness of morality. Peter's casual cruelty and violence stem not from some defect in his moral makeup. Instead, it arises from the fact that to him, everything that happens in Neverland is a game. When Wendy is injured, Peter realizes she needs a doctor. The lost boys remember what Peter does not: there is no doctor on the island. So Slightly pretends to be a doctor. This is sufficient for Peter. As the narrator explains, although the lost boys know the difference between reality and make-believe, Peter does not. If he pretends something, he believes it is real. This inability to distinguish between fact and fantasy sometimes causes problems for the lost boys, "as when they had to make believe that they had their dinners."

They need someone responsible, someone who will make sure that they always have something real to eat for dinner. Even Peter realizes this. He may be famous as the boy who doesn't want to grow up. But wanting to be an eternal child doesn't mean that Peter also wants to ban all adults from his world. He may not want any fathers around, but he and the lost boys are all desperate for a mother. They say so, all of them, repeatedly in this chapter. In fact, this is the reason Peter works so hard to convince Wendy to come to Neverland. It is not, as some stage and film adaptations of the book have suggested, a romantic crush. Peter doesn't want Wendy as a girlfriend. He wants her as a mother, both for him and his friends.

The relationship between Peter and Wendy may not be romantic, but this doesn't stop [Tinker Bell](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/character-analysis/#Tinker_Bell) from being jealous. In the book, Tink is not the mute blonde pixie dressed all in green that viewers meet in the 1953 Disney film. Fairies were all the rage in Britain in the mid to late-1800s, an interest which continued into the 20th century. One of [Barrie](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Peter-Pan/author/)'s friends—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930), the creator of Sherlock Holmes—was even duped into believing fairies were real. He was tricked by an infamous 1917 hoax called the Cottingley Fairy photos. The hoax was perpetuated by two young girls in Cottingley, England. The photos they took playing in a garden appeared to show them with fairies. Several "experts," including Doyle, concluded the photos were genuine. However, in 1981 one of the girls confessed she had used paper cutouts fastened in place with hatpins.

In appearance, Tinker Bell conforms to this romantic Victorian image of fairies, always darting about like overgrown fireflies glowing with magic. But in her behavior, she conforms more to the sobering view of fairies found in ancient Celtic myths. This view is reflected in much of 21st-century urban fantasy, role-playing games, and computer video games. Celtic fairies can be small, but more often they have the same size and shape of mortal humans—but they are impossibly, inhumanly beautiful. Their beauty is only skin deep, however, as they are said to have no souls. They don't think like humans, and they don't feel human emotions. The only thing predictive of their behavior is that they will do whatever it takes to get what they want—even if that means tricking, enchanting, or killing. This is exactly what Tinker Bell does to rid herself of Wendy.

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

***Summary part 1:***

The boys all gather around [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy), and they realize she is not really a bird. [Tootles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) is very sad to have killed a lady. Suddenly they hear crowing, which is [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan)’s special noise. Peter Pan himself lands nearby. He is surprised to see the boys so quiet and sad, and he tells them he has brought them a mother. Tootles solemnly leads Peter to Wendy’s body.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Peter often says that he does not much like mothers, but he goes to some lengths to find a mother for the lost boys. He thinks the boys do need a mother, since they are only ordinary children. Peter believes that not wanting a mother sets him apart from the others.

***Summary Part 2:***

When [Tootles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) takes responsibility for the death[, Peter Pan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) almost stabs him with an arrow. But [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy)’s hand holds him back. She is alive: Peter’s button, which she wears as a necklace, stopped the arrow from hurting her too badly. When Peter learns that the accident was [Tink](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/tinker-bell)’s doing, he tells her that he never wants to see her again; but right away he takes pity on her and reduces the length of her exile to a week.

***Analysis part 2:***

Peter’s love, or lack of love, orchestrates every aspect of this story. Tink’s jealous desire for Peter’s affection makes her plot Wendy’s death, and Peter’s button, a “kiss,” saves Wendy’s life. Peter is one of the magical beings of Neverland, but he is also its main architect. He is the imaginer, and the imagined.

***Summary Part 3:***

The boys decide to build a house around the very spot where [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy) lies, so as not to disturb her. They bring her nice things from their underground home and build a cabin of branches and leaves. A very sleepy [John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/john) and [Michael](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) fly in, and they get to work too. Peter asks [Slightly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters) to get a doctor, and Slightly reappears in a moment wearing a doctor-like hat and pretends to cure Wendy. [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/peter-pan) speaks to him just as he would to a doctor, because to him there is no difference between reality and make-believe.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Peter does not see a difference between reality and make-believe because, as one of the imagined creatures, he himself is make-believe. And as the island’s main imaginer, Peter’s powers of make-believe are greater than those of the other boys, who, after all, do feel a little hungry after a pretend dinner. They are not quite as imaginary as Peter: they do grow up.

***Summary Part 4:***

The boys quickly finish [Wendy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/peter-pan/characters/wendy)’s house, and they make it just as she asks them to: it has red walls, a green roof, roses, and windows. Then they politely knock on the door. Wendy opens it, and they all introduce themselves. They beg her to be their mother, since they very much need “a nice motherly person.” Wendy says she is just that, and happily agrees. She tucks them in and reads them a bedtime story, and they happily fall asleep.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Why do the boys need a mother, or a motherly person? Of course, most of the boys have very vague memories of their mothers, and the memories probably make them feel lonely. But we might also say that they remember the games and rituals of motherhood, and they long for them as for a toy that other children have.