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On this day: Peter Pan

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Oct. 11, 2011 NCR Today

On this day, a century ago, James M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy,* [1] illustrated by F. D. Bedford, was published in England by Hodder & Stoughton and in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons. Later editions would be titled *Peter Pan and Wendy,* and later still, just *Peter Pan.*

The book was the novelization of Barrie's successful 1904 play, *Peter Pan.* On opening night, at the Duke of York's Theatre, Barrie "instructed the members of the orchestra to put down their instruments and clap when Peter appealed for help to save Tinker Bell's life and cried out, 'If you believe in fairies, clap your hands.' However, there had been no need for these instructions, for the audience clapped thunderously, causing Nina Boucicault, the actress playing Peter, to burst into tears."

--from the Introduction to *Peter Pan,* [2] Penguin Books, 2004, in which Jack Zipes summarizes the life of James M. Barrie and the effects he had on the Llewelyn Davies family.

For more on Barrie's "desire to possess the family who inspired his most famous creation, Peter Pan," see "How Bad Was J. M. Barrie?" [3] by Justine Picardie, in the Telegraph, July 13, 2008.

The book Justine Picardie describes in the article is *Neverland: J. M. Barrie, the Du Mauriers, and the Dark Side of Peter Pan,* [4] by Piers Dudgeon, Pegasus, 2011. Notice the Editorial Reviews and the Product Description. "Barrie later altered Sylvia?s will after her death so that he could become the boys? legal guardian, while pushing several members of the family to nervous breakdown and suicide. Barrie?s compulsion to dominate was so apparent to those around him that D. H. Lawrence once wrote: *J. M Barrie has a fatal touch for those he loves. They die.*"

The book may be sampled at Amazon and at Google Books. [5]

It is interesting, after reading the Zipes Introduction, the Picardie article, and chapters of the Dudgeon book, to re-read Eugene Cullen Kennedy's two-part NCR article, "Set-Decorator Catholicism: Clericalism Thrives in a New Phase of the Sex Abuse Crisis." [6] Part Two, in particular, "The Common Traits of Set-Decorators," [7] gives specific and chilling details about "eternal boys" who "play with people".

Click here [8] for the Wikipedia article on *Peter and Wendy.*

Click here [9] for *The Annotated Peter Pan,* edited by Maria Tatar, published today for the Centennial by W. W. Norton.

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