

# STUDY GUIDE

# PETER AND THE STAR CATCHER

by Rick Elice  
based on the novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

**COMPANY OF FOOLS**  
A PROUD PART OF SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Company of Fools  
P.O. Box 656, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353  
208.788.6520  
[www.companyoffools.org](http://www.companyoffools.org)

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The information and classroom activities in this study guide support Idaho State Department of Education Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy for grades 3-8.

# WELCOME TO THE LIBERTY

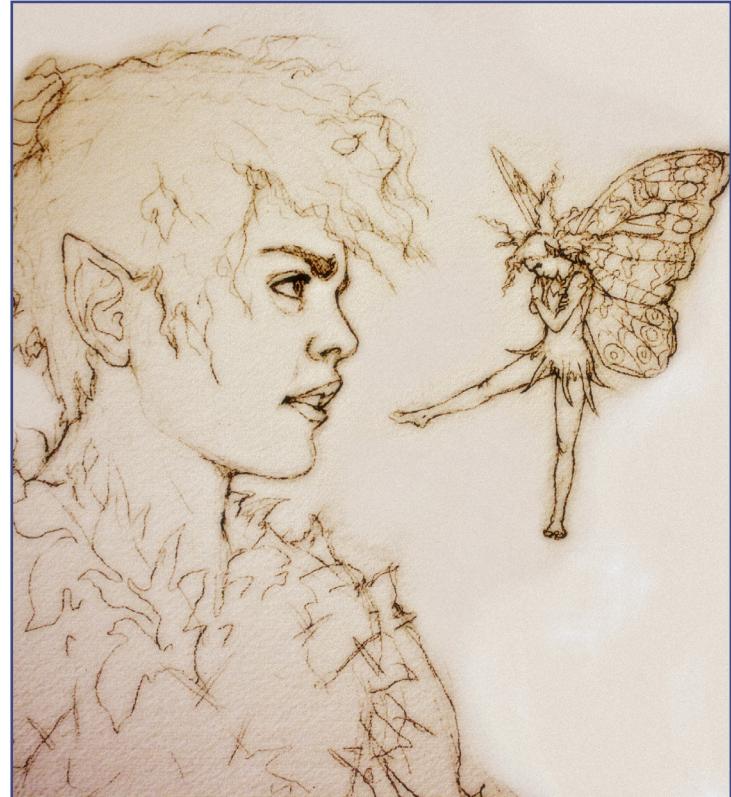
Dear Educator,

We're delighted to welcome you and your students to Company of Fools' (a proud part of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts) production of **Peter and the Starcatcher**. Working with local schools is a fundamental part of Company of Fools' and The Sun Valley Center for the Arts' mission.

We hope this study guide will serve as a useful resource for you as educators and parents. It is designed to enhance student learning both before and after the performance, to support your classroom lesson plans and deepen the educational value of your students' experience. The information and classroom activities in this study guide support Idaho State Department of Education Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy for grades 3-8. If you have any comments or suggestions for future study guides, please don't hesitate to contact Denise Simone at denise@companyoffools.org.

Thank you for sharing the magic of live theatre with your students!

- Company of Fools



# HOW TO BE A GREAT AUDIENCE

Live theatre productions are exciting and vibrant. Actors, audience, and backstage technicians are all part of the experience. As audience members, your students will play an important role in the overall atmosphere of the performance.

To ensure that everyone has a great time at the theatre, please share the following expectations with your students:

- Please remain seated throughout the entire performance.
- Try not to rock back and forth in your seats. They can—and sometimes do—break.
- Restroom visits are best made before leaving school. The theatre's restroom facilities are very limited. **Peter and the Starcatcher** is 2 hours in length with one short intermission (a 10 -minute Q&A session will follow the performance).
- Lights Out = Quiet Time! When the lights in the theatre dim to blackout, this is the signal that the performance is about to begin.
- Please do not talk or whisper during the performance. You might think whispering during the show is okay. But if everyone in the audience whispers, it will be disruptive to the performers.
- Do not drink, eat, or chew gum during the performance.
- Turn cell phones to the “silent” setting. And **absolutely** no texting.
- Keep your feet on the floor, not on the seat in front of you.

We hope you and your students will enjoy your visit to the Liberty Theatre!

**Teacher Tip:** Spark conversation with your students by asking them to remember a time when they were in an audience. Was it a great audience or were there distractions? Have students make their own criteria for what a GREAT audience is and have them share their thoughts.

## PLAY SYNOPSIS

It is 1885 during the reign of Queen Victoria and two ships from the British Empire set sail on the high seas for the imaginary kingdom of Rundoon.

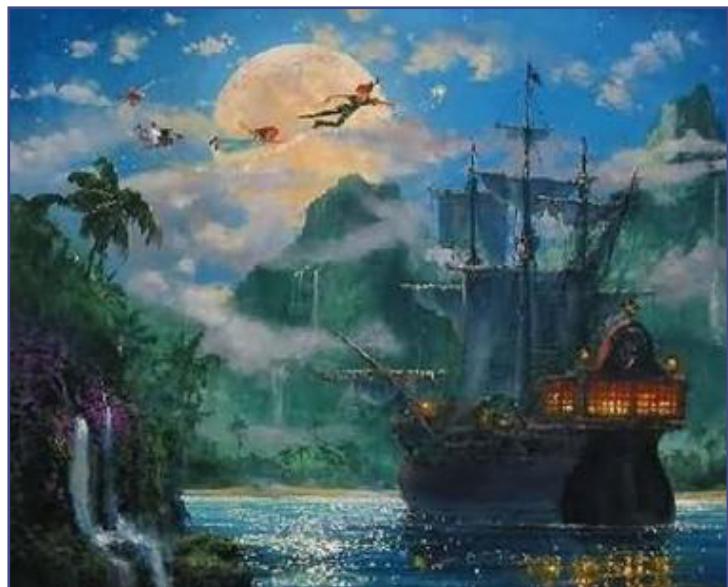
On one ship, *The Neverland*, three orphan boys encounter a smart and witty girl named Molly Aster, the daughter of an English lord and minister to the queen. Also on board is a trunk full of precious starstuff that Molly has promised to protect. One of the orphans, known only as Boy, is bitter and unpleasant. Once he meets Molly, his lonely and miserable world is turned upside down.

On the other ship, *The Wasp*, Molly's father, the famous starcatcher Lord Aster, guards a decoy trunk from the pirates who are in search of treasure. The pirate captain, Black Stache, discovers the ruse and goes after *The Neverland*.

A violent storm ensues, and Molly and the orphans find themselves trying to save the valuable trunk from Black Stache, his men, and both of the ship's crews. *The Neverland* is torn asunder in the storm.

In the midst of all the upheaval, Boy meets Black Stache who gives him the name of Peter while trying to convince him to become a pirate. The trunk is almost in secure hands, when in order to save himself from drowning, Peter rides it through the waves to a nearby island.

And the adventures have only just begun! What becomes of Molly, Peter, and the other lost boys? Why is everyone after the starstuff and what does it do? Does anyone – or anything – ever stop Black Stache and the pirates? Fasten your lifejackets and enjoy the adventure!



# WHAT CAME BEFORE (BUT REALLY AFTER) PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

The play you are going to experience, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, was 108 years in the making! In 1904, Scottish novelist and playwright J.M. Barrie wrote *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up*. The play was phenomenally popular, and Peter Pan has continued to captivate audiences in many adaptations ever since.

Here are some highlights of Peter's flights since he first took off:

## 1904

J.M. Barrie's play, *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would not Grow Up*, premieres at the Duke of York's Theatre in London with the adult actress Nina Boucicault as Peter, launching an often-maintained casting convention.

## 1911

Barrie's own novelization of the play, *Peter and Wendy*, is first published.

## 1924

A revival including two songs by Jerome Kern opens on Broadway.

Paramount releases the first movie version of *Peter Pan*, directed by Howard Brenon. Despite a detailed scenario submitted by Barrie, Brenon hires Willis Goldbeck to write the screenplay. Barrie retains final say on casting, which included Betty Bronson as Peter.

## 1929

Barrie gives all rights to *Peter Pan* to the Great Ormond Street Hospital, which has earned royalties since his death in 1937

## 1950

Leonard Bernstein provides five songs for a new Broadway production.



## 1953

Walt Disney releases an animated musical version of the classic tale. A real boy, Bobby Driscoll, is cast to be the voice and close-up model for Peter.

## 1954

Jerome Robbins conceives and directs a new musical version starring Mary Martin. The production is broadcast on NBC the following year and subsequently enjoys several Broadway revivals and long-running tours, most notably those starring Sandy Duncan (1979) and Cathy Rigby (1990-present).

## 1975

*Neverland*, a futuristic, sci-fi, rock 'n' roll version of *Peter Pan*, debuts at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; songs from this production end up on Meat Loaf's album *Bat Out of Hell*.

## 1987

Inspired by Barrie's Neverland characters, Joel Schumacher directs *The Lost Boys*, a film in which two Arizona brothers move to California and end up fighting a gang of teenage vampires.

## 1991

Steven Spielberg directs *Hook*, a live-action movie that re-visits *Peter Pan* (Robin Williams) as an adult.

## 1998

Cathy Rigby returns *Peter Pan* to Broadway in a newly designed production featuring groundbreaking flying stunts and acrobatics.

## 2002

Disney releases *Return to Never Land*, an animated sequel to *Peter Pan*.

## 2004

Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's novel *Peter and the Starcatchers*, a prequel to *Peter Pan*, is published by Disney-Hyperion.

## 2006

The first sequel in the Starcatchers series – *Peter and the Shadow Thieves* – is published.

## 2007

Barry and Pearson's *Peter and the Secret of Rundoon* is published.

## 2009

A "Page to Stage" developmental production of *Peter and the Starcatchers*, written by Rick Elice and directed by Roger Rees and Alex Timbers, premieres at the LaJolla Playhouse in San Diego. Barry and Pearson's *Peter and the Sword of Mercy* is published.

## 2011

*Peter and the Starcatcher* is produced at the New York Theatre Workshop.

Barry and Pearson's *The Bridge to Never Land*, a modern story with roots in the Starcatchers series, is published.

## 2012

*Peter and the Starcatcher* premieres on Broadway at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on April 15, 2012.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

## The Orphans

**Peter:** A boy who doesn't miss much. Nameless, homeless and friendless at the beginning of the play, and a hero by the end. Feral, brave, competitive, the boy the others will come to look up to. A survivor. More than anything in the world, he wants a home and a family.

**Prentiss:** A bit older than Peter. Ambitious, hyper-articulate, logical, yearns to be a leader even as he knows he never shall be one, on account of the fact that the boys wouldn't follow him no matter what, and also just the teeny-tiniest touch of cowardice.

**Ted:** Obsessed with food: the finding of it, the eating of, the fighting over; the dreaming about. The most talented of the boys, a natural actor, and easy wit, maybe even a poet.

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## The British Subjects

**Lord Leonard Aster:** The very model of a Victorian English gentleman, loyal subject to the Queen, devoted father to Molly, faithful friend. Lord Aster is a Starcatcher dedicated to protecting the earth and all who dwell thereon from the awesome power of starstuff.

**Molly Aster:** Raised to believe females can do anything males can. A natural leader, at a time when girls are mostly followers. Fearless, passionate, devoted to her father, her country and her Queen. Willing to risk everything for the sake of doing right. Curious, intelligent, beginning to feel things she doesn't understand – romantic longings that revert to childish tantrums under pressure – because, for the moment, she's still a thirteen-year-old kid.

**Mrs. Bumbrake:** Molly's Nanny. British through and through, not afraid of anything including her late husband. A no-nonsense, good-time gal, who still has enough of her girlish charm intact to turn a sailor's head.

**Captain Robert Falcon Scott:** Captain of the sports teams at Trinity School, now commander of the fastest ship in Victoria's fleet, *The Wasp*.

**Grempink:** The malodorous schoolmaster of St. Norbert's Orphanage for Lost Boys. Known as The Angel of Anguish, he keeps his boys in the dark.

## The Seafarers Aboard the Neverland

**Bill Slank:** A vicious Captain without the skill or quality to lead anyone but himself, and always into disaster. Would sell his own mother for a ship to command, would hurt his best friend for a leg-up from the stinking hold he calls home. Cheerfully aids the awful machinations of those who would use starstuff for personal gain, global domination, or worse. An orphan too.

**Alf:** An old seadog who's prouder of achieving the rank of "Mister" than he should be, given the state of the competition. A white knight in search of a damsel, any damsel. Something about him appeals to the feminine sensibility; might be his bow legs, his saucy gait or his kind heart.

**Mack:** A very bad sailor who wants to be anywhere else but under the thumb of Bill Slank.

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## Aboard the Wasp

**The Black Stache:** Long after most everyone else has gotten out of the Pirate business, The Black Stache continues to terrorize the seven seas. Ruthless, peerless, heartless and suspiciously well read, partial to the poetical and theatrical, and married to his piratical career with a ferocity from which no good shall ever spring.

**Smee:** First mate to The Black Stache. Simple-minded but single-mindedly dedicated to his Captain's every whim.

**Sanchez:** A hard-working Spanish pirate with an identity crisis.

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## The Natives

**Fighting Prawn:** King of the Mollusk natives, son of Jumbo Prawn and Littleneck Clam. Kidnapped by British sailors and brought in chains to England, he served as sous-chef below stairs in a country estate in Derbyshire, where, for no good reason, he learned Italian wines and mastered Italian cuisine. Since returning to his island kingdom, he has vengefully murdered any English with the temerity to land on his Mollusk Isle domain.

**Hawking Clam:** Son of Fighting Prawn. Hawking understands his father's hatred for the British, but, as often happens with younger generations, he will gladly bend such strictures when, one day, he ascends to the Clam throne as head of the Royal Clam Clan.

**Teacher:** Formerly a salmon, now an ancient, knowledgeable mermaid.

# STARCATCHER ACTIVITIES

## CLASS AND POWER

*Peter and the Starcatcher* takes place around 1885 and begins in England – a time and place in which class meant power, and people were often born into their stations of life. The characters in the play span every social status imaginable, from the oppressed and trampled orphan boys all the way up to the noble ambassador of the Queen herself. It's important that students understand the very real class struggles of the Victorian era so that they may fully appreciate the inhabitants of the play.

### ACTIVITY: Who's Got The Power

Clear desks out of the way and create an open space in your classroom. Have your class form a standing semicircle facing the "stage." Place three chairs into the playing space. Tell your class that they are to enter the space, one at a time, and – using only a chair and/or their bodies – command the most power in the room. Once a student enters the space and takes her position, she must remain frozen in place as part of the ever-growing stage picture. The next student will enter and strike a pose, which he thinks will give him the most power in the group. Take a few volunteers for a practice round to ensure everyone understand the exercise. Coach the class with open-ended questions as the activity progresses, and feel free to freeze the game periodically to point out interesting choices that students make. After everyone has contributed to the exercise, take a moment to discuss the experience with your class.



### ACTIVITY: Dramatic Discussion

Use these prompts to engage your students in a conversation about adaptation:

- Are you aware of any books that have been made into movies? What about books that have become plays?
- How does the way an audience experience a movie differ from the way they experience a stage musical?
- How does the way a reader experiences a book differ from the way they experience a play?

### ACTIVITY: A Bedtime Story

*Peter and the Starcatcher* is a prequel that tells the story of how the iconic characters in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* came to be. But there is a gap of time between the end of our play and the beginning of Barrie's tale.

Have the students write a short story about what happens to the characters at the end of the story. They can choose one character to follow when creating their story (students can also create a comic book story if they prefer a more visual medium).

# GLOSSARY: Terms & Vocabulary

**Aft** – In or near the hinder part or stern of a ship.

**Ahi** – A large tuna fish, esp. the bigeye tuna and the yellow-fin tuna.

**Capstan** – An apparatus used for hoisting weights and heavy sails. It consists of a vertical spool-shaped cylinder, around which rope is wound. It is rotated manually.

**Dover Sole** – Refers to two types of fish: the solea solea found in eastern Atlantic Ocean commonly used for fillet cooking, and the microstomus pacificus found in the Pacific Ocean primarily used for grilling.

**Foretop** – The top of a foremast (the forward lower-mast).

**Frigate** – A high-speed, medium sized sailing vessel of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

**Grotto** – A cave or cavern, esp. one that forms an agreeable retreat. In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the grotto is underground and connected to the ocean.

**Jib** – The jib is the triangular shaped sail at the front of the boat.

**Knots** – The nautical measure of speed. Knots are determined using a piece of knotted string fastened to the log-line, one of a series fixed at such intervals that the number of them that run out while the sand-glass is running indicates the ship's speed in nautical miles per hour.

**Lagoon** – A shallow body of water, esp. one separated from the sea by sandbars or a barrier reef.

**Longboat** – The largest boat belonging to a sailing vessel.

**Merchant Sailors** – Sailors on a trade vessel.

**Mast** – An upright pole, usually raked, which is fixed or stepped in the keel of a sailing ship in order to support the sails, either directly or by means of horizontal spars.

**Mizzen-mast** – On a ship with two or more masts: the mast aft of the mainmast.

**Smelt** – A species of small saltwater Northern Hemisphere fish that breed in freshwater. Smelt are a common food source for the salmon and the lake trout. The orange eggs of the smelt, also known as roe, are often used to garnish sushi.

**Spar** – The gaff and the boom are spars, i.e. long round bits of wood.

**Swag** – Plunder or booty.

# RESOURCES

## J.M. BARRIE & PETER PAN

**The Little White Bird**, by J.M. Barrie (1902)

**Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Never Grow Up**,  
by J.M. Barrie (1904)

**Peter and Wendy**, by J.M. Barrie (1911)

**The Annotated Peter Pan**, by J.M. Barrie,  
Edited by Maria Tater (W.W. Norton and Company, 2012)  
[JMBarrie.co.uk](http://JMBarrie.co.uk)

## DAVE BARRY AND RIDLEY PEARSON'S PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS SERIES

**Peter and the Starcatchers**

by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney-Hyperion, 2004)

**Peter and the Shadow Thieves**

by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney-Hyperion, 2006)

**Peter and the Secret of Rundoon**

by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney-Hyperion, 2007)

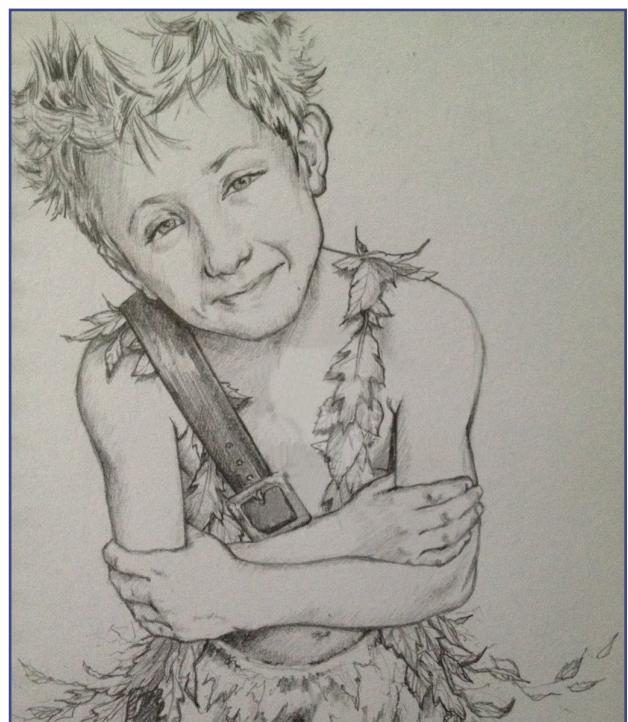
**Peter and the Sword of Mercy**

by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney-Hyperion, 2009)

**The Bridge to Never Land**

by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney-Hyperion, 2011)

**Official Website:** [Peterandthestarcatchers.com](http://Peterandthestarcatchers.com)



# WRITE A REVIEW OF PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

1. Include your name, grade and school.
2. What remains in your memory from the play that you saw?
3. How did the designers make the performance more exciting? (think about the set, lights, sounds, costumes and props)
4. Who were your favorite characters and why?
5. Compare and contrast the themes of the play to an adventure movie or the short story.
6. Give your review a headline.

**Send your review of  
PETER AND THE STARCATCHER to:**

Company of Fools  
P.O. Box 656  
Sun Valley, Idaho 83353



# TEACHER FEEDBACK: PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

1. Did using the Study Guide add to your theatre experience?
  - a. YES
  - b. SOME
  - c. NO
2. How much of the Study Guide did you read?
  - a. Didn't have time
  - b. About a quarter
  - c. All
3. What do you think of what you read?  
(Mark as many as apply)
  - a. Useful
  - b. Nothing New
  - c. Enjoyable
  - d. Not for my students because \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you get the Study Guide in time to prepare your students to see the play?
  - a. YES
  - b. NO
5. What sections of the Study Guide did you find most important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact your students? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER you saw the play?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE FAX THIS TO 788-1053  
or Mail to Company of Fools,  
P. O. Box 656, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353