



Peter Pan

J. M. Barrie (1860 - 1937)

Read by:	William Tomcho	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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No character in all of literature better personifies mankind's fascination with eternal youth than Peter Pan, the character invented by J.M. Barrie and introduced in his popular 1904 stage play *Peter Pan, or The Boy Wouldn't Grow Up* and later in the 1911 novel version entitled *Peter and Wendy*. George Bernard Shaw described the play as "ostensibly a holiday entertainment for children but really a play for grown-up people." The character was modeled on his older brother David, who died in a skating accident at age 13, and who was remembered by Barrie and his mother as forever a boy. The name Peter is borrowed from one of the sons of his friend Sylvia Llewelyn Davies and combined with Pan, the mischievous Greek god of the woodlands. His personality displays the stereotypical traits of the adolescent boy: he

is self-centered, boastful, careless, fearless, nonchalant and forgetful. He is a born leader and highly skilled: he can fly, he can fight; he can do just about anything that needs to be done. In the back story, Peter had flown away from his parents when he was a baby. Returning home, he finds the house closed and spies a new baby and concludes he is not wanted, so he never goes back. The action begins when Peter is caught listening to bedtime stories at the window of the home of Wendy Darling and loses his shadow while trying to escape. Wendy re-attaches the shadow when he returns to claim it and he invites her to Neverland to be a mother to his tribe of Lost Boys. There they experience countless adventures that introduce us to characters that have universally well known: Tinkerbell the fairy, Tiger Lily the princess, the dastardly Captain Hook, Hook's nemesis The Crocodile, and various fairies and mermaids. The work has spawned numerous adaptations and derivative works, most notably the 1953 Disney film and a 2003 live action film.

Sir James Matthew "J. M." Barrie (May 9, 1860 – June 19, 1937) was a Scottish playwright and novelist who achieved fame as the creator of *Peter Pan*. Born the ninth of ten children to a conservative Calvinist family in the Angus region of Scotland, he was a voracious reader who early set on a career as an author. After graduating from the University of Edinburgh he worked as a journalist and found some success with a series of nostalgic novels about a religious sect in parochial Scotland. He was drawn to the theatre; during the production of his Ibsen's *Ghost*, a parody of Ibsen, met actress Mary Ansell, who he married in 1894. He had two successes on the stage, *Quality Street* (1901) and *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) before the huge success of *Peter Pan* in 1904. He continued to find success in the theatre with productions that often dwelt on social issues. He was well connected in literary England of the day, counting Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, and Thomas Hardy as friends and correspondents. After the World War he established an amateur cricket team for his friends; players included H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, P. G. Wodehouse, G. K. Chesterton, and A. A. Milne, to name just a few. In 1929 he donated the British copyrights to all the *Peter Pan* works to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, which continue to provide support to this day.