

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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# Hook (1991)

Steven Spielberg

## OVERVIEW

*Auteur* Stephen Spielberg's work spans many genres. While he is most famous for blockbuster films such as *Jaws* (1975), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), and *Jurassic Park* (1993), each of which has a firm foothold in horror and science fiction, his filmography also reveals a deep commitment to asking questions about history and humanity. Spielberg's diverse collection of work has been widely recognized as pioneering, frequently engaging with unexplored themes and techniques that have earned Spielberg a reputation as an innovator and a master artist. He has been awarded three Academy Awards, the AFI Life Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His films have likewise collectively placed him at the top of the list of the most profitable film directors in history.

*Film* *Hook* (1991) creatively reimagines J. M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* (1911), asking the question, "What if Peter Pan grew up?" Spielberg's answer engages with some of the most enduring questions of *Peter Pan* itself – the importance of childhood, the thrill of imagination, and adult nostalgia for childhood that is marked as "lost." While *Hook* was a box-office success, reviews of the film marked it as saccharine, sentimental, and wandering. Spielberg himself has remarked that the film is not one of his favorites, saying that he would like to revisit the material with different imaging technology to create a more vivid visualization of the Neverland space. Despite the critical response, many viewers remember the film as a cult classic and admire the performances of Robin Williams as an adult Peter Pan and Dustin Hoffman as an aging Captain Hook.

*Background* Although Spielberg had originally signed on to direct a new version of the traditional Peter Pan story, he left the project in 1985 when he found himself uninspired. However, when Jim V. Hart reconceived the story as a sequel of sorts, considering what Peter Pan would be like if he ever grew up and forgot his time in Neverland, Spielberg agreed to rejoin the project. The film was shot on elaborate sound stages that allowed Spielberg to experiment with complex sets and a large cast. Spielberg also engaged with several themes that have become hallmarks of his career: children and their troubled relationships with their fathers, flying, and large groups of children (mostly boys) defying adult control.

## CHARACTERS

<i>Peter Banning</i>	A grown-up Peter Pan, a lawyer
<i>Captain Hook</i>	An aging pirate
<i>Jack Banning</i>	Peter Pan's son

## SYNOPSIS

*Hook* begins by exploring what Peter Pan might be like if he, like all children, grew up. The audience is introduced to Peter Banning, a San Francisco-based lawyer who is very distracted by work and thus neglects the needs of his wife, Moira, and their two children, Jack and Maggie. While Peter loves his children and desires to be a part of their lives by attending Maggie's play and Jack's baseball game, he is distracted by his high-powered job. Peter is so distracted that he misses one of Jack's baseball games, which deeply hurts Jack's feelings and makes him feel unloved.

Peter and Moira return with their children to London, where Moira grew up and where Jack spent a few years of his childhood before being adopted and moving to the United States. There, they visit Moira's grandmother, Wendy Darling, an old woman and a philanthropist who is being honored for her work rehoming hundreds of orphans throughout her long career. Secretly, she is also the true Wendy Darling of the Peter Pan stories. The film slowly begins to reveal that while Peter has forgotten his past, Wendy remembers her girlhood trips to Neverland at Peter's side. Peter is starkly reminded of their reality, though, when Jack and Maggie are abducted from the nursery of Wendy's home. A note pinned to the nursery door

with an elaborate dagger reveals that Jack and Maggie have been stolen away to Neverland by Captain Hook.

Tinkerbell returns to the nursery and scolds Peter for forgetting his past life before she takes him to Neverland. There, Peter reunites with the Lost Boys – a ragtag crew of children – to fight Captain Hook and take Jack and Maggie back. Peter must remember the joys of childhood to remember his old fighting skills and his ability to fly. It is only when Peter remembers his childhood and that he is indeed Peter Pan that he is able to defeat Hook. The story ends with Hook being eaten by his other enemy, a crocodile, and Peter returning home safely with his two children. There, he throws away his cell phone, symbolizing his new dedication to his children and his family.

## SCENES

**A Play** A group of children and their families sit in a school auditorium, watching a production of Peter Pan put on by a group of younger children. A man takes a phone call in the middle of the production and, under pressure, agrees to attend an early business meeting. His wife, calling him Peter, scolds him and tells him to get off the phone so that he can watch their daughter on stage. Hearing him agree to take the meeting, Peter's son whispers, "My game!" Peter sighs and arranges to keep the meeting short so that he does not miss the baseball game.



**The Game** Peter's son plays in his baseball game as Peter's wife and daughter look around, worrying about where he is. At the office, Peter speaks quickly with his secretaries and aids about business deals and an award his grandmother, Wendy, will be receiving in London for the care she's given to orphans for decades. Peter sends one of his aids to the baseball game with a video camera so that he can watch what he missed. Peter's co-workers say goodbye to him while Jack, Peter's son, is up to bat. Jack looks back to the crowd for his father and sighs when he is not there. He strikes out, and his team loses the game.



**Absent** Peter's car arrives at the baseball field and he climbs out, running up the hill, but the field is empty. Peter sighs and takes a call on his phone, walking away.



**Flight** Peter and his family are on a shaky flight to London. Peter grips the arm of his chair, anxious, and his daughter Maggie cheerfully shows him a picture that Jack has drawn of the plane crashing. Peter's wife, Moira, urges him to talk to Jack, who throws a baseball against the ceiling until Peter, annoyed, snatches it away. Peter promises Jack to come to his future games. Jack says the promise is a lie and throws the baseball against the ceiling again, making a compartment open so that oxygen masks fall. Angry, Peter shouts at Jack, asking when he'll stop acting like a child. Jack protests that he is a child.



**London** Cars drive down a snowy London street with Big Ben in the background. Peter and his family walk up the steps to a townhouse as their daughter asks if Grandma Wendy is the real Wendy from the play she was in. Her mother says yes, but Peter says no. Peter reminds his children to have good manners and they are loudly welcomed into the house by a woman named Liza and an old man named Tootles. Peter's wife, Moira, reminisces about their mutual childhood, saying they were "children in these rooms!" Tootles crawls around on the floor saying he's "lost his marbles."



**Wendy** An old woman appears at the top of the stairs and says, "Hello boy." Peter greets her as Wendy and Wendy hugs Moira, calling her 'grandchild'. Wendy greets the children and tells them that the one rule of the house is "no growing up," saying that this includes Peter as well. When Peter insists that he has work to do, Wendy asks what is so important and Jack describes Peter's job as sailing into other companies and blowing them up to take what valuables he can in the fallout. Wendy turns to Peter and says, "So, Peter, you've become a pirate."



**The Nursery** Peter walks upstairs in the quiet house and enters an abandoned nursery. The window is open and the wind blows in. Peter looks around at the images on the wall of mermaids and pirates, and shivers before closing the open doors. When his wife shouts up the stairs for him, Peter goes downstairs to take a call. Peter's children interrupt his call with their games and Peter shouts at them to shut up. Wendy, horrified, takes the children upstairs and comforts them. Moira scolds Peter for not paying enough attention to his children. When he answers the phone instead of paying attention to her, Moira throws the phone out the window. A dog buries it beneath mud and snow.



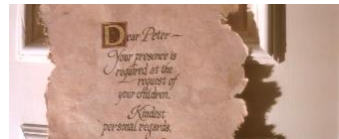
**The Story** Upstairs in the nursery, Wendy tells Jack and his sister the story of Peter Pan, saying that she is the true Wendy. She says that Mr. Barrie, who wrote Peter Pan, was their neighbor and he loved their stories so much that he wrote them down. Peter comes up to the nursery to take Wendy to the award ceremony. Jack climbs into bed and asks where his baseball is. His sister says that the "mean scary man" took it, and Peter insists that this mean scary man doesn't exist. Before he leaves, Peter gives Jack his pocket watch and tells him that he's in charge and can keep track of the time.



**Ceremony** Peter gives a speech at the ceremony to honor Wendy and tells the story of how Wendy took him in from the cold as an orphan and found people to adopt him. Peter asks those orphans whom Wendy saved to stand, and many of the guests stand. Wendy is very touched and cries.



**Stolen Away** Back at the house, the dog in the back yard begins to bark. Tootles wakes up barking as well, his noises eventually turning into the word "hook!" which he shouts over and over. Jack wakes up in the nursery as the lock on their window, shaped like a hook, slowly unlatches. The nursery door blows open and green lights flood in along with the wind. The children's blankets fly away from them. At the ceremony, wind flies through the window and Wendy is very upset. The adults arrive back home at the house and hurry inside. They find the house ransacked and the children gone. They find a dagger stabbed into the nursery door with a note attached, saying that Peter must come for his children. It is signed Jas Hook.



**Hook is Back** Tootles whispers to Peter that Hook is back and that he must fly and fight. Peter whispers "who?" and Wendy collapses. The police come to the house and assure Peter that they are doing what they can. Peter and Moira help Wendy to bed, and Wendy sends Moira away before asking Peter how far back he can remember. He reveals that he remembers nothing of his childhood before he turned twelve. She urges him to try and tells Peter that she was his favorite when she was a girl. She then reveals that Peter only decided "not to go back to Neverland" when he saw Wendy's granddaughter, Moira, in the same nursery in which she grew up. Peter shouts for Moira, and Wendy insists that "the stories are true" and that Hook has come back to seek his revenge and that he must "go back."



**In the Nursery** Alone in the nursery, Peter pours himself a glass of whiskey and stumbles around, looking at his children's toys. He opens the doors to the balcony and peers outside when suddenly he sees a bright light flying towards him. The light chases Peter into the room and flies around him. He calls it a "firefly from hell" and tries to kill it, but the light transforms into a fairy the size of his hand. She expresses her excitement to see him and calls him "Peter Pan." Peter insists that's not his name, but she says they're going to have a great deal of fun. The fairy pulls Peter along with her and says that he must fight Hook to save his children. Peter tells her that he doesn't believe in fairies, and the fairy pretends to die until Peter claps his hands. When he does, she knocks him over and wraps him up into some blankets, flying him away to Neverland.



**Neverland** Peter wakes up in Neverland, shouting for Moira. When he peers out from beneath his blankets, he discovers that he's in the middle of a pirate town. Tinkerbell shouts for him to hide, but he asks for a payphone and the pirates begin to beat him, attempting to steal his shoes. Tinkerbell helps Peter to disguise himself, bringing him a pirate's hat so that he fits in. Peter walks through the town until he sees a pirate, called Smee, carrying a silver hook on a pillow. Tinkerbell tells him to follow the hook, so Peter joins the crowd of people chanting "Hook!" and following Smee through the town.



**Hook** Smee carries the hook onto a pirate ship while the crowd sings "Hook! Give us the hook!" Smee shouts out "Good Morning, Neverland!" to the waiting crowd and introduces Hook. Hook emerges from his cabin to cheers from the crowd. He announces that he has revenge on Peter by stealing his children. Peter, listening in the crowd, is horrified. Hook calls out a traitor in the crowd – a man who bet against him being able to get his revenge on Peter. Hook's men seize the man and lock him in a chest before dropping scorpions on top of him.



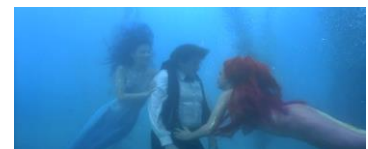
**Jack and Maggie** Jack and Maggie are hoisted in a cargo net from beneath the deck of the ship. Peter shouts "those are my kids!" and throws off his disguise, rushing forward to claim them. Pirates seize Peter and drag him forward. Hook cannot believe that it's Peter, but Smee reveals a scar on Peter's stomach which Hook himself gave him, which proves that he is Peter. Hook looks closely at him and calls him "pitiful" and says he's not even the shadow of Peter Pan. Peter insists Hook hand over the children, and Hook insists that they have a war. Peter pulls out a checkbook and asks "how much?" Hook pulls out a pistol and shoots the checkbook.



**The Deal** The children are hoisted higher into the air, and Hook says that if Peter can fly up and touch their fingers, he will let them free. Peter insists he cannot fly as his children scream for him. Peter attempts to climb the rigging and all the pirates wonder aloud why he doesn't fly. Smee suggests that he's just been away from Neverland so long that he forgets everything. Peter gets very close to Jack and Maggie, who reach for him, but he cannot touch their hands. Peter falls from the rigging and Hook, disappointed, orders him killed. Tinkerbell flies in front of Hook's face and offers a challenge, saying he should give her one week to "get him in shape" and she will bring him back for the war that Hook seeks. Hook agrees to three days.



**Mermaid Rescue** Peter is accidentally knocked from the pirate ship as the pirates cheer the news that they will have a war in three days. Peter falls into the sea and is rescued by mermaids, who give him air and lead him to a gigantic shell. The shell is then lifted from the water by vines and Peter is dumped onto a high rock, where he finds an elaborate treehouse.



**Lost Boys** Peter steps into a trap that pulls him into the air by his leg. When he comes face-to-face with a little cuckoo clock in which Tinkerbell is sleeping, he begs her for help. Tinkerbell shouts for the lost boys to wake up. The boys come out of their sleeping areas and swing down from the trees, all shouting that Pan is back. In the midst of the fuss, Peter untangles himself from the vines and falls to the ground. The children gather around Peter, who lays moaning on the ground, and declare that it can't be Peter Pan because he is "an old fat grandpa man."



**Rufio** A boy rides into lost boy's tree fort on an elaborate skateboard track as the lost boys chant "Rufio! Rufio! Ru-Fi-O!" Rufio flips through the air and lands before Peter, drawing a golden sword. When Peter demands to know who is in charge here, all the boys point to Rufio. Peter insists that he be allowed to speak to a grown-up, and Rufio shouts that all grown-ups are





pirates and that they kill pirates. When Peter insists he's not a pirate, he's a lawyer, Rufio shouts "kill the lawyer!" and the lost boys begin to chase Peter through their fort.

**Bangarang** As the boys chase Peter, tripping him and shooting him with sticky paint-covered arrows, Tinkerbell flies around explaining things to the boys and insisting that they have to make Peter "bangarang," a nonsense word that to the boys means powerful and cool. She begs Rufio to teach Peter to use a sword. The boys throw balls at Peter, insisting that he "play," but Peter just stares around, exhausted and confused. Rufio draws a line in the ground and says that everyone who doesn't believe that Peter is Peter Pan should come to his side. One small boy stays on Peter's side, looking at him closely and touching his face, pushing the skin back and making Peter smile before saying, "Oh there you are, Peter!" Many of the boys, but not Rufio, rush back to Peter's side. Peter begs the lost boys to help him save his children.



**In the Ship** Hook, angry that he agreed to Tinkerbell's deal to wait three days to fight Pan, says that he hates everything and that his life is over. Smee attempts to distract him, but Hook retrieves a gun from his closet and lifts it to his head, telling Smee not to try to stop him. Smee nods, but then Hook sighs and tells Smee to try to stop him. Smee stops Hook, who is still desolate, and prepares Hook for bed. Hook sighs and schemes, saying he is tired of his life and that he wants to kill Peter. Smee suggests that the greater revenge may be in turning Peter's kids against him and making them love Hook. Hook likes the plan.



**Training** The lost boys sing chants as they attempt to teach Peter to fly, making him do exhausting exercises. Rufio and Peter fight with swords so that Peter can remember how to fight, but Peter is very bad at it. The boys paint Peter's skin with bright paints and load him into a gigantic slingshot, encouraging him to think happy thoughts so that he can fly. When they fling him into the air, Peter does not fly and instead splashes down into a large pool of paint.



**Pirate Class** Jack and Maggie sit in Hook's cabin as he attempts to teach them that parents hate their children. Maggie insists that their parents love them, but Jack listens carefully to Hook. Hook reminds Jack that his father missed his baseball game. Maggie shouts that she hates Hook, and Smee carries Maggie away. Maggie shouts to Jack that he needs to run home, but Hook, laughing, tells Jack that he is home.



**Dinner** Peter moans as he hobbles towards the dinner table, but then sniffs and says "oh yeah!" when he gets close to the kitchen. Eager, he sits down at the table with the boys, eyeing the dozens of covered dishes. When the dishes are uncovered, though, there is nothing inside. The boys grab for the dishes as if they are full, pretending to eat. Peter stares around, confused. Tinkerbell encourages him to eat, telling him that this used to be his favorite game and that if he can't imagine himself as Peter Pan then he never will be. Rufio hurls insults at Peter, who scolds the boy until he snaps. Losing his temper, Peter insults Rufio before throwing the pretend-food at him. However, now that Peter is participating in the game, the food becomes real and Peter marvels at all of the delicious food laid out on the table. The group feasts and then has a food fight.



**Happy Thoughts** Angry, Rufio throws a coconut at Pan during the food fight. One of the boys throws Peter a sword and Peter slices the coconut in half as it flies through the air towards him. The boys whisper "bangarang," but Peter gasps, shocked. Later, when Peter has cleaned up, one of the boys tells Peter he knows Tootles. He gives Peter Tootles's marbles, saying they're Tootles's happy thought. The two turn towards the sea, where they can hear a little girl singing. Maggie stands alone on the pirate ship's deck as darkness falls, singing about loneliness. When Jack whispers that their mother used to sing that song, Smee turns him away, asking him about baseball. All of the children and the pirates go to sleep.



**Pocket Watch** Hook awakens in a panic the next morning when he hears the sound of a clock. Jack sleeps with his father's pocket watch in his hands, and Hook is about to attack Jack for having the watch when Smee intercedes, saying that the crocodile is dead and that Jack didn't know any better. Hook brings Jack and the pocket watch into a room in the pirate town where Hook keeps all of the clocks that he has broken. There, Hook and Smee encourage Jack to smash the pocket watch his father gave him. Jack smashes the watch with a mallet, shouting about all of the things he's angry at Peter for. Hook comforts the crying Jack, calling him "son" and telling the boy that he, Hook, always keeps his promises.



**Baseball** "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" plays as Peter and some of the lost boys, disguised as pirates, sneak into the pirate town. The pirates are gathered to play a baseball game, and Hook takes off his hook so that he can attach a baseball mitt to the end of his arm. The lost boys see this and encourage Peter to steal the hook. While Peter reaches for it, he sees Jack stand at the plate, getting ready to take his turn at bat. Hook, laughing, shouts to Jack that "this is for all the games your daddy missed" and Peter's hand falls away from the hook. Peter proudly watches his son hit a home run. He is jealous when Jack celebrates with Hook at the plate, Hook calling him "my boy!" and "son!" Peter throws off his disguise and runs away.



**Home** Peter desperately attempts to fly, throwing himself into the air and jumping off things. Suddenly, he's smacked in the head by the home-run baseball Jack hit and he falls to the ground. Peter turns over, peering into a pool of water, where he sees the reflection of a boy looking at him. Peter reaches into the water and disrupts the reflection, picking up the ball. His shadow begins to move on its own, pointing towards a tree. Peter goes to the tree, where he finds the entrance to his old treehouse. Peter goes inside, where Tinkerbell welcomes him home wearing a beautiful blue dress. He begins to remember Wendy and his past life in Neverland, as well as his mother.



**Peter's Past** Peter begins to muse aloud about all of the things he remembers from his past. He tells of how he ran away from his mother as a baby because he was afraid to grow up, and of how Tinkerbell saved him and brought him to Neverland. Missing his mother, he went back to find her, but could not. So, he visited other nurseries, including that of the Darling family, where he met Wendy. He kept visiting her again and again, and each time she was older. Wendy introduced Peter to Moira, her granddaughter, with whom he fell in love.



**Happy Thoughts** Peter remembers the birth of his son, saying that he decided to grow up because he wanted to be a father. In Neverland, Peter realizes that his happy thought is of his children, and he begins to float in the air, flying. He soars out of the treehouse and into the air above the lost boys' treehouse. The boys shout that Peter is back. Peter flies around while all the boys shout and celebrate. Rufio, angry, grabs his sword, but he kneels before Peter and offers it to him, whispering "you are the Pan." Peter takes the golden sword and draws a line in the sand. All the boys rush to his side and Rufio bows to him. They all crow in celebration, welcoming Pan home.



**Tink** Peter visits Tinkerbell, peering into her house, but Tinkerbell is crying. He comments that she should cheer up because they have such great adventures, and she reminds him that he needs to save his kids. Peter protests that Peter Pan doesn't have kids. Tinkerbell's house begins to flash with lights and suddenly she appears before Peter the same size as a human. She tells Peter that she's finally made a wish for herself and that she wants to kiss him and does. Tinkerbell tells Peter that she loves him, but he insists that he loves Moira, and Jack, and Maggie. He walks away and looks at the pirate ship. Tinkerbell is heartbroken, but she tells Peter to go save his family.



**Preparation** The lost boys prepare for war by dressing in armor made from wood and other supplies gathered from the forest. On the pirate ship, Jack is dressed like a miniature Hook as Hook offers him his first pirate's earring. Before Hook can pierce Jack's ear, Peter cuts through the ship's sail and appears in the air. Peter lands on the ship's deck and offers his hand to Jack, saying that they should go home, but Jack protests that he's already home.



**Fight** Hook tells Peter to prepare to meet his doom, but Peter flies away, beginning a sword fight with all the pirates. Peter calls to Jack that Jack is his happy thought. Jack begins to remember his father and laughs. When Peter is finally captured in a net, he shouts "bangarang!" and the lost boys begin their assault, using ropes to swing onto the pirate ship and attack. Hook calls up reinforcements from the pirate town.



**Charge** Hook orders all of the pirates to attack, but the lost boys counter by blinding them with mirrors and shooting eggs, paint, and marbles at them. Smee runs inside the ship in a panic. Rufio challenges Hook while Peter chases after Maggie, attempting to rescue her. Peter finally gets to Maggie and hugs her. The pirates surrender to the lost boys, but Hook stabs Rufio through the heart with his sword. Before he dies, Rufio whispers that he wishes he had a dad like Peter. Jack whispers that he is sorry as Rufio dies.



**Ready to Go** Peter finally faces Hook, ready to fight, but Jack takes off his wig and his pirate hat and tells his dad that he's ready to go home. Peter flies away with Jack and reunites with Maggie. Hook calls Peter to come back and fight him, but Peter just walks away with all of the children while Maggie calls to Hook that he needs a mother "very very badly." Hook calls after Peter that he will always come after him and that he will continue to attack his children's children's children unless he comes back and fights. Peter flies back, ready to battle Hook.



**Fight** Peter and Hook fight one-on-one while Jack and Maggie watch. Their fight takes them all over the ship and through the pirate town. When Hook tries to convince Peter that he's not truly Peter Pan, all of the lost boys and Tinkerbell whisper to Peter that they believe in him. The lost boys corner Hook in the square, holding up ticking clocks that make him scream and attempt to run away. Peter taunts Hook about being afraid of time before knocking Hook's hat and wig off, revealing that he is an old bald man. Hook admits his defeat and asks for his dignity before his death. Peter prepares to kill him for murdering Rufio and kidnapping his children, but Maggie and Jack intercede, asking Peter just to take them home.



**Hook is Neverland** Peter orders Hook to leave Neverland and takes Jack and Maggie's hands, preparing to leave. Suddenly Hook produces a sword from inside his sleeve and shouts, "Fools, James Hook is Neverland!" He corners Peter with the sword to his throat, but as Hook prepares to slash Peter's throat with his hook, Tinkerbell flies between them. Instead of hitting Peter, Hook's hook pierces the belly of the crocodile in the middle of the square. Peter and his children run away as the clock tower begins to fall apart. The clock falls from the crocodile's mouth as Hook stumbles to the ground. Then the crocodile falls fully onto Hook, and Hook disappears into the animal's mouth. When the dust clears, a great belch sounds. The lost boys celebrate that Hook is gone.



**Going Back** Peter stops celebrating with the lost boys and announces that he has to go home. The boys protest, but Peter walks over to Jack and Maggie and asks Tinkerbell to give them fairy dust so that they can fly. Peter sends his children ahead of him with Tinkerbell and stays back a moment to say goodbye to the lost boys. He gives his sword to another boy, marking him as "in charge" while he is gone. The boys smile as Peter flies away.





**Back in the Nursery** The balcony doors to the nursery softly open. Moira is alone, asleep in a chair. Jack and Maggie fly in and decide not to wake her, instead climbing into their beds. Moira wakes and walks to the doors, pulling them closed. Wendy comes into the room, and Jack and Maggie jump out of their beds, shouting for their mother, who cries when she hugs them.



**Kensington Gardens** Peter wakes up at the foot of the Peter Pan statue in Kensington Gardens, dressed again in the clothing in which he left. Tinkerbell is there and Peter tells her that he believes in fairies and she tells him that she will always love him.



**Return** Peter climbs over the wall into his back yard and greets the dog who is waiting there. When he hears his phone ringing, Peter digs it up and answers it. He tells the man on the other end of the line that he can't talk right now. Peter climbs the drain pipe and enters the nursery through the balcony doors. Peter hugs his children and kisses his wife. His phone rings again and Peter throws it out the window. When Tootles comes into the room, Peter gives him his marbles. Wendy says, "Hello, boy," and they embrace.



**Flying** Wendy asks Peter why he's crying and he replies "one tear for each happy thought." Tootles finds fairy dust in the bottom of the bag of marbles and shouts with joy, flying out the window. The housekeeper shrieks, but the rest of the family gather on the balcony. Peter declares that "to live will be an awfully big adventure." The family waves to Tootles, who flies in loops through the sky.



## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Peter Banning

A lawyer and a father, Peter Banning is Peter Pan once he has grown up and forgotten his childhood in Neverland. Peter has lost his childhood whimsy and become a high-powered lawyer who forgets what the film suggests is important in life – love, family, and joy. Peter regains these characteristics when he remembers his childhood experiences as Peter Pan.

*Strict* – Peter is impatient with his children, snapping at them when they interrupt a phone call with his work. He demands several times at the start of the film that Jack "grow up" and stop acting childishly, suggesting that Peter values self-control and hard work more than play and childish joy. This strict self-discipline causes a rift between Peter and his son, Jack.

*Powerful* – Peter is a dominant force at his law agency, bossing around lower-level employees and making big decisions on important matters. However, all of these skills fail Peter when he returns to Neverland and finds that he cannot fight or fly – the skills that would allow him to get his children back. Peter relearns these skills during his time with the lost boys, which makes him more powerful than he was before: when Peter relearns the childish powers of joy and imagination, he can fight and fly in addition to being a powerful lawyer.

### Captain Hook

Captain James Hook is a pirate who lives in Neverland and captains The Jolly Roger. He is ruled by his obsession with getting revenge on Peter Pan, who left Neverland over thirty years ago. Hook has no empathy and is willing to go to any means to defeat Pan, including kidnapping Peter's children.

*Obsessed* – Hook is obsessed throughout the film with the idea of taking revenge on Peter Pan, who he sees as having fled Neverland before they have had their final battle. To achieve his revenge, Hook seeks information about Peter his whole life and, when Peter returns to the Darling nursery, he kidnaps Peter's children so that Peter must return to Neverland and engage in the duel that Hook so eagerly seeks.

*Cruel* – Hook is in many ways a fairytale villain, in that he has no good attributes that make him a complex character. Instead, he is ruled by his obsession and is willing to go to any end to achieve his revenge. Hook does not hesitate to main, kill, or kidnap in the pursuit of his desires. Not only does he kidnap Jack and



Maggie, he also seeks to turn Jack against Peter and convince Jack that he, Hook, is a truer and better father. This does not come from any desire in Hook to be a father, but instead in the singular pursuit of revenge.

### **Jack Banning**

Jack is Peter Pan's eldest child, a boy who likes baseball and feels abandoned by his father. When Peter pays more attention to his work than to his son, Jack acts out in order to get his father's attention. When this still does not work, Jack turns to Captain Hook as a substitute paternal figure, seeking love and affection at any cost.

*Lonely* – Although Jack has a mother and a sister who love him deeply, he seeks approval from his father and very much wants Peter to come to his baseball game. When Peter fails to show up, Jack feels abandoned and thinks his father does not love him. Jack displays his anger at this neglect by acting out. He throws his baseball at the airplane's ceiling and draws pictures of his father falling out of the airplane. However, when Peter demonstrates his love for Jack by rescuing him from the pirates, Jack eagerly runs into his arms.

*Loving* – While Jack purposefully seeks to bother his father for attention – being disruptive while his father is on the phone, for example – he is a very loving child who simply seeks paternal affection. Hook, sensing this lack in Jack, provides Jack with this kind of attention, showering him with gifts and putting on a baseball game in which Jack is the star player. Jack responds to this affection with alacrity, dressing like a miniature Hook and coming to see him as a father. It is Jack's loneliness and desire to receive paternal love that is his strongest character trait.

### **THEMES**

**Childhood** *Hook* is a nostalgic film that emphasizes the importance of childhood. In J. M. Barrie's original Peter Pan stories, Peter is a child who never grows up. In choosing to reconsider this aspect of the character and experiment with the question of what Peter would be like if he did grow up, *Hook* is a text that marks childhood and adulthood as two very different times. Childhood in this figuration is something that is "lost" when one grows to be an adult. For Peter Pan, already an extreme character, this loss of childhood is likewise exaggerated: Peter does not just "lose" his childhood upon growing into an adult, he forgets it entirely. The film further suggests that this is a loss that results in Peter not being able to connect with those around him: his wife, his children, and Wendy, who raised him. It is only when Peter returns to Neverland and reconnects with his childhood that he can remember who he is and connect with his loved ones.

**Family** As in many of Spielberg's films, the question of family in *Hook* revolves around a boy's fractured relationship with his father. Perhaps inspired by Spielberg's complicated relationship with his own father, Jack feels failed by Peter when Peter chooses to work instead of attending his baseball game. When Jack goes to Neverland and lives for a short period of time on the Jolly Roger, Captain Hook's ship, he finds in Captain Hook a paternal figure who is willing to shower him with the love and attention that Peter did not. Hook not only puts on a baseball game for Jack to play in and enthusiastically joins the crowd, but Hook further encourages Jack to break the pocket watch that Peter gave him as a gift and forget his father entirely. Hook's intentions here are those of revenge – he knows that turning Peter's son against him will hurt Peter deeply – but Jack eagerly accepts Hook's attention and forgets his father, dressing as a miniature Hook and embracing his life as a child pirate. When Peter returns, however, and begins to remind Jack of how much he loves him, Jack decides he does not want to be a pirate and, like Maggie, wants to return home. In having Jack choose to return with Peter, the film emphasizes the importance of family and the enduring love that ideally exists there.

**Love** While *Hook* is not a particularly romantic film, love is a strong theme, especially regarding a father's love for his children. The film never really suggests that Peter does not love his family – he attends Maggie's play, desires to go to Jack's baseball game, and eagerly goes with his wife Moira to celebrate the life of her grandmother, Wendy. However, whenever his job claims his attention, Peter turns towards work instead of his family's needs. This causes a rift between Peter and his loved ones. When Peter goes to Neverland to rescue his children, he must remember the intensity of his love in order to remember his past and become

“Pan,” who can fly and fight with a sword. Importantly, Peter’s children are his “happy thoughts,” the most joyful things he can think of that allow him to fly. Familial and paternal love in *Hook* are thus a force that reaches an almost mythical, magical power – it allows a man to recapture his childhood powers and reclaim his children.

**Obsession** Captain Hook is never able to forget the fact that he lost a battle with Peter Pan even though at least thirty years have passed. While even Peter has forgotten his identity, Hook remains in Neverland obsessing over his desire for revenge. The result of this obsession is a Hook who is far more deranged than the original Hook of Barrie’s creation, who is a charming caricature of paternal control. Indeed, in the original *Peter Pan* play produced in 1904, the actor who played Mr. Darling was frequently likewise cast as Captain Hook. Spielberg’s Hook, however, is more complex. As the years have passed he has obsessively collected clocks, each of which he has broken so that he cannot hear the ticking sound of time passing. Hook has also taken his other enemy, the crocodile, and fixed it in the town square of his pirate village as a taxidermized clock tower. Hook’s obsession with time, Pan, and revenge results in a doomed villain. Although Peter has a life and a future to return to with his children, Hook is doomed to live in the paused world of Neverland and is, indeed, consumed by his obsession when the crocodile/clock tower falls upon him and he disappears between its jaws.

**Revenge** Captain Hook’s desire for revenge is what fuels the film. Hook obsessively watched Pan and waited for him to return to the Darling household, where Hook seizes Peter’s children and takes them to be captives on his ship in Neverland. However, Hook has no real interest in the children themselves. Instead, his desire is simply to lure Peter Pan back so that they may have a “war,” a battle in which they can determine who is the true victor between them. When Tinkerbell tricks Hook into giving her three days to prepare Peter for the battle, Hook regrets the choice. However, the time allows him to notice Jack’s discontent with his father and to realize that the true revenge on Peter will not be in a war, but instead in turning his child against him. Although Hook’s plan on both ends is unsuccessful – Peter beats him at swordplay and wins Jack’s affection – the film marks a desire for revenge as Hook’s most enduring trait.

**Greed** While Peter seems more passionate about his work for the joy of the job than a desire to make more and more money, *Hook* is certainly a film that discourages an avaricious desire for wealth. In particular, a great deal of time is spent at the start of the story celebrating Grandma Wendy, an aged Wendy Darling, for her efforts as a philanthropist. When Peter and Moira arrive at her house and Peter explains to her what he does – the seizure of failing companies and the attempt to sell them bit-by-bit to recoup those losses and turn a profit – Wendy stares at Peter wide-eyed and accuses him of having become a pirate. While money is not frequently discussed in the film, *Hook*’s emphasis on things that are frequently understood as free – familial love, dedication, imagination, and fun – suggests that true happiness does not come from the acquisition of money and goods. Indeed, the pirates – who are marked as greedy – are those who meet the darkest ends in the film.

**Conflict** Unlike many of Spielberg’s films, *Hook* portrays a clean line between good and evil. The pirates, with Captain Hook leading them, represent evil in the film: they are obsessed with revenge, violence, and cruelty. Peter Pan and his allies, the lost boys, represent the side of good within the film. Even when they engage with weapons, it is all in the name of good fun and play – their arrows are tipped with paint, not arrowheads, and their guns at the pirate battle are filled with paint, eggs, and marbles. The conflict within the story is thus relatively simple and untroubling: it is those who love and value family and friendship pitted against those who value greed and vengeance. Interestingly, the only character to truly step over that line between good and evil is Jack, whose actions suggest that if someone is starved enough for love they will even look to unhealthy sources to find affection. Despite this interesting crossover, the film ends the conflict simply with Hook banished and Peter’s family happily united.