SOFTWARE & TECH

Peter And Wendy First Edition

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Introduction: The Enduring Magic of Peter Pan

Few characters in literary history have captured the universal longing for eternal youth and adventure quite like Peter Pan. Created by the Scottish novelist and playwright Sir James Matthew Barrie, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up first took flight on the London stage in 1904 in the play *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*. However, it was the novelization of this beloved story, titled **Peter and Wendy**, published in 1911, that cemented Barrie’s creation as a cornerstone of children’s literature. For collectors, bibliophiles, and literary enthusiasts, the **Peter And Wendy First Edition** represents the holy grail of Edwardian children’s books. It is a tangible piece of literary history, a beautifully crafted object that bridges the gap between stage magic and the printed page. This article delves deep into the story behind this iconic book, exploring its publication history, physical characteristics, market value, and what makes a true **Peter And Wendy First Edition**such a coveted possession. Whether you are a seasoned collector or simply a lover of classic literature, understanding the nuances of this first edition offers a fascinating glimpse into the golden age of book publishing.

The Genesis of a Classic: From Stage to Page

Before examining the physical book itself, it is essential to understand its origins. J.M. Barrie’s relationship with the Darling family and the world of Neverland began as a series of stories told to the five Llewelyn Davies boys, whom Barrie had befriended in London’s Kensington Gardens. The success of the 1904 stage play was immediate and profound. Audiences were enchanted by the flying sequences, the villainous Captain Hook, and the poignant theme of lost childhood. Barrie was initially reluctant to novelize the play, fearing that the magic of the theatre might not translate to prose. He finally agreed, and in 1911, the publishing firm **Hodder & Stoughton** in London released the first edition of *Peter and Wendy*. This was not a simple transcription of the play script. Barrie expanded the narrative, added rich descriptive passages, and deepened the psychological complexity of the characters, particularly Mrs. Darling and the lost boys. The **Peter And Wendy First Edition**is therefore a distinct literary work, not merely a souvenir of the play. It is the definitive version of the story for countless readers who first encountered Peter Pan through its pages.

Identifying the True First Edition: Points of Issue

For anyone seeking to acquire a **Peter And Wendy First Edition**, understanding the specific bibliographic points is crucial. The market is filled with later printings, reprints, and facsimiles, which, while charming, lack the rarity and value of a true first. The first edition was published in October 1911 by Hodder & Stoughton in London. The first printing is identifiable by several key characteristics.

Publisher and Date

The title page of a genuine **Peter And Wendy First Edition**reads: “Peter and Wendy” by J.M.

Barrie, with the imprint “Hodder & Stoughton, London” and the date “1911”. Crucially, the date must appear on the title page. Later printings may have the same date but will lack the specific first edition points.

Dust Jacket

Perhaps the single most important factor in determining value is the presence and condition of the original dust jacket. The dust jacket for the **Peter And Wendy First Edition** is a stunning piece of Edwardian design. It features an intricate illustration by F.D. Bedford (who also illustrated the interior of the book) depicting Peter Pan flying over the rooftops of London with Wendy, John, and Michael. The jacket is printed in a distinctive shade of blue and dark red. Because dust jackets were originally intended to protect the book cover and were often discarded by owners, a first edition with its original dust jacket intact and in good condition is extraordinarily rare and commands a significant premium. A copy without the jacket, even in fine condition, is worth a fraction of a jacketed copy.

Illustrations by F.D. Bedford

The **Peter And Wendy First Edition** is renowned for its beautiful illustrations. The book contains a frontispiece and eleven full-page plates, all drawn by Francis Donkin Bedford, a prominent Edwardian illustrator. These illustrations, rendered in a delicate line art style, are crucial identification points. The frontispiece, which shows Peter Pan playing the pipes for the fairies, is particularly iconic. Later editions sometimes used different illustrators or reproduced Bedford’s work in a different format. A true first edition will have Bedford’s name clearly listed on the title page.

Binding and Collation

The book was originally bound in a deep blue-green cloth (often described as “ribbed cloth”) with a gilt-stamped design on the front cover and spine. The design typically features a silhouette of Peter Pan blowing a pipe. The correct collation is: octavo (approximately 7.5 x 5 inches), with 267 pages of text plus the plates. The endpapers are often plain, but some copies may have a simple decorative pattern. Checking the collation against a known description is essential for authentication.

The Rarity and Market Value of the First Edition

The **Peter And Wendy First Edition** is not merely a rare book; it is a cornerstone of 20th-century children’s literature collecting. Its value is driven by a confluence of factors: the enduring popularity of the story, the limited number of copies in circulation, the fragility of the dust jacket, and the high demand from collectors worldwide. While the original print run is not precisely known, it is estimated to have been around 3,000 to 5,000 copies, a relatively modest number for a popular book even in 1911. Over the past century, many copies have been lost, damaged, or discarded, making surviving examples increasingly scarce.

Current Market Prices

The value of a **Peter And Wendy First Edition** can vary dramatically based on condition. A poor condition copy (with a broken binding, missing plates, significant staining, or a tattered dust jacket) can still be worth several thousand dollars due to its inherent rarity. A good to very good condition copy without a dust jacket might sell for $5,000 to $12,000 at auction. However, a fine or near-fine copy with its original dust jacket in excellent condition is a true trophy. Such copies have sold at major auction houses like Sotheby’s and Christie’s for prices ranging from **$20,000 to over $60,000**. A copy with a pristine dust jacket, no foxing, bright gilt, and tight binding is considered the zenith of the market and can fetch a six-figure sum in a private sale or record-breaking auction.

Factors Influencing Value

- Condition of Dust Jacket: This is the single most important variable. Even a jacket with small chips, tears,

or fading can add immense value.

- Binding and Gilt: The original blue-green cloth should be clean and unfaded. The gilt on the spine and front cover should be bright and legible.
- Interior Condition: The pages should be free from foxing (brown spotting), tearing, and moisture damage. The plates should be present and secure.
- Provenance: A copy with a notable previous owner (e.g., a famous author, a significant collector, or an inscription by Barrie himself) can exponentially increase the value.
- Association Copies: A copy inscribed by J.M. Barrie to a friend or family member is the rarest of all and can be priceless.

Why Collect a First Edition?

Beyond the obvious financial investment, collecting a **Peter And Wendy First Edition** is an act of literary preservation. Owning this book means owning the book that first introduced the world to the complete, novelized version of Peter Pan. It is the text that inspired generations of readers, from children in the 1910s to modern-day enthusiasts. The physical object itself is a time capsule. The feel of the cloth binding, the smell of the aged paper, the turn of each page, and the sight of Bedford’s original illustrations as they were first printed create an intimate connection to the past that no modern reprint can replicate. For a collector, it is the difference between seeing a photograph of a painting and standing in front of the original canvas. It is a conversation starter, a family heirloom, and a testament to the enduring power of storytelling.

Tips for Aspiring Collectors

1. Do Your Research: Read bibliographic descriptions. Understand the points of issue. Compare listings carefully.
2. Buy from Reputable Dealers: Seek out established antiquarian booksellers who specialize in children’s literature or modern first editions. They will guarantee authenticity and often provide condition reports.
3. Consider Condition: If your budget is limited, consider a copy without a dust jacket but in excellent internal condition. A beautiful, clean copy without a jacket is still a magnificent artifact.
4. Join a Community: Organizations like the Peter Pan Collector’s Club or the Bibliographical Society of America can offer invaluable advice and resources.
5. Protect Your Investment: Store your first edition in a cool, dry, stable environment away from direct sunlight. Use a custom-made archival box that supports the book and protects it from dust and light.

The Legacy of Peter and Wendy

The **Peter And Wendy First Edition** is not just a collector’s item; it is a cultural landmark. Barrie’s novel has never been out of print, and its influence on literature, film, theatre, and popular culture is immeasurable. From Disney’s 1953 animated film to live-action adaptations and countless stage revivals, the story of the boy who refused to grow up remains a universal metaphor for the conflict between innocence and experience, freedom and responsibility. The first edition represents the purest, most authentic expression of Barrie’s vision. It is the version that has been studied by scholars, cherished by critics, and loved by readers for over a century. To hold a copy is to hold a piece of that legacy in your hands.

Comparing Editions: First vs. Later Printings

It is common for sellers to mistakenly list later printings as first editions, often due to the fact that the title page still bears the 1911 date. However, later printings (from 1912 onward) will often have a different binding, a different dust jacket design, or subtle changes to the text and illustrations. For instance, the 1912 second edition features a slightly different spine design and often has a publisher’s catalog at the back. The 1913 and 1914 editions used different cloth colors. A true **Peter And Wendy First Edition** must be the 1911 printing with

all the correct points. A good bookseller will always specify the edition and printing, but a cautious buyer learns to verify through independent research.

Conclusion: A Treasure for a Lifetime

In the world of book collecting, few items possess the perfect storm of literary significance, aesthetic beauty, and emotional resonance that defines the **Peter And Wendy First Edition**. It is a book that speaks to the child in all of us, while simultaneously standing as a masterpiece of Edwardian publishing. Whether you are fortunate enough to own a copy or simply dream of one, its story is worth knowing and telling. It reminds us that some treasures are not measured solely in monetary terms, but in their capacity to inspire wonder,

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