



## The Catcher in the Rye and Peter Pan

### Holden's desire to keep people frozen in time

Holden stated, "The best thing, though, in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move....Nobody'd be different. The only thing that would be different would be you." Later he states, "Certain things they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone."

### But the truth about the glass cases is...

The truth about Holden's desire to keep everyone in glass cases is that no one would have freedom, no one would be trusted, no one would grow, and no one would change. In fact, everything would stay so much the same that no one would be living. They'd be frozen. Forever. In time.

### Now, read the following excerpt from *Peter Pan* by James M. Barrie:

Peter came next spring cleaning; and the strange thing was that he never knew he had missed a year.

That was the last time the girl Wendy ever saw him. For a little longer she tried for his sake not to have growing pains; and she felt she was untrue to him when she got a prize for general knowledge. But the years came and went without bringing the careless boy; and when they met again Wendy was a married woman, and Peter was no more to her than a little dust in the box in which she had kept her toys. Wendy was grown up. You need not be sorry for her. She was one of the kind that likes to grow up. In the end she grew up of her own free will a day quicker than other girls.

All the boys were grown up and done for by this time; so it is scarcely worth while saying anything more about them. You may see the twins and Nibs and Curly any day going to an office, each carrying a little bag and an umbrella. Michael is an engine-driver. Slightly married a lady of title, and so he became a lord. You see that judge in a wig coming out at the iron door? That used to be Tootles. The bearded man who doesn't know any story to tell his children was once John.

Wendy was married in white with a pink sash. It is strange to think that Peter did not alight in the church and forbid the banns.

Years rolled on again, and Wendy had a daughter. This ought not to be written in ink but in a golden splash.

She was called Jane, and always had an odd inquiring look, as if from the moment she arrived on the mainland she wanted to ask questions. When she was old enough to ask them they were mostly about Peter Pan. She loved to hear of Peter, and Wendy told her all she could remember in the very nursery from which the famous flight had taken place. It was Jane's nursery now, for her father had bought it at the three percents from Wendy's father, who was no longer fond of stairs. Mrs. Darling was now dead and forgotten.

There were only two beds in the nursery now, Jane's and her nurse's; and there was no kennel, for Nana also had passed away. She died of old age, and at the end she had been rather difficult to get on with, being very firmly convinced that no one knew how to look after children except herself.

Once a week Jane's nurse had her evening off, and then it was Wendy's part to put Jane to bed. That was the time for stories. It was Jane's invention to raise the sheet over her mother's head and her own, thus making a tent, and in the awful darkness to whisper:-

"What do we see now?"

"I don't think I see anything to-night," says Wendy, with a feeling that if Nana were here she would object to further conversation.

"Yes, you do," says Jane, "you see when you were a little girl."

"That is a long time ago, sweetheart," says Wendy. "Ah me, how time flies!"

"Does it fly," asks the artful child, "the way you flew when you were a little girl?"

“The way I flew! Do you know, Jane, I sometimes wonder whether I ever did really fly.”

“Yes, you did.”

“The dear old days when I could fly!”

“Why can’t you fly now, mother?”

“Because I am grown up, dearest. When people grow up they forget the way.”

“Why do they forget the way?”

“Because they are no longer gay and innocent and heartless. It is only the gay and innocent and heartless who can fly.”

“What is gay and innocent and heartless? I do wish I was gay and innocent and heartless.”

Barrie, James M. "Peter Pan." (1904): n. pag. Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

## Now, it's your turn.

Prepare a formal essay responding to what you have read above. Consider the following questions, all of which should be answered in your essay. Use specific, concrete, and textual evidence that proves that while remaining young and innocent forever may seem like a nice idea, it is impossible and sad to want that for anyone.

## Questions to answer in your reflection:

- What does Wendy realize that Holden has not accepted?
- When does Holden accept it? What are the ramifications of his acceptance? What prevented him from accepting the truth about the loss of innocence sooner?
- How can you tell that the author of Peter Pan understands the importance of growing up?
- What do you think would Holden ultimately say to Wendy? Why?
- What other significant, “out of the box” connections can you make between the excerpt and the novel?
- In all cases, please use specific references to the novel! Quotations with page numbers are not only accepted, but required!
- This essay is due on Friday, March 2nd. A printed copy must be turned in that day and it must be uploaded to TURNITIN by 11:59 that evening.