



Hide-and-Seek with Angels: A Life of J. M. Barrie

Lisa Chaney

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What kind of man creates a boy who never grows up? More than 100 years after *Peter Pan* first appeared on the London stage, author J. M. Barrie remains one of the most complex and enigmatic figures in modern literature. A few facts, of course, are widely known: *Peter Pan* made Barrie the richest author of his time, and he bequeathed the royalties to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. He was married, but later divorced, and he was devoted to the orphaned sons of Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, one of whom was named Peter. And then the rumors begin—about the nature of his marriage; about his precise relationship with the Davies boys, whose guardian he became; about the fantasies and demons that determined his achievements.

In this brilliant biography, Lisa Chaney goes beyond the myths to discover the fascinating, frequently misunderstood man behind the famous boy. James Matthew Barrie was born in a village in Scotland in 1860, the ninth of 10 children of a linen-weaver and his wife. When James was six years old, his older brother died in a skating accident, and his mother began her withdrawal into grief. It is not an exaggeration to say that Barrie's entire life—both his professional triumphs as a writer and his personal tragedies—led up to the creation of *Peter Pan*, the play where "all children except one grow up." As Lisa Chaney explores Barrie's own struggles to grow up, she deepens our understanding both of his most famous character and of the complex relationship between life and art.

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