

PETER PAN LOSES THE LOST BOYS



A.P. MCANANEY

To all the families across the UK.

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Illustrations by Julian Beresford.

With thanks to Macmillan Children's Books.

CHAPTER 1

CHILDREN, they grow up. It's just what children do. They stretch up towards the sky like huge, tall trees reaching for the sun, their arms sprouting this way and that.

And when they become grown-ups they don't stop there. No way. They keep growing! Some grow long, grizzly beards. Some grow wibbly-wobbly, floppy ears. Some grow big, squishy noses. Some grow so much that their heads pop out of the top of their hair! But shhhhh, keep quiet about that, you must never, ever mention that to an older gentleman, they can be a bit sensitive about it, trust me.



However, there's one person who is forever young. A boy, who never needs to worry about his hair, or ears and nose, or beard. A boy who will always be a boy.

I think you might have guessed who I'm talking about haven't you? There isn't a man, woman or mouse in the world who doesn't know the name of the mighty PETER PAN.

Even just seeing his name written down paints wonderful pictures in your head. You can imagine him flying through the air, looping the loop and taking on the truly terrifying Captain Hook and his crotchety crew. Oh, and we mustn't forget the Lost Boys, his band of brothers, supporting him all the way.

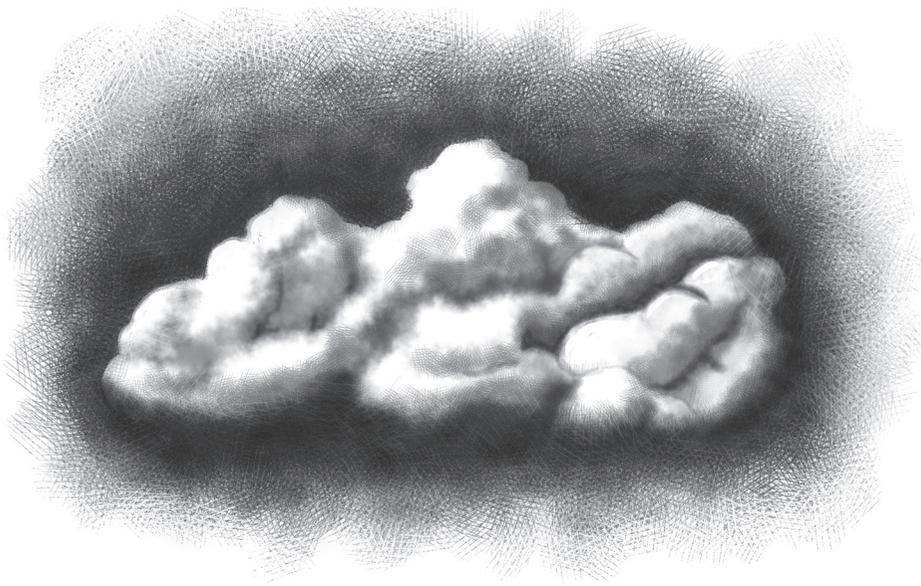
But what happens when Peter's friends aren't around? If they're off having adventures of their own? What does poor Peter do then? Well readers, that is what you will discover as this tale unfolds. That and much, much more besides.

CHAPTER 2

‘SECOND to the right, and straight on till morning.’

That is how you get to the home of Peter Pan. Simply, second to the right, and straight on till morning. Sounds as easy as can be doesn't it? And in a way it is, because all of us at some point in our lives will be drawn to this place. The directions somehow already planted in our brains, each of us knowing exactly the way to go, without ever really, truly knowing how.

We know that we will dip and dive over huge crashing waves. We know that we will drift through huge billowing clouds, as thunder begins to build. We even know that halfway there we will



wish to turn back, our pyjamas soaked through with rain. But still we will fly on, heading to that wondrous place called Neverland.

Most of us will stay for just one night, and we will awake back in our beds as the sun rises, knowing that we've been on a magical adventure. Our thoughts foggy, we will try and try with all our might to remember what has happened and where we've been. But recalling what has occurred, will be like trying to spot a panther in the night, almost impossible, it will slip away before you can see it, and the memory will fade and disappear.

Peter, however, lives in Neverland, it's the place he calls home. There isn't a day that goes by without him being there. So, let's follow those

million golden arrows, make our way past the turtles burying their eggs in the sand and see what that mischievous fellow is up to.

CHAPTER 3

THE hollowed-out trees were quiet and still. Once upon a time, Peter's den echoed with excitement and the singing of loud songs. But now, it lay almost untouched, the lights seemingly less bright, the fire not quite as warm as it used to be. Peter missed his friends dearly, and while he hoped they really were having great adventures, he couldn't wait to see them once again.

One of the hollowed-out trees was making a very strange, high-pitched noise. Could it be the chill wind blowing through its nooks and crannies? Unfortunately not. On closer inspection it seemed to be the gentle sob of a boy. Yes, it was without any doubt crying of the



most honest kind. Oh, that could be only one person, our normally sprightly hero: Peter Pan. What a truly sad thing.

Peter Pan emerged from his resting place and dried his eyes with a crisp leaf. If truth be told, he just pushed the tears around his face, as leaves aren't particularly good at absorbing moisture and make your face a bit dirty. The sad boy took a deep breath, looked around his once vibrant den, and sighed a quite forlorn sigh. Oh, does it not give you a strange feeling in the pit of your stomach to see Peter Pan in such a situation? The boy who was well-known for having sparkle was as flat as a hedgehog's pancake.

Looking down, Peter saw a discarded bow and arrow, the prized possession of the long-since-

departed Tootles. 'Oh Tootles, why did you have to leave? It's not fair!' Peter angrily cast the bow and arrow into the fire. And immediately regretted it. Another tear escaped his eye, rolled down his cheek and was extinguished in the flames.

Peter tried to stand a little taller, have courage and think in a grown-up way: the way that Mr Darling would. He tried to think about his feelings and why he felt the way he did. 'Why do I have this strange feeling dragging me down? Why do I feel so heavy when I fly? It's like that dastardly Hook has tied an anchor around my waist, and my lightness and joy has gone.'

Oh, how he missed the Lost Boys. How he missed the Darlings. 'Wendy my dear, how I would love

to see your smile and hear your laughter.' But he was unsure when the Lost Boys would return. And the Darlings had all grown up, left Neverland and made lives for themselves back in the big, smoky city of London, while he was still here, all alone without a friend in the world.

Well, that's what he thought, but at that very moment a flash of golden light darted in the branches of the treetops. The bright yellow trail accompanied by a familiar sound. A sound that made Peter's heart flutter.

Peter sat up with a start, the weight on his head and neck cast aside for the briefest of moments.

'Could it? Could it possibly be? Is that you, the little light of my life? Is that you...Tinker Bell?'

CHAPTER 4



PETER was right of course, it was his beloved friend, the kindest of all the fairies, that little ray of sunshine gowned in a skeleton leaf. It could be no one else other than Tinker Bell. But what Peter did not know, was that Tink had been watching him quietly for a short time. She saw how much her friend's chest ached, she saw the enormous weight he was carrying on his shoulders. He wasn't actually carrying a real weight around you must understand, Peter didn't have a bag of potatoes on one shoulder and a bicycle balanced on the other. That would have been some trick! It's just that Tinker Bell

understood how sad her chum felt, and how much he missed his friends.

Peter stood up and turned around, just in time to see a golden blaze of fairy dust paint its way through the air towards him.

‘TINKER BELL,’ he shrieked with delight, ‘my fairy friend where have you been? I have missed you so.’

Peter grabbed Tinker Bell and showered her with a thousand kisses, even though he absolutely and utterly hated kisses with every inch of his being. That’s how happy he was to see the long-lost fairy.

It was then that Tinker Bell gathered herself, sat on his shoulder and began to tell him all about her travels. You or I, good reader, would have

heard nothing but the gentle chime of a delicate bell, but Peter understood Fairy very well and listened intently.

Tink explained that she had travelled to the Land of the Fairies, the place where she was born, her home, where all fairies must return someday.

There she learnt more about fairy magic, but also about something even more powerful: PLAY!

Peter scoffed ‘Play? How can that possibly be more powerful than magic, Tink? I think all that flying may have left you a little light-headed.’

But these harsh words from Peter did not sadden Tinker Bell, she knew he was confused, angry and that he found it hard to talk about

his feelings - instead they bubbled up. He missed his friends, he missed the fun times, those days filled with endless laughter. Poor, poor Peter.

A thought started to build in Tinker Bell's mind. What Peter needed was some new friends. Neverland was full of wonderful creatures, Peter just needed to open his eyes and get a little bit of fairy positivity.

CHAPTER 5

THE MERMAIDS??? THE MERMAIDS???

Why on earth would I want to be friends with them?’ Peter was outraged. He stomped angrily from tree to tree, kicking each one for good measure, while ranting and raving as he went. ‘What on earth is this fairy talking about? The mermaids? Why, I don’t like them and they certainly DO NOT like me, of that I can be quite sure. Does she not remember what happened the last time we visited Mermaid Lagoon? Why, the mermaids swam away. Tinker Bell disappears for what seems like an eternity and then comes back and tells me to make friends with the mermaids. That is one of, if



not the most, preposterous things I have ever heard. Utter, utter rot! That's what I say.'

Tinker Bell sat calmly on the branch of a willow and let Peter shout and holler for what seemed like hours. To be truthful, it was hours, Peter can get very angry at times. Finally, he slumped down at the base of the tree, completely and utterly exhausted. He stared into the distance, feeling rather sorry for himself. Tink gently drifted down, landed on Peter's shoulder and began to softly stroke his hair.

Peter sniffed, wiped his hand across his red, puffy eyes and in a barely audible voice whispered into his chest 'I'm...sorry...Tinker Bell...I...truly am. It's just...it's just...' Peter struggled to find the words. The boy who was

usually so full of bravado slumped his head and let Tink gently soothe him.

'I understand my dearest Peter. It may seem scary and daunting.'

'Scary? HA! Not for me. Never.'

'But if we used the power of play, I think something amazing could happen. What do you say?'

Peter screwed up his face incredibly tight. Imagine someone sucking on the sourest lemon ever and you'll be getting close to the look.

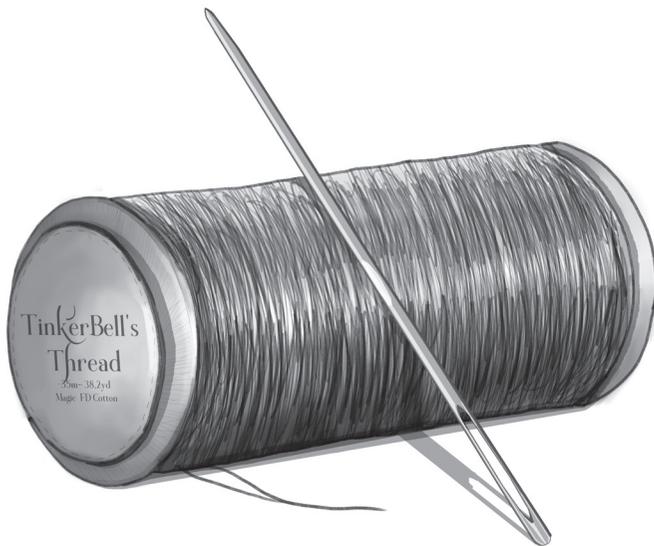
'Play! What a silly suggestion. I won't and I shan't do it. Tinker Bell, I don't play, I have real adventures! I was doing just fine before you came back. Thank you very much.'

And with that, Peter stood up and stomped out of the hollow, leaving Tinker Bell floating in mid-air. But she wasn't angry with her friend, as she watched him angrily flee, she knew the sadness he was feeling deep inside.

CHAPTER 6

IT WAS quiet in the hollow when Peter returned many hours later. He tiptoed in, surveying the scene quietly from behind a large oak tree.

And what he saw was a wild blur of fairy wings, magic dust and silver thread. Tinker Bell was busying herself with all kinds of material, dashing nimbly through the air. Of course, Tink knew that Peter was watching, her fairy powers alerted her to his presence as soon as he had come back to the hollow. But she continued to work away, waiting to see if Peter would join her in her playing. Finally, Peter inched forward gingerly, one step at a time. Curiosity had got



the better of him, and he casually asked Tinker Bell, as if nothing had happened between them, what she was doing. 'So, what's all this commotion about then my fair fairy friend?'

'Oh, you wouldn't want to know anything about all this.'

'But I do, I do!' Peter insisted, at his most charming.

Tinker Bell smiled and she turned around to face Peter. 'Well Peter, what I have here are some puppets that I've been making, with the help of a good old needle and thread, and some fairy dust of course. This one is you.'

Tink thrust a sock-puppet towards Peter and, although a little rough around the edges, it was unmistakably our hero from Neverland.

Of course, Peter had a few things to say about how he looked when he studied this small version of himself. Modesty was never his strong point. 'Well, the muscles aren't quite as big as they should be, and my nose isn't as crooked, but yes Tinkerbelle you have done a half-decent job, I must say.'

'Why, thank you Peter.'

'And what's in your other hand?' he asked inquisitively.

'Oh these? These are the mermaids of course.' Tinker Bell held out a gaggle of puppets with long, wavy hair and fishy tails. 'I am, my lonesome friend, going to share with you the truly wondrous POWER OF PLAY!'

CHAPTER 7



Peter sat quietly, as Tinker Bell began to explain what they were going to do and how they would play together. Peter was going to use his puppet as though it was actually him, he would really need to use his imagination to do that. They would pretend he was introducing himself to the mermaids, then get to know them, by asking them questions, telling them all about himself, and talking through his likes and interests.

‘Gah! That sounds stupid, they’re only puppets, how are they going to help me make friends in the real world?’ Peter scoffed.

But Tinker Bell knew that play would most

certainly help Peter. She knew play could unlock secret new ways of talking and behaving. That play could turn timid mice into mighty lions with majestic roars. Tinker Bell knew that play would help Peter figure out why he had feelings that he didn't understand about the Lost Boys going away.

'Trust me Peter, let's give it a try. It may seem strange, but surely it's better to try it with me now, than to be scared when you go to Mermaid's Lagoon.'

Peter thought about this quietly for a short time, before shrugging, nodding his head and puffing out his cheeks. 'Well OK, I suppose. If you say that these sock puppets have some kind of magic then they must do. I'll play. If only to make you happy, dear Tinker Bell.'

Although it felt a bit difficult and strange at first, he began to put his uncertainty to one side. And do you know what? He actually began to have fun. Actual proper fun. The kind of which he hadn't had since the Lost Boys had left.

The pair played a wonderful game called Kind Words, where each puppet took it in turns to say something positive about the other. It helped Peter grasp feelings buried deep inside and find words that were normally too tricky to say out loud. Peter discovered something else while he was playing with Tinker Bell. He realised that the mermaids might be just as nervous about meeting new people as he was. Ha! They might have something in common after all.

After the pair had finished playing with the

puppets, he found his confidence was returning, which made him realise he didn't need to be so scared. In fact, a little part of Peter began to look forward to meeting the mermaids. Who would've thought such a thing only a day earlier? Why, no one of course!

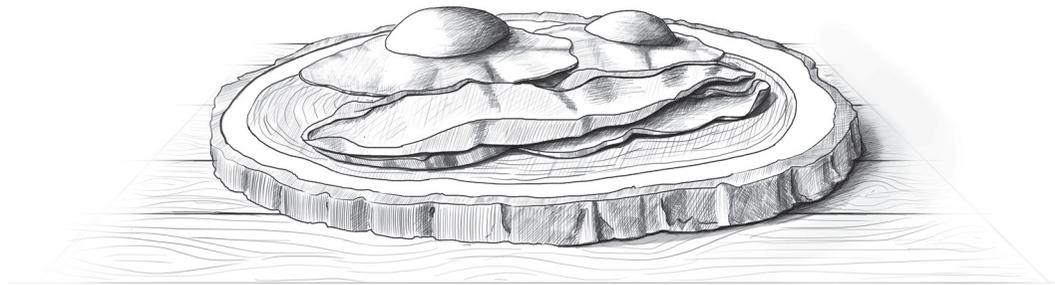
Peter stood up, clenched his fist and puffed out his chest. 'I'm going to do it Tinker Bell. I'm going to go and make friends with real mermaids tomorrow! You'll see.'

And with that, Peter took himself off to bed and slept the soundest sleep he had had for many a month.

Tinker Bell yawned, curled up to one of the fluffy mermaid puppets and smiled. She knew that the real test lay ahead. Would play be powerful

enough to make Peter's encounter with the mermaids a happy one? Well, she supposed, she'd find that out the very next day...

CHAPTER 8



THE sun was shining on Neverland the next morning, and Peter had just finished eating a hearty breakfast, all imaginary of course, you have to imagine your food in Neverland as everyone knows. ‘Oh, Tinker Bell, I’m so full that I don’t think I can move a single muscle. I’m just going to have to sit here all day and let my bacon and eggs go down.’

Tinker Bell of course, being the smart fairy that she was, saw right through Peter’s excuses. ‘Now come on Peter, I know that you still might be a little nervo...’ Peter interrupted her. ‘Nervous? Of course not. Why, let’s go over to Mermaid’s Lagoon right now, shall we?’

And with that he stood up and flew swiftly out of the hollow. Tinker Bell glided in beside him and held his hand. She thought this might help make him feel more brave, and it did! Without turning his head, Peter whispered ever so softly: 'Thank you Tink, thank you.' She gave his gently shaking hand a tight squeeze.

They landed quietly on the fringes of Mermaid's Lagoon, where the dense tropical jungle met the crisp, white sands, and looked out for Peter's potential friends.

'Look Peter, there they are, lounging by the rock pools.' Peter peered over and counted them, yes, 1, 2, 3...more...7 mermaids! Hmm, that was more than he had expected. They were sunning their tails on the warm rocks and, every so

often, they would dive into the cooling waters, before elegantly leaping back out and retaking their places on the dark volcanic stone.

It was now or never! Peter stood up, dusted down his clothes, making himself presentable, and looked across the beach to where the mermaids lay. Tink gave him some final words of encouragement. 'You can do this Peter. Just remember all the things we learnt when we played yesterday. And be yourself!'

Peter smiled at Tinker Bell, nodded to himself, then surely and steadily walked across the hot sands towards the mermaids. They saw his approach and slowly sat up, unsure of what was afoot. Peter stopped a few metres away from the rocks and began to talk. If only Tinker Bell

could hear what he was saying! He was just out of her earshot. But perhaps, Tink thought to herself, that was for the best. She wanted Peter to do this on his own. She knew that, guided by the power of play, he could do it!

It was then that one of the mermaids slowly raised her hands above her head...Oh my! What was happening?



CHAPTER 9



A SWEET rhythmic sound stole across the bay. The mermaids were clapping, singing and dancing! Peter was like a boy transformed. The deep sadness that Tink had seen only yesterday was washed away. The smile on his face was as bright as the stars and twice as wide as the sun. He dipped this way and that through the air, twirling and whirling in time to the music as his new friends, the mermaids, clapped their hands, played their conch shells and sang the most beautiful songs you can imagine.

Tinker Bell had been watching for what seemed like hours, the dancing and singing had been almost non-stop. And the music, my goodness,

Tinker Bell had never heard such wondrous sounds. They seemed to take over your body and mind, compelling your limbs to move in such amazing ways. If you're wondering how this all started, let me explain.

Peter had carefully walked over to the naturally suspicious mermaids. They were unsure of his intentions. But Peter wasn't fearful...well perhaps just a little. But he remembered all the things he had learnt when playing with Tinker Bell, and my goodness they worked! He introduced himself, told the mermaids about his likes and dislikes, asked them questions about themselves, and slowly but surely they began to welcome Peter. It was then that the leader of the mermaids had raised her hands above her head and began to clap out that

wonderful, joyful rhythm that had kept them all dancing into the evening.

Friendship had been waiting all this time and it was just a stone's throw away from Peter's home. All he had needed to uncover it, was a little bit of confidence and the power of play...

And some support from Tinker Bell too, of course!

As the sun began to set, the music became slower, gentler and more soothing, as it was getting close to bedtime. Tinker Bell made her way over to Peter, who by this time was exhausted; exhausted but happy. She landed on his shoulder and quietly whispered in his ear, Peter nodded, yawned and turned to the mermaids.

'My fun and joyful friends, I have had the most wonderful day. I could keep partying into the

night, but sadly I must return home and keep the dance going in my dreams. Thank you so much, I should like to return soon if I may.'

The leader of the mermaids put down her conch shell and smiled. Tinker Bell heard her speak for the very first time, her voice was soothing and kind. 'Thank you, Peter. You have shown us friendship is easy to uncover when you know how. We'd be delighted if you visited again. Here, take this, it will shine whenever we return to Mermaid's Lagoon.' With that, she handed Peter a piece of coral that shimmered with all the colours of the rainbow, and many more besides. Peter thanked her and said goodbye before leaping into the air and setting off for home.

As Tinker Bell and Peter travelled through the

cool night air they didn't speak, but both knew it had been a special day.

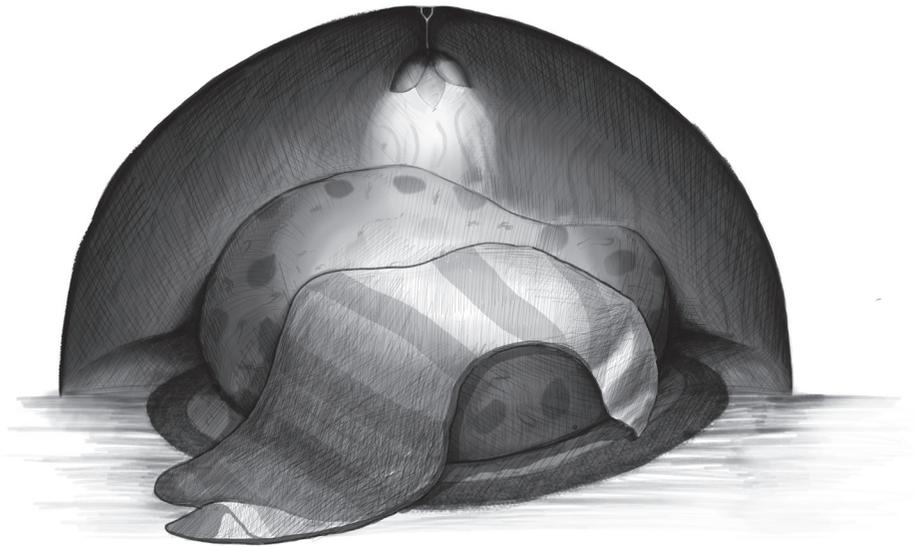
CHAPTER 10

PETER lay down drowsily on his bed and Tinker Bell pulled his quilt up over his shoulders to his chin. Through the happiest of yawns, Peter said:

‘Thank you Tink...thank you for everything.’

‘You have nothing to thank me for Peter. You did it, you harnessed the power of play. You made those new friends, not me. You deserve to have the most wonderful dreams tonight.’

Peter’s eyes were closing, when a gust of wind suddenly blew through the hollow. At that very moment, who should swoop in, but the Lost Boys! They were back from all their adventures.



Peter leapt out of bed, full of energy once again. He embraced his friends one by one and proudly showed them his special piece of coral, the symbol of everything he had achieved that day. He grabbed the little puppet version of himself and began acting out all the things he had learnt with Tinker Bell and invited them to join in and play. Soon they were all racing around the hollow, puppets in hand, embracing adventures old and new.

Peter was so proud of himself - but not in a big-headed way. That day had taught him that everyone had the power to make new friends, and that even a little bit of help can go a very long way. So, the next time the Lost Boys went off adventuring, he would be just fine. In fact,

he was going to introduce the Lost Boys to the mermaids the very next day! There were no two ways about it. What a merry gang they would be, the Lost Mermaids!

Tinker Bell drifted away from the raucous group and lay down on a leaf as sleep washed over her. She knew that Peter would be fine the next time she left for the Land of the Fairies. He had made new friends all by himself. His confidence, which had taken such a knock, would continue to grow. She knew Peter would go on to explore many exciting places, have amazing adventures and make more wonderful friends.

The fairies were right: play is truly powerful. It had helped this boy who had been a child for so, so long. Perhaps, he was taking a little step

towards growing up. How incredible!

Tinker Bell smiled happily to herself and slowly drifted off to sleep...



THE END 

A BIT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN UP

Oh, we're so glad that things worked out for Peter Pan in the end. And it was thanks to the incredible POWER OF PLAY.

Play isn't some strange, mystical, Neverland magic. It has real, tangible benefits that can help children through some tricky situations. That's why Great Ormond Street Hospital has a whole team dedicated to play.

Take Peter Pan, he was lonely, confused and upset. But acting out his fears with Tinker Bell helped build his confidence and allowed him to make new friends. Now, that's truly amazing.

To find out more, take a trip across to GOSH Charity's brilliant hub of ideas, activities and resources at gosh.org/play or search 'GOSH Power of Play'.



Helping children through life's challenges

PETER PAN'S merry band of friends, the Lost Boys, have gone off adventuring and left him on his lonesome. He feels down, low in confidence and unable to make new friends. Can the returning Tinker Bell help her down-trodden companion with her amazing new discovery, the Power of Play?

A fantastic original story featuring Peter Pan, Tinker Bell and the Mermaids.



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