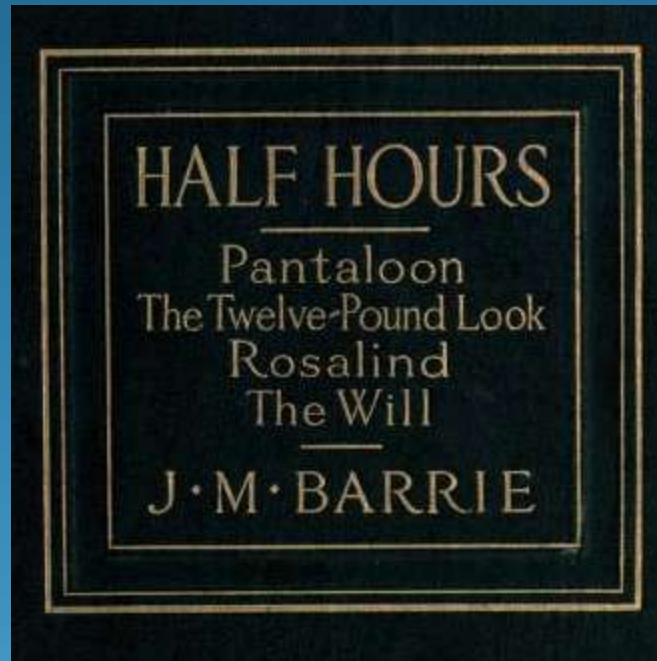


The Will- An Overview



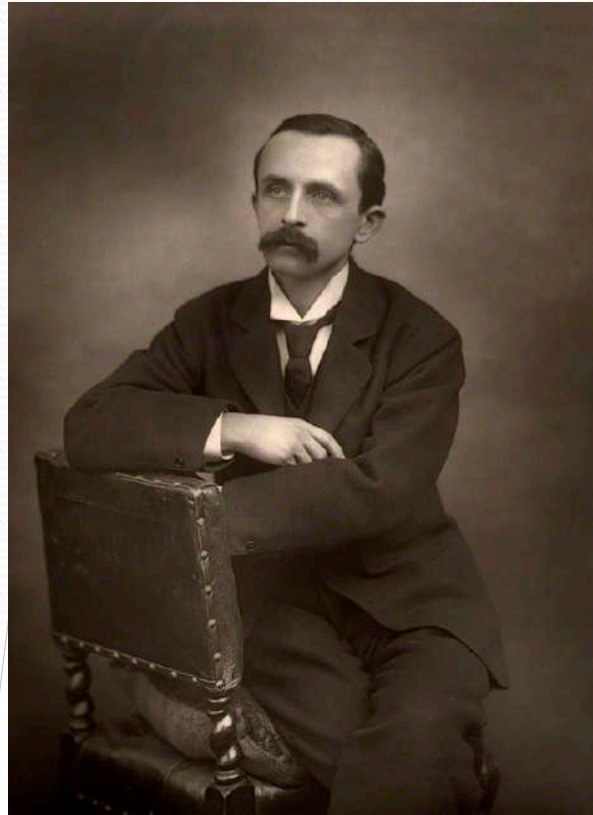
**Submitted by:-
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J.M. Barrie: Life Sketch (1860-1937)

- Born in Kirriemuir, Angus, Scotland on May 9, 1860.
- Son of a Scottish weaver.
- Belonged to a conservative Calvinist family.
- Interested in Theatre

Contd.....


- Scottish novelist, playwright, journalist, and children's book writer
- Graduated from University of Edinburgh in 1882
- Died of pneumonia at a nursing home in Manchester Street, Marylabone on 19 June 1937
- Birthplace maintained as a museum by National Trust for Scotland.



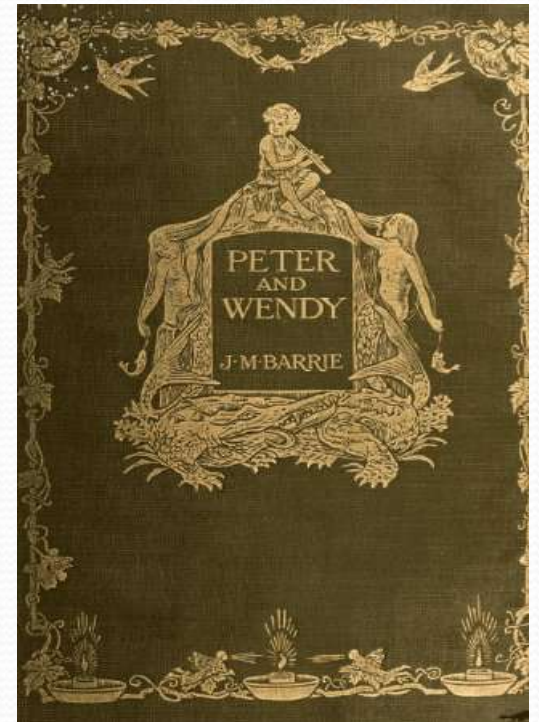
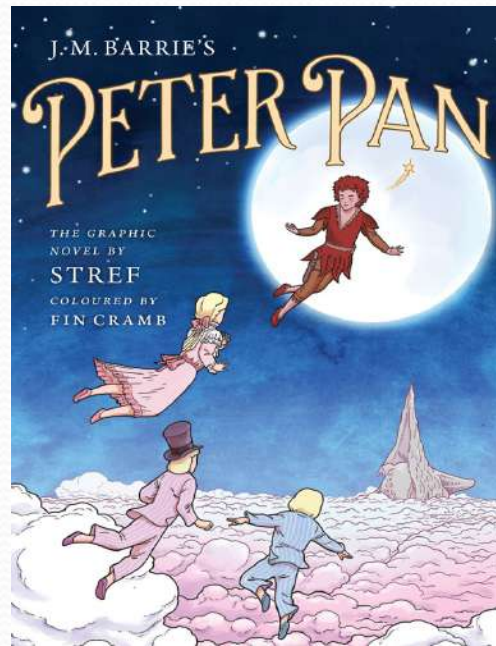
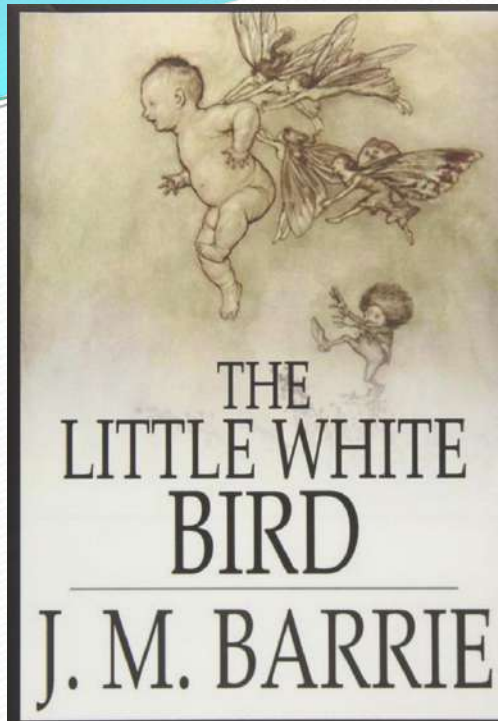
‘May God blast anyone who writes a biography of me’ declared J.M. Barrie in one of his last notebooks.

Major Works – Books and Plays

- The Little White Birds (1902)
- Peter Pan (staged in 1904 and published in 1928)
- The Admirable Crichton (1902)
- Peter and Wendy (1904)
- The Will (1914)
- What Every Woman Knows (1908)
- Dear Brutus (1917)
- Quality Street (1901)
- Echoes of the war (1918)
- Alice Sit-by-the-Fire (1919)



World Famous for his play and story about Peter Pan, the boy who lived in Never Land or the boy who wouldn't grow up. The book Carries autobiographical elements.



Major Character

Devizes Senior

- Middle aged
- A solicitor,
- Owner of the firm 'Devizes and Devizes'
- Hand working
- Traditional in outlook
- Straight forward

Devizes Junior

- Son of Devizes Senior, also called Robert
- Twenty three
- A solicitor
- Happy-go-lucky fellow
- Educated recently for Oxford, smart
- Found balancing an office ruler on his nose
- Confident and sharp
- Takes over the business when his father becomes a sleeping partner.

Philip Ross & Emily Ross

- Youthful, loving & humble couple
- Want to get a will made
- Want to give their cousins and a hospital a large amount of money out of love and gratitude
- Optimistic, generous
- With meagre means
- Change with passage of time
- Acquire love for money
- Philip survives Emily and starts disliking the acquired wealth

Surtees

- Clerk in Devizes Sr.'s Office
- Refers to an illness from which he suffers 'a black spot, not so big as a pin's head, but waiting to destroy me in the fullness of time.'
- The cancerous tumors spreads as it goes unnoticed
- Sanguine

Children of the Rosses

- Spoilt and irresponsible
- No affection for their parents.

Emily Ross

- Wife of Philip Ross, pretty, young, affectionate and emotional, nervous
- Married only four months back
- Disturbed by expressions like ‘of which I die possessed’ and ‘widow’
- A dotting wife initially but proud and pompous later on
- Dies before Philip Ross

Symbolism

- Black Spot** - Symbolic of the disease of greed that chokes the affection of Philip and Emily.
- Philip & Emily** - Symbolic of the modern 21st century withering relationships and greed for money
- Children of the Rosses** - Symbolic of the present day hedonist youth


Irony and Suspense

- Untimely death of Mrs. Emily Ross
- Money acquired through unfair means becomes the cause of unhappiness.
- Futility of wealth
- A dig at greed for money

Plot

The First scene opens with Mr. Devizes Sr. and his son Robert in the office. Their clients Mr. Philip Ross and his wife Emily Ross, who have already written to them about their problem, pay a visit. As their letter gets misplaced, the contents of the letter remain unknown. Subtle guesses and tactics of Robert do not work.

Contd.....



The elder Devizes handles the case himself. They are introduced as a very loving couple with very limited resources and desirous of making a will but getting uneasy even at the thought of separation. Emily weeps tears and wants the words ‘death’, ‘widow’ etc. to be excluded from the written will. Mr. Devizes gets immensely impressed by their generosity and optimism.


Scene –II

The next scene takes us twenty years ahead Mr. & Mrs. Ross are a wealthy couple now with lack of an emotional bonding and having acquired a taste for money. Emily is no longer desirous of sharing her assets with their cousins.

Scene –III

In the next scene, twenty years further, we find that Emily has died. Philip hardly has a soft corner for her. His daughter & son are vagabonds. Devizes' failing money reminds us of the emotional bonding of the Rosses when they just got married.

Contd....



Surtees, the clerk refers to a disease he suffers from ‘a black spot, not so big as a pin’s head, but waiting to spread and destroy me in the fullness of time.’ The cancerous spot which has gone unattended and ignored is symbolic of the withering relationship which needs to be restored in time. Otherwise it becomes a wound, but tragically the Rosses failed to notice that wound had existed.

Structure

- Divided into Three scenes.
- Time gap indicated through change of Kingship in England.
 - First scene carries the framed picture of Queen Victoria
 - Scene Two has the picture of King Edward in the background.
 - Scene Three opens with a picture of King George.
- Background setting changes with better appliances, more employees and a noisy atmosphere.

As a Modern Play

- As a psychological play
- Deals with existential issues
- J.M. Barrie as a visionary
- Money as a necessary evil today
- Reference to cancer, an over-riding problem in the present day.

Major Themes

➤ **Withering Human Relationships**

Projected through the deteriorating relationship of Philip and Emily

➤ **Greed for money**

Power corrupts, Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Greed for money tarnishes all relationships. Philip and Emily become inhuman and insensitive.



➤ **Time and Death**

Time and tide wait for none.

Emily dies untimely, though always concerned about her share of the property in the Will.


➤ **Generation Gap**

Depicted through the responsible and irresponsible roles of Devizes Sr. and his son Robert.

The Three Unities

- The three Unities in drama require a play to have a single action represented as occurring in a single place and within the course of a day.
- These are called unity of action, unity of place and unity of time.

Contd.....

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- The play ‘The Will’ adheres to unity of action and unity of place
 - The action in all the three scenes is a continued action, one leading to the other.
 - The place remains the office of the Devizes in all the three scenes.

Moral/Message

Withering of relationships is like a cancerous spot which is always there, which is not bigger than a pin's head and spreads and destroys us, if neglected or unattended. Relationships have to be nurtured and watered with love and affection to make them bloom and spread fragrance around. Philip and Emily reached a fruitless end with their own negligence and greed for money.