



0. SYLVIA LLEWELYN DAVIES - Story Preface

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J.M. Barrie took this photo of Sylvia Llewelyn Davies in 1898. She was the mother of the five boys who inspired Barrie to write his story about "Peter Pan." Copyright, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children's Charity, [now expired](#).

In 1897, as James Barrie sat on the Round Pond bench, or walked Porthos (his St. Bernard) through Kensington Gardens, two children repeatedly caught his eye. They were often dressed in blue shirts and red tams - hard to miss among those who frequented this favorite London place.

The older child - George Llewelyn Davies - was a very outgoing boy of five who was impressed by the small man with the big dog. He especially liked the way Barrie wiggled his ears and moved his eyebrows.

The son of Sylvia du Maurier (daughter of the famous writer and illustrator George du Maurier and his wife Emma) and Arthur Llewelyn Davies (a handsome London barrister), George was intrigued by Barrie. He and his four-year-old brother Jack were soon listening to Barrie's tales of pirates, fairies, desert islands and other fun subjects.

Barrie had a unique way with children. Pamela Maude, the daughter of an actor in one of Barrie's plays, described his appearance at about the time he met the Llewelyn Davies' children:

*He was a tiny man, and he had a pale face and large eyes with shadows round them...He looked fragile, but he was strong when he wrestled with Porthos, his St. Bernard dog...[H]e was telling us about fairies as though he knew all about them...He and Papa liked to talk about fishing.*

*We never saw him without his pipe...One evening we saw a pea-pod lying in the hollow of a great tree-trunk, and we brought it to Mr. Barrie. There, inside, was a tiny letter, folded inside the pod, that a fairy had written. Mr. Barrie said he could read fairy writing and read it to us. We received several more, in pea-pods, before the end of our visit. (Pamela Maude, quoted by Andrew Birkin in JM Barrie and the Lost Boys, pages 41-42.)*

Not long after befriending the boys in the park, Barrie coincidentally met their mother at a dinner party. He was soon a frequent visitor at the Davies' home.

Although she was passionately in love with her husband Arthur, with whom (by 1897) she had three sons (George, Jack and Peter), Sylvia and Barrie also became friends. Their friendship turned out to be a blessing when, nine years and two additional sons later, Arthur developed a devastating, deadly illness. Barrie's time, and money, helped to ease the family's burdens during those trying months.

Before that fatal blow, however, Peter Pan - Barrie's play based largely on the Llewelyn Davies boys (especially George) - opened at the Duke of York's Theatre in London. It was a play that almost didn't happen.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SYLVIA-LLEWELYN-DAVIES-Finding-Neverland>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SYLVIA-LLEWELYN-DAVIES-Finding-Neverland>



### Sylvia Llewelyn Davies

J.M. Barrie took this photograph of Sylvia in 1898.

J.M. Barrie photo of Sylvia Llewelyn Davies taken in 1898. [Copyright expired.](#)

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### Photo of J.M. Barrie with his Dog, Luath

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Children Inspiring Peter Pan Story

Image online, courtesy Sir JM Barrie.

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### George Llewelyn Davies

Image online, courtesy the [sirjbarrie.com](http://sirjbarrie.com) website.

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### George du Maurier

Image online, courtesy [victorianweb.org](http://victorianweb.org) website.

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### Arthur Llewelyn Davies

Image online, courtesy [stanford.edu](http://stanford.edu) website.

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### J.M. Barrie Photo - Posing with Hat

Image online, courtesy [sirjmbarrie.com](http://sirjmbarrie.com) website.

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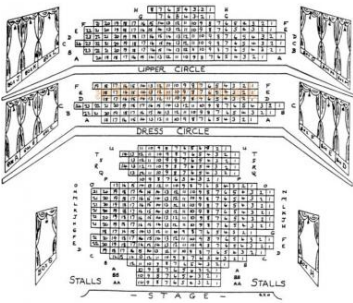


### Duke of York Theater

Image online, courtesy [arthurlloyd.co.uk](http://arthurlloyd.co.uk) website.

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### **DUKE OF YORKS**



### Duke of York Theater - Interior Sketch

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### J.M Barrie Photo - Fishing

Image online, courtesy Sir JM Barrie.

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### Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies

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### The Peter of Peter Pan

Image online, courtesy [sociedadadaugusta.com](http://sociedadadaugusta.com) website.

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### Sylvia Llewelyn Davies with Sons, George and Jack

Image online, courtesy [sirjmbarrie.com](http://sirjmbarrie.com) website.

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