

NEVERAND
Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

PETER, from eight years old to his early forties

WENDY, same ages as Peter

J.M., ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, PETER'S MOTHER, MINISTER,
PRISON GUARD, COLLEGE PROFESSOR, RELIGIOUS FIGURE, COP, AA
COUNSELOR, all played by one Actress

A DIGNIFIED VOICE

An intermission probably shouldn't exist, but if there must be one, it should fall after
Scene 6.

Neverland received its world premiere at City Theater Company, Wilmington, Delaware.

PROLOGUE

(WENDY, early forties, is on a ledge outside her apartment. PETER, a few months older, pokes his head through a window frame.)

PETER

I'm coming out.

WENDY

It's dangerous out here. You could fall.

PETER

I'll go in if you will.

WENDY

Do you love me?

PETER

Now?

WENDY

Yes.

PETER

I think I'm supposed to.

WENDY

But you don't?

PETER

I should have liked you better when we were eight. Sorry I was mean to you at my ninth birthday party. I had a bad day.

WENDY

Did you love me then?

PETER

I was nine.

WENDY

What about when you were eight, when you told me to give back the hundred dollars and buy a lottery ticket?

PETER

I was eight.

WENDY

And you don't love me now.

PETER

It's complicated. Could you come inside? I'm worried that if I explain it you might get bored and fall off.

(The lights dim, and Peter pushes off the window frame.)

SCENE 1

(A split stage approximately thirty-five years earlier. On one side, a dark classroom with a blackboard upstage. On the other side, Wendy, eight years old, goes through a garbage can. She finds a small brown bag. Enter J.M.—played by the Actress, as are all characters except for Peter and Wendy—wearing an overcoat.)

J.M.

Don't eat from there. Garbage in that can's been sitting there for two weeks. Try this one here.

(J.M. points at a second can, which Wendy opens. Wendy pulls out a fast food bag.)

See? Sealed for freshness.

WENDY

I'm Wendy.

(Wendy offers her hand, but J.M. doesn't take it.)

J.M.

You don't want to do that. Destroys the illusion.

(J.M. walks toward the darkness of the classroom.)

I'll be back later.

(J.M. enters the classroom area, removes her overcoat and becomes a TEACHER who dresses like *La Femme Nikita*. Wendy continues to dig in the garbage can. She finds a wallet. She holds it up and looks through it. Inside are a number of bills—a hundred dollars. Beat. She pockets it. Lights up on the classroom, where the Teacher stands at the blackboard. Peter, almost nine years old, sits in a chair surrounded by empty chairs and nibbles on an apple.)

TEACHER

Some children starve. They starve to death. Little boys and girls just like you starve and die. It happens all the time. Starve and die. Not die and starve. Make a note: that's impossible. You must starve first and die later. Sometimes you'll hear the phrase "dying of starvation," as if they're doing both at the same time. This is inaccurate. It is not possible to die slowly. Really, they are starving slowly, and when they are done, they'll die all at once. In one motion, so to speak. Please make a note.

(Wendy enters the classroom and takes a seat.)

WENDY

Sorry I was late. I had to make my own breakfast.

TEACHER

For today's lesson,

(The Teacher pulls out a large cue card that reads "People change.")

I would like to talk about God. But I can't, because this is public school. Instead, I will talk about Greek gods and expose you to subliminal messages.

(She changes to a cue card reading "Some things never change.")

We're allowed to mention Greek gods because there are so many of them. So they don't violate your constitutional rights. Can anyone name any Greek gods? Peter?

PETER

Petey.

TEACHER

Big boys go by Peter. Petey sounds like someone who limps. Maybe your wrist limps. Do you want everyone to think you're limp, *Petey*?

(The Teacher changes her card to "Remember where you came from.")

PETER

Peter.

TEACHER

Good boy. But—are you eating in class?

PETER

(nods, waves an apple)

I brought one for you too. It's organic.

TEACHER

Thank you, Peter. That's very thoughtful of you.

(She takes the apple and changes her card to "Don't live in the past.")

Toss it.

PETER

But—

TEACHER

But what?

PETER

That's not fair.

TEACHER

Suck it up.

(Peter tosses his half-eaten apple in the trash can as the Teacher switches to "Nurture your inner child.")

Class, that's your first lesson on Greek gods. They are arbitrary. Whimsical. Capricious. Does anyone understand any of the words I've used? Please make a note to look them up tonight.

(A BELL RINGS.)

For tomorrow, please dress as your favorite Greek god.

(The Teacher switches to "You have to grow up sometime.")

PETER

But we don't know any!

TEACHER

Research! This is third grade, not kindergarten!

(Peter sulks out and sits elsewhere on stage, staring into space. Exit the Teacher with the good apple. Beat. Wendy rummages in the garbage and pulls out the half-eaten apple. She wipes it on her shirt and bites into it. She exits as the lights dim. Wendy, the apple gone, reenters and approaches Peter.)

WENDY

What would you do if you found a hundred dollars?

PETER

Where?

WENDY

What's it matter?

PETER

If I found a hundred dollars at a bank?

WENDY

A hundred dollars all alone.

PETER
It has to be somewhere.

WENDY
In a wallet.

PETER
You found somebody's wallet?

WENDY
I said what if.

PETER
Did you?

WENDY
Yeah. What would you do with it?

PETER
Can I see?

(Wendy pulls out the wallet. They look at it.)

Whose is it?

(Beat.)

I guess I'd tell my Dad. My Mom might spend it. She shops.

WENDY
You'd give it back?

PETER
Except for a dollar. My Dad says you always keep a dollar for luck.

WENDY
How's a dollar lucky?

PETER
You could buy a lottery ticket. That's what my Dad does.

WENDY
What if you only find a dollar?

(Beat. Exit Wendy. Lights dim on Peter, who pulls out another apple and eats.)

SCENE 2

(The next week. Peter has a birthday hat on his head. Enter his MOTHER, played by the Actress. Enter Wendy, who stands at the edge of the stage in a spotlight.)

MOTHER

Your friend is here.

PETER

She's not invited.

MOTHER

That's not nice.

PETER

You said I could only have ten people. She isn't one of the ten people.
(to offstage friends)
It's time to open the presents everybody!

MOTHER

You can have eleven, Peter. It's all right.

PETER

But I don't want eleven. I want ten. It's MY birthday.

MOTHER

Last week she was your best friend.

PETER

She was not. She's a girl.

MOTHER

So am I.

PETER

The guys'll make fun of me. And she's poor.

MOTHER

God punishes mean people, Peter. He dogs them their entire lives, and no matter where they go, he is always dogging them.

PETER

What's "dogs"?

MOTHER

He's in here, Wendy!

(Peter's Mother exits.)

PETER

Mom!

(Wendy walks out of the spot and into the room.)

WENDY

Hi.

PETER

Hi.

WENDY

Happy birthday.

PETER

Thanks.

(Wendy takes out an apple.)

WENDY

I brought you a present.

PETER

Really? What?

(beat)

Thanks.

(He takes it. He smells it and looks about to eat.)

Is it organic?

WENDY

I don't know.

(Peter no longer looks ready to eat it.)

PETER

Oh.

WENDY

I'll get you another present.

PETER

That's OK.

(beat)

I gotta' go open the presents.

WENDY

We won five million dollars in the lottery.

PETER

If you won five million dollars, how come you're wearing the same clothes as all last week?

WENDY

We just won today. We didn't get the money yet.

PETER

I gotta' go open the presents now.

WENDY

Can I watch?

PETER

I already opened yours.

(Lights flicker. Enter the Actress dressed as a MINISTER.)

WENDY

Do you wanna' be my boyfriend?

PETER

No.

MINISTER

With this apple, I thee wed. Do you, Wendy, promise to be eternally grateful, recognizing Peter as your Lord and Savior, your chosen one, the horse you rode in on,
(She examines an index card, then tosses it.)
your one and only, so long as you both shall live?

WENDY

I do. I really, really do.

MINISTER

(turns to Peter)

Do you, Peter—

PETER

No! Get away from me. You're all icky.

WENDY

I love you, Peter.

MINISTER

She loves you, Peter.

WENDY

I want to marry you, Peter.

MINISTER

She wants to—

WENDY

Choke you!

(Wendy puts her hands around Peter's throat and chokes Peter.)

PETER

Help!

WENDY

I just wanna' get close to you.

PETER

You're . . . chok . . . ing—

WENDY

I love you, Peter.

PETER

Get off!

WENDY

I'll always be with you.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!