**Peter & the Starcatchers - Plot summary**

In this prequel to the story of Peter Pan, Peter and his ragtag group of orphans are placed on the leaky, poorly-run ship known as the "The Never Land," to be deposited on the island of Rundoon. Rundoon is governed by a barbaric king, whose acts of torture and abuse--such as the time he fed his father to his pet snake--are well-known throughout the empire. As the orphans travel the wide seas in a leaky vessel infested with rats, take abuse by the second-in-command, Slank, and are served meals that are still alive and moving, they are not sure if their fate under such a tyrant would be worse than their lot on "The Never Land", or perhaps an improvement. They look to Peter for help.

As it happens, as the ship was loading these poor boys, a large trunk was placed in the hold of the vessel, and locked up tight. There is clearly something magical about this trunk--whoever touches it is healed, begins to sense of the beauty of the universe, and feels a profound sense of happiness and well-being. Peter is determined to find out what treasure this trunk holds, and in doing so he runs across Molly Aster, the only daughter of the man who is scheduled to be the ambassador on Rundoon, and who has--oddly enough--booked his passage separate from his daughter. Initially, Molly clearly knows more about the trunk than she will tell Peter, but she is forced to take him into her confidence as Black Stache, the most dangerous pirate on the high seas, first successfully attacks Molly's father's ship and then heads for "The Neverland".

What the trunk holds is much more than simple treasure; the contents are so powerful as to be connected to the ongoing struggle between good and evil that pervades the universe. Peter and Molly valiantly try to fight off both Stache and their ship's own Slank from the trunk, but the battle for it takes a backseat as a violent storm whips up, and, after Stache wrecks the Never Land, the boys, Molly, and the seaman Alf are shipwrecked on an island inhabited by savages where visitors are promptly fed to a vicious beast in order to strongly discourage them from ever returning. Shortly after, the pirates land on the island for fresh water, and discover what Peter and Molly already found out: the trunk floated to the island

Thanks to Molly and Peter, the trunk of starstuff is safe, returned to the Starcatchers and Molly's living father. Peter however, in his surviving exposure to the starstuff, has gained the permanent ability to fly. It is also uncertain as to whether or not he will ever age. Peter learns he will be an outcast, and even though Molly will return to London, he decides to stay on the island, so he can be the person he "really is" and not "a circus sideshow". The orphan boys decide to remain with him, and Leonard Aster creates a fairy, which they name Tinker Bell, to protect Peter. Peter and the other orphan boys are soon taught by the natives how to build a house, and they learn to survive on the island, which Peter names "Never Land" after finding a plank that said "Never Land" from the ship that wrecked on its rocks as he watches Molly, and only Molly, on the ship containing her, a few starcatchers, Leonard, and Alf, sail back to England.

**Peter & the Starcatchers - Characters**

Many of the characters from *Peter and the Starcatchers* are brand new characters created for the novel. However, a few characters are also mentioned in *Peter and Wendy*. 
- **Peter** - Peter is the protagonist who fantasizes about a place called *Never Land*. Described as orange-haired and blue-eyed, he is approximately twelve to fourteen years old. Peter gained leader status by being the oldest and being able to spit the farthest. Peter learns to fly by being exposed to a large amount of starstuff and surviving. By the end of the novel, Peter is stranded as an outcast on Mollusk Island, with the fairy Tinker Bell and his orphan friends. Even though he does not learn that his surname is "Pan" (but does in "Peter and the Secret of Rundoon") in this novel, this is the beginning of the story of Peter Pan.

- **Molly Aster** - Molly is the daughter of the new ambassador to Rundoon, the famous Starcatcher Leonard Aster. Molly is an independent, strong-minded, twelve to fourteen-year-old. Though surviving the wreck of the *Never Land* (and saving Peter in the process), while on Mollusk Island she is kidnapped by Slank. She is later rescued by Peter. After helping to retrieve the starstuff, Molly joins her father and sails back to her hometown in London. Molly can apparently speak the porpoise language, although she is not very fluent and constantly tells them her teeth are green, thinking she's saying "Hello".

- **The Lost Boys** - The Lost Boys (first called Lost Boys in *Peter and the Shadow Thieves*) were originally orphans from St. Norbert's Home for Wayward Boys. Peter is leader to James, Thomas, Prentiss, and Tubby Ted. Tubby Ted so nicknamed because he is always ready to eat (literally).

- **Black Stache** - Black Stache is a disgusting, filthy pirate, captain of the ship *The Sea Devil*. Named Black Stache because of a near foot long mustache that he keeps perfectly groomed. He eats raw meat and keeps a very dirty cabin, earning the nickname of "Rat Breath" by his crew. Stache is very resourceful, capturing the naval ship *The Wasp* by using a corset-shaped sail. Black Stache is actually the future Captain Hook - his hand is cut off by Peter near the end of the novel.

- **Smee** - Mr. Smee is the idiotic first mate of the ship *The Sea Devil*, and Black Stache's assistant.

- **Slank** - Mr. Slank is the evil first-mate and second-in-command of the ship *The Never Land*. Slank is one of the "Others" who use starstuff corruptly, and he and his giant sidekick Little Richard try to steal the trunk of starstuff throughout the novel. Slank eventually escapes the wrath of Peter, but does not manage to get hold of the starstuff.

- **Alf** - Alf is the elderly sailor from the ship *The Never Land* who helps Peter in saving the starstuff. Alf is one of the first characters to experience the power of starstuff in chapter two of the novel. He decides to go home to England at the end of the novel.

- **Fighting Prawn** - Fighting Prawn is the chief of the Mollusk Tribe. He harbors a great hatred for Englishmen, after he and his brothers were taken as slaves by English men who arrived on the island. Fighting Prawn was nearly killed, but Peter healed him with a bit of starstuff.
- **Teacher** - Teacher is leader of the mermaids on Mollusk Island, one of the first to form as the result of starstuff. She is a particularly beautiful, blond mermaid. And although she does not speak English, Teacher is still able to communicate by talking to Peter and the other mermaids with her mind. Teacher and her fellow mermaids help Peter several times while he is on the island, including diverting the paths of the villains.