

This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of *Sketches from a Spy Tree*. Visit her Web site at tracievaughnzimmer.com to find many guides to children's literature.

BOOKS BY DAVE BARRY AND RIDLEY PEARSON



Peter and the Starcatchers

Tr. ed. 0-7868-5445-6 (\$17.99)

Pbk. ed. 0-7868-4907-X (\$7.99)
10 and up, Gr. 5+



Peter and the Shadow Thieves

Tr. ed. 0-7868-3787-X (\$18.99)
10 and up, Gr. 5+



Escape from the Carnival A Never Land Book

Tr. ed. 0-7868-3789-6 (\$9.99)
Ages 8 and up, Gr. 3+

ALSO BY RIDLEY PEARSON



The Kingdom Keepers

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

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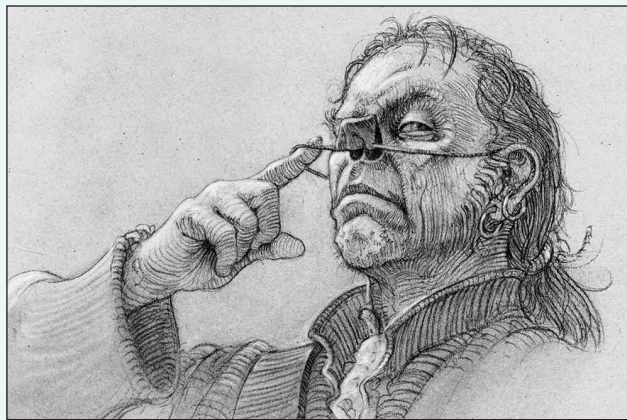
ABOUT THE BOOK

In this riveting and adventure-packed follow-up to the award-winning *New York Times* best seller *Peter and the Starcatchers*, Peter leaves the relative safety of Mollusk Island—along with his trusted companion, Tinker Bell—for the cold, damp, dangerous streets of London. On a difficult journey across the sea, he and Tink discover the dark and deadly, slithering creature, Lord Ombra, who is intent on recovering the missing starstuff—celestial dust that contains unimagined powers. In London, Peter attempts to track down the indomitable Molly, hoping that together they can combat Ombra's determined forces. But London is not Mollusk Island; Peter is not the boy he used to be; and Lord Ombra—the Shadow Master—is unlike anything Peter, or the world, has ever seen.

Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson have done it again—written a compulsively readable, magical, impossible-to-put-down tale that will delight readers of all ages.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide includes discussion questions and projects intended to extend the use of the novel into classrooms, book clubs, and literature circles. It should promote discussion on the themes of the novel, including friendship, courage, and corruption.



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PRE-READING

Have you read *Peter Pan* by James Barrie? What about the first book in the series of prequels, *Peter and the Starcatchers*? Can you read a series out of order? If you do, as a reader what should you keep in mind?

Do you remember the ending of *Peter and the Starcatchers*? How did Molly end up in London and Peter on Mollusk Island? Where was the starstuff? Are the Others still after it? Predict what you think this adventure might bring.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 Peter loves taunting the pirates (including Hook) on Mollusk Island. Why does this turn out to be a misguided decision? What does it lead to? Can one mistake often lead to more? Why?
- 2 What is Hook's situation on Mollusk Island? How does he feel about it? What would he rather be doing?
- 3 Who are the passengers and crew aboard Captain Nerezza's ship? What is their goal? Who do they think can lead them to it? What details prove that these are evil characters?
- 4 Are Fighting Prawn and Peter able to rescue James? How do they accomplish it? Why does the chief blame Peter for what happened? Do you agree?
- 5 Describe Ombra and the powers he has. How does he use them? Describe how he moves. Whose power would you rather have: Peter's ability to fly or Ombra's powers over people's shadows? Why? How would you use both? What is Ombra's weakness? Does Peter have one?
- 6 What is the value of the box that Lord Aster is protecting? What will the Others do if they have it in their possession? Do you think there is anything that powerful in the world today?

- 7 How does Peter find his way to England? Who helps him the most along the way? What was the most dangerous part of the journey? What does he do about food, water, and rest along the way? How can someone as small as Tinker Bell be so important?
- 8 What is Captain Hook's new plan for exacting revenge on the Lost Boys and specifically Peter? Does his plan work? Why or why not? Does revenge ever really work?
- 9 Retell the events from the ship docking in London until Peter finds Molly. What kind of trouble do he and Tink get into? How do they manage to escape and find each other? What does this show us about their characters?
- 10 Describe Molly's friend, George. How does he help Peter and Molly? Does he prove himself to be a worthy friend and honorable enough to learn the secrets of starstuff? How do friends prove themselves in our everyday lives? Do you have a friend you could trust to keep any secret for you?
- 11 George and Peter are allies, but they are definitely not friends. Why? Can you remain allies and not be friends? When can friends turn into enemies?
- 12 What events transpire at the Tower of London? Why is this an important stop along the path to finding Lord Aster and the starstuff?
- 13 Molly accuses her father of not caring for Lady Aster. With whom do you agree? Why? Where should Lord Aster's loyalties be—with his family or his obligation as a Starcatcher?
- 14 How does Stonehenge become an important setting for the story? What is the history of this remarkable place? When was it originally built? By whom?
- 15 Do you know what the words Ombra, Nerezza, and Fantome mean in different languages? Which languages? What are the definitions? What are the similarities between these words?
- 16 Barry and Pearson are masters at creating adventure stories. Which part of this one was your favorite? Why? What makes a story impossible to put down? What can you learn about your own writing from this novel?

PROJECTS

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING

At the end of each chapter write a prediction about what you think may happen next. Base your predictions on facts, hints, and what you know about the characters.

Create a character chart to fill out as you read the novel. Include the following information: character's name, description, friend or foe of Peter, goal, outcome.

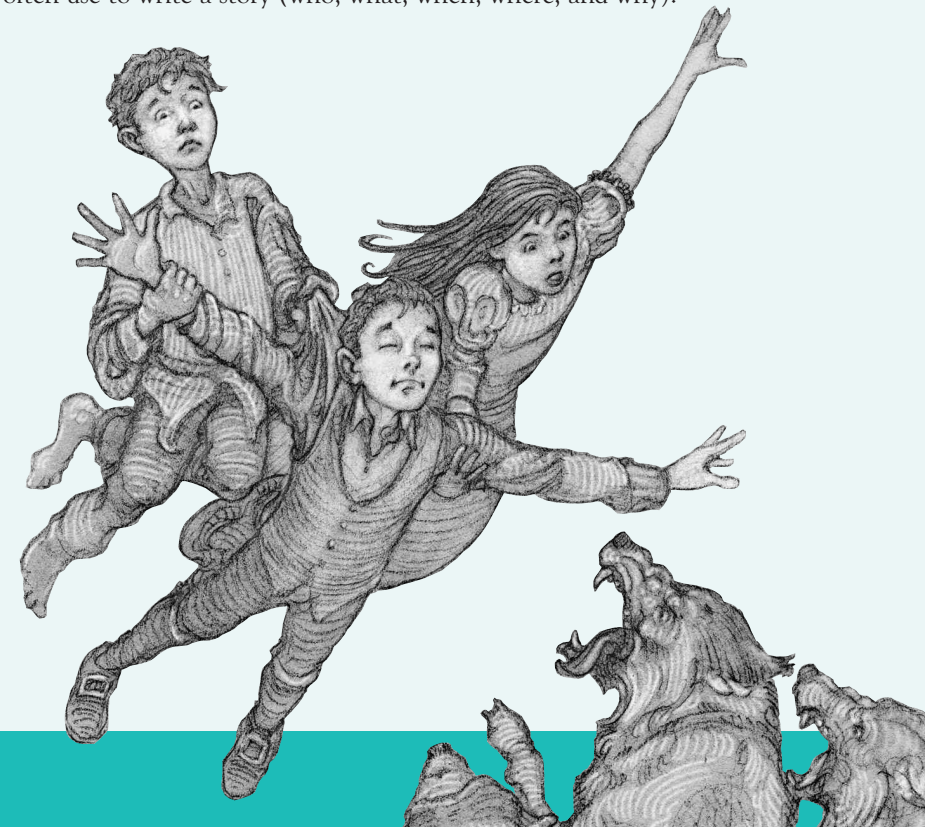
SCIENCE

Research what types of things actually fall from outer space to Earth each year. What chemicals are they made of? What do scientists try to learn by gathering these items and collecting dust from comets and other space objects? Create five questions about space inspired by the novel and then do research to find the answers.

HISTORY

Create a poster, pamphlet, or Web site about Stonehenge. Find out the five W's that reporters often use to write a story (who, what, when, where, and why).

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Raul Rubiera/Miami Herald

DAVE BARRY

is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author of more than two dozen books, including *Dave Barry's Money Secrets*, *Dave Barry's Complete Guide to Guys*, *Dave Barry Slept Here*, *Big Trouble*, and *Dave Barry Hits Below the Beltway*.



Jacques Bailhe/Jimmy Malecki

RIDLEY PEARSON

a Fulbright Fellow, is the best-selling author of twenty-three novels, including *Cut and Run* and *The Middle of Nowhere*. He is also the author of the young adult novel, *The Kingdom Keepers*.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

**Can you explain a bit about your process for writing as a team?
How is it different from writing on your own? Would you recommend it?**

Ridley: We like to outline each of the books, to know where it starts, where it goes, and where and how it ends. We do this before we write any of the chapters. Then, with an outline in place, Dave takes a set of characters, and I take a set of characters, and if the outline calls for my characters, then I write that chapter, turning it over to Dave to edit. Likewise, if it's Dave's characters, then he writes the first pass and turns it over to me. We trade the chapter back and forth, changing, rewriting, and editing, until both of us are pleased with the results.

Dave: I definitely recommend writing with a partner, if you trust the other person's judgment. Ridley and I often catch problems in each other's chapters, or come up with suggestions for improving them.

What's been the best part of writing the prequels to *Peter Pan's* story?

Ridley: Having a partner to write with, to bounce ideas off and to laugh with has made the process much more enjoyable than solo writing. *Peter Pan* is such a great story that writing the stories that come before it has let both of us use our imaginations and create a whole new world.

Dave: The other great thing has been getting the reactions of people who've read the book—especially younger readers. They really get into the story.

Is your writing process different when you write for children rather than adults?

Ridley: Both Dave and I believe that story and character are everything (as opposed to “passing along a message”) to readers. I think in both my adult and young adult novels (and Dave's too!), the emphasis is on writing a compelling, entertaining story.

Dave: We made a point of not “writing down” to younger readers; we didn't simplify our plot or our vocabulary. We feel that younger readers, even if they haven't encountered a specific word before, are pretty good at figuring out its meaning from the context.

What can fans look forward to next?

Ridley: The third and final book in the *Starcatchers* series is just now underway. We've also begun a series of books (*Never Land Books*) that take place on *Never Land* to explain what's going on there while *Peter* is away.

Dave: We just finished plotting the third *Starcatchers* book, and we're very excited—it's a wild tale.

What advice would you give to kids who want to grow up to be writers?

Ridley: Read. Read. Read. Did I mention you need to read a lot?

Dave: And then read some more.

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