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## Disney's new live-action Peter Pan: Production facts, rumors and questions



by Victoria Davis 2 months ago [Follow @victoriadavisd](#)

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***After already producing eight Peter Pan films which spanned 80 years, Disney is aiming to produce another live-action remake. What makes this one special? Here's what we know about the production.***

29 novels, 24 stage productions, 12 television shows, 8 comic books, 8 feature films, and even 5 video games have paid tribute to the story of Peter Pan since the 1904 release of J. M. Barrie's original play, [Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up](#). Peter Pan is arguably one of the most successful stories ever to be capitalized upon in the entertainment world, captivating Walt Disney and Hollywood alike. Now, Disney Studios is aiming for a new live-action remake.

But how much is too much? Should fans be excited for another Peter Pan story, or has the boy who wouldn't grow up finally been, well, outgrown?

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He's certainly been a character that has stood the test of time. Peter Pan's mysterious, mischievous and unmistakable boyish charm has captured the hearts of young adventurers, and the story of Neverland had been a beacon of hope for adults in fear of growing up too fast. Peter Pan, Tinkerbell, Captain Hook, and the Darlings have been there for those who want to believe in magic, fairies, and ticking crocodiles.

Maybe it's that love which Disney hopes will also stand the test of time in the wake of over 80 adaptations. Still, there has to be a difference between Disney's new endeavor and the other Peter Pan films that have gone before it. So, what makes this new adaptation special?



The very first Peter Pan adaptation to hit the big screen, believe it or not, was not Disney's 1950s cartoon. It was Paramount Pictures 1920s silent film starring Betty Bronson as Peter and Ernest Torrence as Hook. This was the real launch of the Peter Pan film franchise. Next came Disney, then Steven Spielberg's *Hook* in 1991, followed by *Peter Pan 2: Return to Neverland* by Disney again, and P. J. Hogan's 2003 *Peter Pan* from Universal Studios.

But the most recent adaptation was *Pan*, a 2015 origin story directed by Joe Wright starring Levi Miller as Pan, Garrett Hedlund as Hook, and Hugh Jackman as Blackbeard.

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But the Warner Bros.' film did not do as well as Joe Wright had hoped. *Pan's* worldwide gross, which was \$128.4 million, didn't quite manage to offset the **studio's production cost** of \$150 million. Perhaps this is why, in 2016, Disney Studios decided to make the **official announcement** that they would be producing their own live-action Peter Pan, with David Lowery at the helm.

This is the first factor that sets this upcoming Peter Pan adaptation apart from the other live-action attempts. Despite so many films having been released by other major production companies, Disney has never actually taken a swing at the task themselves before.



On top of that, their chosen script writer is well-versed in the realm of Disney remakes. Having directed the **highly successful** *Pete's Dragon* remake, Lowery expressed a lot of excitement in an **interview with Collider** regarding diving into the Peter Pan script to bring a live-action version to the Disney Studios.

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"Everyone at Disney, from the executives to our producers and everybody there, I just really love and get along with," said Lowery. "They all have similar taste to me, and wonderful taste in films...I love Peter Pan to death. It's one of the most influential pieces of storytelling in my life. It made a huge impact on how I grew up."

Lowery went on to add that he had seen and fallen in love with both the Disney cartoon as well as P.J. Hogan's 2003 version. But while these are works the director says he greatly admires. He also

sees the importance in keeping Peter Pan's well-worn story fresh.

"I didn't know how I would do it better," said Lowery to Collider. "Then, I started thinking, 'Well, how would I do it, not better, but differently?' As soon as I started thinking that, I started getting ideas and it seemed like a good fit. We're writing the script and that will come along, at some point."



Lowery is adamant that the new Peter Pan will not be another origin story, nor is it likely to be a sequel to the original tale as was Spielberg's *Hook*. In fact, it's been reported that Disney and Lowery are **drawing inspiration** from Barrie's original script. While Lowery is listed as "director" on **IMDB** for the new Peter Pan remake, he is also currently signed on as co-writer with *Pete's Dragon* writer Toby Halbrooks.

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Though the film was, by many accounts, a flop, Lowery is not intimidated by *Pan*'s release being relatively recent. In fact, he says it's affirming that there's something other director's haven't yet captured. He still believes there's a new way to tell the story while still keeping the original tale at the forefront.

"I think [*Pan*] reached the people it needed to reach, but it probably wasn't the Peter Pan that people wanted," said Lowery in the same interview with **Collider**. "And maybe people don't want Peter Pan. I don't know. We'll find out. But, I think it's timeless for a reason...I think regardless of the fact that there was a version of it in recent memory, I don't see that as a problem...I look at that and think, "Yeah, there's room for more. I'd go see another version of it."

He added, "I'm hoping that people will be ready to see new life breathed into that character."

As of last year, Peter Pan's producer is reportedly A Wrinkle in Time's Jim Whitaker, who has been occasionally mistaken for the film's director.



Whoever is running the show, Whitaker gave [ComicBook.com](#) a little insight into what fans can expect from Lowery's script and Disney's upcoming live-action. At the time, the team was still working on the script.

"But you know David Lowery's work," said Whitaker. "I would say some of the tenets of his great work is a kind of grounded emotionality. And I think that's at least one part of what you can expect. But it'll be a big, rollicking adventure, too."

"A lot of [my movies] have to do with emotion," added the producer. "It's really about a character's journey and a lot of them has to do with hope. I like to do movies that ultimately have hope in them."

The official cast of Peter Pan has not yet been confirmed, though there are some who are hoping Disney casts [Millie Bobby Brown](#) as Wendy Darling and Idris Elba as Captain Hook.

However, there is a rumor going around in the fairy world that Reese Witherspoon might soon be one of the first to be cast in the new remake.

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Along with a live-action remake of Peter Pan, Disney has also teased about a potential Tink feature film. Time Magazine [revealed](#) in May that Reese Witherspoon is set to play the beloved fairy Tinkerbell as well as sit in the [producer's chair](#). Victoria Strouse, who co-wrote the screenplay for Finding Dory, was also hired on by Disney to write the script for *Tink*.

However, since neither the Peter Pan remake nor the Tinkerbell film has a set release date yet, or produced an official cast list outside of Witherspoon, there's speculation that the two films will be combined into one. This might be a reasonable course of action considering Disney already has the odds stacked against them with another Peter Pan remake and might not have the budget to give both films the typical Disney high-bill production financing.

Another reason Disney Studios might decide to combine the films is that both stories are, for the most part, following Barrie's original screenplay. But the combination of the films poses some questions:

Peter Pan and the Darling children are all very young kids in Barrie's play. They are hardly even teenagers. So one can't help but wonder, if Disney decides to combine the films, if Witherspoon's Tinkerbell will still act the silent, jealous counterpart to Wendy as a woman much more mature than the child stars, or if Tinkerbell will take on a more motherly role. Another possibility is that the cast will, in fact, be of an older age. This seems to contradict the very idea of Peter Pan, but only time will tell how the roles will play out.



Further details on both the Peter Pan remake and Tink are being kept, as the Hollywood Reporter noted, ["deep in Pixie Hollow,"](#) but more news is sure to come along after Disney premieres their upcoming remakes, *The Lion King*, *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, *Mulan* and *Cruella*.

To this day, Disney's 1953 animated Peter Pan is considered the **"most successful"** of all the Peter Pan film adaptations. It will be interesting to see if Disney can top their own creation in their new live-action ambitions for the story of the boy who could never grow up.

A release date for Disney's Peter Pan remake has not yet been revealed.

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Do you think Disney can create a fresh new story with another Peter Pan remake? Or is the story old hat? Leave your thoughts in the comments below!

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