



Peter Panzerfaust, Vol. 1: The Great Escape

Kurtis J. Wiebe , Tyler Jenkins

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A coming of age tale told through the eyes of a group of French orphans during World War 2 who are saved by a brave and daring American boy named Peter. As they travel together, they get tangled up in the French Resistance in Paris, fighting a growing German presence under the leadership of a fanatical SS officer hell bent on wiping them out! Using the Peter Pan story as a touchstone, Peter Panzerfaust reinvents familiar character and plot elements in a unique and creative way.

Collects Peter Panzerfaust #1-5

Peter Panzerfaust, Vol. 1: The Great Escape Details

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From Reader Review Peter Panzerfaust, Vol. 1: The Great Escape for online ebook

'kris Pung says

A fun take on the Peter Pan mythos

Erin says

I really enjoyed this one. An inventive retelling of the Peter Pan myth set in WWII France. There is a certain whimsy and elegance to the artwork that adds an extra layer of depth to the story as a whole. Each character has moments of their own that elucidate certain aspects of their personalities so you feel like you're getting to know the group along with everyone else. I'm excited to read the next story arch.

Jeff says

Three and a half stars.

For those of you who hate Peter Pan (this includes me), this version takes a look at the basic story through a distorted mirror. This volume takes place in France at the beginning of World War II. Here, Peter is an American teen, with Daddy issues*, who rescues a group of French teenagers (the proverbial Lost Boys) from an orphanage. It borrows certain elements of the Pan legend: he's fearless, cocky, and nonchalant; the Darlings, an elusive (Tinker) Belle, and a nemesis (a German commander, Nazis = pirates). It jettisons the magic, the flying, and the crocodile with a ticking clock in its belly.

Peter's able to lead the boys with praise, and through the strength of his will and personality. With feats of derring-do, he slowly forms the beginnings of a commando squad.

Worth a look if interested in a re-tooled Peter Pan, but the story stands alone on its own merits.

*(clink) Another character with a father complex and another nickel in the Slim Jim fund.

Brendan says

I like when they take a story like Peter Pan and revamp it for a new audience. The issue here is the lack of risks and safety net surrounding the characters. Why choose a WWII setting and not dive head first into the atrocities that surrounded the German army? There is potential here for a grand story but this first volume struggles with identity, maybe the next volume may course correct. The creative team have twisted the Peter Pan narrative around so they can now begin throwing the curve balls at the audience. I have this at a firm 3, good but not great. The first volumes tend to be mixed for these high concept ideas.

Andy says

Peter Pan was not a big part of my childhood. Oh, I knew who he was, but those stories (and the Disney appearances) were never really on my radar. That could explain why I liked Peter Panzerfaust so much.

The story begins with a reporter named Parsons interviewing Gilbert Agnew, a survivor of the Nazi bombing of Calais in 1940. Gilbert relates the tale of how he and several other boys from a local orphanage were rescued by a free-wheeling, danger-loving stranger named Peter. The boys are skeptical at first; maybe this lanky young man with the strangely waving hair and pixie-like grin poses more of a threat than the Nazis. Gilbert tells the reporter that being around Peter was “like being chased by a wild dog.” Would the boys really be safer with Peter, trying to sneak away 150 miles to Paris or hiding out in a collapsed orphanage?

Peter Panzerfaust is an interesting mix of adventure and survival, a coming-of-age story with consequences, sort of a Neverland-meets-the-brutality-of-war. A lot of odd (I wouldn't exactly say “strange”) things happen to make you wonder just what's going on here, but nothing that's so beyond your reach that would cause frustration. Wiebe and Jenkins provide just the right amount of humor and darkness to make *Peter Panzerfaust* one of the most interesting graphic novels of the year.

Lisa says

I don't usually comment or care about art style, but these orphan boys are drawn in such a way that they look like grown men to me. It's weird.

Nicola Mansfield says

Reason for Reading: I like WWII stories and I like reimagined fairy tales. This appealed to my tastes.

This is a very well done historical tale of a group of French orphans who survive the blasting of their orphanage in Calais. As they are trying to survive and decide what to do next they meet a charismatic American boy, Peter, who readily takes charge of the group and they set off to first just escape Calais, then later head to Paris where they assume they will be safer.

The dynamics of the children are good. They are all around the same age 14-16, some being leaders, others followers, some more gung ho while others are more timid and afraid. A well-rounded group of kids. Peter, however, is a bit larger than life. He seems to have no fear, thrives on it actually and just naturally becomes the leader with little resistance from anyone. He doesn't have super abilities but he comes out unscathed where it seems impossible.

The elements of Peter Pan have been wound into the story well. Of course there is the obvious leader Peter, the thinking of the orphans as Lost Boys, the eventual rescuing of the Darling children, but there are more subtle ones as well. Peter mentions his looking for a woman named "Belle" before the war started, in one scene as Peter crosses a room that is being riddled with bullets his shape is left upon the wall, ie his shadow, there are instances when Peter "flies", Wendy has dreamt of being able to live in a Neverland and so on. An enjoyable story with its connections to the Peter Pan tale; there is no magic in it and I hope future volumes continue that way, but it is obvious there is something not quite right about Peter and it will be interesting find out what his mystery is.

Skye Kilaen says

A World War II graphic novel chronicling the exploits of Peter Pan, the Lost Boys, and the Darling children. The charismatic Peter leads a resistance cell in occupied France. The Lost Boys are orphaned French teenagers who fall in with him and become his soldiers. The Darling children survive a plane crash that kills their parents. And there's a fanatical SS officer bent on hunting Peter down, you may recognize him once he shows up.

I was suspicious of this before I read it, because the concept seemed somewhat silly. The execution, though, is amazing. Peter's personality seems otherworldly in the context of the war, as it should, but he's a natural leader and dedicated to the cause. His nemesis Hook is chilling, reinvented here as an SS officer. The story is framed as a series of interviews with the surviving Lost Boys, now elderly, which gives it an extra note of nostalgia and sadness.

Peter Panzerfaust is (finally) complete in five paperback volumes.

Sesana says

An interesting take on the Peter Pan story. Wiebe moves the action to World War II France and extracts all the fantasy. Honestly, that sounded like less than fun to me. Isn't the joy of Peter Pan in the fantasy? What good is a Peter who can't fly, and who doesn't make the acquaintance of mermaids? But something convinced me to give it a shot. Probably that cover, with the Lost Boys joyriding in a jeep.

I'm glad that I did. Personally, I picked up quite a few references to the original, though I don't doubt that somebody better versed in Peter Pan could find more. The references make sense in the new context, and can be rather clever. I'm very interested in seeing where Wiebe is going with Belle, for example, and the Darlings show up in a way that was quite surprising to me.

And the story holds up as more than just a series of callbacks. The boys have definite, and distinct personalities, which makes it easier to follow the large cast. The framing narrative, with an elderly Toodles telling his story as part of an interview, allows for some perspective on what's going on, and makes it clear that this adventure is just beginning.

But the writing could be a bit clumsy at times, and the violence sometimes seemed more cartoony than I think was intended. Neither were enough to turn me off the series, by any means, but they were minor flaws. I'm not sure yet if I'll finish off the series, but I'll at least put in a few more volumes.

Sam Quixote says

Peter Panzerfaust is a retelling of JM Barrie's Peter Pan set in Nazi-occupied France in 1940 – and it's really good!

Told from the perspective of one of the orphans Peter liberates in the opening chapter, who's now an elderly man, The Great Escape follows Peter and the boys as they fight their way through Calais to the docks before

realising escape to Britain is now impossible. Turning around, they head toward Paris in the hope that somehow the Nazi threat will be repelled and the capital will remain unscathed. But the war is only escalating and for Peter and the boys, their story is just beginning...

The Peter Pan angle isn't that heavily played up and the only really overt reference is when Wendy Darling appears and reveals her name – without that, you could easily read this book and not notice it's the Peter Pan story. But once you know the angle, you can see all the references: Peter, the orphans (or "lost boys"), the wolf howls, and Captain Hook who here is, of course, Kapitain Haken, an SS officer whom Peter engages in a swordfight and mutilates his left hand.

But this is definitely not a kids' book as there's a plenty of violence and killing which you'd expect from a WW2-set story. It's also a thrilling survival story of a small group of teenage orphans in war-torn Europe, dodging the Nazis – and killing a fair few - who find a new family amongst their friends. There are some awesome action scenes as the boys outwit the Nazis in the streets of Calais, and Kurtis Wiebe creates some excellent characters in the group, not least of whom is the charismatic Peter.

Peter Panzerfaust Volume 1 is a highly enjoyable book and a great start to this promising series. Remember this name: Kurtis Wiebe, because between this book and Rat Queens, he's one of the most interesting comics writers around at the moment, publishing some of the best, most original titles. Check out Peter Panzerfaust for an enthralling tale of adventure and fun set against the darkest of times.

I wonder if a crocodile with a ticking belly shows up later on...

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

With a nod to Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie, Wiebe frames his story of Peter, the lost boy, Wendy, John and Michael Darling, in the memories of one of the boys, Gilbert, recalling the events that brought them all together. It begins with the German invasion of France in June 1940. The British has already retreated and the Germans were bombing France into submission. The lost boys are a bunch of French orphans in Calais whose orphanage is bombed one day. Wondering what to do, they meet an American boy named Peter, on quest to find a girl named Belle. Before Peter leads them to a safe place, the boys encounter some Germans and have it out with them, and acquire some weapons. After a few days of hiding, getting to know each other, and more fighting with Germans, they head out for Paris, with plenty of adventures. Along the way a small plane is shot down, and the only survivors are Wendy, John and Michael, who end up traveling with Peter and the lost boys to Paris, where they find more adventure, fighting and become more organized.

I didn't expect to like this graphic novel very much but I was surprised how much I did like it. It is an easy story to follow, the boys all have a distinct look of their own so you never get them confused as happens in some graphic novels, and it is clear when the story jumps to the present and Gilbert's memories and the past, where the action happens.

There is some violence, some French cursing, but on the whole it is an enjoyable story and a nice start to the Peter Panzerfaust series. This is a nice reimagining of the Peter Pan, although resemblance isn't really distracting, because it only extends to how the boys meet and form a band, and are later joined by the Darling kids. J.M. Barrie's Peter and lost boys never had adventures like the boys in this story.

This is a nice addition to the graphic novel genre and fans of that will be happy to read this first volume in the adventures of Peter and his band of boys.

Joe says

I adored Volume 1 of Rat Queens so I immediately checked to see what else my library had by Kurtis Wiebe. I'm so glad I picked this one up. I will say this, "Peter Panzerfaust, Vol. 1: The Great Escape" is never a book I would have picked up on my own. The story of Peter Pan mixed with Nazi-occupied France seems like it wouldn't work at all. How wrong I was!

I particularly like the story framing device of interviewing on of the lost boys when he's an old man. I suspect as the volumes go on we'll visit each of the surviving lost boys for their perspective. Peter himself is great fun and much less annoying than I've seen him in other adaptations. But be warned, this is no light-hearted romp. There are real stakes and it doesn't take long for tragedy to effect our heroes.

The story touches upon how those we meet in our youth disproportionately influence us for the rest of our lives, especially if there is a shared trauma. I felt for each and every one of these boys (and Wendy Darling, let's not forget).

I've already picked up the rest of the volumes and cannot wait to devour them. It's official Wiebe writes great male and female characters. It's almost like he's a really good author or something. Crazy, right??!!

Brad says

I don't like Peter Pan. I don't like the idea. I don't like the book. I like the Disney movie only very little, and I've never bothered seeing it on stage. I don't like either of the live action film versions I can think of at the moment. I just don't like it, so it is no surprise that I like Peter Panzerfaust much, much better than everything that's come before it.

It didn't need to do a whole hell of a lot to get there, though. But it did, which is good because this is a truly inspired take. Peter Pan (the lone Yankee) and his French Lost Boys as Resistance to the Nazis in WWII France? It is precisely as cool as it sounds. We've already seen Untersturmfuhrer Hook for a moment (pre-hand loss). We have an appropriately spunky Peter. Wendy and her brothers are there in peripheral supporting roles, and joy of joys, the narrative has been delivered by one of the Lost Boys himself.

Image is producing some excellent comics at the moment. If you're a fan of the medium, you should check out what they've got in their stable at the moment. Image is doing it right.

Dan says

Quarter of the way into this I felt like giving up on this book. I decided to push on and just get thru it. It wasn't till half way thru that I got that it was a Peter Pan themed WWII story, but that still wasn't enough to make me enjoy this. I will try one more volume before I decide that I do not like this series.

Kaitlin says

So I picked this up on a recommendation from my lovely friend Chelsea who had already read and very much enjoyed this series. She told me that this was a sort of updated and modernised version of Peter Pan, set in a war-zone time period. I, naturally, thought it sounded hugely intriguing and didn't need to know anything more before I went ahead and bought Volume 1 to try it out. It also helps that we have pretty similar tastes in Graphic Novels and so I knew that the artwork would be pretty too.

So, this is exactly what I said above, a Peter Pan 'remake' essentially but set during the World War. We follow a group of Orphans who, when a bomb goes off at their orphanage, meet another young boy called Peter who leads them away from the scene and into yet more trouble and adventure (see the resemblance to the Lost Boys is already there).

Along the way we get to know the boys a bit more and we see the story from the pov of one of them who has grown old and is recounting the story to a younger man. I liked this style of recounting and felt that it worked well for the book.

The art style is indeed very nice with a lot of bold colours, although neutral tones, setting the scene for the action to happen. As it is a war-focused book there are a lot of big explosions and moments of destruction which leads to some wonderful panoramic 2-pg spreads (my favourite in Vol. 1 being the page of the docks at sunset with the ships aflame).

The only slight quibble I had with the artwork was the faces, particularly the eyes, because occasionally I felt they didn't look quite as thought-out as some other parts and sometimes one pupil was strangely bigger than the other, but this is a very minor complaint and probably something that is only likely to bother me. Other than that the art work was solid and pretty, action-packed and clear and you could tell who was who fairly easily.

I loved the fact that there was a lot of french language snippets included in the storyline because it was set within France and I found that my very basic school lessons in French were enough to help me translate and understand it all. I also imagined all the characters a lot easier due to the language change because it meant that I imagined them all with a French accent and could believe in it all a bit more.

Overall a very solid beginning to what no doubt becomes a better story. I am very much looking forward to picking up the next volume, and I can't wait to see where the boys and the story will go next! :) 4*s
