

Reader Information Guide

The Never: A Tale of Peter and the Fae

Approximate Reading Grade Level

- **Grade Level: 8th – 10th Grade**¹
- **Rationale:** The novel is a "thoughtful reinterpretation" of classic literature with an "elegiac" tone that utilizes more complex vocabulary and philosophical themes than standard middle-grade fiction²². It features historical and mythological elements that require a more mature reading capacity

Recommended Grade Level for Readers

- **Recommendation: Young Adult (Ages 14+)**
- **Themes and Content:** Critics describe the book as a "darker adult take" on children's literature⁵⁵. While it deals with Peter Pan, it is intended for readers who enjoy "mythology" and stories about "attempting to protect one's way of life amid change and destruction" rather than lighthearted adventure

Trigger Warnings & Sensitive Content

- **Genocide/Existential Threat:** The Fae are fleeing "The Rot," a magical black slime that consumes their world, kills their people, and dissolves their magic
- **Grief and Loss:** The story begins with the death of King Oberon and almost his entire company of knights, leaving Queen Mab in a state of "defeat" and "mourning"
- **Child Abandonment/Kidnapping:** A central plot point involves the Fae scouting for "Lost children" to "steal" and bring to their world to serve as "anchors" for their new realm
- **Violence with "Cold Iron":** Humans are depicted hunting the Fae with iron-tipped spears, which act as a lethal poison to magical beings
- **Stereotypes:** The book addresses the "horrendously stereotypical Indians" found in original Pan stories by recontextualizing them as "Fae manifestations of childish interpretations," which may still be sensitive for some readers

Racy, Adult, or Spicy Content

- **Synopsis:** The novel contains no "spicy" or sexually explicit content.
- **Adult Elements:** The "adult" nature of the book refers to its **philosophical and dark tone** rather than sexual content. There are descriptions of Queen Mab's beauty (e.g., "white shoulders," "silken mane") and her "disdain" for the smell of humans, but interactions remain focused on royal duty and survival

Themes for Parents of Under-18 Readers

- **The Cost of Survival:** The Fae must decide whether to "cower in the dark" and diminish themselves to stay alive or face total extinction
- **Perspective and Prejudice:** The story explores the conflict between Humans and Fae, noting that Humans act out of "fear" while the Fae view Humans as "filthy beasts" or "provoked animals"
- **The Burden of Creation:** Peter's imagination is the engine that keeps "The Never" existing, but the Fae manipulate this to ensure their own survival, raising questions about the ethics of using a child's mind to sustain a world
- **Elegiac Tone:** Unlike the Disney version of Peter Pan, this story is about the "end of an age" and the loss of a magical civilization