

1 Peter Breaks Through



All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, “Oh, why can’t you remain like this for ever!” Henceforth, Wendy knew that she must grow up.

Mrs. Darling loved to have everything just so, and Mr. Darling had a passion for being exactly like his neighbors; so, of course, they had a nurse. As they were poor, owing to the amount of milk the children drank, this nurse was a prim¹ Newfoundland dog, called Nana, who had belonged to no one in particular until the Darlings engaged her.

Nana proved to be quite a treasure of a nurse. How thorough she was at bath-time, and up at any moment of the night if one of her charges made the slightest cry. Of course her kennel² was in the nursery.

1 prim [prɒm] (a.) excessively formal and proper in manner or appearance

2 kennel [ˈkɛnl] (n.) a small, usually wooden shelter for a dog to sleep in outside



There never was a simpler happier family until the coming of Peter Pan.

Occasionally in her travels through her children's minds Mrs. Darling found things she could not understand, and of these quite the most perplexing³ was the word Peter.

She knew of no Peter, and yet he was here and there in John and Michael's minds, while Wendy's began to be scrawled⁴ all over with him.

"Who is he, my pet?"

"He is Peter Pan, you know, mother."

At first Mrs. Darling did not know, but after thinking back into her childhood she just remembered a Peter Pan who was said to live with the fairies. "Besides," she said to Wendy, "he would be grown up by this time."

"Oh no, he isn't grown up," Wendy assured her confidently, "and he is just my size." She meant that he was her size in both mind and body.

Children have the strangest adventures without being troubled by them. For instance, they may remember to mention, a week after the event happened, that when they were in the wood they had met their dead father and had a game with him.

3 perplexing [p3r}pleks0H] (a.) causing confusion

4 scrawl [skrA:l] (v.) to write something quickly, without trying to make your writing tidy or easy to read

5 disquieting [d0s}kwa0Bt0H] (a.) causing a feeling of anxiety or uneasiness

6 revelation [{}rev3}le0Bn] (n.) information that is newly disclosed, especially surprising, or valuable

7 puzzle [}pKzI] (v.) think about without fully understanding or being able to decide

8 tolerant [}tA:l3r3nt] (a.) showing or characterized by broad-mindedness

3 It was in this casual way that Wendy one morning made a disquieting⁵ revelation⁶. Some leaves of a tree had been found on the nursery floor, which certainly were not there when the children went to bed, and Mrs. Darling was puzzling⁷ over them when Wendy said with a tolerant⁸ smile: “I do believe it is that Peter again!”

“Whatever do you mean, Wendy?”

“It is so naughty of him not to wipe his feet,” Wendy said, sighing. She was a tidy child.

“What nonsense you talk, precious. No one can get into the house without knocking.”

“I think he comes in by the window,” she said.

“My love, it is three floors up.”


“Were not the leaves at the foot of the window, mother?”

It was quite true; the leaves had been found very near the window.

Mrs. Darling did not know what to think. Oh, surely she must have been dreaming.



」

 4 On the night we speak of all the children were once more in bed.

All were looking so safe and cosy⁹ that she smiled at her fears now and sat down tranquilly¹⁰ by the fire to sew. Then her head nodded, oh, so gracefully. She was asleep.

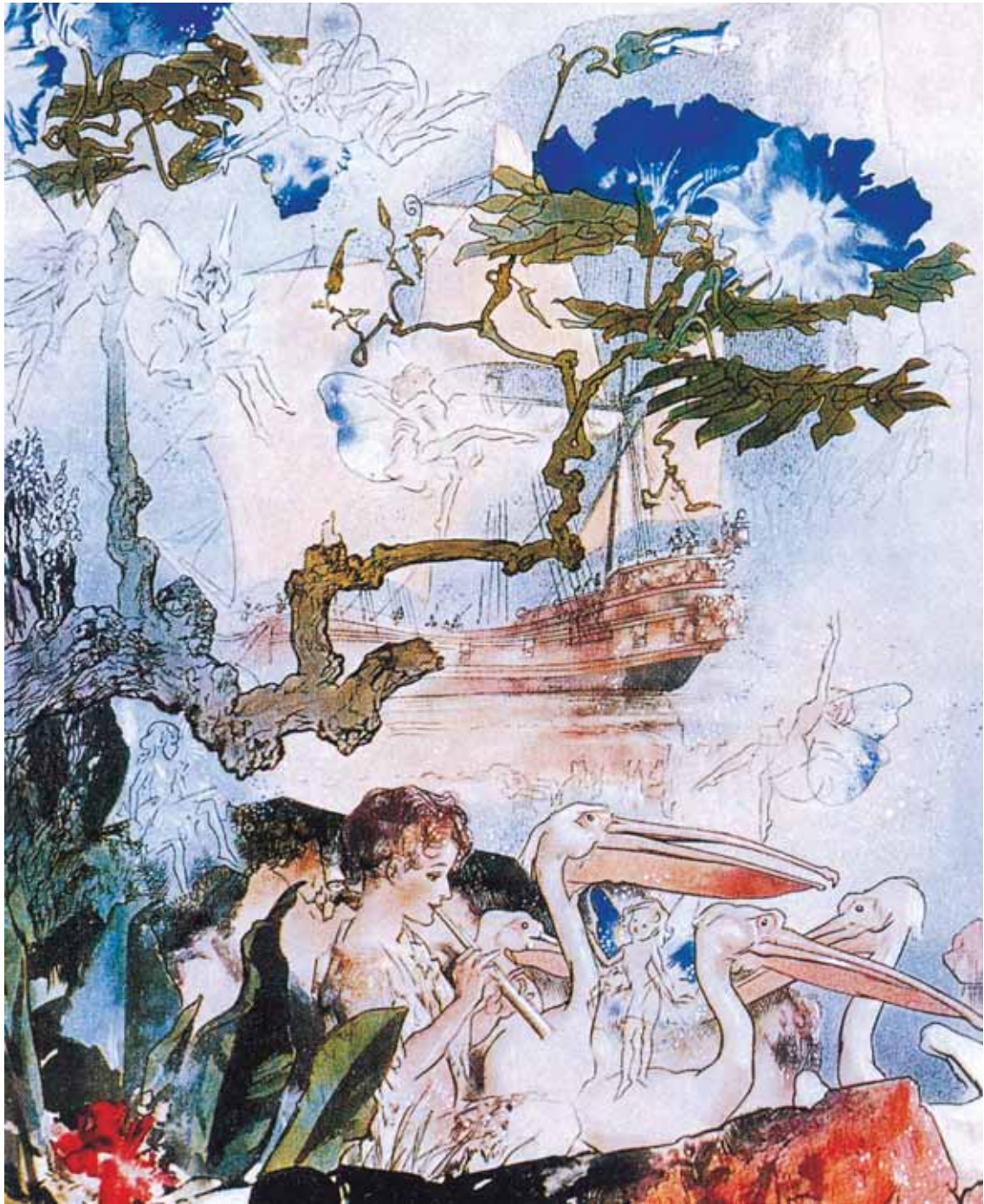
While she slept she had a dream. She dreamt that the Neverland had come too near and that a strange boy had broken through from it. In her dream he had rent¹¹ the film¹² that obscures¹³ the Neverland, and she saw Wendy and John and Michael peeping through the gap.

The dream by itself would have been a trifle¹⁴, but while she was dreaming the window of the nursery blew open, and a boy did drop on the floor.

She started up with a cry, and saw the boy, and somehow she knew at once that he was Peter Pan. He was a lovely boy, clad¹⁵ in skeleton leaves and the juices that ooze¹⁶ out of trees but the most entrancing¹⁷ thing about him was that he had all his first teeth. When he saw she was a grown-up, he gnashed¹⁸ the little pearls at her.

- 9 cosy [ʃkoʊzi] (a.) a small, comfortable, and warm place
- 10 tranquilly [ʃtrɒŋkwɒli] (adv.) pleasantly calm, quiet, and peaceful
- 11 rend [rɛnd] (v.) to tear something or somebody away
- 12 film [fɪlm] (n.) a thin layer of something on a surface
- 13 obscure [ɒbskjʊr] (v.) to make something unclear, indistinct, or hidden
- 14 trifle [ˈtraɪfl] (n.) a matter or item of little value or importance
- 15 clothe [kloʊ] (v.) to put clothes on somebody
- 16 ooze [uːz] (v.) leak through or as if through small openings
- 17 entrancing [ɪnˈtrɒnsɪŋ] (a.) capturing interest as if by a spell
- 18 gnash [næʃ] (v.) to bring your teeth forcefully together





Mrs. Darling dreamt that the Neverland had come too near and that a strange boy had broken through from it.