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Opening extract from

Mabel Lucie Attwell's Peter Pan and Wendy

Written by

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Illustrated by

Mabel Lucie Attwell

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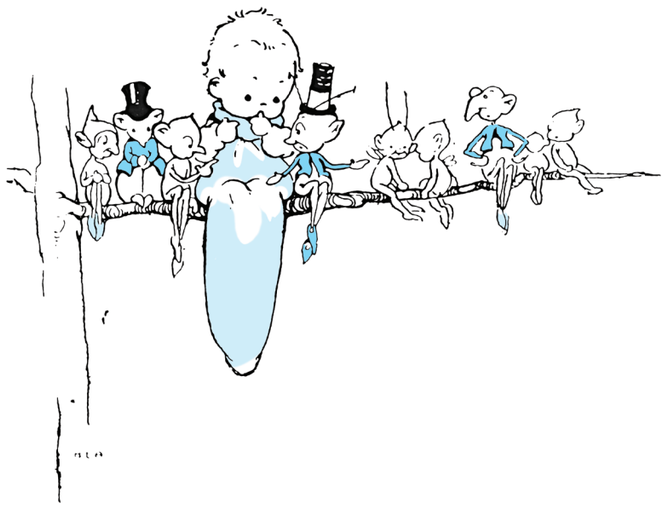

PETER PAN and WENDY

J. M. BARRIE

Retold by May Byron for little people with the approval of the author

with original illustrations by

Mabel Lucie Attwell

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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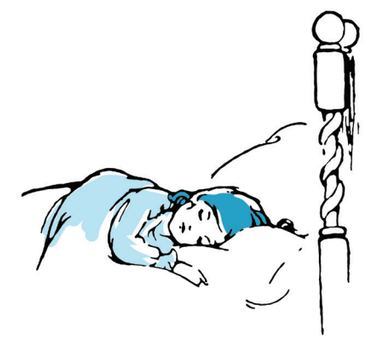
Chapter One

The Family at No. 14



All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy Moira Angela Darling knew was this: one day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she ran to

her mother with some flowers she had picked. And she looked so sweet, just like a little flower herself, that Mrs Darling said, "Oh, why can't you stay like this for ever!"

Then Wendy began to see that one didn't stay at two for the rest of one's life. Indeed, two is the beginning of the end. The end is being grown-up. Once you get to twenty-one or so, you can never be un-grown-up again. But Mrs Darling did not tell this to Wendy. Between two and twenty-one, there was lots of time for her to find out.

Mrs Darling was a perfect dear. Just the sort of mother one would choose: as sweet as honey, with lovely eyes, and a mouth that looked like a kiss. It had got like that with kissing her children so often. There were three children: Wendy, John and Michael; and Mrs Darling didn't know which she loved best. They were all pretty good, but Wendy was the best, because she tried

to make herself as like her mother as could be. It wasn't easy of course, but still she tried.

The three little Darlings had a very nice nursery, with lots of toys and picture-books; also a night-nursery with three little beds in it. And they had a most uncommon kind of nurse. She was called Nana, like other nurses, but she was really a large Newfoundland dog. Her kennel was in the nursery, so that she could keep her eye on the children all the time. She was rather prim and particular, and would have everything just so, but she was splendid at games, and would join in the wildest romps. In fact, she was a real treasure: she bathed and dressed the children, saw that they got up and went to bed in proper time. Oh, I tell you, she wouldn't stand any nonsense! She gave them their medicine when it was wanted, changed their pinnies when they became too grubby, and took them to the

Kindergarten and back every day, carrying an umbrella if it looked like rain.

The only person at No. 14 (this was the Darlings' house) who did not much care for Nana was Mr Darling, the father of Wendy, John and Michael. He was very faddy about what the neighbours thought, and he felt that they must certainly think it extremely odd to have a dog for a nurse. So Nana was never allowed to appear in the drawing-room, and if visitors came, she was shut up in the nursery, while the door was opened by the tiny little maidservant, Liza. Everybody knew that Mr Darling was not the best of friends with Nana, but everybody pretended not to know. It was a pity he was so set against her.

However, the children had other things to take up their minds. When the Kindergarten part of the day was over and it wasn't time yet for the evening romps

and dances, they talked to each other about the Never-Land. One could go on doing that for hours.

The Never-Land was a make-believe island, full of delightful places and interesting people. It is very hard to describe, because an island of that sort changes about from day to day, according to how you want it to be. It might be all over fairies, dwarfs and goblins; or it might have giants who live in enchanted castles, and princes (always the youngest of three) who go and attack them. Or it might have a robbers' cave, and a tumble-down cottage where a witch makes magic. There could be pirates there, too, and all sorts of ships (that's where an island comes in so useful), and coral reefs, and underground rivers. There is no end to the wonderful things in the Never-Land.

The most wonderful of all, though, is Peter Pan.

Now, Mrs Darling knew, more or less, about the

Never-Land. Very likely, when she was little, she had had a make-believe island of her own, cram-full of flowers, and kisses, and fairy ladies. As time went on, she forgot about it; still, she liked to hear what the children had to tell her. There was one thing, however, which puzzled her: and that was the name Peter Pan. Wendy had the most to say about him; but John and Michael mentioned him now and then. When Mrs Darling asked, "But who is Peter Pan?" nobody could explain; only Wendy said that he wasn't a grown-up person, he was just her size. Wendy was now about nine. Mrs Darling thought perhaps he was some boy at the Kindergarten.

But one day, Wendy told her that Peter sometimes came in the night, and sat at the end of her bed, playing on his pipes. No Kindergarten boy would do that. Besides, he couldn't get into the house without somebody knowing.

So Mrs Darling said that Wendy was talking nonsense. Nobody could come in at night like that.

Wendy replied that it was not nonsense; Peter came in by the window. She said, "You know those funny leaves that were on the floor today by the window? You couldn't think what they were?"

Mrs Darling certainly had picked up some strange unknown leaves. She said: "What have leaves got to do with Peter Pan?"

"They are off his shoes," said Wendy. "Naughty boy, he will not wipe his shoes. He never does."

"Why have you never told me all this before?" asked her mother.

"I suppose I forgot," said Wendy.

Mrs Darling was very uneasy, and she searched all over the nursery to see if the naughty boy was hiding anywhere. She asked Mr Darling if he had ever heard of a person called Peter Pan. But he said, "Oh dear me! It's some silly stuff that Nana has been putting into the children's heads. What do you expect if you will have a dog for a nurse?" She thought she would show him the leaves, but on second thoughts she did not.

The following evening Mrs Darling was sitting

sewing by the night-nursery fire. Nana had gone out, so she herself had bathed the little ones and put them to bed. They had dropped off to sleep while she sang to them. She had lit their three night-lights, and everything was as quiet as could be. Presently, it was so peaceful that she went to sleep too.

And suddenly, the night-nursery window flew open by itself, and a lovely boy dropped in. He was dressed in leaves of every colour. When he saw a grown-up sitting there, he was very much annoyed. Mrs Darling, waking with a start, knew at once – though I can't say how she knew – that this must be Peter Pan.