

to say that this was just the mantelpiece over here, and that the Neverland was all make-believe.

Of course the Neverland had been make-believe in those days; but it was real now, and there were no night-lights, and it was getting darker every moment, and where was Nana?

They had been flying apart, but they huddled close to Peter now. His careless manner had gone at last, his eyes were sparkling, and a tingle went through them every time they touched his body. They were now over the fearsome island, flying so low that sometimes a tree grazed their feet. Nothing horrid was visible in the air, yet their progress had become slow and laboured, exactly as if they were pushing their way through hostile forces. Sometimes they hung in the air until Peter had beaten on it with his fists.

“They don’t want us to land,” he explained.

“Who are they?” Wendy whispered, shuddering.

But he could not or would not say. Tinker Bell had been asleep on his shoulder, but now he wakened her and sent her on in front.

Sometimes he poised himself in the air, listening intently with his hand to his ear, and again he would stare down with eyes so bright that they seemed to bore two holes to earth. Having done these things, he went on again.

His courage was almost appalling. “Do you want an adventure now,” he said casually to John, “or would you like to have your tea first?”

Wendy said “tea first” quickly, and Michael pressed her hand in gratitude, but the braver John hesitated.

“What kind of adventure?” he asked cautiously.

“There’s a pirate asleep in the pampas just beneath us,” Peter told him. “If you like, we’ll go down and kill him.”

“I don’t see him,” John said after a long pause.

“I do.”

“Suppose,” John said a little huskily, “he were to wake up.”

Peter spoke indignantly. “You don’t think I would kill him while he was sleeping! I would wake him first, and then kill him. That’s the way I always do.”

“I say! Do you kill many?”

“Tons.”

John said “how ripping,” but decided to have tea first. He asked if there were many pirates on the island just now, and Peter said he had never