

“They are the children who fall out of their perambulators when the nurse is looking the other way. If they are not claimed in seven days they are sent far away to the Neverland to defray expenses. I’m captain.”

“What fun it must be!”

“Yes,” said cunning Peter, “but we are rather lonely. You see we have no female companionship.”

“Are none of the others girls?”

“Oh no; girls, you know, are much too clever to fall out of their prams.”

This flattered Wendy immensely. “I think,” she said, “it is perfectly lovely the way you talk about girls; John there just despises us.”

For reply Peter rose and kicked John out of bed, blankets and all; one kick. This seemed to Wendy rather forward for a first meeting, and she told him with spirit that he was not captain in her house. However, John continued to sleep so placidly on the floor that she allowed him to remain there. “And I know you meant to be kind,” she said, relenting, “so you may give me a kiss.”

For the moment she had forgotten his ignorance about kisses. “I thought you would want it back,” he said a little bitterly, and offered to return her the thimble.

“Oh dear,” said the nice Wendy, “I don’t mean a kiss, I mean a thimble.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s like this.” She kissed him.

“Funny!” said Peter gravely. “Now shall I give you a thimble?”

“If you wish to,” said Wendy, keeping her head erect this time.

Peter thimbled her, and almost immediately she screeched. “What is it, Wendy?”

“It was exactly as if someone were pulling my hair.”

“That must have been Tink. I never knew her so naughty before.”

And indeed Tink was darting about again, using offensive language.

“She says she will do that to you, Wendy, every time I give you a thimble.”

“But why?”

“Why, Tink?”

Again Tink replied, “You silly ass.” Peter could not understand why, but Wendy understood; and she was just slightly disappointed when he admitted that he came to the nursery window not to see her but to listen to stories.