

“Let’s keep her prisoner.”

“Ay, chain her up.”

In her extremity an instinct told her to which of them to turn.

“Tootles,” she cried, “I appeal to you.”

Was it not strange? she appealed to Tootles, quite the silliest one.

Grandly, however, did Tootles respond. For that one moment he dropped his silliness and spoke with dignity.

“I am just Tootles,” he said, “and nobody minds me. But the first who does not behave to Wendy like an English gentleman I will blood him severely.”

He drew his hanger; and for that instant his sun was at noon. The others held back uneasily. Then Peter returned, and they saw at once that they would get no support from him. He would keep no girl in the Neverland against her will.

“Wendy,” he said, striding up and down, “I have asked the redskins to guide you through the wood, as flying tires you so.”

“Thank you, Peter.”

“Then,” he continued, in the short sharp voice of one accustomed to be obeyed, “Tinker Bell will take you across the sea. Wake her, Nibs.”

Nibs had to knock twice before he got an answer, though Tink had really been sitting up in bed listening for some time.

“Who are you? How dare you? Go away,” she cried.

“You are to get up, Tink,” Nibs called, “and take Wendy on a journey.”

Of course Tink had been delighted to hear that Wendy was going; but she was jolly well determined not to be her courier, and she said so in still more offensive language. Then she pretended to be asleep again.

“She says she won’t,” Nibs exclaimed, aghast at such insubordination, whereupon Peter went sternly toward the young lady’s chamber.

“Tink,” he rapped out, “if you don’t get up and dress at once I will open the curtains, and then we shall all see you in your negligee.”

This made her leap to the floor. “Who said I wasn’t getting up?” she cried.

In the meantime the boys were gazing very forlornly at Wendy, now equipped with John and Michael for the journey. By this time they were dejected, not merely because they were about to lose her, but also because they felt that she was going off to something nice to which they had not been invited. Novelty was beckoning to them as usual.