

“You see I don’t know any stories. None of the lost boys know any stories.”

“How perfectly awful,” Wendy said.

“Do you know,” Peter asked, “why swallows build in the eaves of houses? It is to listen to the stories. O Wendy, your mother was telling you such a lovely story.”

“Which story was it?”

“About the prince who couldn’t find the lady who wore the glass slipper.”

“Peter,” said Wendy excitedly, “that was Cinderella, and he found her, and they lived happy ever after.”

Peter was so glad that he rose from the floor, where they had been sitting, and hurried to the window. “Where are you going?” she cried with misgiving.

“To tell the other boys.”

“Don’t go, Peter,” she entreated, “I know such lots of stories.”

Those were her precise words, so there can be no denying that it was she who first tempted him.

He came back, and there was a greedy look in his eyes now which ought to have alarmed her, but did not.

“Oh, the stories I could tell to the boys!” she cried, and then Peter gripped her and began to draw her toward the window.

“Let me go!” she ordered him.

“Wendy, do come with me and tell the other boys.”

Of course she was very pleased to be asked, but she said, “Oh dear, I can’t. Think of mummy! Besides, I can’t fly.”

“I’ll teach you.”

“Oh, how lovely to fly.”

“I’ll teach you how to jump on the wind’s back, and then away we go.”

“Oo!” she exclaimed rapturously.

“Wendy, Wendy, when you are sleeping in your silly bed you might be flying about with me saying funny things to the stars.”

“Oo!”

“And, Wendy, there are mermaids.”

“Mermaids! With tails?”

“Such long tails.”

“Oh,” cried Wendy, “to see a mermaid!”