

jowl on the favoured island. Their tongues are hanging out, they are hungry tonight.

When they have passed, comes the last figure of all, a gigantic crocodile. We shall see for whom she is looking presently.

The crocodile passes, but soon the boys appear again, for the procession must continue indefinitely until one of the parties stops or changes its pace. Then quickly they will be on top of each other.

All are keeping a sharp lookout in front, but none suspects that the danger may be creeping up from behind. This shows how real the island was.

The first to fall out of the moving circle was the boys. They flung themselves down on the sward, close to their underground home.

“I do wish Peter would come back,” every one of them said nervously, though in height and still more in breadth they were all larger than their captain.

“I am the only one who is not afraid of the pirates,” Slightly said, in the tone that prevented his being a general favourite; but perhaps some distant sound disturbed him, for he added hastily, “but I wish he would come back, and tell us whether he has heard anything more about Cinderella.”

They talked of Cinderella, and Tootles was confident that his mother must have been very like her.

It was only in Peter’s absence that they could speak of mothers, the subject being forbidden by him as silly.

“All I remember about my mother,” Nibs told them, “is that she often said to father, ‘Oh, how I wish I had a chequebook of my own.’ I don’t know what a chequebook is, but I should just love to give my mother one.”

While they talked they heard a distant sound. You or I, not being wild things of the woods, would have heard nothing, but they heard it, and it was the grim song:

“Yo ho, yo ho, the pirate life,
The flag o’ skull and bones,
A merry hour, a hempen rope,
And hey for Davy Jones.”

At once the lost boys—but where are they? They are no longer there. Rabbits could not have disappeared more quickly.