

TO RQ9TQCN

by Altaire Gural

a two-act Peter Pan fantasy

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Cast list: (doubling possible). The Lost Boys, the pirates, the Tribal Elders may all be either gender.

Gwendolyn Moira Angela Deering – 18 year old girl in Edwardian England, attends St. Francis School.

John Deering – her brother, 17 years old

Michael Deering – their youngest brother, 14 years old

Mary Deering -their mother

George Deering – their father

Lisa – The Deering's maid.

Young Wendy -13

Young John -12

Young Michael

O'Connor – a young man, John's schoolmate, 18 years old

Peter – 13/14 Leader of the Lost Boys, friend to Wendy

Hook/Dr. Holder – any age.

Mr. Smee/Mr. Sparrow – a pirate

Alf Mullins – a pirate

Bill Jukes – a pirate

extra pirates

Miss Perdue – Headmistress of St. Francis School

Miss Beale – teacher at St. Francis School

Jane – 18/17 a classmate at St. Francis

Sarah – 18/17 a classmate at St. Francis

Cecily – 11 a younger student at St. Francis

other girls at school

Tabitha Knell – 15-18 year old girl. Dresses oddly. A new student at St. Francis School

Slightly – all children of varying ages, members of the Lost Boys

Curly

Tootles

Twin 1

Twin 2

Sally – 11 a young country girl

Farmer – adult, kin to Sally.

Tiger Lily – 14 years old. A girl of high rank on the island

Chief- either male or female

Tribal elders/women and men.

A man and a woman as pedestrians in Scene 3

Setting: 1906 England as present, and in flashbacks from 5 years previous.

Author's Note: This play works best on a larger stage, with scenes alternating between left and right. Minimal set props are recommended as they can be brought forward while actors perform on opposite ends, and then removed when lights on their side fade out. It is important not to allow lag time between scenes that might interrupt flow. In this way, the unfolding of the play rather resembles the movement of a clock. Also, we used interlude music before the play, and during some longer transitions, as well as during the close of the final curtain that denoted the magical or “atmospheric” quality to the play.

Main prop pieces: 2 beds, a ship wheel, dining room table and chairs, school chairs, a giant stuffed crocodile (standing), two chairs and a desk for Dr. Holder's study.

Smaller items: blankets, pillows, teddy bear, plates, cups, the spherical, tiger lilies, chum bucket for Smee, pistols, swords.

ACT 1

Stage is in black out.

A scream: I'm falling! Don't let me go!

Lights come up stage right on a girl's dormitory ... school girls are frightened, hovering near one girl who is in the middle of a nightmare, thrashing about on her bed, screaming. MISS BEALE, a teacher, bursts into the room and rushes to GWENDOLYN, the girl on the bed.

Miss Beale: Gwendolyn! Gwendolyn!

Sarah: It's no use, Miss. We've tried. She can't hear us.

Miss Beale: Gwen, darling. Wake up.

Gwendolyn: No. NO. Why did you let go?! (she sits bolt upright, awake. Stares around at the crowd, blinking). Again? (mortified).

Miss Beale: My dear?

Gwendolyn: I don't remember! I still can't remember!

(Miss Perdue, Headmistress of St. Francis' college, enters the room)

Miss Perdue: Everyone return to your beds at once!

Miss Beale: Gwendolyn's had another one of her spells, I'm afraid, Headmistress.

Ms. Perdue: Yes, I did manage to ascertain as much. The tone was admirable in quality. (she peers at Gwen). Gwendolyn, can you still not remember?

Gwendolyn shakes her head

Miss Perdue: My dear, we will have to do something about this. In the morning we will speak further on the matter. Ms. Beale, can you gather these young ladies and instruct them on the importance of a marvelous thing called sleep. Repose. Dormancy. And Gwendolyn, I trust that there will be no further outbursts this evening? My charm depends on it.

Gwendolyn: Yes, Headmistress.

Miss Perdue: Good. Well done, then. Bed, ladies. (she turns to leave, and sees quite a few of the younger girls peeking in the doorway, or, depending on size of cast, just Cecily, Jane and Sarah). Oh for Heaven's Sake! Is the sun suddenly displaying an extraordinary ability to defy celestial law? Has Christmas come early? Are

you ALL out of bed? Now really! (the girls scatter).

(little Cecily pops her head back in, looking worriedly at Gwendolyn)

Cecily: Are you alright? (Gwen nods her head, Cecily beams and disappears).

Gwendolyn: Ms. Beale, what is the matter with me?

Sarah: Is she all right, Miss?

Miss Beale Yes, she's fine. Just a bit of a bad dream. Off you go, you lot. You'll be up soon enough! Art history first thing. (girls let out a collective groan). Now. You just lie here and think of the loveliest things you can. You think of long summer walks by the river, or gardens bursting with colour. Or your favourite book! You just do that till you feel inclined to fall asleep. Make sure you're thinking of those things as you drift off, all right?

Gwendolyn: (being cheeky) I shall endeavour to attempt to have a pleasant thought, Miss Beale.

Miss Beale laughs, pats Gwen on the hand, and then leaves, taking the light with her. Everyone is leaving the room.

Jane: Really, Gwen! It's getting so as I haven't had a decent night's sleep in weeks!

Sarah: Leave her alone. Don't you mind her, Gwen. (Sarah pushes Jane out the door as she says this).

Lights fade and then ...

SCENE 2

sounds of seagulls and waves crashing as lights come up stage left. These sounds fade as we watch SMEE ...

Scene should represent the deck of a ship with a simple ship's wheel present. MR. SMEE is chuckling and Oh ho-ing while he throws scraps from a bucket he is carrying over the "railing". In the original production the "railing" was the audience, and SMEE threw tiny wrapped candies to them as he spoke. Below we can hear vicious smacking, hissing, biting, mayhem.

Mr. Smee: That's enough, Missies. There's plenty for all. Oh I saw that! (he throws another scrap over). Wicked creatures. Oi! That was rude. See if you get any next time! (we hear a mermaid blow a nasty raspberry, or the cheeky comeback of an annoyed dolphin).

Hook enters. Elegant and intimidating.

Hook: Well ... ?

Mr. Smee: No luck, Sir. The men couldn't find him.

More splashing can be heard in the breakers.

Hook: No luck? Truly? How unfortunate. I suppose we'll have to see what the lady can tell us, then.

Mr. Smee: The lady, Sir? Beg your pardon, but what lady is it that you're meaning?

Hook: ... He's looking for *her*.

Mr. Smee: Oh dear. Why would he DO that?

Hook: He is misguided.

Mr. Smee: But Sir. How do you know?

Hook: Let us say our mutual friend told me.

Mr. Smee: (grimacing) ... Her kind are not friends to *our* kind.

Hook: My dear man. Our kind are not friends to *any* kind; nature of our profession, I'm afraid.

Mr. Smee: You trust her?

Hook: I make it a rule to never trust anyone.

Mr. Smee: I trust you, sir.

Hook: No you don't. You trust your instincts for survival. Everyone has an agenda and I have come to rely on that knowledge. When you know someone's agenda you know what they need and why they need it. Trust the motive, not the person ...

Mr. Smee: That's very clever, Cap'n.

Hook: Yes, I know.

Mr. Smee: The plan then, Sir? Are you going to stop him?

Hook: I suppose I must. I'm thinking, Smee. Do not disturb me.

Mr. Smee: I wasn't born yesterday, Cap'n.

Hook: Now, I know *that's* true. Get the men ready. And don't get distracted (he indicates the mermaids over the railing as he exits).

SCENE 3

Evening lights come up stage right on two disreputable men, ALF MULLINS and BILL JUKES shivering in the cold rain/wind of a London street at night. They are waiting for someone. Every so often one grunts and the other will “aye” in response. Every time a pedestrian walks by they look hopefully/eagerly, and then are annoyed when it's not who they were searching for.

Lights to full with occasional lightening flashes.

Bill Jukes: He's not here!

Alf Mullins: Aye (with a sigh).

(A lady and gentleman pass by. Alf doffs his hat, bows and gives what he thinks is a warm smile. It's not. The lady lets out a squawk and hurries her partner on).

Alf Mullins: Did you see that? That was me trying to be nice and polite, like. What'd she go and do that for? That near hurt my feelings! Makes one question oneself, in point of fact.

Bill Jukes: Pay attention to the door, Alf. He's bound to come out at some point.

A young man, O'Connor has been watching them from a corner of the stage. He laughs when the lady squawks. He's bored, and he likes to bait these men. He decides to walk past them, both too stunned at first to do anything but gape.

O'Connor: (making a big show of it by smacking his forehead and spinning around).
Forgot something! (the two men freeze in their tracks). Hullo! Bit miserable out, eh? Been waiting long, have you? That's all right, lads. That's all right. Let's warm up! We can nip into that pub across the street for a pint if you'd like. My treat. I don't think much of an employer who sends his men out in this mess, I don't mind saying.

The two men stare at each other and then reach into their overcoats.

O'Connor: Lads, lads. Swords? Really? I don't fancy a go-round at the moment. It's mud everywhere and I'm in my best coat!

The men pull out two evil looking pistols.

Bill Jukes: We need you to come with us, son.

O'Connor: Oh. It's like that is it? I see. Short and lovely but no skill. I'm sad, boys. Fencing is an art. An ART, I tell you.

Lightening and low thunder. Alf takes aim and fires just as lightening blacks the stage out in a snap-

back-up with lights only on stage left.

Bill bellows and lunges at Alf, knocking the pistol from his hand.

But O'Connor is already gone.

Alf: Where'd he go?

Bill: Oi. You know. You KNOW where he's got to. (he scowls, looking up at the sky. He turns back to Alf and cuffs him on the head, knocking Alf's bowler off). We weren't supposed ta SHOOT!

Alf: (picking up his hat) Well. He's gotten away, regardless. Master's going to kill us.

Bill: Not if we don't tell him. Agreed?

Alf: I only look the part of stupid.

Bill: Nooo. It's not just your looks, mate. You are utterly lacking in an educated way.

Alf: What are you saying?

Bill: You show poor judgment.

Alf: ... I don't understand you.

Bill: You squeal.

Alf: I NEVER!

Bill: I'm warning you. SHUT IT.

Alf: All right, all right. No need to be so sensitive.

Bill: SENSITIVE! He damn well flew away! Boss sets us on his trail ... but how are we supposed to keep up with THAT? Made to fail, says I.

Alf: It's a mite unfair.

Bill: ... Let's go have that pint, anyway. No one will know. Right?

Alf: Know what? (Alf taps the side of his nose with his finger, and the two men laugh as they exit stage left).

SCENE 4

Flashback scene.

A bed with a teddy bear and two pillows is stage right as lights come up full.

Wendy, John and Michael Deering are running around the nursery, laughing, being chased/corralled by their parents, GEORGE and MARY DEERING, also laughing.

John: One more story. Can Wendy tell us one more story, Father?

George: You've had three already. Come on, you lot. It's bed time. (he ushers the boys out, while Mary tucks Wendy into her bed as lights dim to only on the bed stage right).

Mary: Good night, my love. (she kisses her and leaves the room.)

Wendy: Good night, Mother.

Tantrum yelling, and lights come up full. There is suddenly a boy sitting in the middle of the floor, audibly pouting. Wendy sits up, startled.

Wendy: Boy.

(no answer)

Wendy: Boy! (she bounces a toy off his head) Why are you crying?

The two stare at each other for a moment.

Peter: I'm not crying.

Wendy: What's wrong?

Peter: My shadow. It will not come home.

Wendy: I beg your pardon?

Peter: It's a nuisance. I came to hear your stories. They're quite good, by the way. You have me down brilliantly! Well, yesterday Tink and myself ... we were here outside your window listening to your story, And my shadow skipped off. Ran away. It quit my company. AND I'M KEEPING SCORE, MIND! (This last bit he shouts behind Wendy and off to the side).

Wendy quickly turns around to look behind her but there is nothing there. She regards him steadily, thinking he might be unhinged.

Wendy: Perhaps I ought to call for father.

A giant shadow darts across the wall where no one's moved. Wendy is astonished.

Peter: That's him. (sullenly).

Wendy: ... I tell stories about you?

Peter: You do indeed. Tremendous ones!

Wendy: Who are you?

Peter: ... I'm Peter Pan.

Wendy: No you're not.

Peter: I am.

Wendy: I made you up.

Peter: You did not. How dare you!

Wendy: How dare I? How dare you! You are in my room! How you got in here I'll never know.

Peter: I flew.

Wendy: ... you what?

Peter: I flew. In through that window. Me and Tink.

Wendy: You're a liar.

Peter: I'm not!

Wendy: You are!

Peter: Take that back.

Wendy: Or what?!

Peter: Take it back ... or I'll ... knock you on your backside!

Wendy: You wouldn't dare hit a girl!

Peter: Why not?

Wendy: Because. It isn't done.

Peter: Why not?

Wendy: Because you can't hit a girl.

Peter: That's stupid. Course I can. You're right there.

Wendy: It doesn't matter whether I'm here or there, you cannot. hit. a girl.

Peter: Nonsense. I'm a great warrior! I've killed pirates, and cannibals, and hunted

the most frightening ...

A pillow, full on in the face, knocks him viciously to the floor. From his new vantage point he stares up at her, stunned, rubbing his jaw.

Peter: What did you do that for?

Wendy: If you were going to hit me I wasn't going to give you the opportunity. You are an ignorant ..

Suddenly Wendy is on the floor, a pillow having knocked her feet out from under her. Peter has been just as quick, just as underhanded as she has.

They stare at each other murderously.

And then they hit each other mercilessly with the pillows.

Peter: Ow. Look here! I wasn't ready.

Wendy: No rules! Drat! (she ducks. And then she picks up a pillow and attacks him. They pummel each other till, exhausted, they fall to the floor, breathing heavily. And then Wendy looks at the condition of her room, a bit in awe.)

Wendy: Mother's going to kill me.

Suddenly they both begin to laugh hysterically. And then they are smiling at each other. Peter jumps up, an idea taking hold, and offers her his hand. She eyes it warily.

Peter: Will you come?

Wendy: Come where?

Peter: You are quite fun, indeed! I think you should come with us. You can tell us stories too. Will you come?

Wendy: To where? (a bit worried).

Peter: My home. Neverland. It could be your home too, if you wanted it to be.

They exit stage left

SCENE 5

A girl, oddly dressed, stands in the middle of the stage staring at the audience, head tilted. Gwen walks in. The girl turns to her, and stares, unblinking.

Gwen: Can I help you?

The girl smiles slowly but says nothing. Gwen now takes in the other girls' appearance and is mildly alarmed. Miss Beale enters.

Miss Beale: Ah! Gwendolyn. This is Miss Tabitha Knell. Miss Knell will be our newest student at St. Francis'. I was about to show her around, but I think it would be a much finer idea if you were to take her for a tour. It would be wonderful to facilitate a fast friendship on her very first day, don't you agree?"

Tabitha stares at Gwen. Gwen is a tiny bit horrified.

Miss Beale: The classroom? And then dinner?

Gwen: Yes, Miss Beale. ... Would you care to accompany me?

Tabitha: Thank you. Yes, I think.

Miss Beale: Marvellous. Gwendolyn she will be staying in the senior girl's rooms. You are able to show her that as well? (Miss Beale smiles and exits).

Gwen: ... You've just arrived?

Tabitha: Yes. I've just ... arrived.

Gwen: I see. And you've come from ...?

Tabitha: Home.

Gwen: Yes. And is that far from here?

Tabitha: Yes.

Gwen: Oh. Uh ... over there is the garden, and beyond that are the bee hives. We take turns collecting the honey. We're to be careful, as you can imagine. We'll teach you how to go about it.

Tabitha: I like bee's wings. Their wings are very small. They beat very quickly as they don't take up much space. Very efficient. They are so opinionated, too. I like bees. And they like me.

Gwen: (at a loss) You'll want to see where you sleep, I imagine.

Tabitha: Sleep! Yes I forgot about that! (She's practically skipping, and then she suddenly stops, whirling about). You sleep indoors, right? (very serious).

Gwen: ... Yes?"

Tabitha: (jumping up and down, clapping. And then she stops). Are there beds? Will we sleep on beds?

Gwen: You're joking, aren't you?.

Tabitha: Joking?

School girls run past, followed by an exasperated Miss Perdue. The girls bring forward the dining table/chairs/plates/cups to be set up stage right.

Miss Perdue: Ladies! Walking. Always walking. Running is for herds of sheep. We are not sheep at St. Francis. Always dignity.

Tabitha: (fascinated) Dignity (she whispers to herself, affecting a grace as she crosses the stage. She turns to Gwen, smiling from ear to ear). So many girls!

Gwen and Tabitha move over to the other side of the stage where tables have been set. They all sit down to dinner. Tabitha stares at the food as if she's never seen it before. Gwen takes a serving ladle and places a heaping spoonful of beans on Tabitha's plate. Tabitha takes a mouthful, and then she spits it out.

Tabitha: (hissing) Why is this warm? (gags and chokes. Gwen stares, and then pats her back, trying to keep the commotion from Miss Perdue who is glaring at them for a moment).

Gwen: Whatever is the matter?

Tabitha: What is this refuse? Do they think to trick us by hiding the flavour with heat? Is this poison? (she picks up a bean and sniffs it suspiciously).

Gwen pours Tabitha a glass of juice, who drinks it gratefully, and then spits that out too. All over Jane.

Jane: What on earth?

Tabitha: Don't drink it! It's poison! They're trying to kill us! (she purposely knocks over everyone's glass in an attempt to "save" them).

Gwen: Tabitha stop! Here here. You must be hungry. Have some carrots, they're delicious! (she tries to serve the girl carrots but Tabitha up-ends the plate).

Tabitha: Don't you want to live?! I see what they're doing!

Gwen: Shhhh.

Tabitha: I SEE WHAT THEY'RE DOING!

Miss Beale: (hurrying over) Gwendolyn. Whatever is going on?

Gwen: I'm not sure, Miss Beale. Tabitha seems to have taken issue with the meal? Perhaps it's different in her own country?

Miss Beale: Her country? She's from Devonshire!

Tabitha: And they're not savages there!

Miss Beale: Gwen, please take Miss Knell up to the rooms. I think she might very well be suffering from exhaustion.

Gwen takes Tabitha by the hand, Tabitha glares at the teachers over her shoulder.

Tabitha: Savages. (she mutters).

Lights cross fade from right to left for next scene:

SCENE 6

Hook and Smee enter stage left looking around ...

Smee: What is this place, Cap'n?

Hook: It's a house.

Smee: Yes, but what are we doing here?

Hook: Part of my plan. I think I'd like to be a doctor of some sort.

Smee: Ohhhh I don't get it.

Hook: I'm mildly shocked.

Smee laughs, and then realizes Hook is making fun of him. Stops laughing.

Hook: That will be my office where I receive my patient.

Smee: Only one? You'll never be a success with only one client, Sir.

Hook: (sighing). I don't want patientS ... I want ONE. HER.

Smee: Ohhh. Her. her ...

Hook: This is just temporary, Smee. I do my job ... WE do OUR jobs right ... and then we can go home.

Smee: But this is a house.

Hook: Right. But it's not our home.

Smee: No.

Hook: Right.

Smee: Yes. Exactly.

Hook: So ... Are we good?

Smee: Got it. I have it in my mind, Sir.

Hook: I'm so glad. Start with that room. That will make a suitable study.

Smee: ... what are you studying?

Hook: God's teeth! Get out!!

Smee: Going. I'm going!

They exit stage left and lights fade stage left as ...

SCENE 7

lights come up on 2 beds, stage right at night.

Wendy's voice: We'll not go back. I'll not go back. Don't let me go! Peter!"

Gwen wakes up to find Tabitha sitting on her bed, staring at her.

Tabitha: You were calling out in your sleep.

Gwen: Yes. I seem to be doing that a lot of late.

Tabitha: Is it fun?

Gwen: Is what fun?

Tabitha: Dreaming? Calling out in your sleep?

Gwen: No. It is decidedly **not** fun.

Tabitha: That's too bad. I think I'd like it.

Gwen: How long have you been sitting there?

Tabitha: I don't know. Not long. Hours.

Gwen: I think you'd better go back to sleep. We'll have to be up soon enough.

Tabitha: I don't mind. Sleep is boring. I don't like it.

Gwen: Well, Tabitha. You may not, but I need sleep.

Tabitha: Ah. Sleep requires straight-out legs. I see how that works. I should try it! (she goes to her own cot and sticks her legs straight out, toes up. After a moment she turns back to Gwen). It's not working.

Gwen: Just close your eyes, Tabitha. I'm tired too. (with that, Gwen pulls the blanket over her head.

Lights fade stage right

SCENE 8

whooping and hollering in the dark ...

flashback lights come up full.

Peter: I've brought you a great and wonderful story teller. Wendy. Yes, she's a girl. No, she's not your mother.

John: Excuse me ...

Peter: Oh. Right. These are her brothers.

John: John Deering, and our brother Michael.

Michael: How do you do?

Slightly: How do you do what?

Peter: Right. Look sharp, boys. Straighten your collars. Fix your hair. Right that hat, Slightly! What would you do if Hook himself were here?

Slightly: Run away? (lost boys nod)

Peter: Never mind them, they come in useful sometimes. Slightly.

Slightly: Hullo. lovely to meet you. It's a pleasure.

Curly: M'Lady. I'm Curly.

Peter: What are you doing?

Curly: I'm bowing.

Peter: You look like you have a stomach ache.

Tootles: Tootles, at your service. Except when I'm napping.

Slightly: Which is always.

Wendy: My! You're Twins!

(Lost Boys and Peter all look worried and tense)

Peter: Uh ... don't say that.

Wendy: Why not?

Twin 1: We're not related

Twin 2: We look nothing alike.

Twin 1: Do we LOOK ALIKE?

Twin2: I think not.

Twin1: Indeed. The insult.

Twin2: The nerve.

Twins, as one, turn their back on Wendy. Yet they're snickering, as Wendy looks distressed.

Peter: Oi! I'm HUNGRY! Where's my dinner? (Tootles waves his arms about and presents Peter with pretend food.) THIS IS NOT EDIBLE! Chop his head off.

Wendy: WHAT?

Peter: Well. I don't mean that, not really. But we have to keep the men sharp or else they lose their edge. You're not losing your edge, boys, are you?

Slightly/Tootles/Curly/Twins/

Nooooooo. Nope. Not us. Lethal weapons (indicating hands).

Peter: Nooo. I thought not. Well. Someone get the lady a chair (lost boys pretend to give Wendy a chair), she's tired after all that flying. You're tired after all that flying, right? Just nod. I don't want the lads to doubt me. Right, then.
Welcome to Neverland. (Lost Boys gather round Wendy excitedly as lights

fade).

SCENE 9

Lights up full

Classroom centre stage to stage left.

Miss Perdue: What is a common theme within these stories? (girls can either try to answer and Miss Perdue ignores them, or girls are too nervous to answer) I'll tell you, shall I? It is hubris. What is hubris?

Tabitha: A flower! (the other girls burst out laughing).

Miss Perdue: Settle down, please. Not at all, Miss Knell. Hubris, Sarah. Can you answer?

Sarah: Excessive pride or arrogance, Miss.

Miss Perdue: Exactly so. Can anyone recall a tale where hubris played a prominent theme? The story of Icarus springs immediately to mind, ladies. (she points to Jane).

Jane: Daedalus was an artist and inventor quite respected in his field, who lived with his son Icarus at the palace of King Minos.

Miss Perdue stops Jane and points to Sarah.

Sarah: King Minos had Daedalus design the famous Labyrinth where the ferocious Minotaur was kept. Daedalus made the terrible mistake of revealing the Labyrinth's secret to King Minos' daughter, Ariadne.

Miss Perdue: (cutting off Sarah) As punishment, Daedalus and Icarus were imprisoned in the Labyrinth themselves.

Tabitha: But he made the Labyrinth.

Miss Perdue: (wary) Quite.

Tabitha: He could have just left. He knew the way out. (The girls burst into laughter again).

Miss Perdue: It is a story, Miss Knell. I must say, it's rather rude of you to continuously interrupt me.

Oh – Tabitha mouths, quieting down.

Miss Perdue: I shall continue, shall I? We're all terribly interested in how this ends, aren't we?

The entire class nods.

Miss Perdue: Deadalus thought of an escape plan.

Tabitha: (annoyed) I should hope so.

Miss Perdue: He built wings from feathers and wax for both himself and his son, and before the two set off he gave Icarus a most severe warning: not to fly so high as to be near the sun, for the heat of it would melt the wax, and not to fly so low as to touch the sea for the salt and the spray would do the same. However, Icarus did not listen to his father, and overcome with the joy of flight, he rose ever higher till he was indeed to near to the sun. The wax from his wings melted, and he fell out of the sky.

Gwendolyn faints at the mention of falling out of the sky.

Miss Perdue: Gwendolyn! Help her up. Help her up! (Gwen wakes up. They help her up.) Sarah, can you take Gwendolyn to the infirmary? Everybody back to your seats.

Sarah: Are you really all right?

Gwen: I believe I might have skipped breakfast. That's all. (but she looks worried).

School girls strike set and exit stage left as ...

SCENE 10

The lights go up full as Wendy and the Lost Boys enter stage right, running across the stage hollering like hoodlums.

Slightly: Tell us a story!

Wendy: I don't think you deserve one.

Curly: Faw! That's rot, that! We don't need to do nuffink to deserve anything here.

John: What about rules?

Slightly: There's no rules here, and that's right. That's as it ought to be.

Twins: No blinking rules!!!

Murmuring assent.

All Boys: Tell us a story!

Wendy: Right. Story. (she mimes pirates battling ... and we see real pirates fighting and killing each other, and Hook shouting orders, and fighting Peter, etc.) Hook decided he'd had enough of Peter Pan and devised a plan to finish him once and

for all ...

Slightly: "Devised"?

Tootles: It means he made up a plan. In his head.

Slightly: ... I am a bit taken aback by your knowledge, Tootles. That is impressive.

Tootles: I listen when she explains things.

Twins: Oohhhh.

Wendy: He had his men waiting, hidden, for Peter and the Lost Boys ...

Curly: She means us.

Tootles/Slightly: Shhhhhhhh

Wendy: Pirates sneaking around in the forest ... and then, Tiger Lily and her warriors, out of nowhere, swoop down (Tiger Lily's tribe arrives) ...

Tiger Lily: (motioning for her tribe to stay silent) ...Wait.

Wendy: The brave princess surveyed the scene ... she noticed the forest was silent. A dead giveaway that something was very very wrong (Tiger Lily motions for her people to crouch down) And then the pirates attacked!! (Pirates jump at the lost boys, lost boys scream and start fighting)

Hook: (to Peter) It's over, Pan!

Peter: Not today. (fighting with swords) Aww. What's the matter, old man? Arthritis? Oh, bad carve! You're slowing down, Hook.

Hook: You. are an irritating little prat.

Peter: What are you going to do? Tell my mother? Moooooommmmmmm ... Hook's going to beat me (they run into the forest, Peter laughing and Hook enraged).

Curly: But what about Tiger Lily?

Wendy: She'd arrived to save the Lost Boys of course (Tiger Lily's tribe chases the pirates off stage). The pirates were terrified (Wendy cackles like a maniac).

Curly: Don't laugh like that!

Wendy: Why not?

Curly: Cause I won't be able to sleep tonight, Miss!

Slightly: That's good news for US! We don't have to listen to you SNORING!

Curly: Oi! Shut it!

Slightly: You. First!

Slightly and Wendy fight with swords, laughing

Curly: (to the other boys) She's us! Her stories are best! Not even Peter can scare us the way she can.

Tootles: Don't say that out loud. Peter will hear!

Slightly: That's alright. Peter will forget! He forgets everything. (as they all laugh, run and exit)

SCENE 11

Gwen has brought a basket with blankets centre stage and is folding the top one. Cecily bounces in.

Cecily: Gwendolyn, tell me a story.

Gwen: Cecily, you know Miss Perdue doesn't like my telling stories.

Cecily: But we've done ever so much work! (The little girl lets out a dramatic sigh and flops on the floor).

Gwen: All right. I think I have an especially vivid one in mind.

Cecily: You do?

Gwen: (warning) I do. Do not say this day that this particular story is for the faint of heart!

Cecily: (whispering) It's not?

Gwen: No indeed. It's quite an ugly story, I'm sorry to tell. There was once a Merchant ... rather well to do. He had vast estates with parks and woodlands where one could ride or hunt to their hearts content.

Cecily: Hunting? That's cruel.

Gwen: Yes, well. What manner of things they hunted who can tell? At one point the country side was overrun with wolves.

Cecily: Wolves!

Gwen: Giant wolves. Many woodsmen and farmhands ... milkmaids ... went missing, Even riding your pony was never quite safe.

Cecily: My pony is rather fat and slow.

Gwen: Well, you'd have been eaten for sure, then.

Cecily: Oh!

Gwen: Indeed. Hush now or I can't tell you the rest. It so happened that there was a great and terrible tempest.

Cecily: That's a storm?

Gwen: That's right. In this storm the Merchant lost three great vessels at sea. He was a ruined man, and the family was forced to sell all that they had. His two elder daughters were bitter bitter bitter. The loss of their lovely dresses, their jewels, their servants ... it was all too much for them and they complained and complained. The youngest daughter, however, Belle, felt that she needed to dig in and help so she did the majority of the work round the household. She cooked, she cleaned, she sewed, she milked the cow, she read to her father. She set the mousetraps.

Cecily: That's horrid! And she sounds too remarkable. I'd be tired.

Gwen: I would too, but there you have it; that was Belle. She was oh so kind. And this kindness left her at the mercy of her sisters: Belle do this, Belle do that. Frankly, I'm not sure why Belle didn't just hit them. She was too even tempered.

Cecily: So ... we shouldn't be ... ex ... expl ...

Gwen: Exploited?

Cecily: Yes. That's the word! Exploited.

Gwen: Definitely not.

Cecily: ... That wasn't a scary story at all.

Gwen: Well I find housework scary.

Miss Perdue: (coming out of the wings) Miss Deering!

Gwen: Yes, Headmistress?

Miss Perdue: I feel I have warned you too many times in the past: you are not to corrupt the young minds of this institute with your wild notions.

Gwen: Cecily merely wanted a story.

Miss Perdue: Yes. Well. Your stories bear nothing resembling convention: your imagination

leans toward the unsavoury. I won't tell you again, Miss Deering. Your ideas are your own. Do not share them. Do we understand each other?

Gwen: Yes, Miss.

Blackout ...

SCENE 12

Flashes of lightening, and then lights up night time outdoors with Miss Beale and all the schoolgirls (save Gwen and Tabitha) screaming and staring up towards the ceiling stage right, as if looking up to the roof.

All the girls screaming: She's up on the roof! Gwen's walking in her sleep again! She's up on the roof! Someone get Miss Perdue! Oh ! Miss Perdue! Miss Perdue! (it's utter chaos). Lightening flashes.

Miss Perdue runs on, breathless ...

Miss Perdue: Gwendolyn!

Miss Beale: No! Don't call her, she might fall.

Jane: We tried the door upstairs. It's locked.

Sarah: We can't get to her. Oh Gwen!

Lightning is flashing incessantly. Wind is picking up.

Miss Beale: She's too close to the edge!

Sarah: She's falling!

Everyone is screaming. Snap black out and back up. The crowd has huddled round a “figure” the audience cannot see on the ground. Tabitha Knell is now there, standing apart from the crowd, looking on.

Cecily: (indicating the “figure” the group is covering) She's all right! She's all right!

Miss Perdue: Oh my. Oh my word. (Miss Beale helps her as she sinks to her knees). That is it! That is the very last straw, Miss Beale. Gwendolyn Deering must go home.

Lights fade

SCENE 13

lights come up stage left to show Dr. Holder's study. 2 desks, a chair, and a stuffed crocodile in the corner. On the desk is the spherical.

A butler, MR. SPARROW (Mr. Smee) ushers Gwen into the room.

SMEE/SPARROW: Have a seat please, Miss Deering. Doctor Holder will be along shortly.

Gwen is about to sit when she sees the giant crocodile in the corner of the room.

Gwen: Oh! Good heavens!

Mr. Sparrow : Is something the matter?

Gwen: That! What is that?!

Mr. Sparrow: This ... is Kali.

Gwen: It has a name? But it's ... stuffed!

Mr. Sparrow: Oh, she does indeed! Wife of the Hindu god, Siva. Kali: The Devourer of Time. Master does like his little jokes. (he pats the crocodile on the head as he departs).

Dr. Holder enters the room.

Dr. Holder: Good afternoon.

Gwen: Dr. Holder (she offers to shake his hand but he declines. She notices his leather gloves).

Dr. Holder: Your mother tells me you've had a difficult time of late. (Gwen doesn't answer). I can understand your reluctance to discuss this. I am a perfect stranger, after all. Shall we start with something more pleasant?

Gwen: Lovely crocodile.

Dr. Holder: (laughing) You mean Kali.

Gwen: Don't you think it rather odd to give it a name?

Dr. Holder: Not at all. I always name my fears. Nameless fears are the worst kinds. Nameless fears, Gwendolyn. This is why you're here.

Gwen: I can't say that they're fears, Sir. I don't even know what they are.

Dr. Holder: That would be frustrating one would think.

Gwen: One could think that.

Dr. Holder: (picking up a pen with his left hand and writing in his notebook). Let's give it some context, and a time line so I can better understand. You did not get on at school?

Gwen: I did not get on with Miss Perdue, our headmistress.

Dr. Holder: (writing) Argumentative.

Gwen: If you say so.

Dr. Holder: Do you not think I am here to help you?

Gwen: My mother says that you are.

Dr. Holder: You think I want something else? I have some other purpose? To make fun of you, perhaps?

Gwen: To observe me, yes. Mild interest in a ridiculous girl given to hysteria. Common and tiresome. I imagine that's what you're writing down there in your journal.

Dr. Holder: Yes that's right. I am mocking you in the side notes. Success be damned, I enjoy tarnishing my reputation. Failing my patients is my paramount concern.

Gwen: ... You're rather young to have such a distinguished reputation, aren't you?

Dr. Holder: I'm rather older than I look. Blessing and a curse, I'm afraid.

They stare at each other.

Gwen: ... So what do we do here, then?

Dr. Holder: Well. For a start, I will be drawing a bit of blood, and experimenting on you with noxious herbs and teas.

Gwen: I hope you're joking.

Dr. Holder: (smiling) Gwendolyn. I'm here to listen to you, to see beneath the surface of what you say, what we talk about, and to get to the bottom of what is troubling you.

Gwen: I'm rather afraid to find out.

Dr. Holder: I'd think you weren't human if you were not afraid in some part. Of course you are. Whatever is the matter *matters* a very great deal. Your mind seems to think so ... it's shielding you. That is what the forgetting actually is ... it's a shield. Do you understand?

Gwen: ...yes?

Dr. Holder: Because your mind has gone to such lengths to protect you, we must uncover these things rather gradually. It might seem tedious.

Gwen: I understand. When do we begin?

Dr. Holder: Tell me about your mother.

Gwen: You've met her?

Dr. Holder: I have.

Gwen: Then what's to tell?

Dr. Holder: Well, you just did. Your reluctance to discuss her tells me a great deal, actually. But I'd rather hear your words, what you think.

Gwen: My mother doesn't approve of me.

Dr. Holder: She loves you.

Gwen: I can think of better ways to show one's love than sending her only daughter away for almost six years.

Dr. Holder: Your father passed away?

Gwen: Right before I was sent off to school.

Dr. Holder: That must have been difficult.

Gwen: My recollections of that time are clouded at best, doctor.

Dr. Holder: You have brothers?

Gwen: They're both younger. They're about to return from school now.

Dr. Holder: And when did the trouble start? When did you begin having the "episodes" at school?

Gwen: I'm not sure. Several months ago, I believe. At least that's what my classmates told me.

Dr. Holder: And this began to affect you while you were also awake?

Gwen: Yes. Sometimes while I attended lessons, even.

Dr. Holder: And the night in question; the episode on the roof. I'm told you fell but were unharmed. That's quite remarkable.

Gwen: I suspect they're exaggerating.

Dr. Holder: Indeed? You apparently had the entire faculty in hysterics.

Gwen: Dr. Holder, I can't remember any of it.

Dr. Holder: (standing) All right, then.(He reaches across the desk and places an apparatus in front of her). We are going to try something. It's nothing sinister, I promise. It will not hurt. It is perfectly benign. It's called a Spherical.

Gwen: What does it do?

Dr. Holder: Ah. I hear the distrust. Gwendolyn. Truly; this little tool is a marvel.

Gwen: But what's its purpose?

Dr. Holder: It helps one to remember.

Gwen: How can it possibly?

Dr. Holder: I'll have you stare at this ball in the centre of the form. As you focus I will count down from ten. You may or may not see things. If you do that is well and good; if you do not that's fine also. There is no pressure for results. When we have reached a point that I deem satisfactory I will count you back to your waking state. I promise you that you will be safe at all times.

Gwen nods.

Dr. Holder: Good girl. Let's begin. (He touches the glass ball, spinning it). Look no where else. Listen to my voice. 10 ... 9 ... 8 ... 7 ... (multi coloured lights are flashing all over theatre very quickly) ... Focus on the sphere, Gwendolyn. You are safe. Observe the visions as if looking through a window. You are apart from what you see. As an artist looks on a tableau, you will observe with detachment. 6 ... 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ...1

Where are you, Gwendolyn?

Gwen: I don't know.

Dr. Holder: Are you frightened?

Gwen: No.

Dr. Holder: Are you having a nightmare?

Gwen: Not yet.

We can hear young John, young Michael and Wendy laughing and giggling.

Wendy: Mind you don't drift off.

Boys: Why would we, Wendy? We're safe.

George: (from far away) Where are you... ?

Wendy: I'm okay Father. Tell Mother. We're all right.

Peter: Wendy.

Wendy: Don't! Don't let me go!

Gwen sits bolt upright in her chair. Her breathing is laboured, her heart pounding in her chest. Dr. Holder observes her calmly, the spherical coming to rest in its cradle.

Dr. Holder: Are you all right?

Gwen: Don't let me go. They say that's what I shout every time: don't let me go.

Dr. Holder: Yes. You said that here too.

Gwen: I still don't know what that means.

Dr. Holder: But this time, you saw things. Am I correct?

Gwen: Impossible things. My brothers and I ... floating above houses, touching clouds. I saw our old home, and my father. None of those things are possible. My father ... died when I was 12, Dr. Holder.

Dr. Holder: It's rather significant that you're seeing your father in your dreams.

Gwen: He had a heart condition.

Dr. Holder: Could it be him you're pleading with to not let you go?

Gwen: I don't know. ... I think there was another boy there ...

Dr. Holder: Yes? Who?

Gwen: ... I can't remember ...

Gwen gets up from chair and crosses to stage right. Dr. Holder exits stage left as his study is struck from the set.

SCENE 14

Gwen is taking off her hat, having just come back from Dr. Holder's. John and Michael Deering, and Mr. O'Connor enter the room. LISA is there waiting, smiling.

Gwen: John! (her brother embraces her warmly) Michael (swings her around, laughing. Michael steals her hat and pretends to wear it. Gwen laughs and

chases him. Lisa eventually takes the hat from Michael, a disapproving frown on her face as she departs to set up dining table).

John: GWEN! My wonderful ... lovely ... intelligent, COMBATIVE sister!!!! This is my good friend, O'Connor. Connor, this is my dearest, darlingest sister, Gwendolyn.

Gwen: Your onliest (she laughs. And then she stops. She's finally seen the guest. Gwen and Mr. O'Connor stare at each other a beat too long).

O'Connor takes her hand, causing her to be flustered.

O'Connor: Hello.

Gwen smiles shyly, but then gets a handle on herself and moves away a bit. Something is very very jarring.

O'Connor: Miss Gwendolyn. Your brother tells me you have an outrageous imagination. He neglected to tell me, however, how lovely you are.

Gwen: John is a bit of an exaggerator, I'm afraid. I merely used to tell my brothers children's stories. They were a captive audience, quite literally.

John laughs

John: Don't let her fool you, Connor. She is brilliant. Should be published, in my opinion.

Mr. O'Connor: ... I have no doubt.

John: Come along, and meet Mother. I'm starved. Gwen, where's Mother?

O'Connor does not follow John and Michael, but turns to Gwendolyn. They simply stare at each other for a moment.

O'Connor: So. Children's stories? Were they parables? Folk tales? Moral lessons? Or fanciful nonsense?

Gwendolyn smiles

Gwen: ... A lot of pirates, apparently.

O'Connor: I'm sure you were up to the task. Your brother goes on about how wonderful your stories were.

Gwen: We were children, Mr. O'Connor. Children always think things are more wonderful, or more dire, or more interesting than they are. I love my brothers, but I think they heap too much praise on my abilities.

