

it is not his dogs that can frighten JAS
HOOK. *Hearing something like a cheer
from the boys he wheels round, and his face
brings them to their knees.)*

HOOK. So you like it, do you! By Caius and
Balbus, bullies, here is a notion: open the cabin
door and drive them in. Let them fight the
doodle-doo for their lives. If they kill him we
are so much the better; if he kills them we are
none the worse.

*(This masterly stroke restores their con-
fidence; and the boys, affecting fear, are
driven into the cabin. Desperadoes though
the pirates are, some of them have been
boys themselves, and all turn their backs to
the cabin and listen, with arms outstretched
to it as if to ward off the horrors that are
being enacted there.)*

*Relieved by PETER of their manacles, and
armed with such weapons as they can lay their
hands on, the boys steal out softly as snow-
flakes, and under their captain's hushed order
find hiding-places on the poop. He releases
WENDY; and now it would be easy for them*

*all to fly away, but it is to be HOOK or him
this time. He signs to her to join the others,
and with awful grimness folding her cloak
around him, the hood over his head, he takes
her place by the mast, and crows.)*

MULLINS. The doodle-doo has killed them all!

SEVERAL. The ship's bewitched.

(They are snapping at HOOK again.)

HOOK. I've thought it out, lads; there is a
Jonah aboard.

SEVERAL *(advancing upon him)*. Ay, a man
with a hook.

*(If he were to withdraw one step their
knives would be in him, but he does not
flinch.)*

HOOK *(temporising)*. No, lads, no, it is the
girl. Never was luck on a pirate ship wi' a
woman aboard. We'll right the ship when she
has gone.

MULLINS *(lowering his cutlass)*. It's worth
trying.

HOOK. Throw the girl overboard.

MULLINS *(jeering)*. There is none can save
you now, missy.

PETER. There is one.

MULLINS. Who is that?

PETER (*casting off the cloak*). Peter Pan, the avenger!

(*He continues standing there to let the effect sink in.*)

HOOK (*throwing out a suggestion*). Cleave him to the brisket.

(*But he has a sinking that this boy has no brisket.*)

NOODLER. The ship's accurst!

PETER. Down, boys, and at them!

(*The boys leap from their concealment and the clash of arms resounds through the vessel. Man to man the pirates are the stronger, but they are unnerved by the suddenness of the onslaught and they scatter, thus enabling their opponents to hunt in couples and choose their quarry. Some are hurled into the lagoon; others are dragged from dark recesses. There is no boy whose weapon is not reeking save SLIGHTLY, who runs about with a lantern, counting, ever counting.*)

WENDY (*meeting MICHAEL in a moment's lull*). Oh, Michael, stay with me, protect me!

MICHAEL (*reeling*). Wendy, I've killed a pirate!

WENDY. It's awful, awful.

MICHAEL. No, it isn't, I like it, I like it.

(*He casts himself into the group of boys who are encircling HOOK. Again and again they close upon him and again and again he hews a clear space.*)

HOOK. Back, back, you mice. It's Hook; do you like him? (*He lifts up MICHAEL with his claw and uses him as a buckler. A terrible voice breaks in.*)

PETER. Put up your swords, boys. This man is mine.

(*HOOK shakes MICHAEL off his claw as if he were a drop of water, and these two antagonists face each other for their final bout. They measure swords at arms' length, make a sweeping motion with them, and bringing the points to the deck rest their hands upon the hilts.*)

HOOK (*with curling lip*). So, Pan, this is all your doing!

PETER. Ay, Jas Hook, it is all my doing.

HOOK. Proud and insolent youth, prepare to meet thy doom.

PETER. Dark and sinister man, have at thee.

(*Some say that he had to ask TOOTLES whether the word was sinister or canister.*)

HOOK or PETER *this time!* They fall to without another word. PETER is a rare swordsman, and parries with dazzling rapidity, sometimes before the other can make his stroke. HOOK, if not quite so nimble in wrist play, has the advantage of a yard or two in reach, but though they close he cannot give the quietus with his claw, which seems to find nothing to tear at. He does not, especially in the most heated moments, quite see PETER, who to his eyes, now blurred or opened clearly for the first time, is less like a boy than a mote of dust dancing in the sun. By some impalpable stroke HOOK's sword is whipped from his grasp, and when he stoops to raise it a little

foot is on its blade. There is no deep gash on HOOK, but he is suffering torment as from innumerable jags.)

BOYS (*exulting*). Now, Peter, now!

(PETER raises the sword by its blade, and with an inclination of the head that is perhaps slightly overdone, presents the hilt to his enemy.)

HOOK. 'Tis some fiend fighting me! Pan, who and what art thou?

(The children listen eagerly for the answer, none quite so eagerly as WENDY.)

PETER (*at a venture*). I'm youth, I'm joy, I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg.

HOOK. To 't again!

(He has now a damp feeling that this boy is the weapon which is to strike him from the lists of man; but the grandeur of his mind still holds and, true to the traditions of his flag, he fights on like a human flail. PETER flutters round and through and over these gyrations as if the wind of them blew him out of the danger zone, and again and again he darts in and jags.)