

Before Never Never Land

Script Excerpt

book and lyrics by Scott Guy
music by Ken Neufeld

based on the stories
by James M. Barrie

*story developed by Kristin Overn
original development by Stephanie Angelini*



CAST:

Peter Pan
Queen Mab
Solomon Caw

Maimie Mannering
Tony Mannering
The Nurse
The Gatekeeper

Four Fairies:
Mushpot, Tag, Finders-Keepers, One Potato

TIME:

Late afternoon on the first night of winter, circa 1902

PLACE:

Kensington Gardens, England

Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

Solomon's Nest.....	Instrumental
The Fairies' Burden	The Fairies
Magic in the Gardens	The Gatekeeper, Maimie
Quick! The Light is Fading Fast!.....	Maimie, Tony, The Gatekeeper, The Nurse
I Shall Be Beautiful.....	Queen Mab
Betwixt and Between	Solomon Caw
Nine Minutes of Tears	The Fairies
The Most Wonderful Boy in the World.....	Maimie, Peter
My Little One.....	Maimie
We Hate the Wait.....	The Fairies
Kiss the Arrow	Peter, The Fairies
Lock-out Time	The Fairies

ACT TWO

The Garden's Ours.....	Fairies
The Wildebeest	Peter
I Have Lived a Child.....	Maimie
Queen Mab's Revenge.....	Queen Mab
My Little One -- Reprise.....	Peter
Four Walls and a Roof	Queen Mab, Mushpot, Tag
Betwixt and Between -- Reprise	Peter
Where Are the Birds?	The Gatekeeper, The Nurse
Yoomans Makes Such Marvy Pets	Finders-Keepers, One Potato
The Island	Maimie, Peter
The Most Wonderful Boy in the World -- Reprise.....	Peter
Magic in the Gardens -- Reprise.....	Ensemble

Synopsis of story prior to this excerpt:

On a late afternoon on the first night of winter, circa 1901, an ancient Magic grips a murky remote corner of Kensington Gardens, as Solomon Caw, a large old purple crow, prepares to send a trembling, frightened Peter Pan back to his mother in London. (**Solomon's Nest**) To Solomon's surprise, however, the boy turns out not to be Peter Pan at all, but one of the trickster fairies of the Gardens in disguise, and three other fairies, who taunt Solomon for being so easily duped. (**The Fairies' Burden**). At least, this is how it all happened according to the Gatekeeper, who has been telling Peter's story to a young girl, Maimie Mannering (**Magic in the Gardens**) to the annoyance of Maimie's Nurse and spoiled younger brother, Tony Mannering. Tony protests he no longer believes in fairies, but suddenly there's an awful sound, the sound of death, and Maimie runs off into the gardens, convinced her brother's words have injured a fairy, perhaps even killed it. (**Quick! The Light is Fading Fast**) The quartet of fairies emerge, horrified that one of their brethren has been killed ("Every time a human stops believing in fairies, one of us falls down dead.") -- and this time it's someone very important indeed: the fiancé of Queen Mab, Ruler of all the Fairies. Queen Mab appears, all in a dither about her wedding day (**I Shall Be Beautiful**), until she discovers the death of her fiancé, whereupon she turns dark and comically sinister.

ACT I

SCENE 4

SOLOMON CAW stands at the entrance to PETER's "house," if we can call it that. From the outside it vaguely resembles a boy's treehouse, but it's too round and twiggy for us to mistake it for a human dwelling. The door slams shut just as the lights come up.

SOLOMON CAW

Peter, open this door! Peter Pan! Let this be a warning that I am losing my patience with you! No more fairies to protect you, no more trickery. I demand that you choose right now, which is it to be: bird or human? The Gardens, or your mother?

(HE is answered by PETER's laughter.)

Very well; neither one nor the other. But you force me to send your mother the child for which she has been waiting so patiently. Tonight.

(The door opens a crack.)

SOLOMON CAW

I thought that might displease you.

(But instead of an answer, SOLOMON receives a cloud of loose feathers and a childish laugh. PETER scrambles out the backside of the house so rapidly neither we nor CAW catch more than a mere glimpse of him -- PETER dives out of sight into a thicket of reeds.)

SOLOMON CAW

If that's your decision, then, Peter. Shall I send your mother tonight -- would she fancy a sparrow? Or perhaps a common little finch? The best hatchling that I have from Class A? Or, because you have ruffled me, shall I send her a very funny one indeed?

(There is no answer.)

Oh little halfling, if I do this, what is to become of you?

(HE sings. **Betwixt and Between.** During the song, PETER, still hidden, fashions a reed-pipe and imitates the calling of the birds. CAW approaches, hoping to close in on PETER.)

SOLOMON CAW

DEAR LITTLE CHILD,
POOR CREATURE OF PAN,
CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:
NEITHER BIRD NOR A MAN.
UNCERTAIN OF WHETHER
TO CRY OR TO LAUGH.
WHICH WAY WILL YOUR WINDS BLOW,
WHICH WAY, HALF-AND-HALF?

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN.
IS THIS WHAT YOU CHOOSE?
IN GAINING YOUR FREEDOM,
HOW MUCH YOU SHALL LOSE!
NO OTHERS AROUND YOU,
UNHEARD AND UNSEEN,
IS THIS WHAT YOU'VE CHOSEN,
BETWIXT AND BETWEEN?

(PETER is suddenly distracted by an intriguing noise, off, and skitters away, just as SOLOMON dives into the reeds to grab him. SOLOMON manages to pull up a handful of mud and grass, merely. PETER runs away, laughing.)

SOLOMON CAW

Peter. You don't know what hangs in the balance here. In spite of what you think, there are no second chances. If I do this, it's forever, you know.

(PETER runs away, laughing. Pause.)

SOLOMON CAW

(with finality)

Very well. Forever let it be.
NO ONE TO ANSWER TO,
NO ONE TO SCOLD,
NO ONE TO HOLD AT NIGHT
WHEN YOU GROW OLD.

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN.
YOU WILL NEVER HAVE A HOME.
ALWAYS THE MISFIT
AND ALWAYS ALONE.
YOU'RE DESTINED TO WANDER
UNHEARD AND UNSEEN,
SO NOW YOU HAVE CHOSEN,
BETWIXT AND BETWEEN.

(Blackout.)

ACT I

SCENE 5

A dim clearing, into which MAIMIE is attempting to crawl her way -- but the vegetation is incredibly thick, and progress is nearly impossible.

MAIMIE

(losing sight of the VINE)

Oh, Mister Fairy, please don't shrivel off and die; curse these brambles! Please, where are you? I'll do anything to keep you alive.

(Something grabs her foot. SHE squeals, initially with fright, but then with intense delight.)

MAIMIE

Oh, let go, let go! Or, wait, don't let go, if you don't want, Mister Fairy!

(SHE gets very sneaky suddenly, pretending still to struggle, when in actuality SHE is maneuvering herself that SHE might reach backwards into the thorns and capture the fairy)

MAIMIE

Or, Miss Fairy, or Mrs., I suppose, only please don't die on me.

At least not before I've had a good look at you. My brother didn't mean what he said, it's just, he's so often such a selfish insufferable conceited

(SHE's ever so close now)

Such a molly-coddled, simpering, snivelling and I might add --

(SHE's got her hand on it now -- and gives it a great big pull and, with the greatest of disappointment, SHE discovers it's only the front half of TONY.)

TONY

I'll thank you not to finish that sentence, please.

MAIMIE

Tony!

TONY

So! It takes merely one good scramble through the undergrowth to discover what your sister really thinks of you?

MAIMIE

Oh, of course I didn't mean a word of it.

TONY

And yet you uttered it with such conviction!

MAIMIE

Only to assure the fairy it was safe to come out.
(calling again to the fairy)

Please, I know you're there!
(to TONY)

He's wearing the funniest little green slippers!

TONY

I shan't tell you again, Maimie, there is no such thing. Not any more, not for us. Now help me out of here, my trousers seem to be stuck on some thorn or other.

MAIMIE

Serves you right.

TONY

Hardly! I'm here to rescue you.

MAIMIE

Looks to me as though it isn't I who needs the rescuing.

TONY

Hoity-toity, Mistress Pert!

MAIMIE

If I do help you out, mighty Lord of the Realm, will you admit you're just *pretending* not to believe, merely to curry favours from Father?

TONY

Stooped to bribery, have we? Well, it won't work.

MAIMIE

Oh, Tony, don't you remember . . . how much *fun* we used to have together?

TONY

No, I don't. Anyway, I was only pretending to have fun.

MAIMIE

Even when I was practicing being a mother and you were my little lost boy?

TONY

Especially then.

MAIMIE

(miserable)
I'm not so sure . . . I like you anymore.

(The sound of PETER's pipes starts up, frightfully close by.)

MAIMIE

There! Do you hear that?

TONY

(squirming)
Not exactly, no.

MAIMIE

I'm going after it. Now, are you coming?

TONY

Not if it means ripping my trousers.

(The pipes sound again, receding rapidly.)

MAIMIE

Never mind your trousers! It's getting away!

TONY

Look, if you would kindly crawl back round through that thorny patch again and --

MAIMIE

There isn't time! Oh, oh, I shall be right back!

TONY

Don't leave me!

MAIMIE

Right -- back -- I promise!

TONY

Maimie. Maimie!

(SHE is gone. Pause.)

TONY

Well. Here is, as they say, a fine how do you do. So, think, Tony. What would a self-respecting member of the House of Lords do if he discovered himself caught by his trousers in such a compromising position? Hmm? He'd probably say "Oh no, not again," I suspect. But he would not, I repeat not, run after a nonexistent fairy into the woods.

TONY (cont'd)

I'LL NEVER BESMIRCH THE DIGNITY OF BRITAIN!
RUNNING ABOUT LIKE A MAD DOG WHO'S BEEN BITTEN.
STEADY AT THE HELM
FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THE REALM
AND THE FATE OF THE DIGNITY OF --

(But there is a startling noise fast approaching from the rear, and TONY bolts out of the brambles like a silly frightened child, his trousers making a dreadful *ri-i-pping* noise. HE runs in fear in the approximate direction in which MAIMIE headed.)

TONY

Oh, blast it! Blast it!

(HE clammers away uncertainly. The GATEKEEPER pushes his way into the clearing, followed immediately by the NURSE.)

NURSE

Tony! Tony, I'm here, dear! Maimie!
(wheezing a little)
Good gracious, I'm not fit for this.

GATEKEEPER

See? If you'd allow the children their proper playtime, perhaps they would return to you happily instead of run from you unhappily.

NURSE

Yes, well, that's all water under the bridge if I don't find them, isn't it? Whatever shall I tell the Master? "Well, sir, sad to say, but it seems I've lost both your children? Dreadfully sorry and all that, but might I still stay on anyway?" I don't think he'd go for it, quite frankly.

GATEKEEPER

Oh, if it's your *job* we're worried about, well, then, goodness sakes
(shouting excitedly)
Maimie . . . ! Theodore!

NURSE

His name is Tony.

GATEKEEPER

(a little tiffy)

Yes, I know. And his birthday is the seventeenth of August, he won the Boys' Boat races on the Thames last year, and his favourite dessert is peaches and clotted cream. Good lord, woman, do you think I don't know the children who play here? What do you take me for, their Nurse?

NURSE

You can't blame me if I worry when they're not in my sight.

GATEKEEPER

But do you think . . . they're unsafe here? Here, of all places?

NURSE

There is danger everywhere in the world, Gatekeeper -- and we are unwise if we simply choose to ignore it.

GATEKEEPER

(distracted)

Oh, look! What a lovely view of the swans from here!

NURSE

Swans!? Who has time for swans with children on the loose?

GATEKEEPER

As with danger, mum, so with beauty. Let us not shut our eyes to it. This way, this way!

(HE leads her on; SHE is most unhappy indeed.
Lights cross-fade to:)

ACT I

SCENE 6

QUEEN MAB is dressed in histrionically-black mourning clothes, and strikes various tragic poses in front of the four FAIRIES, whom SHE has also dressed in black.

QUEEN MAB

Oh, this is the most lamentable, the most dire thing in the world -- widowed at the altar! Weep at such epic tragedy!

(MAB weeps affectedly, and then realizes SHE is the only one who is crying.)

QUEEN MAB

(clobbering ONE POTATO)

Weep I say, you rufus-necked pipit! Why do you not weep?

ONE POTATO

(oblivious, as always)

Well, I'm trying, your Majesty, but I'm thinking maybe *the Duke* isn't actually quite relieved, eh?

QUEEN MAB

Silence, you pink-footed snottie! Now, I am the Queen, and as me heart has been cleft in twain, I hereby order all of you into . . . into seven minutes of tears for me!

FAIRIES

(ad-lib grumbles)

Seven minutes . . . I haven't it in me! . . . can we make it three?

QUEEN MAB

Just for that, *eight* minutes of tears!

FAIRIES

(ad-lib)

Oh, be fair . . . !

QUEEN MAB

Nine minutes, and any flammulated pygmy what don't cry loud enough has to reckon with my highly creative powers of persuasion, is that clear? I said, is that clear?

FAIRIES

(not ad-lib; unison)

Yes, Your Majesty, Queen Mab, Ruler of all the Fairies!

QUEEN MAB

Good then! I shall begin counting. Five, four, three, two, one -- WEEP!

(Music. The QUEEN pulls out an enormous hour-glass and tips it upside-down. The FAIRIES try anything they can think of to induce a tear: pinching themselves, banging their heads against the tree trunks, rubbing onions in their eyes, etc. -- but all with very little success. **Nine Minutes of Tears.**)

FAIRIES

OH-H-H-H-H!

QUEEN MAB

More!

FAIRIES

OH-H-H-H-H!

(then, aside:)

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT,
OUR EYES ARE ALL DRY!
PLEASE, SOMEONE TELL HER THAT WE CANNOT CRY.
WE CANNOT TAKE IT,
ALTHOUGH WE HAVE LOOKED,
THERE'S NOT A SINGLE TEARDROP IN OUR EYE DUCT!

QUEEN MAB

Louder, you ring-tailed boobies!

FAIRIES

SOB SIGH BLUBBER BAWL YAMMER BOO-HOO!
DARLING, WE ARE SO SORRY FOR YOU!
NEVER IN HIST'RY SINCE LOUIS QUATORZE
HAS THERE BEEN SUFFERING GREATER THAN YOURS.
ROMEO'S HEARTBREAK WAS TERRIBLE, TRULY, YET
YOU HAVE BEEN WOUNDED FAR DEEPER THAN JULIET.
GRIZZLE SNIVEL PULE AND WHINE
YES, YOUR SORROW IS GREATER THAN MINE!

QUEEN MAB

That's only three minutes!

FAIRIES

OH-H-H-H-H!

QUEEN MAB

Oh, I do love this.

FAIRIES

OH-H-H-H-H!

(then, aside:)

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT,
OUR EYES ARE ALL DRY!
PLEASE, SOMEONE TELL HER THAT WE CANNOT CRY.

WE CANNOT TAKE IT,
EVEN IF YOU FINE US
THERE'S NOT A BIT OF MOISTURE IN OUR SINUS.

QUEEN MAB

I can't hear you, you green-horned frogmouths!

FAIRIES

SOB SIGH BLUBBER BAWL YAMMER BOO-HOO!
DARLING, WE ARE SO SORRY FOR YOU!
THE FATES, THEY WERE CRUEL TO SAMSON'S DELILAH,
BUT YOU THEY'VE DECIDED TO TREAT EVEN VILER;
THOUGH ANTHONY AGONIZED FOR CLEOPATRA
YOUR TORTURE AND TORMENT (ET CETERA ET CETERA) IS
GRIZZLE SNIVEL PULE AND WHINE.
YES, YOUR SORROW IS GREATER THAN MINE!

QUEEN MAB

Oh, that does me a power of good. Now, find me the human what
withered my fiance -- keep it inside the Gardens until after
Lock-Out Time and then . . . *bring it to me, alive!*

(The FAIRIES take to the Gardens with malicious
glee on their mission for the Queen. The QUEEN
gives a tremendous cackle, but it soon collapses
into a coughing spasm as the lights cross-fade
to:)

ACT I

SCENE 7

A few haunted notes from a pipe echo between tree and limbs, and then stop abruptly as MAIMIE runs in, enchanted, but a little frightened nonetheless. And, sure enough, here the woods are a little darker, a little more menacing. Over MAIMIE's head, for example, in the shadow of the branches, *something* looms: a heavy beast, perhaps, a sinister shadow.

MAIMIE

Oh, don't stop. Please.
(silence)

Where are you?
(silence)

Look, don't you want to come out and play? I won't hurt you. Here, I know, I'll play at being Peter Pan and you . . . or, better still, better still . . . you can be Peter Pan, and I shall be . . . I shall be One-Eyed Betsy, from France! I would even let you be the victor, if you like, oh yes, and I should die a most magnificent death!

(SHE grabs a twig and play-acts the roles of Peter and Betsy, alternately. PETER, fascinated, nears and withdraws, nears and withdraws.)

MAIMIE

"Now, then, One-Eye, the sword or the scaffold?" "No, no, Peter, I'll do whatever you ask." "Too late for that, you miserable sorceress!" "They forced the confession out of me!" "Lies atop of lies! Take that!"

(thrusts as Peter; reels as Betsy)

"I am slain!" "Yes, by the great, the only, the most wonderful Peter Pan!"

(thrusts again)

"Oh, to the quick! This is the end for me, Peter, all grows dark, dark, dark!"

(MAIMIE executes a great death scene as Betsy, only to pop up as Peter to crow over the body.)

MAIMIE

(addressing her fairy again)

There! How's that? A magnificent death indeed. You win!

(Still silence.)

MAIMIE

Fine, I've tired of this game. Look, either show yourself . . . or, I shall be forced to go home and . . . admit to Tony that he was right about you. And who knows after that, but I shan't grow up all sad and sorrowful, merely because you wouldn't let me have the least little peek. I ask you, is that fair?

(SHE storms away. But PETER makes a chilling snarling sound, which causes MAIMIE to stop up short. SHE turns to look, but as there is nothing still to see, SHE continues on. PETER snarls again, nearer.)

MAIMIE

No, no, it's too late now. As Solomon Caw says, there are no second chances.

(But SHE knows this strategy finally is working, and the further from her tormentor SHE walks, the nearer down the tree HE scurries, until finally, PETER pounces down directly in front of her with a strange whooshing noise, his blade drawn!)

MAIMIE

(in near shock)

Peter!

PETER

Did I frighten you?

MAIMIE

Peter Pan!

PETER

Peter Pan? Not a bit.

(This is our first good look at PETER. Shockingly, HE is not much like we have always imagined him. HE is earthbound, surprisingly reserved, and . . . well, rather ordinary.)

MAIMIE

Yes, you are.

(flinging her arms around his neck)

Oh, I just knew I'd find you one day, Peter!

PETER

(extricating himself)

No, no, Peter was eaten by a trio of bears last winter, didn't you hear?

MAIMIE

You were not.

PETER

Oh, yes. I'm actually Lord Ogilvy, fallen from my pram and raised by the falcons. And you are one-eyed Betsy, from France.

(HE strikes a fencing pose.)

MAIMIE

No, I'm afraid I'm not. My name's Maimie Mannering.

PETER

You have but one eye.

MAIMIE

Look again, Peter. Quite the both of them.

PETER

I see only one eye. "Lies atop of lies!" Guards, take her away!

MAIMIE

You don't have guards.

PETER

I most certainly do; it's just they're deaf from too much cannon fire. Guards!

MAIMIE

You don't need guards.

PETER

I don't?

MAIMIE

Of course not. You've never lost a battle in your life. So the stories go, and you're not going to tell me the stories aren't true.

PETER

Stories? There are stories about me?

MAIMIE

From the streets to the nurseries to the, oh I don't know, to the Palace I suppose, we all know about Peter Pan!

PETER

Do we?

MAIMIE

Of course we do. All the boys play at being you, unless they're too Mary-Annish like Tony, in which case we girls are forced to take over for them. Oh, Peter, do let's take a ride in your boat, can't we?

(PETER is about to indicate a raft, when he realizes MAIMIE has something much grander in mind.)

MAIMIE

Such an enormous silver boat it is, isn't it?, with sails and masts and cannons!

PETER

(beginning to catch on to the game)

Yes, I've been around the world in it so many times I tired of it and had it sunk!

MAIMIE

Only to have built a grander one in the spring! Oh, Peter, do fly for me, will you?

PETER

(genuinely confused)

Fly? You think I can fly?

MAIMIE

Why, of course you can, and you don't even need fairy dust to do it! You are everything I imagined you to be!

(Music. **The Most Wonderful Boy in the World.**)

PETER

(skeptical)

What else do you imagine me to be?

MAIMIE

What don't I imagine, Peter?

YOU ARE YOUTH,
YOU ARE JOY!
I CAN SEE
IT'S THE TRUTH.
THERE'S NO BOY
QUITE LIKE YOU.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CANNOT DO?

MAIMIE (CONT'D)

EVEN THOUGH
WE ALL KNOW ANY BOY, ANY GIRL'D
SAY IT'S SO:
PETER PAN,
THE MOST WONDERFUL BOY IN THE WORLD.
HOW
WE ALL WISH WE COULD FLY,
YES, FLY, LIKE PETER PAN.

PETER

(contemplating the idea)

Fly

MAIMIE

AND NOW
THOUGH WE MIGHT EVEN TRY
WE CAN'T, LIKE PETER CAN.
SO
WE ALL ENVY HIM PROUDLY,
HE IS YOUTH! HE IS JOY!
CROW
BIG AND BOISTEROUS AND LOUDLY:
PETER PAN,
WHAT A MARVELOUS BOY!

PETER

It's a little much, don't you think?

MAIMIE

Now, modesty, Peter, really, that's something I never expected from you!

PETER

Well, I'm no end of surprises, looks like.

MAIMIE

Crow for me, Peter!

PETER

Crow.

MAIMIE

Yes, you know --

(SHE crows; HE startles.)

PETER

That's remarkable.

MAIMIE

Yes.

PETER

Well, really, I, uh -- I only crow actually, after I've, killed something. Yes.

MAIMIE

Do you really kill, Peter?

PETER

(half believing it himself now)

Oh, I've lost count. Your zebras and lions, of course, and no end of elephants and giraffes.

MAIMIE

In Africa, then?

PETER

No, no, right here in England. Why do you think you see so few of them around? I've killed them all.

MAIMIE

I always wondered

PETER

Would you expect anything less? After all

I AM YOUTH!
I AM JOY!
YES, I KNOW,
IT'S THE TRUTH.
THERE'S NO BOY
QUITE LIKE ME.
THERE'S NO LIMIT TO WHAT I CAN BE.

EVEN THOUGH
THEY ALL KNOW,
ANY BOY, ANY GIRL'D
SAY IT'S SO:
PETER PAN,
THE MOST WONDERFUL BOY IN THE WORLD.

MAIMIE
And pirates! You've hunted pirates, haven't you?

PETER
As many as you like.

PETER
HOW
YOU ALL WISH YOU COULD FLY,
THROUGH THE SKY, LIKE PETER PAN.
AND NOW
THOUGH YOU MIGHT EVEN TRY
YOU CAN'T, LIKE PETER CAN.

MAIMIE & PETER
SO
DON'T YOU ENVY HIM PROUDLY
DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE HE?
CROW
BIG AND BOISTEROUS AND LOUDLY
PETER PAN
WHAT A MARVELOUS

PETER
ME!

(Blackout.)