

Before Never Never Land

Synopsis

Act One

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.

Meanwhile, Solomon Caw sadly vows to a hide-and-seeking Peter that if Peter does not voluntarily go back to his mother this very night, Solomon will be forced to send another boy in his place, and worries that Peter will never have a home. (**Betwixt and Between**) Maimie and Tony get lost and separated in the woods. The fairies, ordered into mourning by Queen

Mab (**Nine Minutes of Tears**), chase after Tony. Maimie runs into Peter Pan (**The Most Wonderful Boy in the World**) and attributes to him the most amazing abilities, including the power of flight, all of which come as a complete surprise to a very flattered Peter, who doesn't let on to Maimie that he's not entirely the wonderful boy for which she's mistaken him. Solomon Caw makes good on his threat, and sends a newborn to Peter's mother in London. In an effort to impress Maimie by visiting their mothers' windows (**My Little One**), Peter secrets himself off to Queen Mab to borrow some fairy dust so that he can fly. Mab, worried she's losing her precious Peter to the nasty little human girl, distracts Peter with a fantastical hunt of a mythical beast (**Kiss the Arrow**). However, at this moment, the fairies close in on Tony (**We Hate the Wait**), and Peter discovers Solomon Caw's betrayal. Peter flies away to London with a great crowing sound just as the Gates close on Tony and Maimie with a terrible clang.

Act Two

Snow begins to fall. The fairies celebrate the power which the darkness gives them over the shackled Tony (**The Garden's Ours**) and Queen Mab savors the vengeance she is about to extract. Meanwhile, Maimie, separated from Tony, happens upon the body of the Queen's fiancé, and discovers it is still dimly dimly alive. She wraps her arms around it, trying to keep it warm, calling out for help. At his mother's nursery window, Peter imagines an epic battle with a creature Solomon has summoned to prevent him from reaching the newborn (**The Wildebeest**), but then loses his courage when it comes time to rap at his mother's window.

As the Nurse and the Gatekeeper become profoundly lost in the gardens, no one comes to rescue Maimie. Maimie curls up in the snow and prepares to meet death with dignity. (**I Have Lived a Child**) Queen Mab succors every minute of her glorious vengeance upon Tony (**Queen Mab's Revenge**), but at the last moment, Tony confesses that he not only does he still believe in fairies, his sister tells the most wonderful stories about Queen Mab. Mab, hopeful that perhaps Maimie might prevent other humans from disbelieving in fairies, rushes off to save Maimie. On the other hand, she cavalierly tosses Tony to two of the other fairies to keep "as a pet." Peter finally summons the courage to call to his mother (**My**

Little One -- Reprise), but he is too late. He sees, to his horror, that not only is his mother cradling another baby son, but that she has constructed iron bars across the window, locking out Peter forever.

Deep in the woods, Queen Mab and two female fairies find Maimie, frozen in the woods. They build a crazy haphazard house around her to keep her warm (**Four Walls and a Roof**). Peter returns to the Gardens, demented with grief. He tears his old nightgown to shreds, then reaches for a knife to plunge into his heart. But Solomon has stolen his knife and tries to console him. Peter, however, is inconsolable, and shoos Solomon away, lashing out at everything within reach, effectively destroying his home. (**Betwixt and Between -- Reprise**) The Nurse realizes how tragic a figure she is now, how tragic we all are, once we grow up (**Where are the Birds?**) but majestically decides she's not going to allow that to happen completely to her. She fights her way through the fairies and rescues Tony, who has suffered grave indignities as the fairies' new "pet." (**Yoomans Make Such Marvy Pets**) Worried though she is that Maimie might worm her way into Peter's heart, Queen Mab revives Maimie and sends her to comfort Peter. Maimie tells Peter of a place her mother speaks about, a place where you "never never grow up to become cruel and turn your sons away from your window" (**The Island**) Peter is determined to get to that Island, though it breaks Maimie's and Mab's hearts to see him go. While Mab is distracted with her reunion with her fiancé, Peter pushes off in a small reed boat, which Caw transforms into a magical ship, pointed upwards towards a star "second on the right...and straight on till morning." (**Magic in the Gardens**)