

A PIRATE.
A PIXIE.
AND A PLOT TO FOIL
PETER PAN

BECOMING HOOK

MARY MECHAM

SAMPLE SNIPPET



“*I*’m missing dust,” Peter hissed, venom edging his voice. “There should be more than what I have here.” He opened the small chest he used to house his precious powder and showed the group.

While it didn’t look any different to Jimmy, he knew that Peter was fiercely protective of his collection and would know down to the teaspoon how much he had. If he found out who took it...the punishment would be swift and severe. Jimmy’s eyes darted once toward Smee, who had turned ghostly white and began to tremble all over. Jimmy shifted to the side, screening the younger boy’s guilty face from Peter’s view.

“I saw one of those pixies there yesterday when some of them got out,” Auggie piped up suddenly. All the Lost Boys’ attention snapped onto him, and a measure of tension left Jimmy’s body. Maybe Smee wouldn’t be suspected after all. Auggie, ever the chatty one, went on, “It was that blonde one with the green dress. Maybe she took it.”

New fear, even more intense than a moment before, spasmed through Jimmy's chest, paralyzing him. *Not Tink.*

A cruel smile flickered across Peter's face, twisting his handsome features into something sinister and unsettling. "You know, I think dear Mrs. Crocodile hasn't been fed in a while. I think I just found her next meal. We all know how she craves the sweetness of pixies."

Smee and Jimmy exchanged horrified glances.

Peter led the other Lost Boys down the passageway to the animal shed. Once the rest had realized they were not in trouble, they immediately reverted to their boisterous nature—shouting and shoving as they thundered down the hall. Jimmy and Smee, still too stunned to move, began conversing in panicked whispers about what to do.

"I should tell him," Smee agonized. "I can give the dust back."

"No, that is your only way back home!"

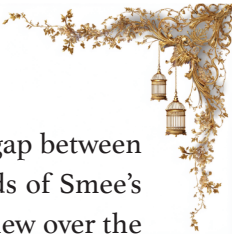

"But Tinkerbelle..."

"I won't let anything happen to Tink," Jimmy promised in a fierce whisper. "No matter what."

"Peter's going to kill her." Tears welled up in the younger boy's eyes. "And it will be all my fault."

"Nobody is going to die today." He glanced around and saw the line of boys had already disappeared. "Hurry!"

The two friends dashed out to the animal shed, but Peter had already come and gone, and Tink's cage was noticeably absent. The Lost Boys must have been just as eager to feed the crocodile as Pan was. Jimmy sprinted toward the jagged outcropping that overlooked the dark



bayou, thanking his long legs for closing the gap between himself and Tink's attackers. The faint sounds of Smee's puffing quickly faded away as Jimmy nearly flew over the ground, outpacing the smaller boy by a great distance.

When Jimmy burst out onto the rock outcropping, he saw Pan clutching Tinkerbell's tiny cage handle, suspended over the crocodile circling below. The pixie dust trickling down from Tinkerbell's frantically fluttering wings only excited the massive reptile. Pixies were a special treat for her, Jimmy knew, but it was now time to bring that tradition to a close.

"Stop!" Jimmy ran forward in a panic and attempted to snatch the cage from Peter. Tinkerbell flitted around madly inside the tiny prison, desperate to put space between herself and the crocodile, jaws open wide in the water below.

"Jimmy, what're you doing?"


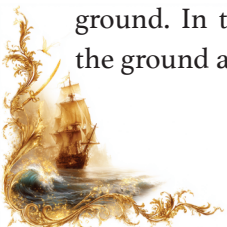
"It was me," Jimmy burst out, sweat breaking out onto his brow. "I stole the dust. It wasn't her."

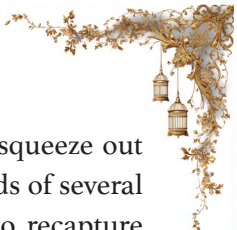
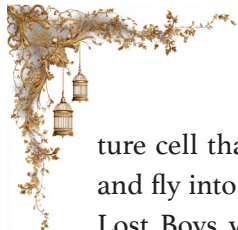
Peter's face darkened. "Come off it, Jimmy Boy! I know you're lying."

"Then throw me out!" Jimmy challenged. "You shouldn't kill pixies." He tried to grab Tink's prison from Peter again, but Peter leapt out of reach.

Peter laughed derisively. "So much effort just to save a bug! How'd this insect get you to lie for it anyway?" He shook the cage viciously, watching Jimmy's reaction carefully.

Jimmy lunged forward again and tackled Peter to the ground. In their ensuing scuffle, Tink's cage crashed to the ground and splintered. Cracks appeared in the minia-






ture cell that were large enough for Tink to squeeze out and fly into the air, evading the grasping hands of several Lost Boys who leapt in a fruitless attempt to recapture her.

“Now see what you did!” Peter roared as he drew his dagger. He began to take off after Tinkerbelle, ready to finish what he started, but Jimmy caught Peter’s ankle and dragged his friend back down toward land, teetering dangerously close to the edge of the rock outcropping.

“Leave her alone!”

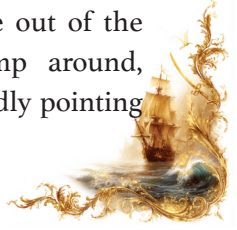
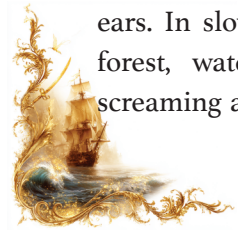
“Leave *me* alone, you traitor!” Peter swiped his dagger downward.



In slow motion, Jimmy saw the dagger descend and penetrate his wrist, where the razor-sharp blade cut through his left wrist as smoothly as butter. The horror of what he was watching seemed like an illusion as his severed hand lost its grip on Peter’s ankle and fell to the water below, where it was enveloped in the sea with a sickening splash.

Jimmy stared at the grotesque sight, uncomprehending, then gazed back at his former best friend. Peter was fixated on the same point in the sea, aghast at what he had done. In a violent flurry, the crocodile descended on the spot where the hand had dropped. Jimmy looked back at the stump where his hand used to be, bile rising in his throat. Despite the copious amounts of blood pouring from his wrist, he didn’t feel any of the accompanying pain he thought would come.

It was as though pillows had been pressed over his ears. In slow motion, he saw Smee stumble out of the forest, watched the other Lost Boys jump around, screaming at the top of their lungs, all excitedly pointing



over the edge at the crocodile devouring the hand, but to Jimmy, no noise was heard. He lifted his gaze upward and saw that Tinkerbell had disappeared into the clouds above.

“Fly, Tink,” Jimmy murmured. “Be free.”
Then, he fainted.







