

MRS. DARLING

Well, we'll soon fix that.

(She takes the top hat from JOHN and places it on MICHAEL)

May I have the honor of this dance, Mr. Darling?

(MICHAEL throws a triumphant look at JOHN, bows to his mother, and all four dance)

ALL

ONE, TWO THREE, ONE TWO THREE,

ONE, TWO THREE, ONE TWO THREE.

ONE, TWO THREE, ONE TWO THREE,

ONE, TWO THREE, ONE!

[On final chord. ALL bow to each other]

MRS. DARLING

You dance beautifully, Mr. Darling.

MR. DARLING

(Off)

Mother! Mother!

(MR. DARLING arrives, in no mood unfortunately to gloat over this domestic scene. [He is really a good man as bread-winners go, and it is hard luck for him to be propelled into the room now, when if we had brought him in a few minutes earlier or later he might have made a fairer impression. In the city where he sits on a stool all day, as fixed as a postage stamp, he is so like all the others on stools that you recognise him not by his face but by his stool, but at home the way to gratify him is to say that he has a distinct personality.] He is very conscientious, and in the days when MRS. DARLING gave up keeping the house books correctly and drew pictures instead (which he called her guesses), he did all the totting up for her, holding her hand while he calculated whether they could have Wendy or not, and coming down on the right side. It is with regret, therefore, that we introduce him as a tornado, rushing into the nursery in evening dress, but without his coat, and brandishing in his hand a recalcitrant white tie)

(Implying that he has searched for her everywhere and that the nursery is a strange place in which to find her)

Oh, here you are, Mary.

MRS. DARLING

(Knowing at once what is the matter)

What is the matter, George dear?

MR. DARLING

(As if the word were monstrous)

Matter? This tie, it will not tie.

(He waxes sarcastic)

Not round my neck. Round the bed-post, oh yes – but round my neck, oh dear no; begs to be excused.

MICHAEL

(In a joyous transport)

Say it again, father, say it again!

MR. DARLING

(Witheringly)

A little less noise there.

(Goaded by an auspiciously crooked smile on MRS. DARLING's face)

I warn you of this, Mother, that unless this tie goes around my neck we don't go out to dinner tonight, and if I don't go out to dinner to-night I never go to the office again, and if I don't go to the office again you and I starve, and our children will be thrown into the streets.

(The CHILDREN blanch as they grasp the gravity of the situation)

MRS. DARLING

Let me try, father dear.

(In a terrible silence their progeny cluster round them. Will she succeed? Their fate depends on it. She fails – no, she succeeds. In another moment they are wildly gay, romping round the room on each other's shoulders. Father is even a better horse than Mother. He sings "We're all right for another day!" as MICHAEL rides on his back. MICHAEL is dropped upon his bed, WENDY retires to prepare for hers, JOHN runs from NANA, who has reappeared with the bath towel)

JOHN

(Rebellious)

I won't take a bath! Nana, I won't take a bath!

MR. DARLING

(In the grand manner)

Go and be bathed at once, sir.

(With bent head JOHN follows NANA into the bathroom)

Come here, Michael – no more nonsense.

(Unfortunately NANA has collided with his trousers – the first pair he has ever had with braid on them)

(MR. DARLING)

Oh, Mother, look here! Hair all over my trousers!!

(To NANA)

Clumsy! Clumsy!

(NANA goes, a drooping figure)

MRS. DARLING

I'll brush you off, Father dear.

MR. DARLING

Thank you. You know, Mother, sometimes I think it's a mistake to have a dog for a nurse.

MRS. DARLING

Why George, Nana is a treasure.

MR. DARLING

No doubt; but at times I have an uneasy feeling that she looks upon the children as her puppies.

MRS. DARLING

George, we must keep Nana. I will tell you why.

(Her seriousness impresses him)

My dear, when I came into this room tonight I saw a face at the window.

MR. DARLING

(Incredulous)

A face at the window, two floors up?

MRS. DARLING

It was the face of a little boy; he was trying to get in.

MR. DARLING

Impossible.

MRS. DARLING

It's not the first time I've seen that boy.

MR. DARLING

(Beginning to think that this may be a man's job)

O-ho?

MRS. DARLING

(Making sure that MICHAEL does not hear)

The first time was a week ago—I remember, because it was Nana's night off.