The Best of Disney's Animated Features

Volume three

Christian Renaut

Editor: Christian Renaut

Layout partly conceived by Valerie Delaunay on an idea by Christian Renaut.

ISBN : 9789403766058

published by : Bookmundo

Contents

Foreword

How well we know those great animated sequences in the Disney classics: Peter Pan whisking the Darling children from their nursery, across the rooftops and landmarks of London and away to Neverland; Lady and Tramp's romantic Italian supper-tryst of spaghetti and meatballs; and Prince Phillip battling Maleficent-in-dragon-form in order to find and awaken his sleeping beauty. The dramatic first appearance of Disney's most outrageous villain, Cruella de Vil; the dazzling pyrotechnics as Merlin and Madam Mim embark on a wizard's duel; Mary Poppins and Bert cavorting through a chalk pavement-picture on their Jolly Holiday; and Baloo and King Louie tearing up the screen with an unforgettable scat-jazz number.

Having seen these scenes (probably more times than we can remember) it is too often the case that their brilliance is dulled and their sharpness dimmed and we fail to appreciate just what masterclasses of animation they are, embracing, as they do, all aspects of filmmaking: design and styling, characterisation, action, choreography and timing, voices, sound and music, background, lighting and every other cinematography choice and editorial decision required to create three-dimensional realism in a two-dimensional medium.

Fortunately we have this invaluable book from Christian Renaut which, like his two previous volumes, offers painstaking research and perceptive analysis of these keynote sequences: opening our eyes to the development and realisation of what are now acknowledged as milestones of animation.

As Christian observes in his introduction, the majority of the films discussed here are quintessentially English and that is a reminder of how many of the Disney classics produced during Walt's life-time – and, indeed, since – owed their origin to the myths, legends, fairy-tales and children's classics of Europe. True the Europeans concerned have not always appreciated the results! The Italians were not enamoured with Disney's take on *Pinocchio*, the Austrians were critical of his version of *Bambi* and the British were, of course, appropriately disgruntled with what happened to *Peter Pan*, *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

More recently, the Greeks got cross about *Hercules*, while *The Little Mermaid* upset the Danes! However, in all these instances, the Disney artists (then and now) showed themselves to be true successors to the many generations of storytellers and folklorists who have retold 'tales as old as time' for a new age. In doing so – despite their sometimes-cavalier handling of the 'originals' – these films have become benchmarks of Twentieth and Twenty-first Century popular culture and deserve to be better understood and appreciated.

So, it's time now to line up the DVDs of these seven films made between 1953 and 1967 and, with Christian Renaut's commentary to hand, prepare to

discover more – *much more* – about the making of these memorable Disney moments.

First stop: *Second Star to the Right!*

Brian Sibley, June 2024.

Introduction

So, here is the last volume of the trilogy dedicated to the animated features made under Walt Disney's supervision. From *Peter Pan* (1953) to *The Jungle Book* (1967), it more or less covers two decades, the 50's and the 60's. Even though Walt's passion for animation had dwindled by then and it was harder and harder to see him in story meetings, he still had the final say, which would cause even more panic when he passed away. However, some aspects could still catch his attention and revive the flame: the Cinemascope format, Eyvind Earle's style, the story of a British nurse, or the animals portrayed in Kipling's books. Those two decades have seen ups and downs, both in terms of his involvement as well as of success. From the triumphs of *Mary Poppins* (1964) or *The 101 Dalmatians* (1961) to the disillusions of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) or *The Sword in the Stone* (1963).

It was also a time of drastic changes: Mary Blair, whose impact was still very visible in *Peter Pan* would stop working for Disney animated features, some artists would take over, Eyvind Earle, Walt Peregoy or Ken Anderson. But more importantly, it would also be the end of the delicate and refined inking process on cels. The advent of Xerography was a major transformation, and it would take Walt time to realize it…

I don't know why I have a special feeling for the films of that period, perhaps because they might have been the first films I ever saw at the cinema in re-releases. Perhaps because *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) ignited a lifetime passion for dogs and then animals, perhaps because I must have fallen in love with Julie Andrews (at age 6!), or maybe because *The Jungle Book* was the first film release I followed from A to Z. Soon to be followed by the stunning news that the wizard behind all these gems was not immortal.

It shouldn't be misunderstood by the artists who made Disney films even long after his death, but to me, it would never be the same. By the way, many of the artists who have worked on the films from 1970 to today agree with me and they are all in awe of the films made under Walt. They always refer to them and there are reasons for this, that I keep trying to develop in this series of books.

Many of the films in this Volume 3 have a strong link with the UK. All but two were based on books written by British authors: Sir James Barrie, Dodie Smith, P.L. Travers, T.H. White and Rudyard Kipling. Would I have ever read them had I not watched the Disney versions? Several of them take place in that country. Also, the Disney historian who has been the closest to P.L. Travers is certainly Brian Sibley. He even co-wrote a sequel with her. Not only is he one of the best experts of Disney animation and wrote many books and articles, but he is also extremely knowledgeable about Lewis Carroll, Tolkien, many illustrators such as Ronald Searle or Ernest H. Shepard, and so many other artistic fields as he showed in many a

lecture or programs for the BBC. Despite a busy schedule, he has always been willing to help me whenever I asked for his advice and readings. I was lucky to eventually meet him in November 2023. We also both cherish the memory of our late beloved friend Robin Allan. For all these reasons, I thought he was *the* man to write the foreword of that last Volume. I thank him very much for having accepted. As usual in this volume, whenever no interviewer is quoted, it means the interview was conducted by myself.

As is written in the acknowledgments at the end of this book, I have met many wonderful people through those many years researching, interviewing, writing, and unfortunately, many of them are no longer with us. I feel particularly indebted to Joanne and Alan Johnston, and sadly, the latter has left us recently, this book is legitimately dedicated to him.

PETER PAN (1953)

Learning to fly (Sequence 02.1) /Flight to Neverland (Sequence 03.0) From 16'58 to 19'50

Walt Disney repeatedly remembered how struck he had been by the film *Snow White* featuring Marguerite Clark he had seen when he was child, urging him to make that story his first animated feature. But another show had a lasting impact on him when he was about 9 and he soon impersonated the key-role: "The most thrilling was the vision of Peter flying through the air. No actor ever identified himself with the part he was playing more than I. And I was more realistic than Maude Adams in at least one particular: I actually flew through the air! Roy was using a block and tackle to hoist me. It gave way and I flew right into the faces of the surprised audience." It is hard to imagine today how successful Sir James M. Barrie's play was back then.

After its premiere on 27 December 1904, at the Duke of York's Theatre in London, the stage play was performed again and again in Great Britain before it toured the USA, starting on Broadway on November 6, 1905. The lucky producer of the show was Charles Frohman whose biographers wrote: "*Peter Pan*...became a nation-wide vogue. Children were named after him[1]." Over two million people saw Maude Adams play Peter Pan during the following two decades even though she was sometimes replaced. One of them was called Walt Disney. It is only later, in 1911, that playwright James Barrie eventually wrote a novel out of that play titled *Peter and Wendy*. Enjoying this sudden fame, Barrie got more and more interested in that invention called "cinema" and as early as 1915 he made his own film, a parody of Macbeth, *The Real Thing at Last* which lasted about 30 minutes. Needless to say that many producers urged him to consider a film adaptation of his beloved story of the boy who never grew up. He turned down several offers until he wrote a screenplay himself that he sold to Paramount. To Barrie, the best actor who could play Peter Pan was no other than Walt's idol and friend as Charlie Chaplin recalled: "Barrie tells me that he is looking for someone to play Peter Pan and says he wants me to play it. He bowls me over completely[2]."

In 1924, the first film version came out, directed by Herbert Brenon, who did without Barrie's script. Is it for this reason, Barrie disliked the film. In a certain way, this silent movie appears as a transition between James Barrie and Walt Disney. In effect, the latter screened it at his studio for his team to have a base to work from, although Walt also disregarded Brenon's adaptation. With his usual self-confidence, Walt was certain he would be the one capable of honoring Barrie's work and even top it: "I don't believe that what James M. Barrie actually intended ever came out on stage. If you read the play carefully, following the author's suggestion on interpretation and staging, I think you'll agree. It's almost a perfect vehicle for cartooning. In fact, one might think that Barrie wrote the play with cartoons in mind. I don't think he was ever happy with the stage version. Live actors are limited, but with cartoons we can give free rein to the imagination."

We saw in Volume 2 that Walt had many projects on his mind when came time to figure out what would follow *Snow White*. There were films he thought he "had to do" like *Alice in Wonderland*, those he felt he could do someday like *Bambi*, or those he thought he had better do, to save the studio from bankruptcy like *Cinderella*. But all along those years, he became like obsessed with the idea of making his animated version of the British fantasy. Like the other films mentioned, and perhaps even more, work on the film started, then it was shelved, back and forth, until it finally reached the screens in 1953. In photos or footage of artists at work at the studio, is very often a model-sheet, a figurine or a sketch somewhere of the characters of that story. One example among many is the film *The Reluctant Dragon* (1941) shot in 1940 where we see a Captain Hook all dressed in black looming over the drawing boards.

Walt started to seriously contemplate tackling *Peter Pan* as early as 1935, after launching *Snow White*. It was not easy for the studio to obtain the rights from Paramount but it was resolved in October 1938 and in January 1939, the studio settled a contract with Ormond Hospital to whom Barrie had offered his rights. Work started as soon as Paramount sold the rights, on October 20, 1938 to be precise, and as was customary, it was up to Dorothy Ann Blank to do the first researches. She proposed a first rough synopsis on November 2nd, 1938. She called it *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* as a reference to the book that Barrie had written about Peter's birth in the well-known London Park, *The Little White Bird*. The very industrious woman had researched through files of reviews of the play since the premiere in the USA. She was a bit bewildered by the work as expresses a note she wrote to Walt: "It's a swell story but Mr. Barrie has scattered it around and made it as confusing as possible." All along the first part of 1939 she was helped by another woman, Bianca Majolie. Jack Miller did the very first sketches. Majolie worked with her usual refined pastels. At the time, it seems the pirates were going to steal the show with lots of work on their designs, personalities and Bill Tytla was even picked by Walt to animate them while Fred Moore was to be in charge of Tinker Bell, as said Walt in a story meeting: "I find in *Peter Pan*, sequences in there, that I think would be ideally suited for animators like Fergy, Tytla and men like that. There's sections of the pirates, you know, and those fellows you know they can do that."

Blank admitted she had a hard time coming up with a viable script: "I am trying to formulate a straight, simple story line, but it's all over the place right now." Then, in the Spring, an Irish man who had a rather short stint at the studio but who was incredibly prolific, Dave Hall, did wonderful paintings of situations. He was simultaneously working hard on *Alice in Wonderland* and a little on *Bambi*. Hall focused more on the Darling children both at home and on Neverland.

In October 1939, Mrs. Blank was assigned other tasks while Earl Hurd took over. Hurd took a wrong direction which was largely influenced by the first book about Peter's infancy and Walt rejected it. In their turn, Bob Carr and Hal Sloane

worked on another version. In December, a larger team was at work, headed by the faithful duo Joe Grant/Dick Huemer whose work on *Fantasia* was almost completed. Hurd, Majolie and Sloane were joined by Bill Cottrell, Ray Kelley, Lyle Robertson for story, along with sketch artists Dennis Mc Carthy, Roy Forkum and an artist who was also working with Hall on *Alice in Wonderland*, Ray Jacobs. Time and again, the project was shelved but in 1940, Miller suggested designs for almost all the characters. In January 1940, a Leica reel was made by Perce Pearce, with some piano ideas by Frank Churchill to no avail. In 1941, Ed Penner and T. Hee proposed another script, but the project was almost abandoned during the war years, like almost all the projects of fully animated features.

In 1946, as Walt hesitated between *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan*, work resumed. To help him make up his mind, he, at long last, decided to thoroughly read the original book in December 1946. Hal Sloane was still involved and suggested a 72-page treatment in March followed by one in July by Frank Gabrielson. It seemed *Peter Pan* was going to be the next feature and Jack Kinney was appointed director and he was heart and soul in the project. Walt had learnt Kinney was courted by MGM so he gave him the reins on *Peter Pan.* But it was a terrible blow for Kinney when he learnt later that *Cinderella* was going to be given priority, which enraged him as can be felt in that interview he gave for Robin Allan: "*Peter Pan* was shelved about four times. Walt said: 'we're going to push this thing through from start to finish. We'll meet up in my office every morning on Story. Crash act! Finally he okayed everything on script, okayed storyboards (Don Da Gradi, Dick Kinney, Tom Oreb…) I auditioned voices for it-I auditioned Jean Arthur for Peter Pan's voice. Boy's voice it was. Hans Conried, Helen Colefax (now Terry Moore) for Wendy. Had it all cast. Good music. 39 storyboards right across from library. But after presenting everything, Walt turned to *Cindy*. Jean Arthur was very upset and made it on stage instead. [3]." Kinney would later be even more furious when he saw that he was not even credited.

After some more time, Walt read the book again in October 1948 and the story was reshuffled by Joe Grant who went back to what Dorothy Blank had proposed years before. Things were now getting serious and in 1950 appeared the first storyboards of the almost final version with input by the storymen who were having a real impact on all the films of the 1950's: Ed Penner, Joe Rinaldi and Don Da Gradi. The main animators to contribute ideas were also Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston and John Lounsbery. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson were appointed directors. One of the very last changes was that unlike what Mrs. Blank had advocated, Wendy would no longer be the off-voice narrator. The voices were recorded in January 1951 while Milt Kahl worked on the designs of the characters. Following a routine that *Cinderella* had initiated, all along 1951, various actors acted for live-action reference as always supervised by the third director Ham Luske, and pretty soon animation started.

As he had been confronted with in *Alice in Wonderland*, Walt knew he would have again to deal with a beloved masterpiece, which would inevitably restrain him. In a story meeting dated January 28, 1941, he said: "We don't want to make this for the few adults who may be worshippers of Barrie. I was afraid we might be taking Barrie too seriously. We want to give our interpretation so that the adults sitting out there aren't going to feel so embarrassed and yet it's our interpretation of Barrie." He must have felt even more self-conscious once he had read the lambasting reviews in the UK when *Alice in Wonderland* was released in 1951, and understood that some writers seem untouchable. Frank Thomas confirmed it: "He wasn't too sure of the picture, so he worked hard on the story[4]."

We saw that Walt felt he could better produce what Barrie had in mind than Barrie himself, and that the playwright would have been enchanted by his film version. Barrie died in 1937 so we will never know. Yet, reading Barrie's recommendations for a film version may make us wonder: "Hook should be played absolutely seriously, and the actor must avoid all temptation to play the part as if he was conscious of its humor. There is such a temptation, and in the stage play the actors of the part have sometimes yielded to it, with fatal results." Hook certainly is a threatening villain with Disney but he also is rather grotesque and funny when he caught a cold or when he is a coward terrorized by the crocodile. Moreover, Barrie was adamant that Tinker Bell should never be seen in close-ups, something the Disney team overlooked completely.

It may have been one of the reasons for the constant reshuffling of the scenario. Still, decisions had to be made and among the drastic ones were: The elimination of the character Liza the servant, the long parade of Redskins/Pirates/Lost Boys on Neverland, the thimble/kiss ambiguity although both were long kept as possibilities, the wooden house built for Wendy, the kite flight to rescue Wendy away from a predicament, but most of all the legendary saving process to "resurrect" Tinker Bell.

We saw that they had studied the Paramount adaptation but they didn't draw much from it, only most of the setting of the Darling children's nursery. But they would not make the Darlings an American family as Paramount had done. They also had access to Barrie's notes about the stage performances but it is hard to know whether they read Barrie's film adaptation notes.

If *Peter Pan* is well-known and acclaimed in Anglo-Saxon countries, most other publics discovered that story through Disney's film. It means that they didn't judge it by comparison with the original book, as opposed to the British critics for instance, who would be far from enthusiastic. However, even the most critical ones acknowledge that the so-called "You can Fly" sequence is memorable and certainly the highlight of Disney's version.

"Flight to Neverland" is introduced by a long "Learning to fly" sequence where all the characters are presented. It made sense to this author to start the analysis a bit ahead to understand the context. It seemed all the more logical as the same team was in charge, Wilfred Jackson as director and Mc Laren Stewart as lead-layout man. Moreover, the two songs "Second Star To the Right" and "You Can Fly" are completely merged.

Sat on a building block Tinker Bell is laughing at Wendy

The Darling children have just tried to fly as the musical chorus of the song "You Can Fly" was heard, but they quickly fell down and locked up in her drawer, Tinker Bell is laughing at them. Most of the scenes in the drawer so far had been animated by Les Clark, but the closer shots are by Marc Davis. This laugh is accompanied by some joyful flutes and the usual jingles. Dorothy Ann Blank had rapidly understood how to make the pixie "talk": "…we will be able to picture her so adorably that it might be highly fantastic if the fairy language of bells could be her sole way of conveying her meaning." The sound effects wizard Jim MacDonald was in charge of this recurring sound but MacDonald struggled as Frank Thomas remembered: "They got this jing-jing yet, there are funny stories about how he created these things. He couldn't get chimes, they wouldn't sound right, he couldn't get bells they weren't right, so he finally took a kind of pieces of some jingle pieces of some kind of aluminum (…) he strung them up and they made just the right sound jingling together, so he could add different ones, take out different ones and get different sound effects[5]." Because Tinker Bell was mute, they came up with a whole catalogue of chimes, bells and jingles sounds which expressed her emotions. They called musicians who specialized in bells, Bernard and Dorothy Mason, who arrived with their whole load. But Jim MacDonald supervised it all. In the book, she did speak, but only to Peter who translated her cues. The common point was that the sounds had to be very high-pitched to match the eerie and light quality of a fairy. But, as if she were punished for her wickedness, she is falling off on her back, all highlighted by some Mickey Mousing.

Peter Pan, easily flying midair in the nursery, is wondering why the trio can't fly. This low-angle shot is animated by Eric Larson. Since the beginning of the film, most full figure shots have been Larson's while closer ones have been by Milt Kahl. In particular, Larson did the whole first section when Peter Pan is seen in silhouettes on the rooftop. The storyboards were done by a variety of cooks: Ted Sears, Bill Peet, Milt Banta, Winston Hibler, Ralph Wright, Bill Cottrell, and Erdman Penner, but the main one on that sequence was Joe Rinaldi.

The background artists had opted for a pink wallpaper with stripes. The nursery being for children, the pink color had a child's connotation and Michael himself is dressed in pink. Al Dempster explained their choice: "In the Darling nursery, vertical striped wallpaper appears in the background. It was painted so that

it didn't distract from the action. In the close-ups, especially, the wallpaper had to be extra 'soft' and subdued[6]." By the way, this nursery is probably the largest ever. While Mr. Darling is being the victim of various problems, pans multiply and it seems the nursery is endless. This contradicts the first establishing shot over the Darlings' Edwardian house. There is a ground floor, and two more storeys. The first one is for the parents and up right is the storey for the children. We see that the nursery which is lit is supposed to be very small, with one only window.

We saw that the 1924 film version had transferred the story from England to the USA. Walt was adamant it had to take place in its original setting, Bloomsbury, as the off-voice indicates in the prologue. It is a very posh area known for the British Museum and St Pancras station where a certain Harry Potter would later take the train. But one of the reasons for the choice of that area is that it is also near the Great Ormond Hospital, a red brick building, founded in 1852. In 1929, James Barrie had decided to donate all the copyrights of his beloved creation to that Hospital and anyone wanting to adapt the story needed to deal with the Hospital to get them. There is a statue of Peter Pan within the precincts.

Regarding the Darlings' social class, the Disney team didn't respect what Barrie had in mind as shows his remark for a possible movie adaptation: "The pictures here show us that the nursery is at the top of a house in a poor, but respectable, London Street." Several times in his comments, Barrie insists on the financial predicament of the family, a far cry from the Disney version. The Darlings clearly belong to the upper-class and the parents are elegantly dressed and sophisticated.

At the time, the artists didn't travel abroad for researches. We know that for films like *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) *The Lion King* (1994) or *Frozen* (2013), a whole group of collaborators spent some weeks immersed in the related countries, sketching and photographing them. But for the few moments which took place in London, the Disney Library plus some information delivered by the Disney London Office would have to suffice. So, McLaren Stewart and Ken Anderson relied on those elements to come up with the furniture like chests, clocks or beds which had to look English.

The three Darling children are on the bed looking up at Peter

As the three children animated by Harvey Toombs (Wendy) and Hal King (John and Michael) are looking up, Peter's cue is typical of a Disney habit we have already encountered. Any time magical powers are used, the studio storymen write a poetic language with clear rimes. We saw it with the Blue Fairy in *Pinocchio* and the Godmother in *Cinderella.* We already explained the reasons why in Volume 1. So, Peter goes "This won't do, what's the matter with you? All it takes is faith and trust, and something I forgot, dust!" This is also a smart way of introducing the song to

come. All this is said by a Peter animated by the same Eric Larson. The next shot is a close-up of Peter scratching his head. We notice that his eyes are a bit more slanted, giving him a slightly Asiatic touch. If Kahl usually did the close-ups, so could such a seasoned animator as Larson.

Meanwhile, unaware of what she will soon have to endure, we see Tinker Bell brushing herself with a full and then a medium-shot. Undoubtedly, Tinker Bell is one of the great stars of the film, and her legacy is unmatched for a character from a feature. On stage, the creature was nothing than a light, but for the screen, she had to really become a character. In his novel, Barrie first explained the origins of her name: she is called so because "she mends pots and kettles". We should add that in British slang "Tinker" means "mischievous child". But more interestingly, when Barrie had to write down on paper who that flash of light was supposed to be, he needed to be more precise regarding her physical appearance: "It was a girl called Tinker Bell, exquisitely gowned in a skeleton leaf, cut low and square, though which her figure could be seen to the best advantage. She was slightly inclined to embonpoint." This last detail made its way into a previous scene where "Tink" was appalled at watching her hips in the mirror. For a movie adaptation, the author gave more information: "Tinker Bell should be 5 inches in height and, if the effect can be got, this should be one of the quaintest pictures of the film, the appearance of a real fairy."

The question is what is "the appearance of a real fairy"? It is alleged that now that the European illustrators like Albert Hurter, Kay Nielsen or Gustav Tenggren were gone, the sketchmen of the studio were not too keen on drawing fairies. They were much more attracted to the pirates. Is it the reason why Walt turned to female artists? Bianca Majolie was the first one to work on the fairy. In a May 20, 1939 story meeting, she had said: "Rackham has cute fairies. Some look like mice and some like goblins-quaint little faces." Arthur Rackham had illustrated *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, which was originally part of Barrie's earlier work, *The Little White Bird*. The *Peter Pan* chapters were extracted and published as a separate work in 1906. Those drawings boosted Rackham's reputation. His fairies do wear a long gown and huge wings, with a touch of art deco style. Majolie had already created the fairies of *Fantasia*'s *Nutcracker Suite*, but they were seldom seen close and didn't have a real personality per se. What is more, Walt had been clear: "We've got to get away from that *Nutcracker Suite* idea. We've got to get a new slant on that fairy thing or else drop it and forget it." Therefore, her pastel studies are more refined and precise than what she had offered for *Fantasia*. She still hesitated between her typical diaphanous slim fairies and plumper and curvier ones. Of course, she was not the only one to work on her and other artists had gone for more mundane and chubby ones, Fred Moore was one of many to make suggestions. In some sketches she looked like a real bathing beauty. Among them, David Hall made hundreds of beautiful paintings and he went for a more sensual and feminine fairy

with huge wings. But the design was far from settled as Frank Thomas reminisced for Bob Thomas: "Walt never saw fairies as little cute dancing Tinker Bells things. We had a hard time selling him the little Tinker Bell[7]."

In terms of costume, what appeared more and more clearly is that the long gown that Barrie envisaged was forsaken. Sketch after sketch, it seemed her dress got shorter and shorter to the extent that she sometimes appeared dressed in sorts of swim suits. In fact, the idea of a bathing beauty was retained. They had long tried outfits made of leaves, but soon gave up. It is hard not to see the influence of the fashion and movies magazines of the time. It had become a trend for those magazines to feature movie stars in bathing costumes. Joe Rinaldi had drawn her dressed that way. In the definitive book written about Tinker Bell by Mindy Johnson, we learn that storyman Bob Carr proposed to have the fairy very often change clothes as if she were some kind of catwalk star. Step by step, the fairy was becoming a very sexy-looking girl, which may have been the source for the wrong idea she was inspired by Marilyn Monroe. Mindy Johnson adds that for a while "their suggestions for portraying Tinker Bell's little niche in the wall involved Turkish shadow-plays with Tinker behind the gossamer curtain." And the writer insists that this was "an element of sex-appeal".[8]

This sex-appeal had appeared early on in the treatments by Dorothy Ann Blank: "… A tiny mischievous fairy girl … Tinker Bell seems not to be the soft, gentle, good-deeds type like our Blue Fairy, but a rather naughty creature with a great deal of sex-appeal in a dainty way." Needless to say the artists could not go too far in that direction. Disney meant family entertainment after all, and the early 1950's were not a time of liberation yet, as indicates Margaret Kerry, the fairy's model: "In the 1950's, people were not so immersed in sex. It was the time of *Father knows Best* and *Leave it to Beaver*. Unlike today, there was very little prurient content in films or magazines. We believed in the family and after World War Two you realize the government wanted all women to stay home and repopulate America[9]." But however young, she would be a very mature girl, and her curvy body did the rest.

Now that the costume was set, the hair was painted different colors before red seemed to be final. In 1940, Jack Miller, from the Model Department, almost found the final design, with the famous pom-pom trimmed slippers she would keep. When Mary Blair came up with her gouache renderings, she, as usual, didn't care too much about the characters. What mattered to her was mostly colors and moods. When work resumed on the film, Marc Davis was assigned the character. In 1951 he found the final look. Now she was fair-haired, knot-topped, a lock of hair over her forehead, a tiny nose. She had a tiny waist and strong thighs. As to the wings, he more or less followed what Jack Miller had initiated. He had largely reduced them. Margaret Kerry, remembered: "Marc told me that he had made the top half of Tink like a little girl and the bottom life an older person. I played her as if she was about 11 years old just coming into her own...Her curves bothered a lot of people at the

studio I am told...but if you read the opening description of Tink in the Barrie book you will see where Marc got his inspiration[10]."

For her face, Mindy Johnson tells us that Bill Cottrell had first suggested four models: Rosalind Russell, Anita Louise, Ann Rutherford and Jane Preisser. Most of them had been child actresses and probably, besides their looks, Cottrell wanted the designers to infuse a touch of youth in the character, though Barrie had given no age. Mrs. Johnson adds that a lovely lady from the Ink and Paint Department had often been photographed for publicity material. So, Ginni Mack was asked to do some more character-modelling in 1951 for Tinker Bell. The way Marc Davis put it, doing the fairy was not such a challenge after all: "You know it was a stage play, and he couldn't have a little tiny Tinker Bell flying around, she was just a spot of light, so when I was put on to do her, they wanted to visualize, so I finally came up with that drawing and they liked it. I just tried to do something cute, pixie-like."[11] But what annoyed the very quiet Marc Davis was that people believed she had been modelled after Marilyn Monroe. He denied it over and over, and anyway, from a historic point, this was hardly possible. At the time, she was hardly known, mostly doing modelling and supporting roles. She began to be noticed in *Love Nest* (1951) when production was starting on *Peter Pan*. Maybe it was preferable because one year before the release of the Disney film, she was the cause of a scandal after the fact she had posed nude for a calendar in 1949 was made public.

It was now customary to shoot the whole movie in live-action. They did it again for *Peter Pan*, and the model for Tinker Bell was Margaret Kerry. She was also a model for one of the mermaids. She very often explained how things were done: "It took a little more than 10 months...I'd be called in when they were ready for the next sequence. I was working doing my weekly TV show *Teleteen Reporter* and a weekly network show for ABC with Charlie Ruggles. So, we sandwiched in the Disney sessions when everyone was available[12]." We should not infer that she worked for ten months, but only a few days, within those ten months. As usual, a limited crew was present during shooting, and the fact she was dressed with only a swimwear was a bit of a problem then. Marc Davis made sure no one would make any derogatory or bad taste comments, Mrs. Kerry adds: "Marc Davis was the director with input by Gerry Geronimi. There was a skeleton camera crew and a full crew for props and lighting. The hairdresser did not come on stage. The atmosphere was fun even when Mr. Disney dropped by[13]." So, she had to perform in incredible situations, with gigantic scissors, huge cubes, given the tiny size of the pixie. She kept great memories of that experience: "Working at Disney studio was different. It was and is the 2nd happiest place on earth (Mr. Disney claimed that Disneyland was the happiest place on earth and I would never contradict him). In my 76 years, I was never treated nicer. Now when I visit, there is still this feeling of excitement and creativity that Mr. Disney and his oh-so-important brother, Roy fostered. Just fond remembrances and the frosting on the cake? I get to travel and spread pixie dust

everywhere[14]." However, although Marc Davis didn't want to hurt her feelings, he made it clear that she was not the model for the design: "I had a girl do the live action for Tinker Bell and she thinks she was the model, but she really wasn't, she did some actions for me[15]."

If Marc Davis was the supervisor for her animation, he explained more precisely how things were done: "I animated all of Tinker Bell's personality scenes. When she had to go from one place to another, someone else would do her[16]." So, generally speaking, when she was seen full figure or from afar in action, it was up to other animators or assistants to do her, like Clair Weeks. However, Les Clark also did her when seen more closely like when she is thrown in the drawer.

She may have been mute, but she had quite a temper. From the start, Dorothy Ann Blank knew there was something special about her as she wrote in an early treatment: "Tinker Bell is a surefire sensation, for the animation medium can now, at last, do justice to her tiny, winged form and fanciful character." In several story meetings, including this one on March 1, 1940 Walt showed he thought they had a winner here: "I think we should see more of her. She would be like Jiminy Cricket. She is something we can put in the props-she can be very cute." Later, Walt once commented on Tinker Bell: "The typical (person) of today is slim of face, torso and legs. No scope for animation. Too stiff. Too limited. Tinker Bell we created manoeuvrable, and she sure manoeuvred."

Barrie had written it all: "Tink was not all bad, or, rather, she was all bad just now, but, on the other hand, sometimes she was all good. Fairies have to be one thing or the other, because being so small, they unfortunately have room for one feeling only at a time." And in the book she keeps saying to Peter: "You, silly ass!" If there is one feeling that she has, it is jealousy**.** Very early in the work on story, this theme appeared as a major one. In story meetings, Walt repeated that this would define the character: "Tinker Bell now is a jealous hussy—Wendy is the new girl that comes into Peter's life—Wendy's sort of in love with Peter. She's got the romantic urge, you know, but Peter's still a boy and a jealous hussy goes." Or again "Tinker Bell wants to get rid of Wendy. We've got to get in our minds here--we've got to be able to follow this plot right through. This dame is jealous of that dame. This dame is in love with that guy—and he doesn't know it—that's Peter Pan" As Barrie had explained, she could be all good for Peter and would even sacrifice herself to save him, but she was all bad when it came to doing away with her challenger Wendy. But jealousy is rampant in *Peter Pan*: Wendy is jealous of Tiger Lily, while the mermaids, like Tinker Bell, are jealous of Wendy. And the cocky Peter loves it!

They had planned many more moments for Tinker Bell that ended up on the cutting room floor. There might have been a whole ceremony and ball with various fairies where she would have been celebrated as a queen, all prepared by Bianca Majolie. This was long planned since, in his hand-written script of 1950, this

is how Walt introduced it: "Underground home. Pete commands fairies to spread banquet and show in kids' honor. Fairies serve meal. Put on show with fairy entertainment. Fairy jazz band. Tink dances. Various acts for amusement of Wendy and boys." Majolie had devised another whole sequence where she led the Darling kids below water where they were turned into merpeople exploring a sunken pirate ship. Although Walt praised her work, it was then scrapped: "Bianca has been working on some very colorful sequences in which Pan shows how he can call the fairies from their seclusion by blowing upon his pipes."

But, for anyone who had enjoyed the play on stage, what was missing was *the* moment of interaction with the audience, a very modern idea at the time. When Tinker was dying after saving Peter's life (he had drunk a poison), the audience was supposed to clap their hands to express that they "believed in fairies". Seeing adults returning to childhood for a short while was Barrie's triumph. He knew how risky this was at the premiere, what if no one responded? He had warned the orchestra musicians to launch the clapping. But this was something you could do "live". What about a movie? Surprisingly, they long considered the possibility as proves this remark by Walt in a May 20, 1939 story meeting: "You ought to try it and have a plan laid out so you can cover it (...) don't weaken it by doing it halfway. Test it, if it doesn't work, take it out." Webb Smith even suggested to dub some applause so as to encourage people to do so. But they realized there might have been other ways as this comment by storyman Erdman Penner shows: "On this applause thing of bringing Tinker Bell to life, would there be any chance of changing that. If Peter forgives her, she'll come to life." This quote shows that they were not too sure and eventually dropped the idea. The British public expected the scene and was rather disappointed it had been deleted though the Disney Publicity Department had issued a memo justifying their option.

As everyone knows, Tinker Bell would then live a long life afterwards, introducing the TV shows *The Wonderful World of Disney* and its many variations, appearing in commercials, comic strips, and sequels and Marc Davis enjoyed it: "She's been such a long-lasting character, that's very gratifying[17]."

"Dust!" Tinker Bell is taking off

But Tinker Bell was not just a little girl. She had wings and there was a glow all around her, not to mention the famous pixie dust that followed her anywhere she went. Marc Davis paid a tribute to the people in the special effects Department: "N°1, I don't think we knew how to do it and number two, these men did it so well, we, as character animators, never had the patience and I don't think half of the time we knew how to do it. These were specialists and it was a very important part of the film, it was like the final finish, the frosting on the cake[18]." We already explained how this pixie dust was done in Volume 2. But in this film there would be a lot of that dust to be done by the special effects animators, one of them was Ed Aardal. The wings

were done on a separate sheet and a separate cel, using a special transparent paint. Sometimes like here, the flapping of the wings was highlighted by streaks of dry brush. As to the glow around her, this was processed afterwards, as was explained by then special effects animator Jack Buckley: "They made a mask of her, and they had a little something between her and the background so that the light blew out around her[19]."

Several close-ups of hands are done by Clair Weeks and here he also does the pixie, while the trio looking up is done by the same animators Toombs and King. Davis is back when Peter is softly spanking her to get her magical dust over the sound of little bells. This is of course a terrible humiliation for Tinker Bell and her anger will grow all through those scenes. All three children react, Wendy, done by Harvey Toombs, Michael and John, both done by Hal King. In three very brief shots, each personality is already well set, Wendy is the romantic one, Michael is a child so he is a bit afraid by all this, and John is curious and wondering what this dust is about.

Eric Larson's Peter is flying in mid-air again. It may seem simple at first sight, but animating such flying bodies was a real challenge. How do you convey weight in such conditions? The animators had to be extra careful in how they achieved that. Kathryn Beaumont, Wendy's voice and live-action model explained: "The main thing of course, was the flying, and they had me hooked up to a harness. The idea of a lack of gravity and floating in space-that was a concept that the artists found a little difficult. They needed to have something to go by to show lifting off the ground and floating and landing on the ground and what the body does when that happens[20]."

For the live-action reference this time, the challenge was to have the actors fly around. Certainly, watching such feats on stage at Barrie's time must have largely contributed to the success of the play. But he knew how dangerous it could be and had asked George Kirby of Flying Ballet Company to find a more appropriate system of a revolutionary harness. But actors usually hate having to do this.

We saw that Margaret Kerry acted as Tinker Bell, but she was the one who advised the studio to hire Roland Dupree to be Peter Pan. She met him when he was a dance director at Fox. Roland Dupree explained how it all happened then: "I was 24 years old at the time, and the girl who played Tinker Bell happened to be a student of mine when I was teaching jazz classes. They asked her if she knew anyone who was a dancer who could do the live-action model for Peter Pan. And she said 'yes, Roland Dupree'. So, they contacted me. I was interviewed and auditioned, and got the role[21]." The man might have had a different career had he been a bit taller, but he was five foot five and this turned out to be a handicap to ever become a romantic lead dancer. Instead, he often danced and choreographed for movies and TV shows. Years later he reminisced his experience: "Bobby Driscoll did the voice of

Peter Pan, and what I did is take home a record of him doing the dialogue, and I would memorize the dialogue, and then go in the next day. The animators would say to me, 'okay, do some action on this line.' So, I would say the line, and do the action that I would improvise as I went along. If they didn't like it, they would say, 'Give us something different.' And I would do that (…) I had to fly. There was only one day of flying, but the contraption was an old one. It wasn't dangerous but the hoist that I flew in was just not fun[22] ."

The flying sessions were restricted to what was absolutely necessary, and mostly the fight scenes with Captain Hook. But there were also some with Wendy, and Kathryn Beaumont was grateful that Dupree was doing anything he could to reassure her while he was himself not so keen on such acrobatic practices. She remembered: "I remember feeling so awkward with the whole thing. Here you are, hooked up with a brace around your middle, and then a wire attached behind you, and you're supposed to go through these scenes where you stay calm while you're flying through the air[23] ." It is hardly known that both Roland Dupree and Kathy Beaumont were also required to act for some live action reference for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) in August 1953, even though later, others would replace them.

Having a dancer act the role was a blessing for the believability of a flying creature. The wary animators thought the risk was to have a boy whose moves might look a bit too effeminate. Andreas Deja underlines another issue: "I know for a fact that various animators had a hard time translating Dupree's muscular physique into proper Peter Pan drawings because the character was so much younger[24]." Walt told columnist Hedda Hopper in 1946 he wanted to "toughen him a bit, making him a real boy."

Michael is concentrating hard on thinking "about the happiest things"

While Peter encourages everyone to think about "the happiest things", the music of "You Can Fly" is already heard, paving the way for the following sequence. Hal King's Michael is very charming with typical child's gestures. The magic of the pixie dust starts operating and the kid is floating up the bed. Now comes Wendy who is gracefully and enthusiastically flapping her night gown like a bird. Eric Larson did her there although he would not do her too much through the film. As the dialogues are written with rimes again, King's John is also rising in a less graceful way. Now that he is floating up, Michael exclaims himself: "Jiminee!" the same expression that the dwarfs had used when they discovered their lit-up cottage, and of course the name of a Disney celebrity. It is to be noticed that each character doesn't float the same way, and the animators were very attentive that each of them had a different way which matched his/her personality. Eric Larson makes Wendy rescue Michael in a much more graceful way each time she does anything.

The two kids were mainly animated by Hal King, more on that later. Here and there, others would do them in group scenes in particular: Art Stevens, Judge Whitaker, Bill Justice and of course Milt Kahl. John is supposed to be the sensible intellectual, hence the large round glasses, and his usually serious face. When will come the time to hunt the "Redskins" he will be the one to theorize on the type of tribe. The hat and the umbrella are already a way to make him older and a little dull. He may have played with Michael in the beginning in the nursery, but soon he is clearly less playful than his little brother. Jack Miller, who had done the first serious designs in 1940 had made him much younger and he had trousers instead of the long nightgown. His voice was that of Paul Collins. The English actor explained how he worked on the role: "I was fifteen years-old and I basically just had to act like a kid! *(Laughs)* At this point, I had been in the United States for only about four or five years so I was still somewhat British. I still had an accent for the most part. I had to work on that accent in order to lose it. When I originally came to United States, I was wearing short pants that all British schoolchildren wore. I was fairly British and the teenager in me was basically hired to play that part. Since then, as an adult, I've studied with Uta Hagen." Like Kathryn Beaumont, he did both the voice and the live action shooting: "I started out by doing the voice. Since they didn't have computers in those days like they do now, it was difficult to make the movements of the characters smooth. So, we recorded the voices in the studio first and then after all of the audio was recorded we went onto the set dressed up in our respective costumes and acted out and lip-synched to the recorded voices that were played over a loudspeaker[25]."

Whether it was the children or any other characters, Walt felt totally free about the characters: "We felt that we had considerable leeway with the characters. From the first stage performance, they were interpreted by living players. They've never really been physical types. We had, therefore, to create our own concept of how they looked and talked and gestured as we translated them into cartoon personalities." Michael Darling is this cute child who keeps trying to follow and emulate the others. He keeps holding his little teddy bear. Director Ham Luske did not go very far to find the voice and model, Jim Korkis explained: "In March, one of his daughters, Carol Jean Luske told me, 'In '*Peter Pan*, for the character of the youngest Darling boy, Michael, Dad needed someone's voice and he used my brother Tom for the voice and as a model for Michael. Michael did end up looking a lot like Tom as the artist used him to draw the character[26]." It was not the first time Ham Luske used the voices of his children, they had already done some for the flowers in *Alice in Wonderland* (1951). Unfortunately, Tom Luske tragically died in a car accident in 1990.

The last two shots of that sequence were animated by Eric Larson's assistant, Clarke Mallery. It was a welcome opportunity for assistants to show they could do bits and pieces of animation, usually distant or action shots because they

might not have handled the delicate animation of personality scenes. However, he didn't do enough footage to be credited. Meanwhile, the timing of the song is perfect as the children shout "We can fly" at the very moment of the chorus, but it is not sung yet only spoken rythmically. Walt was very attentive to the words they used and didn't hesitate to drift away from Barrie's style as he expressed on October 21, 1939: "I think he [Barrie] falls down on the dialogue. It might have been swell in 1905, but it isn't good today. The movies have changed things-they have made things more natural."

So, this is a climax of the struggle to be able to fly. The storymen did a wonderful job to build the excitement, applying what Walt had said in a story meeting on January 28, 1941: "Then the new interest that picks up there is that he's Peter Pan from this Neverland which is of great interest to everybody. All the kids. So that's their new interest. We keep building about Neverland and what it's like, and get these kids really excited about Neverland, and the only way they can get there is by flying."

Peter at window, inviting everyone to go: "C'mon everybody!"

So, now starts the sequence "Flight to Neverland" for good. Larson's Peter is proudly standing at the window, urging everyone to fly through it. At that very moment start the extraordinary vocals on the song "You Can Fly." There is a fast crescendo of choirs singing "U", and this seems to perfectly match what Walt had devised in a January 28, 1941 story meeting: "I was wondering if we couldn't write some music that sounded more like flying—you know that takes off and has a little build up, like an airplane taking off. And an accompaniment that carries a rumble underneath."

This author fully agrees with music expert James Bohn: "I think 'You Can Fly' is the musical showpiece of the film. At the beginning, the rhymed dialogue is accompanied in much the same way that recitative would be in opera[27]." All the rest of the sequence won't need any dialogue, it will all be visual and musical. The song literally "carries" the action.

Several composers were involved in creating the music and songs for the film. As very often, and given the very long history of the making of this film, Frank Churchill then Charles Wolcott wrote some songs in the 1940's. Eliot Daniel also contributed, but everything but one song was scrapped. The songs whose melody had to be simple like "A Pirate's Life" based on some original lyrics by James Barrie, and "March of the Lost Boys (Tee Dum Tee Dee)" were composed by Oliver Wallace. Ed Penner wrote lyrics for the former, Winston Hibler and Ted Sears for the latter. The only legacy from Churchill is "Never Smile at a Crocodile" with lyrics by Jack Lawrence, but it is never *sung* in the film.

Songs' lyrics had been penned by James Barrie, with music composed by John Crook, but had hardly any influence on Disney's version. However, they briefly considered using some of those lyrics. Walt and his collaborators hesitated for a while as to whether the music should be more modern. They found something half-way, giving a rather operatic tone to some of the songs like "You Can Fly". Just like they had done for *Cinderella*, they resorted to an outside duo: Sammy Fain and Sammy Cahn. The score was Oliver Wallace's, orchestrated by the tireless Edward Plumb. The self-taught pianist Sammy Fain had already worked on *Alice in Wonderland*. Sammy Cahn could compose and write lyrics as well. He had mainly worked with Saul Chaplin. Both Sammys were seasoned Broadway writers.

Nana is waking up and sees what is going on up there

With one bird's eye view and a closer shot, we focus on Nana the faithful nurse. This is the last hurrah by the legendary Norman Ferguson. His dog is so much his signature that we seem to recognize Pluto or Bruno in *Cinderella* as expressed Eric Larson to John Culhane: "Nana was a typical Fergy character analysis. He had a way with doing dogs. No matter whether it was a skinny dog or a fat dog, they were all on the same formula. They were all Pluto formulas[28]." For the anecdote, it was not a Pluto but a big Mickey doll which was used to help the actors figure out the dog's presence in the live shootings.

We saw in volume 2 that the former director had been "punished" by Walt. He was now back to animation. In the list of credits he is the only one of the supervising animators that are listed, not to be considered one of the Nine Old Men. But in fact, he had been like a teacher to all the others as Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston recognized: "Fergy's style of animating influenced younger animators and is still in use, particularly the quick test to check a proposed pattern and maintain flexibility in any plan. It suited the way he thought. If it works for you, do more[29]." Ferguson was not very happy at the time, and alcohol was beginning to take its toll. Several top-animators knew what they owed him but their feeling was that anyway, Fergy as an animator was being surpassed, as Milt Kahl explained to Robin Allan: "Fergy had been directing for a long time and Walt got sour on him as director and put him back into animation. And animation had passed him by. Awfully nice guy but he'd kinda had it I guess[30]." It was still planned to use Fergy on another dog on the next project *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), but then Walt asked that he should stop animating on features and work back on shorts. Another humiliation. Once he left Disney, we can go as far as to say he drowned his demise in alcohol. He had been one of the earliest and most prominent members of the Disney staff but this long story was coming to an end. He joined Shamus Culhane for a short while. He kept fighting diabetes and died in 1957. A legend was gone.

Nana was inspired by Barrie's own dog called Porthos, a St Bernard Barrie had bought in Switzerland for his wife. He used to take him to Kensington Gardens

where he met the Lellewlyn Davies family, which would change his life as we will see later. However, the Nana of the book is a Newfoundland dog, which was Barrie's second dog. In his description, Barrie indicates that "the Darlings had become acquainted with her in Kensington Gardens" reminding us of how much Barrie used his own experiences. Nana is a very original character as she is supposed to be a dog but she behaves as if she were a nurse and gives the children their medicine. In the whole prologue introducing the characters, we saw her patiently and pugnaciously trying to tidy up the nursery against all odds. From the start, Walt understood her potential (May 20, 1939): "That dog is pretty good. I wonder if we couldn't get a guy to pantomime it-just for the expression. There is a lot of stuff that this guy is pretty good at (...) We can develop a swell character in that dog. And then you drop him. It's a dirty shame." The success of the dog partly lies in the fact she is all pantomime, but also she is apart from the others and contrasts are played. Everyone in the nursery was stressed (Mr. Darling), overexcited (John and Michael), busy (Wendy and Mrs. Darling), all talking loud in a frenzy, while she was quietly trying to remain cold-blooded and focused. The nursery was a whole mess while she was orderly. One of the episodes involving Nana that the Disney team deleted from Barrie's version is the burlesque anecdote of Mr. Darling and her kennel. As a form of self-punishment, Mr. Darling imposed himself to replace Nana and sleep in the kennel as long as their children were not back.

As we said, we have seen this dog before, in several shorts such as *Alpine Climbers* (1936) although in a cruder style. But the droopy sad-looking face is already there with bluish eye bags. Of course, Milt Kahl's touch has refined the design but it is still very much a Ferguson dog. The very thick black eyebrows are a precious tool to highlight her sad look. Colors are various shades from brown to beige, and she has a lovely cap on her head.

Following Walt's enthusiasm for the dog, the storymen developed many scenes for her, and she was originally supposed to accompany the children on their flight to Neverland. They had many ideas as shows this extract from a story meeting dated May 20, 1939, Dorothy Ann Blank said: "Nana has a terrible time flying. Walt: Nana sees a bird and has to have a beautiful thought. She can't do it, so they finally give her some fairy dust." They had even once contemplated having the story told by Nana. But they were so inspired by the dog that they almost lost sight of the main point of the story as recalled Frank Thomas for Jim Korkis: "There were lots of different things you could do with those characters but then, before you knew it, there was too much of Nana**.** You had to try to keep things in proportion[31]." They kept the idea of Nana going to Neverland for a long time though, but it was soon all scrapped. Taking Nana there would have been a clear departure from Barrie. In his book, Nana was rushing to warn the Darlings who were having dinner a bit further down the street, and then they all watched the kids fly away. But once the Disney team had finally decided to stick to Barrie's version, they were incredibly faithful to

what he had written: "Then Nana in the yard tearing at her chain, and looking up at the nursery window which is the only one lit up."

Peter leaps from windowsill shouting: "Off to Neverland!"

Walt thought they didn't need to tackle this sequence too early: "This is a thing you ought to leave till the last, because this is a bridge, and these bridges should be left until later. By later I mean after you get your continuity well-planned and know what you want, and then this could be in work about the same time." Little did he know that this would become a highlight of the film. As Larson's Peter is flying away in a long left pan, Nana can't believe her eyes but she is in for more surprises as Larson's Wendy also goes out of the nursery, followed by King's John who almost lost his hat. Meanwhile, the lyrics of the song start "Think of a wonderful thought…" Ferguson's Nana is slapping her ears over her eyes. In a previous scene, we had seen how useful those ears could be, to push a tray for instance. Ferguson uses them as if they were hands. Michael is the last one, along with Tinker Bell.

The strong-minded fairy is pouting, standing at the windowsill, while everyone else is having fun. She is sulking because she realizes she has no say on the matter, even on the use of her magical dust for the sake of the children, and especially Wendy. We saw that Marc Davis was the main animator, but Clair Weeks (1911-1996) also did bits and pieces, and not only from afar, but closer like here. He is not very well-known and among the reasons is the fact he had a very unusual career. He was born in India, the son of a Methodist missionary. His co-workers at Disney would often mock him in many caricatures. He left India at teenage and was hired by Disney in 1936. He was a very important artist on *Bambi* and decided to leave the studio once his work on *Peter Pan* had been completed. He explained: "Then, I left here and went to India to start an animation studio for the government, with Walt's blessing, I told him I had this opportunity and he thought that was fine and he was very helpful, supportive. I didn't burn any bridges at the studio, I had been here 26 years you see, we were right in the middle of *Sleeping Beauty*, I was doing Aurora. Walt was very understanding, he never begrudged me but he made me resign because I was going away for more than a year. They had come from India to recruit people here, but I had an advantage because I knew the language, the country and the culture and that was a big plus[32]." Was he homesick? He returned to Bombay after he had been invited by the Indian Government to set up the first ever animation studio of the country, it was part of the American Technical Co-Operation Mission. But it was quite a challenge: "In India I had to teach them all aspects of animation, layout, story, animation, backgrounds, of course they had technicians, cameramen, but the cameraman was trained here and spent several months here. We even had to make the animation desks, but I had to ship paint, cels and all that, and it was quite an exercise having to do the logistics, having come from a highly organized and sophisticated set up like this is with all the specialists, that was really something to take on a project like that[33]."

What should have been a one-year job expanded into many years, as he said: "I then worked for the Foreign Service in audiovisual films, for many years, doing documentaries, training, educational films, graphics first for the Foreign Service and then for the UNO. I came back every 2 years , on leave, I always came back here to see all my peers, like Frank, Ollie an Milt and the rest of them around, and then I would go back to another country and then I got back to teaching animation, so at one stage I came back and started to teach at Orange Coast College And then I had an opportunity to work in Indonesia, to start an animation studio, so I said 'fine, I have some time', so we just put together some people off the street with little talent, no knowledge of what to do and we started a little commercial studio, and within 3 months we had a 62 second spot for selling[34]." He was very busy managing studios in South-East Asia and Nepal. One year after he had settled in India, he started work on a film *The Banyan Deer* (1957) in which the central character resembles Bambi a lot. Many future prominent Indian artists were trained by Weeks. He came back to the USA to teach animation but kept going to India from time to time.

Clair Weeks had been an assistant on several features, starting with *Snow White*, and he became typecast: "I started on Snow-White, doing the girl and then on I became identified with the girl characters with Alice, Cinderella, Wendy[35]." He had learnt a great deal from Jack Campbell who himself had done Snow White and the Blue Fairy. So, he naturally was asked to work on the pixie: "Marc Davis and I together worked on Tinker Bell, I'm still asked to make drawings of her over and over, but I really have to go back and see the model sheets of her because you can't just draw these characters over the top of your head, you practice and learn a lot so you can animate. I also did some other things like Peter, the kids, like John[36]."

We might be surprised by the lyrics at that moment: "Think of Christmas, think of snow, think of sleighbells and off you go!" (This is one of the happy things the kids were dreaming of too). Although the Darling parents are warmly dressed there is not a single snowflake in the streets. But Barrie had clearly set his story in winter and the streets were covered with a little snow: "No 27 was only a few yards distant, but there had been a slight fall of snow (...)"

Nana is trying her best to follow, coming to end of the rope

Barrie had opted for a chain, but a rope seemed less hard and probably easier to animate. As usual, many hands were required to help in storyboarding and laying out the passage. Headed by Mc Laren Stewart, Ken Anderson was quite active here, but Ken O'Connor is known to have largely contributed to the rather complex part when they fly over London. To start with, there is this low-angle shot when we still see things from Nana's standpoint, of the four characters doing a "jack-knife dive silhouetted against the moon" as the draft goes. The idea is repeated with closer shots of John and then Michael, each slowed down by their umbrella or teddy bear. For a long while, the storymen had planned to leave John Darling behind. He was

considered as being too serious, practical and boring, but story artist Ralph Wright convinced Disney to have John go with the others to Never Land.

We have seen that from the beginning, the youngest children, John and Michael have been animated by Hal King (1913-1986), and he would do them until the end of the sequence and in countless sequences of the film, which is a huge task. Although he did a lot of work on many features, left-handed Hal King remains one of the unsung animators. He was born in Minnesota. Jerry, one of his sons, recalls what he looked like: "Dad was, in some respect, sort of a cartoon character himself...small in stature but with a wonderfully warm, cuddly manner...much like the characters he specialized in. The curious thing is...those who met him never thought of him as small (he was 5'6"). He didn't have a 'big personality' but rather a quiet confidence and comfort with who he was." His career at Disney started in the late 1930's as an assistant animator on shorts and *Pinocchio*. It gained momentum during the war years when he worked either on Donald or on the "package films". He was given more and more footage and by the 1950's, he was becoming a full-fledged animator, and his assistant would later be Doris Plough.

For many he was a very nice fellow as co-worker Rolly Crump remembered: "Hal King was a delight to work for. He was easy to talk with. One thing I remember that Hal shared was a little quirk he had. He kept a food price comparison chart. He tracked food prices dating back to the late thirties, early forties when he was first married, up to present day prices in the fifties[37]." His personality is confirmed by one of his sons, Jerry: "Dad was a very unassuming individual. He didn't crave attention nor recognition. My impression is that he treated his job...as just that...a job. He worked a pretty traditional 8 to 5/Monday through Friday work schedule. I do not ever recall him 'bringing work home'...literally or figuratively. He was even-tempered, happy, and fun to be around. He enjoyed his life and most important of all...he was a great father[38]." If some were typecast with heroines, others with broad slapstick scenes, Hal King became a sort of specialist of little ones, from cute children to pups. Michael is a good example, but he would later do the Dalmatian pups, Mowgli and the puppy wolves in *The Jungle Book* (1967) and *The Aristocats* kittens (1970). Ted Berman regretted that a bit: "As you probably know, you were then sort of typecast, like Hal King always did cute things, he'd never be given a heavy like Stromboli or a mean character. In one respect it was good, but in another aspect it was bad cause you never had the opportunity to...I've heard people say about animators, 'well he's OK for fast stuff', but no personality stuff. But sometimes personality is 10 times easier than fast stuff[39]." Assistant animator Dale Oliver thought it was his asset: "He did capture the cuteness, a certain little charm[40]." His other son Dale King explained: "I believe he was more comfortable doing small cute animals than anything else. I think he found doing humans (Mowgli, young King Arthur) more difficult and a bit less enjoyable[41]." Hal King enjoyed caricaturing himself and he was very interested in military history and the greatest battles, he

was also a countryman and didn't enjoy cities. Gary Goldman happened to work with him on one of last assignments: "He was in 1B-Wing in the original Animation Building. I was in 1D-Wing where I spent most of my first three years. I only met Hal once, doing clean-up on one of his scenes on *Robin Hood* near the end of completion of cleanup animation in August of 1973. He was an easy-going nice guy, in his sixties, friendly and handsome with a great career behind of over 40 Disney animated film shorts and feature length films from 1942 to 1973. What an amazing experience! I don't remember the scene I cleaned up for him. He had health issues and ended up working at a slower pace on some animated TV shows before he died." This was in 1986.

One by one, each character swings around the chimney pot

Typical of a shorts gag, Michael is the only one who can't make it and goes right into an attic window. It may be winter time but the windows are open at night! Discreetly, but very efficiently, there is some Mickey Mousing all along the different actions, over the great choirs and strings causing music expert James Bohn's admiration: "The visual action of the animation offers rich opportunities for musical depiction, which the arrangement takes full advantage of. In particular, the woodwind flourishes that accompany the children's changing directions in front of the moon and the music that accompanies the large downward swoop. I also love the numerous tempo changes. The tempo changes keep the music fresh. While this music is not a production number in the same sense of 'Step in Time' from *Mary Poppins*, I feel that the close synchronization between the music and the action (choreography) gives it a similar feeling to a production number[42]." These great arrangements were Ed Plumb's, but as aforesaid, but the breathtaking vocals are all due to Judd Conlon's talent.

His full name was Justin Norbert "Judd" Conlon (1910-1966). Born in Cuba City, Wisconsin, he attended Colombia Academy and Colombia College in Dubuque, Iowa and already specialized in vocal arrangements. He played the accordion. Bing Crosby hired him for his radio series, as a result, they did 230 broadcasts and over 40 recordings. This association led to his participation in Crosby's recordings for *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in *Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). He was very present at the Disney studio in the 1940's/1950's. He was a vocal arranger and also had two groups, The Rhythmaires and The Judd Conlon's Singers. Interestingly, he had only one son called…Michael. Though uncredited, he had already worked on the vocal arrangements on *Bambi* but got more famous for his work on *Alice in Wonderland*. After *Peter Pan* he worked in radio shows with Stan Freberg in 1957. He returned to work on *Babes in Toyland* (1961) for Disney. Finally, he did TV shows, like the *Judy Garland Show* as choral director (1963/1964) but died at the young age of 56.

The camera pans down along the shadows of the four characters on the down side of the house

Ever since the beginning, the theme of the shadow has been omnipresent. Actually, Peter's very reason for coming back to the Darlings' house was to get his shadow back. Here, in a succession of two shots, their shadows are used in a variety of angles: the very smart pan down a brick wall and the upshot showing the shadows circling around the lonely Nana in the yard. Usually, shadows were animated by special effects artists but apparently here, King also did them, while of course Ferguson did the dog. Both would keep animating their characters, and we should notice the excellent animation of Michael floating lightly up in the air before he grabs a sulking Tinker done by Clair Weeks again. The pixie dust enables Ferguson's dog to rise, but the rope will prevent him from joining the others. It ends with a very tricky animation of Nana rising and floating up to camera. Ferguson may not have been very good at anatomy, his animation is completely believable. Each part is alternately sung either by male or female voices, but they are all combined for the chorus.

The group is flying over a pond with swans

The beautiful landscape is likely to be that of Kensington Park. If so, the lake where Peter Pan lands during the flight should be the west bank of Long Water in Kensington Gardens. This position of Peter Pan riding on two swans while playing the pipe is the closest allusion to the Pan god. In the animation draft, they call it the "Roman rider act". There will be another hint at the Romans later. It is Don Lusk who is in charge of the group from afar and then the swans and Peter playing his pipe. He doesn't play very often in the film, although this is what is left of the mythological source for the character. In fact, the name comes from the Greek God Pan. He was known to be half-goat, half god. That is the reason why on the first theatre programs of Barrie's play, Peter was represented riding a goat. According to mythology, this god was playing the Syrinx, kinds of musical pipes. At the time the play was performed, which is the Edwardian period, there was a real fad for the God Pan. In the film, almost any time Peter plays his pipes is heard a 3-note theme played on a Pan flute. Strangely, at a time when they were wondering if they would go for modern music, it was briefly planned Peter would play a Benny Goodman tune! Let's remember that the musician had been around the studio for *Make Mine Music* as explained in Volume 2. This simple theme of the three notes is played several times, even with the full orchestra. This little melody symbolizes Peter Pan and it matches what Barrie had in mind as he indicated in a note for his screen scenario: "The music of the acted play, as especially written for it, should accompany the pictures. Thus there is the music which always heralds Peter's appearances-the Tinker Bell music-the pirate music-the redskin music-the crocodile music etc…all of which have a dramatic significance as well as helping in the telling of the story[43]." The Disney storymen and composers followed that faithfully.

As to the name of the hero, Sylvia Jocelyn Du Maurier had named her son "Peter" after Peter Ibbetson. She was the daughter of George du Maurier who wrote *Peter Ibbetson*. Sylvia married Arthur Llewelyn Davies and had four sons. They were all the inspirations for Barrie's literary adventures. It is while taking his dog to Kensington Gardens that Barrie met that family, of three sons then, George, Jack and Peter, and he soon took to them. They hit it off and soon, George would impress Barrie so much that he wrote *The Little White Bird* about him. A book which tells about Peter Pan's infancy. The writer spent his holidays with them near Tilford at Black Lake Cottage, devising amazing stories of pirates, islands and fairies. All children actively participated, brought ideas and Barrie started taking notes until he came up with a manuscript filled with 35 photos, entitled *The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island*. Barrie kept repeating that the forthcoming *Peter Pan* play was written by the children themselves, but biographer/director Andrew Birkin said: "Barrie's generosity is perhaps overcharged, for although Peter Pan is indeed streaky with the Davies boys-and would become more so as he subjected it to constant annual revision-it is Barrie himself who pervades every character and situation to a degree unparalleled in all his other plays[44]." A fifth son was born to the Davies family before the play was performed on stage for the first time. We can see that most names made their way into the play: George, the eldest, was Mr. Darling's first name, but the character was largely inspired by Arthur, their father. Michael became the youngest child. As to Peter, we know whom he inspired. However, Sylvia, the mother, whom Barrie might have been infatuated with, partly inspired both the roles of simultaneously Mrs. Darling and Wendy.

After both parents died, Barrie generously took care and paid for all the boys' education. But the fate of those boys was horrible. First, George was killed on the war front in World War I at 21 in Flanders. Then, Michael drowned with a friend of his while bathing in Oxford in what was alleged to be a suicide according to his brother Nico. Needless to say Barrie was devastated and never really recovered. But, after Barrie's death the worst was to come: Peter, who had to forever remain "the actual Peter Pan" had a hard time coping with this status and threw himself under a train of the London Underground at Sloane Square station in 1960 at age 63.

So, Peter Pan is a mix of those "real" children, and Barrie was very precise regarding his traits of character, repeating in his novel that "There was never a cockier boy". Peter says: "How clever I am (…) oh, the cleverness of me!" and in his notes for a movie screenplay, Barrie indicated: "No one else can be so gay as Peter, nor so serious, nor so gallant, nor so cocky." In fact, the Disney team soon realized they were facing the same problem as with Pinocchio: Peter was not such a pleasant boy after all. Ted Sears expressed it in an October 21st, 1939 story meeting: "He is a very disagreeable little character through the book. He is selfish and doesn't do anything for anybody. We could make him funny and soften that a little bit." Bill Peet complained that he was too egocentric and arrogant to be likable. In Barrie's book,

Peter Pan is indeed very self-centered, careless, selfish ("he was thinking only of himself"), absent-minded, proud and heartless. Walt was aware of that: "Keep Peter conceited, but in a way so that you will still like the guy." (March 1, 1940) And just like with *Alice in Wonderland*, he even blamed the characters for being too cold.

When Barrie had devised the boy, he was very influenced by the heroes of his readings such as *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *Tom Sawyer* (1876) both by Mark Twain, or Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* (1883) and his favourites Ralph, Piggy, and Jack from *The Coral Island* (1857) by Robert Michael Ballantyne. Robinsonades were very popular then and Barrie even said: "I should feel as if I had left off my clothing, if I were to write without an island". Walt also loved such heroes, and particularly Mark Twain's, so he went for this type of adventurer, trying to make him less unpleasant than in the novel. Still, he refrained from scenes where Peter turned out to be too sensitive and even cried. He did so in the book, even crying in his sleep, but this mysterious behavior is never explained by Barrie.

Regarding the design, the Disney team didn't have the same problem as with *Alice in Wonderland*. We saw in Volume 2 how hard it had been to cope with the success of John Tenniel's drawings. The first edition of *Peter Pan* was illustrated by Francis Donkin Bedford in 1911 and 1915. He had already illustrated books by Charles Dickens, George MacDonald, and E.V. Lucas. This was the very edition Walt had borrowed and annotated from the Disney library, so he knew about the illustrations. Still, they didn't become iconic drawings the way Tenniel's had.

However, the Disney team did read how Barrie had envisioned him: "He was a lovely boy, clad in skeleton leaves and the juices that ooze out of trees." Like for Tinker Bell, they had started designing Peter in an outfit of brownish and greenish leaves. Dave Hall had opted for a fair-haired boy with a brown/reddish tunic and Roman-like laced shoes. But, for economical as well as aesthetic reasons, they simplified it and the green tunic was chosen. The lower part and the short sleeves ending with the shapes of leaves would remind of those first intentions. The cap with feather is a Disney invention. Jim Korkis tells us more about it: "This type of hat is officially known as a bycocket, a style of hat that was fashionable for both men and women in Western Europe from the XIIIth to the XVIth century with a point in the front like a bird's beak[45]." He also wears green tights and mocassins. With Bedford, Peter was barefoot. Expert Oswald Iten notices: "In the original stage productions Peter used to be red and brown because his clothes were supposed to be made of (autumn) leaves. So the highly influential decision to give him a naturally green Robin-Hood-like appearance must have been a very deliberate choice by the film makers[46]." The staple of Disney young boys, the prominent lock of hair, is there again. In the first designs, Peter was less muscular, skinnier and was wearing a belt over his shoulder. The feather was way longer. He resembled a lot the first sketches of an early Pinocchio. He had something of a goblin or sprite. Jack Miller took him one step further until Milt Kahl took over as usual.