



Source: Laura King, 'Echo of Lebanon as Israel claims zone', *LA Times*, *NY Times*, *Newsday*, *Reuters* in *Sydney Morning Herald* online, 30/12/05.

Tags: [evidence](#), [husband/wife](#), [dreams](#)

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As darkness fell, Farley lay back in bed, trying to remember how it had felt to sleep next to Marisa. Marriage to her had been more about shouting, anger, and pain than about the comforts of bed and board, but still he sought to remember the better parts of those years. Remembering only the suffering made him feel too bitter.

Sighing, he gave up and turned onto his side. Dating wasn't worth the risk of being expected to marry again, so he remained a sort of reluctant celibate. At 45, that was a bit of a harsh deal, but he felt safe.

He dropped off to sleep at last and flopped onto his back, throwing out his arms in a cruciform pose. Not that he knew it, and there should have been no one to see him. But there was.

A shadow moved in the corner of the room, drew close to the bed and stood as if in shadowy thought before moving away, toward the desk in the corner of the room. There it silently rifled through papers on the desktop and articles in the drawer, dwelling on nothing. The shadow returned to stand by the bed, this time reaching out a hand to touch Farley's hair, dark against the pillow.

Farley's eyes flew open. He looked up into the indistinct face above him and gasped in startlement. A soft voice said, 'Don't be afraid. I just wanted to watch you sleep.'

'Who are you?' Farley demanded. 'How did you get in here?'

With a light laugh, the shadow pulled away from him. 'I'm Peter Pan, Farley. I came to see if you are a Lost Boy.'

He sat up in angry affront. 'Bollocks. Who are you, and why are you in my apartment?'

The shadow retreated quickly now, out the door and down the hall. Farley leaped up to follow, but by the time he gained the hallway, there was no one there. The front door stood ajar, so he closed and locked it. He patrolled the apartment and found no open windows.

Whoever the interloper was, he or she had entered without forcing any locks. It was frightening, despite the fact that he was uninjured. Farley slept little that night.

The next morning, when he awoke, he staggered out to the kitchen to make coffee. There on the table he found a block-lettered note on plain white paper. It read: 'I'll be back, Farley,' and it was signed 'P.P.' Farley snarled at it. He had the urge to wad it up and throw it into the trash, but his cautious nature prompted him to set it aside in case evidence were ever needed.

Evidence of what, he didn't quite want to think.

That evening, when he returned home from his boring job at the bank, he found himself looking into closets and under the bed, checking the windows and double-locking

the door, even though it made him feel foolish to do so. At bedtime, he was reluctant to turn off the light. It was only with great effort that he finally did, turning onto his side and pulling up the sheet to his chin as if to protect himself. It took him several minutes to drift off.

As soon as his breathing evened out, another shadow moved from the corner of the room, this one much smaller than the one the night before. It hovered over his bed, giving off tiny spangles of cool sparks, and then moved to the desk in the corner of the room. It moved like a firefly, continuing to dust the bright spangles as it dipped into the papers, the pencil cup, the paperclip bin. This shadow was evidently less cautious than the first.

Farley awoke quietly, lying for a moment to listen to the room. He saw the flying sparks at the desk and silently rose from the bed. Nearing the desk, he moved very quickly to slide a piece of paper over the paperclip bin, trapping the interloper inside.

He turned on the desk lamp and removed the paper, jerking in astonishment when he saw a fierce little face looking up at him from among the paperclips. 'What the hell?' For all the world, the angry creature looked human, small as it was. It was clearly telling him off, tiny mouth moving fast, fist waving at him.

'I must be dreaming,' he muttered, unsure what to do. He sat down at the desk, setting the bin and its cargo onto the desktop, and tried to think straight. It was not easy.

'Peter Pan,' he said loudly. 'Oh my God. I'm losing my mind. This can't be Tinker Bell!' He looked back at it in horror. The tiny sprite had settled down, manifestly put out, and made a sulky face at him. 'Listen,' he said to it. 'I can't imagine what you want from me, but I mean you no harm. I just want you out of my apartment and far away from me. Will you go away if I free you?'

It nodded as if highly displeased by having to agree. Farley lifted the paper with trepidation. The little figure buzzed close to him, kissing his cheek saucily, and then zoomed to the window. With no trouble at all, it insinuated itself through the screen and made its way outside, where it hovered at eye level. Immediately it was joined by another flying figure, this one familiar from the night before.

Farley ran to the window and looked out at them in disbelief. The boy who could become shadow grinned and waved and then flew away, followed by the spangly sprite. Farley watched them out of sight. On impulse, he ran to the kitchen to look at the table. There was another sheet of paper on it, this one marked in little sparkly dots. 'We'll be back!' It was signed, 'Tink.'

He sat down at the table, put his head into his hands, and resigned himself to being a Lost Boy.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Vicki Abshire.*