

Rascal fool in the court of a king in another world who fell to earth at No. 17, Cherry Tree Lane.

Chapter 7, "The Evening Out," is the central-theme episode in the second book and is set in the sky, that is, the archetypal element of air, representing the mental plane or dimension. This evening is Mary Poppins' evening off, so after feeding the children and tucking them into bed, she scurries away. Jane and Michael lie in bed looking through the window at the shooting stars that fill the sky. Michael says it's like fireworks or a circus and wonders whether they have circuses in Heaven. Suddenly a large bright shooting star comes right into the bedroom and urges the two children to get dressed and come with him. They do, but Jane wonders whether she could be dreaming. The star that is leading them leaps into the air and tells the children to follow by stepping on stars. They do so and find themselves standing at the edge of a ring of shining sand, with the sky above it drawn up to a point, like a tent. They are in the circus in the heavens, where the Ring Master is the Sun, and the Performing Constellations participate in the Big Parade. Seated in the Royal Box is Mary Poppins. And then the Sun invites all to dance the Dance of the Wheeling Sky.

Michael wonders whether his experience is real or not, and the Sun replies: "What is real and what is not? Can you tell me or I you? Perhaps we shall never know more than this - that to think a thing is to make it true." Jane wonders whether it is true that they are there or only think they are. The Sun smiles sadly and responds, "From the beginning of the world all men have asked that question. And I, who am Lord of the Sky - even I do not know the answer. I am certain only that this is the Evening Out, that the Constellations are shining in your eyes and that it is true if you think it is."

Then Mary Poppins and the Sun dance together, without touching, but opposite each other, keeping perfect time together, as all of the constellations and planets join in the dance. At its end, the Sun lightly touches Mary Poppins' cheek with his lips. The dance being over, all the constellations rush from the ring. The children feel themselves in the rocking arms of Venus, the Homeward Star, and before they know it, they are back in their beds at home. The next morning, they ask Mary Poppins about what happened. As is her wont, she dismisses their question without answering it or denying the events of the night. But Jane points out to her brother that on the center of Mary Poppins'