

Do You Believe in Fairies?

by J.M. Barrie *from Peter Pan*

Peter Pan tells the story of the adventures of the magical boy named Peter Pan who lives in Neverland with his friends and some amazing beings. Peter's great enemy, however, is the evil pirate Captain Hook. In this passage, Hook and his pirates have captured many of Peter's friends. Hook has slipped in to Peter's room and poisoned Peter's medicine. Tinker Bell, or Tink, is a fairy and Peter's dear friend.

He raised the cup. No time for words now; time for deeds; and with one of her lightning movements Tink got between his lips and the draught, and drained it to the dregs.

"Why, Tink, how dare you drink my medicine?"

But she did not answer. Already she was reeling in the air.

"What is the matter with you?" cried Peter, suddenly afraid.

"It was poisoned, Peter," she told him softly; "and now I am going to be dead."

"O Tink, did you drink it to save me?"

"Yes."

"But why, Tink?"

Her wings would scarcely carry her now, but in reply she alighted on his shoulder and gave his nose a loving bite. She whispered in his ear "You silly ass," and then, tottering to her chamber, lay down on the bed.

His head almost filled the fourth wall of her little room as he knelt near her in distress. Every moment her light was growing fainter; and he knew that if it went out she would be no more. She liked his tears so much that she put out her beautiful finger and let them run over it.

Her voice was so low that at first he could not make out what she said. Then he made it out. She was saying that she thought she could get well again if children believed in fairies.

Peter flung out his arms. There were no children there, and it was night time; but he addressed all who might be dreaming of the Neverland, and who were therefore nearer to him than you think.

“Do you believe?” he cried.

Tink sat up in bed almost briskly to listen to her fate.

She fancied she heard answers in the affirmative, and then again she wasn't sure.

“What do you think?” she asked Peter.

“If you believe,” he shouted to them, “clap your hands; don't let Tink die.”

Many clapped.

Some didn't.

A few beasts hissed.

The clapping stopped suddenly; as if countless mothers had rushed to their nurseries to see what on earth was happening; but already Tink was saved. First her voice grew strong, then she popped out of bed, then she was flashing through the room more merry and impudent than ever. She never thought of thanking those who believed, but she would have liked to get at the ones who had hissed.

Questions

1. Who are the “beasts” who hissed?
2. What would it mean if Tink’s light went out?
3. What do you think “No time for words now; time for deeds” means?
4. Why do you think Tink put herself into danger in order to save Peter?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Lightning
2. Reeling
3. Alighted
4. Fainter
5. Briskly
6. Affirmative
7. Countless
8. Impudent

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "... with one of her **lightning** movements Tink got between his lips and the draught, and drained it to the dregs."

- a. bright b. slow c. fast d. sharp

2) "Already she was **reeling** in the air."

- a. flying b. fishing c. spinning d. dancing

3) "Her wings would scarcely carry her now, but in reply she **alighted** on his shoulder and gave his nose a loving bite."

- a. lit up b. perched c. argued d. remained

4) "Every moment her light was growing **fainter**; and he knew that if it went out she would be no more."

- a. weaker b. brighter c. higher d. bigger

5) "Tink sat up in bed almost **briskly** to listen to her fate."

- a. coldly b. curiously c. quietly d. quickly

6) "She fancied she heard answers in the **affirmative**, and then again she wasn't sure."

- a. negative b. positive c. air d. wrong

7) "The clapping stopped suddenly; as if **countless** mothers had rushed to their nurseries to see what on earth was happening..."

- a. many b. clueless c. too few d. not many

8) "First her voice grew strong, then she popped out of bed, then she was flashing through the room more merry and **impudent** than ever."

- a. important b. confused c. happy d. disrespectful