

The Happy Home

by J.M. Barrie from Peter Pan

In the book Peter Pan, Peter lives in the magical land of Neverland with his friends, the Lost Boys. Peter brings his new friends, Wendy, John, and Michael, to Neverland. Once she is in Neverland, Wendy becomes a “pretend” mother to all the boys. The group has many adventures, including battles with Captain Hook, the wicked pirate, and his crew. In this selection from the book, Peter and the children have just survived an attack from pirates and are getting ready to go to sleep.

None of them knew. Perhaps it was best not to know. Their ignorance gave them one more glad hour; and as it was to be their last hour on the island, let us rejoice that there were sixty glad minutes in it. They sang and danced in their night-gowns. Such a deliciously creepy song it was, in which they pretended to be frightened at their own shadows, little witting that so soon shadows would close in upon them, from whom they would shrink in real fear. So uproariously gay was the dance, and how they buffeted each other on the bed and out of it! It was a pillow fight rather than a dance, and when it was finished, the pillows insisted on one bout more, like partners who know that they may never meet again. The stories they told, before it was time for Wendy’s good-night story! Even Slightly tried to tell a story that night, but the beginning was so fearfully dull that it appalled not only the others but himself, and he said happily:

“Yes, it is a dull beginning. I say, let us pretend that it is the end.”

And then at last they all got into bed for Wendy’s story, the story they loved best, the story Peter hated. Usually when she began to tell this story he left the room or put his hands over his ears; and possibly if he had done either of those things this time they might all still be on the island. But tonight he remained on his stool; and we shall see what happened.

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. Ignorance
2. Rejoice
3. Appalled
4. Dull
5. Usually
6. Remained

Context Clues

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

1) “None of them knew. Perhaps it was best not to know. Their **ignorance** gave them one more glad hour...”

a. confusion b. intelligence c. cluelessness d. positivity

2) “...and as it was to be their last hour on the island, ...let us **rejoice** that there were sixty glad minutes in it.”

a. celebrate b. remember c. repeat d. honor

3) Even Slightly tried to tell a story that night, but the beginning was so fearfully dull that it **appalled** not only the others but himself...”

a. bored b. shocked c. confused d. annoyed

4) “Yes, it is a **dull** beginning. I say, let us pretend that it is the end.”

a. boring b. surprising c. shocking d. curious

5) “**Usually** when she began to tell this story he left the room or put his hands over his ears; and possibly if he had done either of those things this time they might all still be on the island.”

a. until b. as soon as c. often d. every time

6) “But tonight he **remained** on his stool; and we shall see what happened.”

a. imagined b. read c. created d. stayed