

# The Landing

by Lewis Carroll *from The Hunting of the Snark*

The *Hunting of the Snark* is a nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll. It was published in 1876. In the poem various characters go hunting an animal called a Snark. Below is the start of the poem.

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“Just the place for a Snark!” the Bellman cried,  
As he landed his crew with care;  
Supporting each man on the top of the tide  
By a finger entwined in his hair.

“Just the place for a Snark! I have said it twice:  
That alone should encourage the crew.  
Just the place for a Snark! I have said it thrice:  
What I tell you three times is true.”

The crew was complete: it included a Boots—  
A maker of Bonnets and Hoods—  
A Barrister, brought to arrange their disputes—  
And a Broker, to value their goods.

A Billiard-marker, whose skill was immense,  
Might perhaps have won more than his share—  
But a Banker, engaged at enormous expense,  
Had the whole of their cash in his care.

There was also a Beaver, that paced on the deck,  
Or would sit making lace in the bow:  
And had often (the Bellman said) saved them from wreck,  
Though none of the sailors knew how.

There was one who was famed for the number of things  
He forgot when he entered the ship:  
His umbrella, his watch, all his jewels and rings,  
And the clothes he had bought for the trip.

He had forty-two boxes, all carefully packed,  
With his name painted clearly on each:  
But, since he omitted to mention the fact,

They were all left behind on the beach.

The loss of his clothes hardly mattered, because  
He had seven coats on when he came,  
With three pairs of boots—but the worst of it was,  
He had wholly forgotten his name.

He would answer to “Hi!” or to any loud cry,  
Such as “Fry me!” or “Fritter my wig!”  
To “What-you-may-call-um!” or “What-was-his-name!”  
But especially “Thing-um-a-jig!”

While, for those who preferred a more forcible word,  
He had different names from these:  
His intimate friends called him “Candle-ends,”  
And his enemies “Toasted-cheese.”

“His form is ungainly—his intellect small—”  
(So the Bellman would often remark)  
“But his courage is perfect! And that, after all,  
Is the thing that one needs with a Snark.”

He would joke with hyænas, returning their stare  
With an impudent wag of the head:  
And he once went a walk, paw-in-paw, with a bear,  
“Just to keep up its spirits,” he said.

He came as a Baker: but owned, when too late—  
And it drove the poor Bellman half-mad—  
He could only bake Bridecake—for which, I may state,  
No materials were to be had.

The last of the crew needs especial remark,  
Though he looked an incredible dunce:  
He had just one idea—but, that one being “Snark,”  
The good Bellman engaged him at once.

He came as a Butcher: but gravely declared,  
When the ship had been sailing a week,  
He could only kill Beavers. The Bellman looked scared,  
And was almost too frightened to speak:

## Questions

1. What was one thing the Baker forgot?
2. What does *entwined* mean here: "By a finger entwined in his hair"?
3. What did the Beaver make?
4. There is a continuous alliteration across this passage, especially in the names of the characters. What letter sound is used repeatedly?

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**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. entwined
2. barrister
3. engaged
4. omitted
5. forcible
6. ungainly
7. impudent
8. dunce

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**Context Clues**

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

1) “By a finger **entwined** in his hair”

- a. above; over    b. hidden    c. twisted or coiled    d. coming out of; sticking out

2) “A **Barrister**, brought to arrange their disputes—”

- a. umpire; referee    b. policeman or sheriff    c. coach or teacher    d. lawyer; attorney

3) “a Banker, **engaged** at enormous expense”

- a. hired or employed    b. promised; to be married    c. delivered or brought    d. found

4) “since he **omitted** to mention the fact”

- a. offered    b. neglected or excluded    c. always; continued    d. delighted; enjoyed

5) “for those who preferred a more **forcible** word”

- a. pleasant; happy    b. scary; fearful    c. unusual or rare    d. strong or powerful

6) “His form is **ungainly**”

- a. tall or very large    b. unimportant    c. awkward or ungraceful    d. handsome; cute

7) “With an **impudent** wag of the head”

- a. polite    b. rude or disrespectful    c. useless; unneeded    d. backwards; opposite

8) “Though he looked an incredible **dunce**”

- a. fool or stupid person    b. puppet or doll    c. genius; brilliant person    d. distance