

The Return Home

by J.M. Barrie from Peter Pan

In Peter Pan, Peter has taken Wendy, Michael, and John Darling to Neverland, his magical home. After many adventures with many interesting people and creatures, the Darling children start the journey home. Peter, however, is not very happy that Wendy is going to leave Neverland. He has a plan. He and his fairy friend, Tinker Bell, get to the Darling home before Wendy and her brothers. This passage is what happens next. Peter's reference to thimbles is from Chapter 3 when he gets thimbles and kisses mixed up; he had never heard of either one before.

“Quick Tink,” he whispered, “close the window; bar it! That’s right. Now you and I must get away by the door; and when Wendy comes she will think her mother has barred her out; and she will have to go back with me.”

Now I understand what had hitherto puzzled me, why when Peter had exterminated the pirates he did not return to the island and leave Tink to escort the children to the mainland. This trick had been in his head all the time.

Instead of feeling that he was behaving badly he danced with glee; then he peeped into the day-nursery to see who was playing. He whispered to Tink, “It’s Wendy’s mother! She is a pretty lady, but not so pretty as my mother. Her mouth is full of thimbles, but not so full as my mother’s was.”

Of course he knew nothing whatever about his mother; but he sometimes bragged about her.

He did not know the tune, which was “Home, Sweet Home,” but he knew it was saying, “Come back, Wendy, Wendy, Wendy”; and he cried exultantly, “You will never see Wendy again, lady, for the window is barred!”

He peeped in again to see why the music had stopped, and now he saw that Mrs. Darling had laid her head on the box, and that two tears were sitting on her eyes.

“She wants me to unbar the window,” thought Peter, “but I won’t, not I!”

He peeped again, and the tears were still there, or another two had taken their place.

“She’s awfully fond of Wendy,” he said to himself. He was angry with her now for not seeing why she could not have Wendy.

The reason was so simple: “I’m fond of her too. We can’t both have her, lady.”

But the lady would not make the best of it, and he was unhappy. He ceased to look at her, but even then she would not let go of him. He skipped about and made funny faces, but when he stopped it was just as if she were inside him, knocking.

“Oh, all right,” he said at last, and gulped. Then he unbarred the window. “Come on, Tink,” he cried, with a frightful sneer at the laws of nature; “we don’t want any silly mothers;” and he flew away.

Questions

1. Explain the reason why Peter and Tink closed and barred the window.
2. What is it that both Peter and Mrs. Darling want?
3. How does Peter plan to leave the room if the window is barred?
4. The text says “He skipped about and made funny faces...” Why did Peter do that?

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. Exterminated
2. Glee
3. Bragged
4. Exultantly
5. Peeped
6. Fond
7. Ceased

Context Clues

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

- 1) "Now I understand what had hitherto puzzled me, why when Peter had **exterminated** the pirates..."
a. cleaned b. fought c. eliminated d. celebrated
- 2) "Instead of feeling that he was behaving badly he danced with **glee**..."
a. joy b. shame c. embarrassment d. sadness
- 3) "Of course he knew nothing whatever about his mother; but he sometimes **bragged** about her."
a. spoke negatively b. spoke positively c. joked d. wondered
- 4) "... it was saying, "Come back, Wendy, Wendy, Wendy"; and he cried **exultantly**..."
a. sadly b. loudly c. happily d. hopefully
- 5) "He **peeped** in again to see why the music had stopped, and now he saw that Mrs. Darling had laid her head on the box..."
a. looked b. jumped c. stepped d. ran
- 6) "She's awfully **fond** of Wendy," he said to himself."
a. upset with b. enthusiastic about c. annoyed by d. mad at
- 7) "He **ceased** to look at her, but even then she would not let go of him."
a. waited b. tried c. hoped d. stopped