

CHAPTER 3 VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Britt-Marie Was Here by Fredrik Backman

act up (phrasal verb) /ækt ʌp/ akt up: "The shopping cart was acting up and she even ran over her own foot with it" (p. 16).

Definition: If a machine or part of your body acts up, it does not work properly.

amputate (verb) /'æmpjʊteɪt/ AM-pyuh-tayt: "Britt-Marie's fingertips are uncomfortably rubbing the white mark on her skin, like the scar of an amputated limb" (p. 18).

Definition: To amputate someone's arm or leg means to cut it off in an operation.

at a loss (phrase) /ət ə lɒs/ at uh loss: "The girl drops onto a chair opposite. Seems at a loss" (p. 18).

Definition: If you are at a loss, you do not know what to do in a particular situation.

at the ready (phrase) /ət ðə 'rɛdi/ at thuh RED-ee: "She doesn't feel like a fully fledged human being unless she has a more or less full bottle at the ready" (p. 15).

Definition: If you have something at the ready, you have it in a position where it can be quickly and easily used.

barbarian (noun) /bɑːr'beəriən/ bar-BAIR-ee-un: "'Barbarians,' she whispers, sucking in her cheeks" (p. 18).

Definition: If you describe someone as a barbarian, you disapprove of them because they behave in a way that is cruel or uncivilized.

brochure (noun) /'brɔʃfər/ broh-SHUR: "The young man held out a brochure" (p. 16).

Definition: A brochure is a magazine or thin book with pictures that gives you information about a product or service.

cashier (noun) /kæ'ʃɪər/ ka-SHEER: "'Are you a member?' asked the young man when she reached the cashier" (p. 16).

Definition: A cashier is a person who customers pay money to in a shop.

civility (noun) /sɪ'vɪlɪti/ sih-VIL-ih-tee: "Britt-Marie decides to acknowledge her civility with some sort of compliment of her own" (p. 17).

Definition: Civility is polite behavior.

clasp (verb) /klɑːsp/ klasp: "Britt-Marie clasps her hands together over her stomach and looks into the oven" (p. 21).

Definition: If you clasp something or someone, you hold them tightly in your hands or arms.

compliment (noun) /'kɒmplɪmənt/ KOM-plih-munt: "Britt-Marie decides to acknowledge her civility with some sort of compliment of her own" (p. 17).

Definition: A compliment is a polite remark that praises someone or expresses admiration for them.

concern (noun) /kən'sɜːrn/ kun-SURN: "The girl's irritation turns to genuine concern" (p. 18).

Definition: Concern is worry about a situation or problem.

confusion (noun) /kən'fjuːʒən/ kun-FYOO-zhun: "When the girl takes it, in some confusion, Britt-Marie also holds out a pair of pencil sharpeners" (p. 17).

Definition: If there is confusion about something, it is not clear what the true situation is.

contain (verb) /kən'teɪn/ kun-TAYN: "She considered adding exclamation marks at the end, to really highlight the seriousness of it, but managed to contain herself" (p. 15).

Definition: If you contain yourself, you control your feelings or behaviour.

conveyor belt (noun) /kən'veɪər belt/ kun-VAY-ur belt: "She tried to yell, and to slap down her wallet on the conveyor belt, but it was more like a whisper and a little pushing movement" (p. 16).

Definition: A conveyor belt is a continuously moving strip of rubber or metal which is used in factories for moving objects along so that they can be dealt with as quickly as possible.

cooperate (verb) /kə'ɒpəreɪt/ koh-OP-uh-rayt: "She wanted so badly to raise her voice, but her vocal cords wouldn't cooperate" (p. 16).

Definition: If you cooperate, you do what someone has asked or told you to do.

courageous (adjective) /kə'reɪdʒəs/ kuh-RAY-jus: "'It's courageous of you to wear red at this time of year. Where are the cooking implements?'" (p. 18).

Definition: Someone who is courageous shows courage.

cutlery (noun) /'kʌtləri/ KUT-luh-ree: "The other holds a plastic compartment for cutlery" (p. 18).

Definition: Cutlery consists of the knives, forks, and spoons that you use when eating.

diminish (verb) /dɪ'mɪnɪʃ/ dih-MIN-ish: "With diminishing patience, the girl opens a drawer" (p. 18).

Definition: When something diminishes, it becomes smaller or less important.

disturb (verb) /dɪ'stɜːrb/ dih-STURB: "'I want a job because I actually don't think it's very edifying to disturb the neighbors with bad smells" (p. 21).

Definition: If you disturb someone, you interrupt what they are doing and upset them.

due respect (phrase) /dju: rɪ'spɛkt/ dyoo rih-SPEKT: "With all due respect, Britt-Marie, you haven't had a job in forty years" (p. 19).

Definition: You can say with all due respect when you are about to disagree with someone in order to seem more polite.

edifying (adjective) /'ɛdɪfaɪɪŋ/ ED-ih-fy-ing: "'I want a job because I actually don't think it's very edifying to disturb the neighbors with bad smells" (p. 21).

Definition: If you describe something as edifying, you mean that it benefits people in some way, for example by teaching them something.

entrepreneur (noun) /,ɒnrəprə'nɜːr/ on-truh-pruh-NUR: "Britt-Marie wanted to tell him that her husband was actually an entrepreneur" (p. 17).

Definition: An entrepreneur is a person who starts businesses or organizes business deals, often taking risks in order to make a profit.

exclaim (verb) /ɪk'skleɪm/ ik-SKLAYM: "The girl very briefly looks as if she's going to exclaim, 'Kitchen?' but at the last moment she holds back" (p. 17).

Definition: If you exclaim, you say something suddenly, loudly, or with emphasis.

exhale (verb) /ɛks'heɪl/ eks-HAYL: "Britt-Marie exhales with great patience" (p. 19).

Definition: When you exhale, you breathe out the air that is in your lungs.

fabric (noun) /'fæbrɪk/ FAB-rik: "The girl's hand slides in surprise over the fabric of her coat" (p. 18).

Definition: Fabric is cloth or other material that is used for making things like clothes and curtains.

fairy tale (noun) /'fɛəri teɪl/ FAIR-ee tayl: "'It's a fairy tale, you understand" (p. 20).

Definition: A fairy tale is a story for children involving magical events and imaginary creatures.

fiddle (verb) /'fɪdl/ FID-ul: "The girl fiddles with her hair" (p. 19).

Definition: If you fiddle with something, you keep moving it or touching it with your fingers.

filleting knife (noun) /'fɪlɪtɪŋ naɪf/ FIL-it-ing nyf: "The girl stands up to help, then sits down watchfully when Britt-Marie takes the filleting knife from the drawer" (p. 20).

Definition: A filleting knife is a knife with a long thin blade that is used for removing bones from fish or meat.

fledged (adjective) /flɛdʒd/ flejd: "She doesn't feel like a fully fledged human being unless she has a more or less full bottle at the ready" (p. 15).

Definition: You use fledged after an adverb to indicate that someone or something has all the characteristics of the state described by the adverb.

fringe (noun) /frɪndʒ/ frinj: "The girl scratches her forehead, just under her fringe" (p. 21).

Definition: A fringe is hair that is cut so that it hangs over your forehead.

fumble (verb) /'fʌmbl/ FUM-bul: "'So . . . you . . . sort of want a job, so that . . .' she says, fumbling" (p. 19).

Definition: When you fumble for words, you speak in a confused or unclear way, often while you are thinking of what to say.

genuine (adjective) /'dʒɛnjʊɪn/ JEN-yoo-in: "The girl's irritation turns to genuine concern" (p. 18).

Definition: Genuine is used to describe people and things that are exactly what they appear to be, and are not false or pretended.

give up (phrasal verb) /gɪv ʌp/ giv up: "She simply gives up, points to the staff kitchen, and takes the food bag from Britt-Marie" (p. 17).

Definition: If you give up, you decide to stop trying to do something.

gently (adverb) /'dʒɛntli/ JENT-lee: "The wind ruffles her hair gently" (p. 15).

Definition: If you do something gently, you do it in a careful and not forceful or violent way.

hold back (phrasal verb) /həʊld bæk/ hohld bak: "The girl very briefly looks as if she's going to exclaim, 'Kitchen?' but at the last moment she holds back" (p. 17).

Definition: If you hold back from doing something, you stop yourself from doing it.

hold out (phrasal verb) /həʊld aʊt/ hohld owt: "The young man held out a brochure" (p. 16).

Definition: If you hold out something such as your hand, you move your hand away from your body so that someone can take something from it.

imaginary (adjective) /ɪ'mædʒɪnəri/ ih-MAJ-ih-nair-ee: "Britt-Marie, and brushes some imaginary crumbs off the table" (p. 19).

Definition: An imaginary person, place, or thing exists only in your mind or in a story, and not in real life.

imagination (noun) /ɪ,mædʒɪ'neɪʃən/ ih-maj-ih-NAY-shun: "Kent said it was because I don't have any imagination, but actually my imagination is excellent" (p. 20).

Definition: Your imagination is your ability to invent or think of new things.

implement (noun) /'ɪmplɪmənt/ IM-plih-munt: "'It's courageous of you to wear red at this time of year. Where are the cooking implements?'" (p. 18).

Definition: An implement is a tool or other piece of equipment.

incriminating (adjective) /ɪnˈkrɪmɪneɪtɪŋ/ in-KRIM-ih-nay-ting: "The girl seems to pick up an incriminating note in her voice" (p. 17).

Definition: If something is incriminating, it suggests that someone is guilty of a crime or bad behaviour.

instinct (noun) /ˈɪnstɪŋkt/ IN-stingkt: "Britt-Marie looks down at her plate and tries to resist the instinct to serve up a portion for Kent" (p. 21).

Definition: Instinct is the natural tendency that a person or animal has to behave or react in a particular way.

interrupt (verb) /ɪntəˈrʌpt/ in-tuh-RUPT: "Britt-Marie interrupts her by getting up and starting to sort the cutlery as if it has committed some kind of crime" (p. 20).

Definition: If you interrupt someone who is speaking, you start speaking before they have finished.

irritation (noun) /ˌɪrɪˈteɪʃən/ ir-ih-TAY-shun: "The girl's irritation turns to genuine concern" (p. 18).

Definition: Irritation is a feeling of annoyance, especially when something is happening that you cannot easily stop or control.

jumble (noun) /ˈdʒʌmbəl/ JUM-bul: "One half is a jumble of cooking implements" (p. 18).

Definition: A jumble of things is a lot of different things that are mixed together in an untidy way.

knuckle (noun) /ˈnʌkl/ NUK-ul: "The girl rubs her eyelids with her knuckles" (p. 17).

Definition: Your knuckles are the rounded pieces of bone where your fingers join your hands.

lecture (verb) /ˈlɛktʃər/ LEK-chur: "She stops abruptly, and gives the oven a quick lecture about its buttons being the wrong way around" (p. 20).

Definition: If you lecture someone about something, you criticize them or tell them how they should behave.

limb (noun) /lɪm/ lim: "Britt-Marie's fingertips are uncomfortably rubbing the white mark on her skin, like the scar of an amputated limb" (p. 18).

Definition: Your limbs are your arms and legs.

more or less (phrase) /mɔːr ɔːr lɛs/ mor or less: "She doesn't feel like a fully fledged human being unless she has a more or less full bottle at the ready" (p. 15).

Definition: You use more or less to indicate that a statement is approximately true.

mumble (verb) /ˈmʌmbəl/ MUM-bul: "Britt-Marie looks up and mumbles: 'Pardon me?'" (p. 21).

Definition: If you mumble, you speak very quietly and not at all clearly with the result that the words are difficult to understand.

on sale (phrase) /ɒn seɪl/ on sayl: "She found some salmon on sale and got some potatoes and vegetables" (p. 16).

Definition: If something is on sale, it is being offered at a lower price than usual.

on the verge of (phrase) /ɒn ðə vɜːrdʒ əv/ on thuh vurj uv: "Britt-Marie has gone over to a chair to sit down, and looks on the verge of passing out" (p. 18).

Definition: If you are on the verge of something, you are about to do it or experience it.

oven dish (noun) /ˈʌvən dɪʃ/ UV-un dish: "She puts the salmon in an oven dish" (p. 20).

Definition: An oven dish is a dish that can be put in an oven.

patiently (adverb) /ˈpeɪʃəntli/ PAY-shunt-lee: "Britt-Marie smiled patiently" (p. 16).

Definition: If you do something patiently, you do it without becoming annoyed or anxious.

perfume (noun) /ˈpɜːrfjuːm/ PUR-fyoom: "'I don't use perfume, so I asked him to always put his shirt directly in the washing machine when he came home" (p. 20).

Definition: Perfume is a pleasant smelling liquid which people put on their bodies to make themselves smell nice.

pick up (phrasal verb) /pɪk ʌp/ pik up: "The girl seems to pick up an incriminating note in her voice" (p. 17).

Definition: If you pick up a particular thing or quality, you notice it or become aware of it.

polite (adjective) /pəˈlaɪt/ puh-LYT: "It's 4:55. Britt-Marie is waiting by herself in the street outside the unemployment office, because it would be impolite to go in too early for the meeting" (p. 15).

Definition: Someone who is polite has good manners and behaves in a way that is socially correct and not rude to other people.

preposterous (adjective) /prɪˈpɒstərəs/ prih-POS-tur-us: "'Ha. You believe it's preposterous, of course" (p. 20).

Definition: If you describe something as preposterous, you mean that it is extremely unreasonable and foolish.

pretend (verb) /prɪˈtend/ prih-TEND: "It takes an excellent imagination to pretend one doesn't understand anything year in, year out" (p. 21).

Definition: If you pretend that something is the case, you act in a way that is intended to make people believe that it is the case, although in fact it is not.

prolong (verb) /prəˈlɒŋ/ pruh-LONG: "Seems to understand that protesting will only prolong the process and make it more tortuous" (p. 17).

Definition: To prolong something means to make it last longer.

raise (verb) /reɪz/ rayz: "Gently, the girl raises her eyebrows" (p. 18).

Definition: If you raise a part of your body, you move it to a higher position.

react (verb) /ri'ækt/ ree-AKT: "'No one knew she was dead until her neighbors reacted to the smell'" (p. 19).

Definition: When you react to something that has happened to you, you behave in a particular way because of it.

resist (verb) /rɪ'zɪst/ rih-ZIST: "Britt-Marie looks down at her plate and tries to resist the instinct to serve up a portion for Kent" (p. 21).

Definition: If you resist doing something, or resist the temptation to do it, you stop yourself from doing it although you would like to do it.

ruffle (verb) /'rʌfl/ RUF-ul: "The wind ruffles her hair gently" (p. 15).

Definition: If something ruffles someone's hair, it moves it slightly.

scratch (verb) /skrætʃ/ skrach: "The girl scratches her forehead, just under her fringe" (p. 21).

Definition: If you scratch yourself, you rub your fingernails against your skin because it is itching.

sec (noun) /sæk/ sek: "'You can apply here, it only takes a sec" (p. 16).

Definition: A sec is a very short period of time.

sharpener (noun) /'ʃɑ:pənər/ SHARP-uh-nur: "From a little shelf marked 'Stationery' she took a pencil and two pencil sharpeners and put them in her cart" (p. 16).

Definition: A sharpener is a tool or machine that you use to make something such as a pencil sharp.

shopping cart (noun) /'ʃɒpɪŋ kɑ:t/ SHOP-ing kart: "The shopping cart was acting up and she even ran over her own foot with it" (p. 16).

Definition: A shopping cart is a large metal basket on wheels which is provided by shops such as supermarkets for customers to use while they are in the shop.

shrug (verb) /ʃrʌg/ shrug: "He didn't even know what it was. When Britt-Marie explained that it's her brand of window-cleaner, he just shrugged and suggested a different brand" (p. 15).

Definition: If you shrug or shrug your shoulders, you raise your shoulders to show that you are not interested in something or that you do not know or care about it.

sincerely (adverb) /sɪn'sɪərli/ sin-SEER-lee: "She smiles sincerely, opening the door to the kitchen" (p. 18).

Definition: If you say or feel something sincerely, you really mean it or feel it.

slag (noun) /slæg/ slag: "'She's probably a slag,' the girl offers" (p. 21).

Definition: If someone calls a woman a slag, they are insulting her by saying that she has sexual relationships with many different people.

slap down (phrasal verb) /slæp daʊn/ slap down: "She tried to yell, and to slap down her wallet on the conveyor belt, but it was more like a whisper and a little pushing movement" (p. 16).

Definition: If you slap something down, you put it down with force.

socially incompetent (phrase) /'səʊʃəli ɪn'kɒmpɪtənt/ SOH-shuh-lee in-KOM-pih-tunt: "'I'm certainly aware that conversation isn't one of my strengths. My husband says I'm socially incompetent'" (p. 20).

Definition: If you say someone is socially incompetent, you mean they are not good at dealing with other people or social situations.

sort (verb) /sɔːrt/ sort: "Britt-Marie interrupts her by getting up and starting to sort the cutlery as if it has committed some kind of crime" (p. 20).

Definition: If you sort things, you separate them into different classes, groups, or places.

stare (noun) /stæər/ stair: "Britt-Marie gave him a wide-eyed stare" (p. 16).

Definition: If you give someone a stare, you look at them for a long time.

stationery (noun) /'steɪʃənəri/ STAY-shuh-nair-ee: "From a little shelf marked 'Stationery' she took a pencil and two pencil sharpeners and put them in her cart" (p. 16).

Definition: Stationery is paper, envelopes, and other materials or equipment used for writing.

straight back (phrase) /streɪt bæk/ strayt bak: "Britt-Marie sits with a straight back, like she sits on the chair on the balcony when she's waiting for Kent" (p. 19).

Definition: If you sit with a straight back, you sit in an upright position without bending forward or leaning to one side.

strain (noun) /streɪn/ strayn: "She feels as though she should say something nice back, so, with a certain amount of strain, she manages to say" (p. 21).

Definition: If you do something with strain, you do it with difficulty because it requires effort.

suspiciously (adverb) /sə'spɪʃəsli/ suh-SPISH-us-lee: "'Of what?' Britt-Marie asked suspiciously" (p. 16).

Definition: If you do or say something suspiciously, you do it showing that you do not trust someone or something.

swallow (verb) /'swɒləʊ/ SWOL-oh: "The last words come out more quietly than the rest. The girl swallows and nods at the ring that is no longer on Britt-Marie's finger" (p. 20).

Definition: If you swallow, you make a movement in your throat as if you are swallowing something, often because you are nervous or frightened.

take a sec (phrase) /teɪk ə sek/ tayk uh sek: "You can apply here, it only takes a sec" (p. 16).

Definition: If something takes a sec, it takes a very short time.

temple (noun) /ˈtɛmpl/ TEM-pul: "She has to squeeze her eyes shut so tightly that her temples start hurting" (p. 15).

Definition: Your temples are the flat parts on each side of your forehead.

terrorist (noun) /ˈtɛrərɪst/ TAIR-ur-ist: "Do you really have to register and leave your name and address like some suspected terrorist just because you want to buy a bit of salmon?" (p. 16).

Definition: A terrorist is a person who uses violence, especially murder and bombing, in order to achieve political aims.

tortuous (adjective) /ˈtɔːrtʃʊəs/ TOR-choo-us: "Seems to understand that protesting will only prolong the process and make it more tortuous" (p. 17).

Definition: A tortuous process or piece of writing is very long and complicated.

tub (noun) /tʌb/ tub: "Like small children next to bathtubs, seems to understand that protesting will only prolong the process and make it more tortuous" (p. 17).

Definition: A tub is a deep container of any size.

uncomfortably (adverb) /ʌnˈkʌmftəbli/ un-KUM-ftur-blee: "Britt-Marie's fingertips are uncomfortably rubbing the white mark on her skin" (p. 18).

Definition: If you do something uncomfortably, you do it in a way that makes you feel slightly worried or embarrassed.

unprejudicial (adjective) /ʌnpɹədʒʊˈdɪʃəl/ un-prej-uh-DISH-ul: "She nods at these, and then she nods in a wholly unprejudicial way at the girl's boyish hairstyle" (p. 17).

Definition: If you do something in an unprejudicial way, you do it without showing prejudice or bias.

unsure (adjective) /ʌnˈʃʊər/ un-SHOOR: "The young man looked unsure of himself" (p. 16).

Definition: If you are unsure of yourself, you lack confidence.

vocal cords (noun) /ˈvəʊkl kɔːrdz/ VOH-kul kordz: "She wanted so badly to raise her voice, but her vocal cords wouldn't cooperate" (p. 16).

Definition: Your vocal cords are the part of your throat that vibrates when you speak.

watchfully (adverb) /wɒtʃfəli/ WOCH-fuh-lee: "The girl stands up to help, then sits down watchfully when Britt-Marie takes the filleting knife from the drawer" (p. 20).

Definition: If you do something watchfully, you do it while watching carefully what is happening.

whisper (noun) /'wɪspər/ WIS-pur: "She tried to yell, and to slap down her wallet on the conveyor belt, but it was more like a whisper and a little pushing movement" (p. 16).

Definition: A whisper is something that you say very quietly using your breath rather than your voice.

wide-eyed (adjective) /waɪd aɪd/ wyd yd: "Britt-Marie gave him a wide-eyed stare" (p. 16).

Definition: If you describe someone as wide-eyed, you mean that their eyes are more open than usual, often because they are surprised or frightened.

year in, year out (phrase) /jɪər ɪn jɪər aʊt/ yeer in yeer owt: "It takes an excellent imagination to pretend one doesn't understand anything year in, year out" (p. 21).

Definition: If something happens year in, year out, it happens every year without changing.