

CHAPTER 4 VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Britt-Marie Was Here by Fredrik Backman

abandon (verb) /ə'bændən/ uh-BAN-dun: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: If you abandon something you are doing or using, you stop doing it or using it before it is finished or before you are finished with it.

abandon (verb) /ə'bændən/ uh-BAN-dun: "Apart from that, the only two noticeable things in Borg are soccer and the pizzeria, because these tend to be the last things to abandon humanity" (p. 23).

Definition: If you abandon someone or something, you leave them permanently or for a long time, especially when you should not do so.

abrupt (adjective) /ə'brʌpt/ uh-BRUPT: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: An abrupt change or action is very sudden and often unpleasant or surprising.

admittedly (adverb) /əd'mɪtɪdli/ ad-MIT-id-lee: "There is a recreation center that admittedly has not been closed down, but only because they haven't had time to do it yet" (p. 23).

Definition: You use admittedly when you are saying something that weakens the importance or force of your statement.

applicant (noun) /'æplɪkənt/ AP-lih-kunt: "The number of applicants for the position were, for these reasons, fairly limited" (p. 26).

Definition: An applicant for something such as a job or a place at a college is someone who makes a formal written request to be given it.

bear away (phrasal verb) /bɛər ə'weɪ/ bair uh-WAY: "It has a closed-down soccer field and a closed-down school and a closed-down chemist's and a closed-down liquor store and a closed-down health care center and a closed-down supermarket and a closed-down shopping center and a road that bears away in two directions" (p. 23).

Definition: If something bears away in a particular direction, it goes or moves away in that direction.

bellow (verb) /'bɛləʊ/ BEL-oh: "'I can hardly hear you!!' bellows Britt-Marie, in a very helpful way, and hangs up" (p. 25).

Definition: If you bellow, you shout in a loud, deep voice, especially because you are angry.

blissfully (adverb) /'blɪsfəli/ BLISS-fuh-lee: "'What?' says the girl, for a few moments still blissfully unaware that Britt-Marie has not necessarily walked out of the girl's life just because she's walked out of the unemployment office" (p. 25).

Definition: If you say that someone is blissfully unaware or blissfully ignorant of something unpleasant or difficult, you mean they are completely unaware of it.

blow up (phrasal verb) /bləʊ ʌp/ bloh up: "This takes place just after her car has blown up" (p. 24).

Definition: If a car or other vehicle blows up, it explodes or there is a sudden loud noise from an engine problem.

caretaker (noun) /'kærtɪkər/ KAIR-tay-kur: "As a result, when the personnel department found that the local authority had a building without anyone to take care of it, a vacancy for a caretaker of the recreation center was advertised with the unemployment office in early January" (p. 25).

Definition: A caretaker is a person whose job is to take care of a building such as a school or an apartment building.

chemist's (noun) /'kɛmɪsts/ KEM-ists: "It has a closed-down soccer field and a closed-down school and a closed-down chemist's and a closed-down liquor store and a closed-down health care center and a closed-down supermarket and a closed-down shopping center and a road that bears away in two directions" (p. 23).

Definition: A chemist's is a shop where medicines and toiletries are sold or prepared. In American English, we call this a "pharmacy."

clutch pedal (noun) /klʌtʃ 'pɛd/ kluch PED-ul: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: A clutch pedal is the pedal in a vehicle that you press with your foot to change gears.

councillor (noun) /'kaʊnsələ/ KOWN-suh-lur: "Something is still thumping on the other side of the recreation center, which is still standing only because at the last councillors' meeting in December, there were so many other things already scheduled for closure" (p. 25).

Definition: A councillor is a member of a local council who is elected to represent a particular area and make decisions about local services and policies.

deviation (noun) /,di:vɪ'eɪʃən/ dee-vee-AY-shun: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: Deviation means doing something that is different from what people consider to be normal or acceptable.

disconcerting (adjective) /ˌdɪskən'sɜːrtɪŋ/ dis-kun-SUR-ting: "After a moment there's a disconcerting thumping noise" (p. 24).

Definition: If something is disconcerting, it makes you feel slightly worried, confused, or embarrassed.

eligible (adjective) /ˈɛlɪdʒəbl/ EL-ih-juh-bl: "The girl sighed again and tried to say something about 'retraining courses' and 'measures' that Britt-Marie might be eligible for, but Britt-Marie made it clear that she certainly wouldn't welcome any of those measures" (p. 26).

Definition: Someone who is eligible for something is qualified or able to have it or do it.

engulf (verb) /ɪn'ɡʌlf/ in-GULF: "Terrified, Britt-Marie jumps out of the car, expecting it (quite reasonably, under the circumstances) to be engulfed in flames at any moment" (p. 24).

Definition: If something is engulfed by flames or water, it is completely covered or hidden by them.

exceedingly (adverb) /ɪk'siːdɪŋli/ ik-SEE-ding-lee: "They are exceedingly dirty, all three of them if you include the ball" (p. 27).

Definition: Exceedingly means very or very much.

exhalation (noun) /ˌɛkshə'leɪʃən/ eks-huh-LAY-shun: "Britt-Marie releases an extremely patient exhalation of air" (p. 25).

Definition: An exhalation is an act of breathing out air.

explosion (noun) /ɪk'spləʊʒən/ ik-SPLOH-zhun: "If one wants to be pedantic about it, the actual explosion happens while Britt-Marie is turning into the parking area" (p. 24).

Definition: An explosion is a sudden violent burst of energy, such as one caused by a bomb.

Faxin (noun) /'fæksɪn/ FAK-sin: "'Shouldn't those children be at school?' Britt-Marie exclaims, reminding herself to put an extra exclamation mark after 'Buy Faxin!' on her list" (p. 27).

Definition: Faxin is a brand name for a Swedish cleaning product.

flowerpot (noun) /'flaʊərpɒt/ FLOW-ur-pot: "Britt-Marie was probably intending to say something else, but that's the point at which she sees the rat, more or less as big as a normal-sized flowerpot, scampering across patches of ice in the parking area" (p. 28).

Definition: A flowerpot is a container for growing plants in.

gravel (noun) /'grævl/ GRAV-ul: "A soccer ball rolls in a leisurely manner across the gravel, away from Britt-Marie's car and towards what Britt-Marie assumes must be the recreation center" (p. 24).

Definition: Gravel consists of very small stones that are used to make roads and paths.

handbag (noun) /'hændbæg/ HAND-bag: "She adjusts her skirt and grips her handbag firmly" (p. 24).

Definition: A handbag is a small bag which a woman uses to carry things such as her money and keys in.

instinctually (adverb) /ɪnstɪŋk'tʃu:əli/ in-stingk-CHOO-uh-lee: "'But what if you're out?' asks the girl, instinctually unable to process what the world looked like before one could get hold of anyone, at anytime of the day" (p. 28).

Definition: If you do something instinctually, you do it without thinking, based on your natural feelings or reactions.

ka-boom (interjection) /kə'bu:m/ kuh-BOOM: "If she had to describe the sound she'd say it was a bit like a 'ka-boom'" (p. 24).

Definition: Ka-boom is a word that represents the sound of a large explosion.

leisurely (adjective) /'leɪʒərli/ LEZH-ur-lee: "A soccer ball rolls in a leisurely manner across the gravel, away from Britt-Marie's car and towards what Britt-Marie assumes must be the recreation center" (p. 24).

Definition: If you do something in a leisurely way, you do it in an unhurried and calm way.

liquor store (noun) /'lɪkər stɔ:r/ LIK-ur stor: "It has a closed-down soccer field and a closed-down school and a closed-down chemist's and a closed-down liquor store and a closed-down health care center and a closed-down supermarket and a closed-down shopping center and a road that bears away in two directions" (p. 23).

Definition: A liquor store is a shop that sells alcoholic drinks.

local authority (noun) /'ləʊkəl ɔ:θɔ:rti/ LOH-kul aw-THOR-ih-tee: "In view of the importance of the Christmas dinner, the closure was pushed back to the end of January, after the holiday period of the local authority councillors" (p. 25).

Definition: A local authority is an organization that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area.

mutter (verb) /'mʌtər/ MUT-ur: "The girl mutters something unintelligible, her voice sounding as if it's coming from inside a tin can" (p. 27).

Definition: If you mutter, you speak very quietly so that you cannot easily be heard, often because you are complaining about something.

neon (adjective) /'ni:ɒn/ NEE-on: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: A neon light or sign is a glass tube filled with neon gas that produces a bright light when electricity passes through it.

noticeable (adjective) /'nəʊtɪsəbl/ NOH-tih-suh-bl: "Apart from that, the only two noticeable things in Borg are soccer and the pizzeria, because these tend to be the last things to abandon humanity" (p. 23).

Definition: Something that is noticeable is very obvious, so that it is easy to see, hear, or recognize.

panic (noun) /'pænik/ PAN-ik: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: Panic is a very strong feeling of anxiety or fear that makes you act without thinking carefully.

partially (adverb) /'pɑːrʃəli/ PAR-shuh-lee: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: If something is partially true or possible, it is true or possible to some extent, but not completely.

pathetically (adverb) /pə'θetɪkli/ puh-THET-ik-lee: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: If you say that something is done pathetically, you mean it is done in a way that is weak or not successful and makes you feel sympathy or pity.

pedantic (adjective) /pɪ'dæntɪk/ pih-DAN-tik: "If one wants to be pedantic about it, the actual explosion happens while Britt-Marie is turning into the parking area" (p. 24).

Definition: If you say that someone is pedantic, you mean that they are too concerned with unimportant details or traditional rules, especially in connection with academic subjects.

personnel department (noun) /pɜːrsənəl dɪ'pɑːtmənt/ pur-suh-NEL dih-PART-munt: "As a result, when the personnel department found that the local authority had a building without anyone to take care of it, a vacancy for a caretaker of the recreation center was advertised with the unemployment office in early January" (p. 25).

Definition: A personnel department is the department in a large company or organization that deals with employing, training, and helping employees.

pizzeria (noun) /ˌpɪtsə'riːə/ peet-suh-REE-uh: "Apart from that, the only two noticeable things in Borg are soccer and the pizzeria, because these tend to be the last things to abandon humanity" (p. 23).

A pizzeria is a restaurant that specializes in making and selling pizzas.

postponement (noun) /pəʊst'pəʊnmənt/ pohst-POHN-munt: "The local authority representatives were concerned it might cause a postponement of their annual Christmas dinner" (p. 25).

Definition: If there is a postponement of an event, it is delayed and happens at a later time.

puddle (noun) /'pʌdl/ PUD-ul: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: A puddle is a small, shallow pool of water or other liquid that has collected in a place where the ground is not level.

pursue (verb) /pə'sjuː/ pur-SYOO: "The ball is being pursued by two children" (p. 27).

Definition: If you pursue a person, vehicle, or animal, you follow them in order to catch them.

racket (noun) /'rækt/ RAK-it: "'I'm here now, in this place, Borg. But something is making an awful racket and my car has blown up" (p. 25).

Definition: A racket is a loud unpleasant noise.

recreation center (noun) /ˌrɛkri'eɪʃən 'sɛntər/ rek-ree-AY-shun SEN-tur: "A soccer ball rolls in a leisurely manner across the gravel, away from Britt-Marie's car and towards what Britt-Marie assumes must be the recreation center" (p. 24).

Definition: A recreation center is a building that is open to the public where meetings are held, sports are played, and there are activities available for young people and old people.

release (verb) /rɪ'liːs/ rih-LEES: "Britt-Marie releases an extremely patient exhalation of air" (p. 25).

If you release something, you let it go free or let it move freely.

retraining course (noun) /ri:'treɪnɪŋ kɔːrs/ ree-TRAY-ning kors: "The girl sighed again and tried to say something about 'retraining courses' and 'measures' that Britt-Marie might be eligible for, but Britt-Marie made it clear that she certainly wouldn't welcome any of those measures" (p. 26).

Definition: A retraining course is a course of study that teaches someone new skills so they can do a different job.

scamper (verb) /'skæmpər/ SKAM-pur: "Britt-Marie was probably intending to say something else, but that's the point at which she sees the rat, more or less as big as a normal-sized flowerpot, scampering across patches of ice in the parking area" (p. 28).

Definition: If a person or small animal scampers somewhere, they move there quickly with small, light steps.

scrutinize (verb) /'skruːtɪnaɪz/ SKROO-tih-nyz: "Britt-Marie gives the telephone a scrutinizing look" (p. 28).

Definition: If you scrutinize something, you examine it very carefully, often to find out some information from it or about it.

spell (verb) /spɛl/ spel: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: When you spell a word, you write or speak each letter in the word in the correct order.

splutter (verb) /'splʌtər/ SPLUT-ur: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: If something such as an engine splutters, it makes a series of short, sharp sounds because it is not working smoothly.

steady (verb) /'stɛdi/ STED-ee: "One of them loses his balance and steadies himself by putting his hand against the window, where he leaves a black handprint" (p. 27).

Definition: If you steady something or if it steadies, it stops shaking or moving about.

suck in (phrasal verb) /sʌk ɪn/ suk in: "Then she stands there, on her own, sucking in her cheeks" (p. 25).

Definition: If you suck in your cheeks or stomach, you pull them in tightly by making the muscles tight.

sum up (phrasal verb) /sʌm ʌp/ sum up: "You might sum it up by saying that Borg and Britt-Marie's first impressions of each other are not wholly positive" (p. 24).

Definition: If you sum something up, you describe it as briefly as possible.

temporary (adjective) /'tɛmpərəəri/ TEM-puh-rair-ee: "Anyway, the job is not only exceptionally badly paid, but also temporary and subject to the decision regarding the closure of the recreation center to be reached at the councillors' meeting in three weeks' time" (p. 26).

Definition: Something that is temporary lasts for only a limited time.

terrified (adjective) /'tɛrɪfaɪd/ TAIR-ih-fyd: "Terrified, Britt-Marie jumps out of the car, expecting it (quite reasonably, under the circumstances) to be engulfed in flames at any moment" (p. 24).

Definition: If you are terrified, you are very frightened.

thump (verb) /θʌmp/ thump: "After a moment there's a disconcerting thumping noise" (p. 24).

Definition: If you thump something, you hit it hard, usually with your fist or with a heavy object.

tin can (noun) /tɪn kæn/ tin kan: "The girl mutters something unintelligible, her voice sounding as if it's coming from inside a tin can" (p. 27).

Definition: A tin can is a metal container in which food or other substances are sold.

unconscious (adjective) /ʌn'kɒnʃəs/ un-KON-shus: "But unfortunately she did not have time for that, because everything abruptly went black and Britt-Marie's body lay unconscious on the ground" (p. 28).

Definition: Someone who is unconscious is in a state similar to sleep, usually as the result of a serious injury or a lack of oxygen.

unduly (adverb) /ʌn'dju:li/ un-DOO-lee: "After a few unduly dramatic deviations across the frozen January puddles, it comes to an abrupt stop outside a building with a partially broken sign, the neon lights of which spell the name 'PizzRai'" (p. 24).

Definition: If you say that something is unduly large or unduly serious, you mean that it is larger or more serious than you think is reasonable or appropriate.

unemployment benefits (noun) /,ʌnɪm'plɔɪmənt 'bɛnɪfɪts/ un-im-PLOY-munt BEN-ih-fits: "'There is one job. But it's in the middle of nowhere and so badly paid that if you're receiving unemployment benefits you'll probably lose money on it'" (p. 26).

Definition: Unemployment benefits are payments made by the government or a labor union to someone who is unemployed.

unemployment office (noun) /,ʌnɪm'plɔɪmənt 'ɒfɪs/ un-im-PLOY-munt OFF-iss: "'Hello?' says the girl at the unemployment office" (p. 24).

Definition: An unemployment office is a government office where people who are unemployed can get advice about finding work and can apply for financial help.

unintelligible (adjective) /,ʌnɪn'tɛlɪdʒəbl/ un-in-TEL-ih-juh-bl: "The girl mutters something unintelligible, her voice sounding as if it's coming from inside a tin can" (p. 27).

If speech is unintelligible, it is impossible to understand.

untalented (adjective) /ʌn'tæləntɪd/ un-TAL-un-tid: "'My dear girl, you have to stop saying 'what?' all the time, it makes you sound so untalented'" (p. 28).

Definition: If you describe someone as untalented, you mean that they do not have much natural ability or skill.

vacancy (noun) /'veɪkənsi/ VAY-kun-see: "As a result, when the personnel department found that the local authority had a building without anyone to take care of it, a vacancy for a caretaker of the recreation center was advertised with the unemployment office in early January" (p. 25).

Definition: A vacancy is a job or position that has not been filled.

whereupon (conjunction) /,wɛəə'pɒn/ wair-uh-PON: "Understandably, she's in a panic, and she abandons both brake and clutch pedals, whereupon the car splutters pathetically" (p. 24).

Definition: You use whereupon to say that one thing happens immediately after another thing, and usually as a result of it.

wholly (adverb) /'hɒʊlli/ HOH-lee: "You might sum it up by saying that Borg and Britt-Marie's first impressions of each other are not wholly positive" (p. 24).

Definition: You use wholly to emphasize the extent or degree to which something is the case.