

## A Martian comes to stay

It was on the second day of Peter's holiday with his grandmother that the Martian came to the cottage. There was a knock at the door and when he went to open it there was this small green person with webbed feet and eyes on the end of stumpy antennae who said, perfectly politely, "I wonder if I might bother you for the loan of a spanner?"

"Sure," said Peter. "I'll ask my gran."

Gran was in the back garden, it being a nice sunny day. Peter said, "There's a Martian at the door who'd like to borrow a spanner."

Gran looked at him over her knitting. "Is there, dear? Have a look in grandad's toolbox, there should be one there."

That's not what your grandmother would have said? No, nor mine either, but Peter's gran was an unusual lady, as you will discover. Grandad had died a few years earlier and she lived alone in this isolated cottage in the country, growing vegetables and keeping chickens, and Peter liked going to stay with her more than almost anything he could think of. Gran was not like most people. She was unflappable and what you might call open-minded, which accounts for everything that happened next.

Peter found the spanner and took it back to the Martian, who held out a rather oddly constructed hand and thanked him warmly.

"We've got some trouble with the gears or something and had to make an emergency landing. And now the mechanic says he left his tools back at base. I ask you! It's all a mystery to me - I'm just the steward. Anyway - thanks a lot. I'll bring it back in a minute." And he padded away up the lane. There was no one around, but then there wasn't likely to be: the cottage was a quarter of a mile from the village and hardly anyone came by except the occasional farm tractor and the odd holiday maker who'd got lost. Peter went back into the garden.





“Should have offered him a cup of tea,” said Gran. “He’ll have had a fair journey, I shouldn’t wonder.”

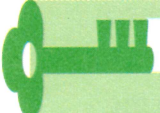
“Yes,” said Peter. “I didn’t think of that.”

In precisely three minutes’ time there was a knock at the door.

The Martian was there, looking distinctly agitated. He said, “They’ve gone.”

“Who’s gone?” said Peter.

“The others. The spaceship. All of them. They’ve taken off and left me.”



Answer in sentences.

- 1 How did Peter react when he opened the door and found a Martian there?
- 2 What was Gran doing when the Martian knocked at the door?
- 3 What is an emergency landing?
- 4 Why didn’t the Martians have their own toolbox in the spaceship?
- 5 The Martian “padded away up the lane.” What does “padded” mean?
- 6 Why was Gran’s reaction so unusual when Peter told her there was a Martian at the door?
- 7 Gran’s cottage was isolated. What does “isolated” mean?
- 8 Why did Gran wish that she had offered the Martian a cup of tea?
- 9 Gran’s husband was dead. Which of the following words means a woman whose husband is dead?  
orphan                  widow                  widower
- 10 Why was the Martian agitated when he came back?