

UNIT
13

The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark



Mother Owl was getting fed up with Plop who, although he was a young owl, was afraid of the dark.

"Go and find out more about the dark," said his mother.

"Ask that little girl down there what she thinks about it."

"What little girl?"

"That little girl sitting down there – the one with the pony-tail."

"Little girls don't have **tails**."

"This one does. Go on now or you'll miss her."

So Plop shut his eyes, took a deep breath, and fell off his branch.

His landing was a little better than usual. He bounced three times and rolled gently towards the little girl's feet.

"Oh, a woolly ball!" cried the little girl.

"Actually, I'm a Barn Owl," said the woolly ball.

"An owl? Are you sure?" she said, putting out a grubby finger and prodding Plop's round fluffy tummy.

"Quite sure," said Plop, backing away and drawing himself up tall.

"Well, there's no need to be huffy," said the little girl. "You bounced.

You must expect to be mistaken for a ball if you go bouncing about the place. I've never met an owl before. Do you say 'Tu-wit-a-woo?'"

"No," said Plop, "that's Tawny Owls."

"Oh, you can't be a proper owl then," said the little girl. "**Proper** owls say 'Tu-wit-a-woo!'"

"I **am** a proper owl!" said Plop, getting very cross. "I am a Barn Owl, and Barn Owls go "**Eeeek**" like that. Anyway – you can't be a proper girl. Girls don't have **tails**. Squirrels have tails, rabbits have tails, mice ..."

Jill Tomlinson

Do you remember?

Match these questions and answers. Write them in your book. The first one has been done for you.

1. Where was the little girl? **The little girl was below the tree.**
2. Why did Plop think the girl had a tail?
3. Could Plop fly well?
4. What sort of owl was Plop?

No, Plop couldn't fly very well.

Plop was a Barn Owl.

The girl's hair was in a pony-tail.

The little girl was below the tree.



More to think about

1. Which words in the story tell us that:
 - a) Plop was worried about flying
 - b) he didn't yet have his adult feathers
 - c) the little girl had dirty hands?
2. Write three sentences in your book about Plop. Think about his personality as well as what he looked like. Don't forget to use capital letters and full stops.

Now try these

1. The little girl said Plop was like a 'woolly ball'. Write in your book some words to describe these birds and animals:
 - a) giraffe
 - b) hippopotamus
 - c) robin
 - d) kitten
2. Have you ever been frightened of the dark, like Plop? Make a list of the things about the dark that can sometimes frighten people.