

Barry Baxter in Franton on Sea

by Terry Moston



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Additional Reading
for Class 7

Illustrations

Ateliergemeinschaft Schwanke/ Raasch

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Through the train window Barry saw the station sign for Franton on Sea. He got his bag. The train stopped and Barry got off. It started to rain. It was the second week of August, the middle of an English summer. Barry put his coat on. Aunt Hilda and his two cousins Percy and Kay were waiting for him.

'You're late,' said Aunt Hilda and took his bag. 'Come on, I haven't got all day.' She walked away* fast. The children followed. Cousin Percy kicked* Barry. He wanted to show* Barry who was boss. Fay walked behind, looked at her feet and said nothing*.

Aunt Hilda's car was in the station car park*.

'A young man like you should* walk there. It's only a mile,' she said. 'But young people don't know how to walk any more. Get in, get in.' Percy got in the front*. Barry and Kay sat in the back.

Barry's sister Pat was in Scotland with her best friend's family. Four days before Mr Baxter had told his son, "Your Aunt Hilda has got a guest house in Franton on Sea. You can go swimming every day and have a lovely holiday without* us. And your cousin Percy is there. He's about your age*. Have a good time, son."

So Barry's parents sent* him to his aunt's house for two weeks. They wanted to go on holiday without him.

"Do you know, this is our first holiday without children for fourteen years?" Mrs Baxter said to Mr Baxter and they went off to Wales in the car half an hour after Barry got on the train in Rugglesworth.

Franton on Sea looked grey and cold in the rain. They drove along the Esplanade, the road which ran along the beach*. There were large* expensive hotels with restaurants here. Smaller roads ran off the Esplanade and here were the cheaper guest houses. Aunt Hilda's guest house was one of twenty other guest houses in the street. They were all white and all had signs in the front* garden, "Bed and Breakfast", "Hot and cold in all rooms", "Man spricht deutsch", "Full* English breakfast" and so on.



The sign on the wall in front of Aunt Hilda's guest house read "Sea Breezes* Guest House - Lounge* with Colour TV". In fact*, all the guest houses had lounges with colour TVs, but only Aunt Hilda thought it was important to put up* a sign about it. When he got out of the car, Barry understood why the name of the guest house was "Sea Breezes"; a strong wind blew in from the sea along the road.



"Wipe* your shoes, Barry," said Aunt Hilda as she opened the front door. "Percy, take Barry to your room."

"Yes, ma," said Percy. Aunt Hilda went into her office* and turned on the radio.

"Come on, you," said Percy. "This way."

The boys went upstairs*. Percy was bigger and stronger than Barry but he didn't carry Barry's bag for him.

"You're in with me," said Percy and opened the door of his room. "You're sleeping there," he said and pointed to a sofa under the window.

The room was small and dark. The window was half open and the wind blew into the room. The walls were yellow and white and the carpet* was brown and black. On one wall there was a picture of Jesus with a lamb* with large eyes. Percy wasn't allowed to put up any posters on the walls, that was obvious. His clothes were all in his wardrobe; there were no clothes on the chair or on the bed. He had ten books. Barry looked at the titles. They were old school books about forty years old.



“Keep* your hands off my things or I’ll tell my mother,” said Percy. “I know where everything is.”

“Two weeks of Percy. What a holiday,” thought Barry.

“It’s half past four,” said Percy. “Come on, it’s teatime*. We mustn’t be late.”

The boys went out and Fay came out of her room at the same time.

“Hello, Fay,” said Barry. Fay said nothing. They all went downstairs* to the dining room*.

The children had their own special table in the dining room - table number four. The other guests were already at their tables. At table number one, there was an old woman. She was Mrs Moore from Manchester and came to Franton on Sea every year. Mrs Moore always stayed in the same room and always sat at the same table. She never went out. She sat in the lounge all day and made pullovers and socks for her grandchildren or read magazines or watched television.



At tables number two and three, there was a young family - a man, a woman and a baby. They needed two tables. At one table they sat. On the other table were all the things for the baby, baby food and clean baby clothes. There was an old man at table number five.

"Hello, young man," he said to Barry. "You're new here, eh?" he said. "Ah, this is the place for you. You can play football in the street, eh? And run along the beach on your young legs, eh?"

Barry didn't like football very much and it was much too cold on the beach, but he said, "Yes, it's very nice here."

Aunt Hilda came into the dining room from time to time and brought sandwiches and cake and tea, tea and more tea for the guests.

After tea, her children took Barry into the kitchen.

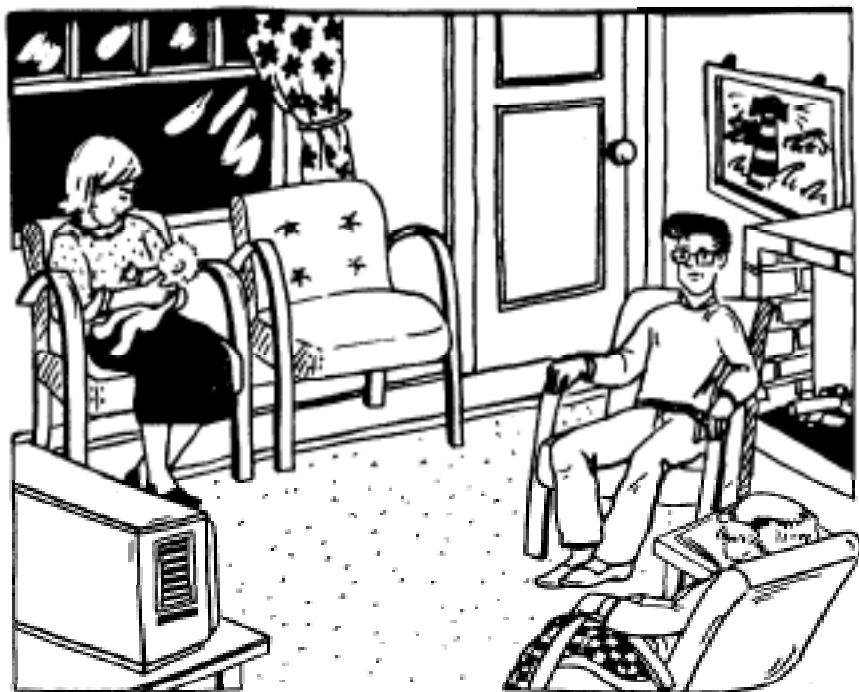
"We've got to do the washing-up* now," they said.

When the washing-up was finished, Percy said, "We can do what we want now."

"What is there to do?" asked Barry.

"I'm going to visit my friends," said Percy. "You can watch television." He went out.

"Help!" thought Barry. "Two weeks of television with the guests of Sea Breezes Guest House. How can I get out of here?"



The lounge had seven chairs, a coffee table with some magazines and a TV. The carpet was red, yellow, white and green; the walls were orange, blue and black. Three model ducks flew up one wall. Barry looked out of the window and tried to see the sea but he could only see a small grey-green line. The guests came into the lounge one by one. They watched television programmes about ice skating, dancing and then a concert. Barry looked for a magazine and found a church magazine and another one about winter sports in Switzerland. At nine o'clock, he gave up and went to bed.

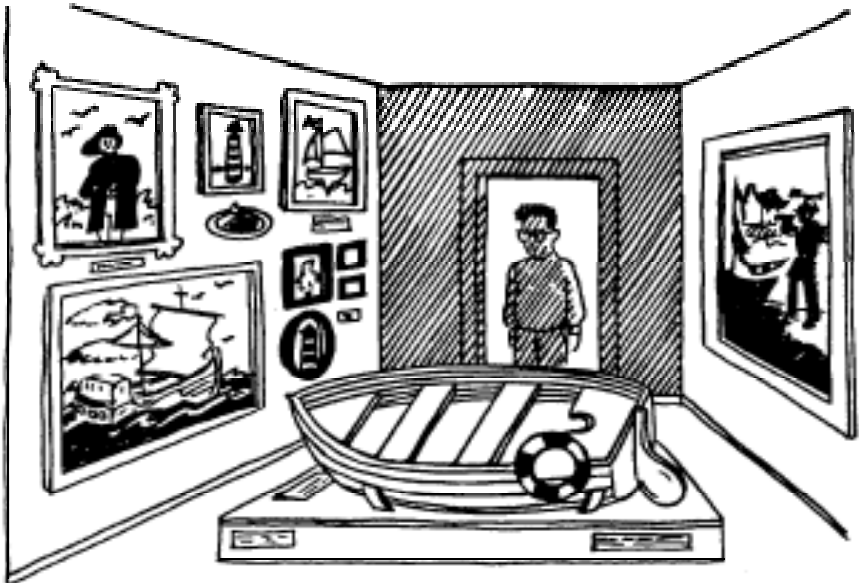
Next morning, the rain had stopped and after breakfast (and after the washing-up was finished), Barry went out alone. He turned right at the end of the road and walked along the Esplanade, past the hotels and the restaurants and went on to the beach.

The beach at Franton on Sea was not the best one in Britain. It was a windy* day. Some visitors were sitting on the beach in their coats. Two dogs ran along the beach and got their feet and their noses wet. Barry walked for half an hour until* he saw a sign "Dangerous Coastline - Keep out!"

"That's nice," thought Barry. "What a lovely place for a holiday." He turned round and walked back to the front*.

At the Grand Hotel, he turned left. A sign said "Franton Lifeboat Museum".

"Well, perhaps it's better than nothing," thought Barry and went in. The museum was one dark room with pictures on the walls and an old lifeboat in the middle. The pictures showed ships in storms a hundred years ago and people in lifeboats and men in uniform in front of their new lifeboats. Barry looked into the boat. There was only an old crisp



bag in it. He decided to leave. At the door stood a big man; he had a box in his hand. He looked at Barry and shook* the box at him. Barry put his hand in his pocket*, found 5 pence and put it in the box. The man let him leave.

When Barry was small there was an Uncle Stan, but nobody* knew where he was now. Some people said he went to Australia. Now that Barry had seen Franton on Sea and Aunt Hilda he could understand why. Barry found a newspaper shop and bought three comics because there was a programme about the birds of Indonesia on television that evening .

Back at Sea Breezes, Barry wiped his shoes and went into the lounge. The old man was there.

"Hello, boy!" he said. "Where have you been, eh? On the beach, eh?"

"Yes, that's right," said Barry.

"I hate Franton on Sea," said the old man. "And I hate this guest house."

"Why do you come here?" asked Barry.

"It's cheap," said the old man. "I haven't got much money. Here, do you want to hear a joke*,eh?"

"Yes, OK," said Barry. He was beginning to like the old man.

"What's the difference* between a guest house in Franton on Sea and a prison*, eh?"

Barry thought for a second. "I don't know," he said.

"Yes, lots of people say that!" laughed the man. Barry laughed, too.

Lunch at Sea Breezes that day was very black sausages, very green peas*, very grey potatoes and tea. The children did the washing-up and then Barry went up* to Percy's room and read one of his comics.

"I mustn't read the other comics now," thought Barry "or I won't have anything for this evening." So he decided to go out again.

This time he turned left. At the end of the road. He watched two men who were putting a patient from one of the guest houses into an ambulance. Then he walked on. After a hundred metres he found Franton Zoo. He bought a ticket and went in. It took Barry eleven minutes to see everything. He left the zoo and walked on for five minutes. Suddenly the guest houses and the shops and the houses stopped. That was the end of Franton on Sea.



“Well, that’s that,” thought Barry. “It’s comic time again.” He turned and walked back towards Sea Breezes. Just before his road, he saw a poster on a wall. Barry stopped and read it.

The poster said, “YOUR TOWN - This popular radio show* on Eastern* Radio is coming to Franton on Sea, Tuesday, 12th August, The Esplanade at 3pm to 4.30pm.” Barry looked at his watch. It said “TUE 12 AUG 14:45.”

“Gosh,” thought Barry. “The show starts in fifteen minutes. Perhaps it’s interesting.” He walked quickly along the Esplanade. This morning there had been nothing interesting there. Now he found a large van* with the sign “Eastern Radio your favourite station” near the Grand Hotel. In front of the van there was a small stage* with a microphone. Some summer visitors were standing around and waiting for the start of the show. Barry went nearer to the van.

A young woman with headphones* came out with some papers* in her hand. She was still talking to someone* inside the van.

“Yes, but I’ve only got two people,” she said. “I need three more for the show, or four.” She saw Barry and went up to him.

“Hello,” she said and smiled. “Have you ever been on the radio?”

“No, never,” said Barry.

“Well, now’s your chance*,” she said. “Can you do anything?”

“What do you mean?” asked Barry.

"Can you sing or tell stories?" said the young woman from Eastern Radio.

"No, sorry," said Barry.

"Can't you do anything?" she asked. She looked around at the other people.

"I can tell a joke," said Barry.

"Great!" said the woman. "There's a prize for everybody* in the show. Wait here and don't go away. Oh, write down your name and address* here, please," she said, gave Barry a piece of paper and went to talk to a group of French teenagers near the van. Barry wrote down his name, address, why he was in Franton on Sea, his hobbies and his age. The woman came back, pulling a French girl with her. She gave the girl a piece of paper, too and Barry helped her with it. The doors of the van were open and Barry watched the radio engineer.*



At one minute past three, he started the tape* machines and the loudspeakers* played "Eastern Radio! Your favourite station, Eastern Radio!" A man on the stage spoke into the microphone said, "Welcome* to 'Your Town' from Franton on Sea! This is Lance Hathaway We've got lots of interesting people for you this afternoon." Lance Hathaway spoke to a young woman about her hobbies and then the engineer played a record. During the music he went into the van and argued* with the engineer. Then he went out to the stage again and spoke to a young man about his hobbies and the engineer played another record.

During the second record Lance Hathaway left the stage and came up to Barry, took his piece of paper, read it quickly and pulled him on to the stage.

“And here we have a young man. Your name’s Barry - er - Baxter.”

“Yes,” said Barry.

“And Barry is from Rugglesworth. He’s on holiday here in Franton on Sea. And what are you going to do for us, Barry?”

“I’m going to tell a joke,” said Barry.

“With weather like this, we need lots of jokes,” said Lance Hathaway.

“The stage is yours, Barry.”

Barry went nearer to the microphone and said, “What’s the difference between a guest house in Franton on Sea and a prison?”

Lance Hathaway smiled and said, “I don’t know.”

“Yes, lots of people say that!” said Barry. All the people laughed.

“Thank you, Barry,” said Lance Hathaway.

The young woman with the headphones took him into the van. She smiled at Barry and said, “Here’s your prize. It’s our special prize, really, but I liked your joke. This town is a terrible place. ” She gave him a box and said, “Thanks for your help.” Barry said thank you and opened the box. It was a beautiful stereo radio cassette recorder! He put it back in its box and watched the show.

At half past four, he arrived at Sea Breezes. With the box under his arm he opened the front door. Aunt Hilda was waiting for him. The radio in her office was on. Barry could* hear Lance Hathaway’s voice* saying “And that’s all from us from Franton on Sea. Listen again next week.”

“So that’s what you think of my guest house, Barry! I’ve packed* your bag,” said Aunt Hilda angrily. “I’ve phoned your parents. They’re on their way from Wales now. They’ll be here at seven o’clock this evening. You can wait in Percy’s room until then.”

Barry listened to his new radio and read his other comics in Percy’s room. He couldn’t* stop smiling.

Wordlist

address	Adresse	nobody	niemand
age	Alter	nothing	nichts
argue	sich streiten	office	Büro
away	weg, hinweg	pack	packen
beach	Strand	paper	Papier
breeze	Brise	peas	Erbsen
car park	Parkplatz	pocket	Tasche
carpet	Teppich	prison	Gefängnis
chance	Chance	sent	<i>past of send</i> schicken
could(n't)	könnte, konnte (nicht)	shook	<i>past of shake</i> schütteln
difference	Unterschied	should	sollte
dining room	Speisesaal	show	zeigen, Show, Sendung
downstairs	(nach) unten	someone	irgendjemand
eastern	östlich	stage	Bühne
engineer	Ingenieur	tape	Tonband
everybody	alle	teatime	Teezeit
front	vorne, Vorder-, die Frontpromenade	until	bis
full	voll	up	(hin)auf
in fact	in der Tat	upstairs	(nach) oben
get off	aussteigen aus	van	Lieferwagen
headphones	Kopfhörer	voice	Stimme
joke	Witz	washing-up	Abwasch
keep	halten	welcome	willkommen
kick	treten	windy	windig
lamb	Lamm	wipe	wischen
large	groß	without	ohne
loudspeaker	Lautsprecher		
lounge	Aufenthaltsraum		

Exercises

a.

1. How did Barry get to Franton on Sea?
2. Why did his parents send him there?
3. How many guests were there in "Sea Breezes"?
4. Was the old man friendly to Barry?
5. Was Percy friendly to Barry?
6. What did Barry do in the evening?
7. What did Barry do next morning? (3 things)
8. Where is Uncle Stan?
9. Who talked to Barry before lunch? What did he say?
10. Where was Barry between lunch and quarter to three?
11. Why was the van from "Eastern Radio" in Franton on Sea?
12. Why did the woman with the headphones need Barry?
13. What did Barry do on the stage?
14. Why was Aunt Hilda angry with Barry?

b.

1. Describe Franton on Sea.
2. Describe the rooms in the "Sea Breezes Guest House".
3. Describe the guests in the "Sea Breezes Guest House".
4. Describe Percy and his room or Aunt Hilda and her guest house.
5. Why did the woman from the Eastern Radio give Barry the "special prize"?

c.

1. Has this story got a happy ending? What will happen when Mr and Mrs Baxter arrive at "Sea Breezes"?
2. Can you tell the story in your own words? Here is some help.
In the summer holidays Barry went to . . . because . . .
He stayed in . . .
It was
The town was . . .
On the second day, Barry saw a poster for . . .