

Improving Your Reading with Predicting Pip: The Jones & Co. Circus



On a summer day, a few years ago, the little village of Briggsville, Pennsylvania, was thrown into a state of excitement, the like of which had never been known before.

Tom Gordon lived a mile from Briggsville with his mother and his Aunt Cynthia. One morning, as Tom Gordon cycled to school, he noticed that his village had become a sea of black, red and white; every available space had been covered with huge posters advertising the Jones & Co. Great Circus, which was on its triumphal tour through the United States and Canada and would soon be stopping in Briggsville.



Naturally, all the children in the village became hugely excited and began hoarding their pennies. They also started behaving impeccably so that nothing would come between them and the trip they were so looking forward to. Tom Gordon had never seen the inside of a circus and, after saving almost the full cost of a ticket, he approached his mother.

1. What do you think Tom did after approaching his mother?

2. Do you think that Tom will get to go to the circus? Why do you think this?

3. What do you think is likely to happen if Tom is not allowed to go to the circus? Why?

4. The title of the story that this extract comes from is *The Great Escape*.
What does this title tell you about what may happen in the story's plot?



Answers

1. What do you think Tom did after approaching his mother?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Tom begged her to let him go to the circus.

2. Do you think that Tom will get to go to the circus? Why do you think this?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I think that Tom will be allowed to go to the circus because he has almost saved up the full cost of the ticket himself and he will probably be able to save the rest by the time the circus arrives.

3. What do you think is likely to happen if Tom is not allowed to go to the circus? Why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: If Tom is not allowed to go to the circus, I think that he will sneak there because he desperately wants to go.

4. The title of the story that this extract comes from is The Great Escape.

What does this title tell you about what may happen in the story's plot?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that an animal will escape from the circus tent and Tom will have to help it to return before anyone notices that it is missing.