

(1) HIS FIRST FLIGHT

- by Liam O'Flaherty.

Meanings

- (1) Ledge - a narrow horizontal shelf projection from a wall or [here] a cliff
- (2) Upbraiding - scolding.
- (3) (to) skim - to move lightly just above a surface. [here; the sea].
- (4) Herring - a soft finned sea fish.
- (5) Preening - making an effort to maintain feathers.
- (6) (to) whet - to sharpen.
- (7) derisively - in a manner showing someone that she/he is stupid.
- (8) curveting - leaping like a horse.

Thinking about the Text

(1) Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their first flight, or are some birds more timid than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first step?

Ans: The young seagull was feared of falling and hurting himself as it was his first flight. He thought that his wings would not support him while flying.

Yes, it is natural that doing something for the first time is a bit challenging and fearful. All birds must be afraid to make their first flight. Similarly, a human baby is also afraid of taking the first step and finds it challenging when he learns to crawl or stands up without support.

(2) "The sight of the food maddened him." What does this suggest? What compelled the young seagull to

finally fly?

Ans: The young seagull was very hungry. His hunger even intensified when he saw his mother tearing a piece of fish that lay her feet. He cried and begged her mother for food. When his mother came towards him with food in her beak, he screamed with joy. But he stopped mid-way. He wondered why she did not come nearer. Not being able to resist his hunger any longer, he dived at the food in his mother's beak. At that moment his hunger overpowered his fear of the great expanse of sea beneath the cliff. Finally, the plunge was followed by the natural reaction of his body i.e., to fly.

(3) "They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly." Why did the seagull's father and mother threaten him and advise him to fly?

Ans: Seagull's parents had tried everything but he was reluctant to fly due to fear of falling down. He looked at

his brothers and sister. but wouldn't make any efforts. That's why the whole family had left him alone, and threatened and cajoled him to come but every effort went in vain.