

cheek is a small fiery mark, round and with flame-shaped edges like a very small sun.

In chapter 8, Mary Poppins takes Jane and Michael and the twins, John and Barbara, on a shopping trip, in which they meet the Balloon Woman, from whom they all get balloons with their names on them. The Balloon Woman denies having put their names on the balloons and says, "All I know is that the names *are* there! And there's a balloon for everybody in the world if only they choose properly." The balloons, which let them float joyously through the air, may be taken as symbols of liberating self-knowledge. In chapter 9, Mary Poppins takes the children to meet Nellie-Rubina, a wooden-doll person who sells conversations, as a sort of candy.

Chapter 10 (which can be seen as a second central-theme episode) ends the second book appropriately with a merry-go-round, a symbol of life as a pleasant series of recurring cycles, which has come to the park near Number 17. When people hear that Mary Poppins is taking the children to it for a ride, they all assume that Mary Poppins is going to leave the world on that merry-go-round, and their expressions of farewell puzzle the children. Their ride on the merry-go-round is quite an experience: "It seemed as if they would never stop, as if there were no such thing as Time, as if the world was nothing but a circle of light and a group of painted horses. [para] The sun died in the West and the dusk came fluttering down. But still they rode, faster and faster, till at last they could not distinguish tree from sky. The whole broad earth was spinning now about them with a deep drumming sound like a humming top. [para] Never again would Jane and Michael and John and Barbara be so close to the centre of the world as they were on that whirling ride."

Then Mary Poppins goes to ride herself, first telling Jane to take care of Michael and the twins. The ticket collector asks her, "Single or Return?" She hesitates for a moment, then says, "You never know ... It might come in useful. I'll take a Return." The merry-go-round begins to revolve faster and faster. As Mary Poppins passes them on her wooden horse, something breaks from her neck and lands at the children's feet. It is her locket, whose golden chain has broken. Jane opens it and finds a picture of all five children with Mary Poppins. "And then a strange thing happened. With a great blast of trumpets, the whole Merry-go-round rose, spinning, from the ground. ... [para] On and on, pricking through the sky, went the Merry-go-round, carrying Mary Poppins with it. And