

LESSON 21

1. Discovering Meanings

1. When I fumbled the ball Ben said with great *sarcasm*, “Good catch!”
 - a) understanding
 - b) using words whose meaning is opposite to what is intended
2. Declan’s friend has the *romantic* idea that everything will always turn out right in the end.
 - a) idealistic or unrealistic
 - b) philosophic
3. The *caliph* was well liked by the people of the Middle Eastern province.
 - a) Middle Eastern leader
 - b) Middle Eastern woman
4. Although Elise’s writing was very small on the note, her sister Ava said that it was still *legible*.
 - a) able to be read
 - b) neatly written
5. The man fell unconscious after the *blow*.
 - a) near suffocation
 - b) a punch or hard bump
6. After their long *quarrel*, Tom and Jim did not speak to each other for five years.
 - a) misunderstanding
 - b) argument

7. How many *shekels* did the merchant earn from the sale?
 - a) Middle Eastern money in silver coins
 - b) American dollars
8. Rocco and Dominic thought that six hundred dollars was a huge *sum* of money to pay for the new bike.
 - a) amount
 - b) high cost
9. Your suspicion that Billy had eaten the ten bars of chocolate in one sitting is a little *far-fetched*.
 - a) unfair
 - b) very unrealistic
10. My father will *lather* his face with ordinary soap before shaving.
 - a) put foamy soap on or make it
 - b) treat in a pampering way

2. Phonics and Spelling

Memorize the spelling of the words in the following two lists.

PHONICS WORDS

ir words: girl, sir, stir, first, third, birthday, bird, thirty,
firm, squirm, spirt, dirt

SPELLING WORDS

excitement, possible, walk, special, bargain, obeyed, companion,
touching, insult, before, caliph, elephant

3. Reading Selections

The Balloon

by William Walter

“You know what I like most about birthday parties,” Dana asked her brother Ben, who was two years older.

Ben shrugged his shoulders. “No, what do you like most about birthday parties?”

“I want you to guess.”

“Okay.” Ben thought a moment. He thought about what he would like. He liked seeing his friends. He also liked the presents. But girls were very different; at least his younger sister was. He had no idea what they like. He made a random guess. “You like eating the cake.”

“Wrong. Guess again.”

“Mm. You like blowing out the candles on the cake.”

“Nope,” Dana said. “Guess one more time.”

Ben then said, “Seeing your friends and getting the presents.”

“That’s two guesses in one, Ben. But they’re both wrong anyway. Well, do you want to know what I like best.”

“The suspense is killing me, Dana,” Ben said with sarcasm, but he really did want to know. What else was there about birthday parties except friends, presents, cake and blowing out candles?

Dana looked straight at her brother and said with great excitement, “Balloons!” Next week on my seventh birthday, I want Mom to have lots and lots of balloons.

Not the balloons that you blow up yourself. I like the balloons that float in the air.”

“You mean the ones filled with helium.”

“Helium?”

Ben explained. “Some balloons are filled with helium. It’s a gas lighter than air. That’s why a helium balloon goes up. But if you fill it with air from your lungs, it will go down.”

Dana clapped her hands with excitement. If I let a balloon escape outside, Ben, do you think it will go all the way to the moon?”

Ben laughed. “Of course not.”

Dana did not think her question was silly and something to laugh at. “Why not?” If helium is lighter than air, why can’t it just go higher and higher until it reaches the moon?”

“First thing, Dana, the moon is about 250,000 miles away from the earth. That’s a long way to travel. Besides, it would not be able to travel through space. And did you know that scientists had to make lots of calculations to put a man on the moon? If they didn’t figure out things so exactly, the spacecraft would have never gotten there.

Dana was disappointed. She was a romantic. She liked dreaming of what could be rather than seeing things they way they really were. She would often tell her far-fetched ideas to her brother, who would laugh. She once told him she would love to build a golden sidewalk to China. Then, she said, people would be able to walk, skip and jump somewhere far-away. “Even if it were possible to build a

sidewalk to China,” Ben said, “it would take you at least a year to walk there. Dana said she wouldn’t mind. She could talk to all the different people along the way.

“Do you think my balloon,” Dana asked her brother Ben, “could float so far away that someone we don’t know and who doesn’t know us could see it?”

“Of course, that’s possible,” Ben said.

For her 7th birthday, Dana’s mom bought her daughter all sorts of helium balloons—skinny ones, fat ones, and those of many different colors—red, blue, silver, purple, green and yellow.

After Dana opened her presents, blew out the candles on her cake and played with her friends, she asked her friends to watch her do something very special. She had written a message on one of the balloons that her mother had given her—a big red one. She would let it out into the open air and it would fly high and away until someone somewhere would see it and get its message.

“What’s the message?” One of her friends asked.

“I am sorry, but I can’t tell,” Dana said. “It’s a secret message that I am sending.”

All her friends were curious and tried to get her to tell them, but Dana wouldn’t. Dana’s mother smiled at Ben, who whispered, “She thinks the balloon will go to someone far away—a very special person.”

Years passed by. By her tenth birthday, Dana no longer thought so much about balloons. But she was still a Romantic. She still dreamed of wild things, like sledding on rainbows and riding elephants. When she became a

young woman, Dana dreamed of marrying a man who was just perfect for her. Who liked the things she liked, like sledding on rainbows, and didn't think them silly. She dreamed of the two of them living on a farm, and owning horses, chickens, cows and goats—and maybe even an elephant. She dreamed of doing chores late in the night when the stars were out in the sky, so many you cannot count them.

One day Dana met up with a man named David. He didn't laugh at her silly ideas. And he also dreamed of running his own farm. Not too long after they met, David asked Dana to marry her. She said yes, and within just a few years, they moved to a very special place. It was a beautiful farm that had chickens, horses, cows and goats. Even though it didn't have an elephant, it had an alpaca and rabbits. Many people smiled when they heard what Dana was up to. "She was always the romantic," they would say.

"She's doing just what she dreamed of doing," her older brother Ben would say. "I don't think she'll ever walk on a golden sidewalk to China, but she did buy a farm."

One night while doing chores late at night on their farm and there were so many stars in the sky you couldn't count them, Dana let out a gasp. She saw something red on the barn door, very high, that she had not seen before. It was a balloon—not just a balloon, but a big red balloon. She reached up to the top of the door and took it down.

There was a message on it, still legible. She took it to her husband, and his mouth opened with surprise.

“What do you know about this?” David asked his wife. Then Dana told about her seventh birthday party when she let loose the big red balloon with a message written on it. She wanted it to go to someone very special. And now here it was, on the door of a barn belonging to a farm that she always dreamed of living on.

“Now let me tell you what I know about this red balloon,” David said. “I was twelve years old, and I saw the balloon high, high, up in the sky. It had got caught on a branch of a tree in our backyard. I climbed the tree. And when I rescued the balloon, I read the message, and thought, I can’t keep the balloon. I have to let the balloon fly away like a dream, as the sender had wanted it to. So I went out into an open field, and let the balloon fly into the big, blue sky driven by the wind.

They both looked at the message on the balloon. It read: “This balloon is my dream, and it will fly to a very special person and to a very special place.”

Dana and David looked at each other and smiled.

The Barber of Bagdad
A Tale from the Middle East

ACT I

The setting is Ali's barber shop in the morning.

WOODCUTTER

I have a load of wood which I have just brought in on my donkey. Would you like to buy it, good barber?

ALI

Well, let me see. Is it good wood?

WOODCUTTER

The best in the country.

ALI

I'll give you five shekels for all the wood upon the donkey.

WOODCUTTER

Agreed. I'll put the wood here by your door. [Lays wood at door.] Now, good sir, give me the silver.

ALI

Not so fast, my good friend. I must have your wooden pack saddle, too. That was the bargain. I said, "All the wood upon your donkey." Truly, the saddle is wood.

WOODCUTTER

Who ever heard of such a bargain? Surely you cannot mean what you say? You would not treat a poor woodcutter so. It is impossible.

ALI

Give me the saddle, or I'll have you put in prison. And take *that*—and *that*—and *that*! [Ali strikes the woodcutter.]

WOODCUTTER

Ah, me, what shall I do? What shall I do? I know. I'll go to the caliph himself.

ACT II

The setting is the caliph's palace, an hour later.

COURTIER

My lord, a good woodcutter is at the door and asks permission to come into your presence.

CALIPH

Bid him enter. There is none too poor to be received by me. [Courtier goes out and returns with woodcutter, who kneels and kisses the ground. Then he stands with arms folded.]

[To Woodcutter} Tell me, good man, what brought you here? Has any one done you a wrong?

WOODCUTTER

Great wrong, my lord. The rich barber Ali did buy a load of wood from me. He offered me five shekels for all the wood on my donkey. When I had put down the load, I asked for my money, but he refused to pay me until I had given him my pack saddle. He said the bargain was "all the wood on the donkey," and that the saddle is wood. He

said he would put me in prison if I did not give up the saddle. Then he took it and drove me away with blows.

CALIPH

A strange story, truly. The barber has law on his side, and yet you have right on yours. The law must be obeyed, but—come here and let me whisper something to you. [The woodcutter listens smilingly and bowing low, leaves the room.]

ACT III

The setting is the barber's shop, a few days later.

ALI

Ah! here comes my stupid friend the woodcutter. I suppose he has come to quarrel about the wood. No, he is smiling.

WOODCUTTER

Good day to you, friend Ali. I have come to ask if you will be so kind as to shave me and a companion from the country.

ALI

Oh, yes, I suppose so.

WOODCUTTER

How much will you charge?

ALI

A shekel for the two. [To himself] The poor fool cannot pay that sum.

WOODCUTTER

Very good. Shave me first. [Ali shaves him.]

ALI

Now you are shaved. Where is your companion?

WOODCUTTER

He is standing outside. He will come in at once. [He goes out and returns leading his donkey.] This is my companion. Shave him.

ALI

[in a rage] Shave him! Shave a donkey, indeed! Is it not enough that I should lower myself by touching you? And then you insult me by asking me to shave your donkey! Away with you!

ACT IV

The setting is the caliph's palace. The time is a half-hour later.

CALIPH

Well, my friend, did you do as I told you?

WOODCUTTER

Yes, and Ali refused to shave my donkey.

CALIPH

[to the courtier] Bid Ali come to me at once and bring his razors with him. [Courtier leaves and returns with Ali.]

[To Ali] Why did you refuse to shave this man's companion? Was not that your agreement?

ALI

[kissing the ground] It is true, O caliph, such was the agreement, but who ever made a companion of a donkey before?

CALIPH

True enough, but who ever thought of saying that a pack saddle is a part of a load of wood? No, no, it is the woodcutter's turn now. Shave his donkey instantly.

[Ali lathers the beast and shaves him in the presence of the whole court, and then slips away amid the laughter of the bystanders.]

CALIPH

Now, my honest woodcutter, here is a purse of gold for you. Always remember that the caliph gladly listens to the complaints of his people, poor and rich, and will right their wrongs if he can.

WOODCUTTER

Long live the Caliph!

COURTIERS

Long live the Caliph!

4. Literary Words: Drama

“The Barber of Bagdad” is a very short *drama* with a moral: treat other people as you want them to treat you. The wise caliph taught this lesson not by his official judgment, which was in favor of the barber, but in his personal advice to the woodcutter.

A drama, also called a *play*, is a work of literature meant to be acted on stage. There are many different kinds of dramas to talk about, but just a few will be mentioned in this section. Traditionally, dramas have been classified as tragedies, comedies, histories and romances. Almost everyone knows that a tragedy is a sad play in which a person in a high position, such as a king, dies at the end. Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* are just a few examples. In each of these tragedies the main character dies in the end. Tragedies may be compared to stories of realism in which the author tries to look *realistically* at life. Stories of realism often have sad plots in which the main character experiences misfortune or even dies.

Almost every, too, knows that comedies are funny. Unlike tragedies, which take a sad look at life, comedies are more light-hearted. They end very happily, sometimes like a fairytale with everyone "living happily ever after." All the character's conflicts or problems introduced in the play are resolved in the end. And like fairytales, classical comedies end with the main character or characters getting married. Marriage is life-affirming and positive, as it promises the birth of children. Tragedies and comedies, then, may be seen as opposite sides of the same coin. Just as birth and death are both part of life, so is sorrow and laughter. Romances are very much like comedies. They can make us laugh and they end in marriage.

Classic *histories*, such as Shakespeare's *Henry V* or *Richard II*, are much like tragedies. These plays end in the

death of a person in a high position, such as a king. But when we look at Shakespeare's tragedies and histories, we will notice two differences. The first is that histories deal with English kings, while tragedies deal with foreign kings. The second is that histories deal with the conflict of one *man*, while tragedies deal with the conflict of *mankind*. In other words, when we watch a tragedy like *King Lear*, we can put ourselves easily into the shoes of the main character. His problems are our problems, or soon will be.

5. Writing Response

Choose one of the following sets of assignments.

Composition 1

1. Write a three- to five-sentence summary of The Middle Eastern Tale "The Barber of Bagdad." Be sure to include only information important to the main idea and write the summary in the present tense.
2. What do people mean when they talk about following the "the letter of the law"? They mean following what is stipulated by the *exact words*. Suppose, for example, that your father has been complaining that you have not been completing your school work. As a reprimand, he tells you that he does not want you to dawdle talking to your friends after class. Following the letter of the law might mean that instead of talking with your friends, you instead make paper airplanes. While making paper airplanes may be following the *letter of the law*—after all, you did not talk to your

friends—, it is not following the *spirit of the law*, which is what your father *really* means: get to your homework and don't waste your time. In a paragraph essay, consider why we should always *first* consider the spirit of the law in dealing with others.

- Write one sentence as your introduction. You might want to say that some people lie by using words that are technically true but really are meant to trick others.
- Write your main idea.
- Explain your main idea by giving one explanation and one example.
- Write a concluding sentence.

Composition 2

1. Write a ten- to fifteen-sentence summary of “The Balloon.” Be sure to include only information important to the main idea and write the summary in the present tense.
2. Write a tale of your own about a balloon being released into the air.