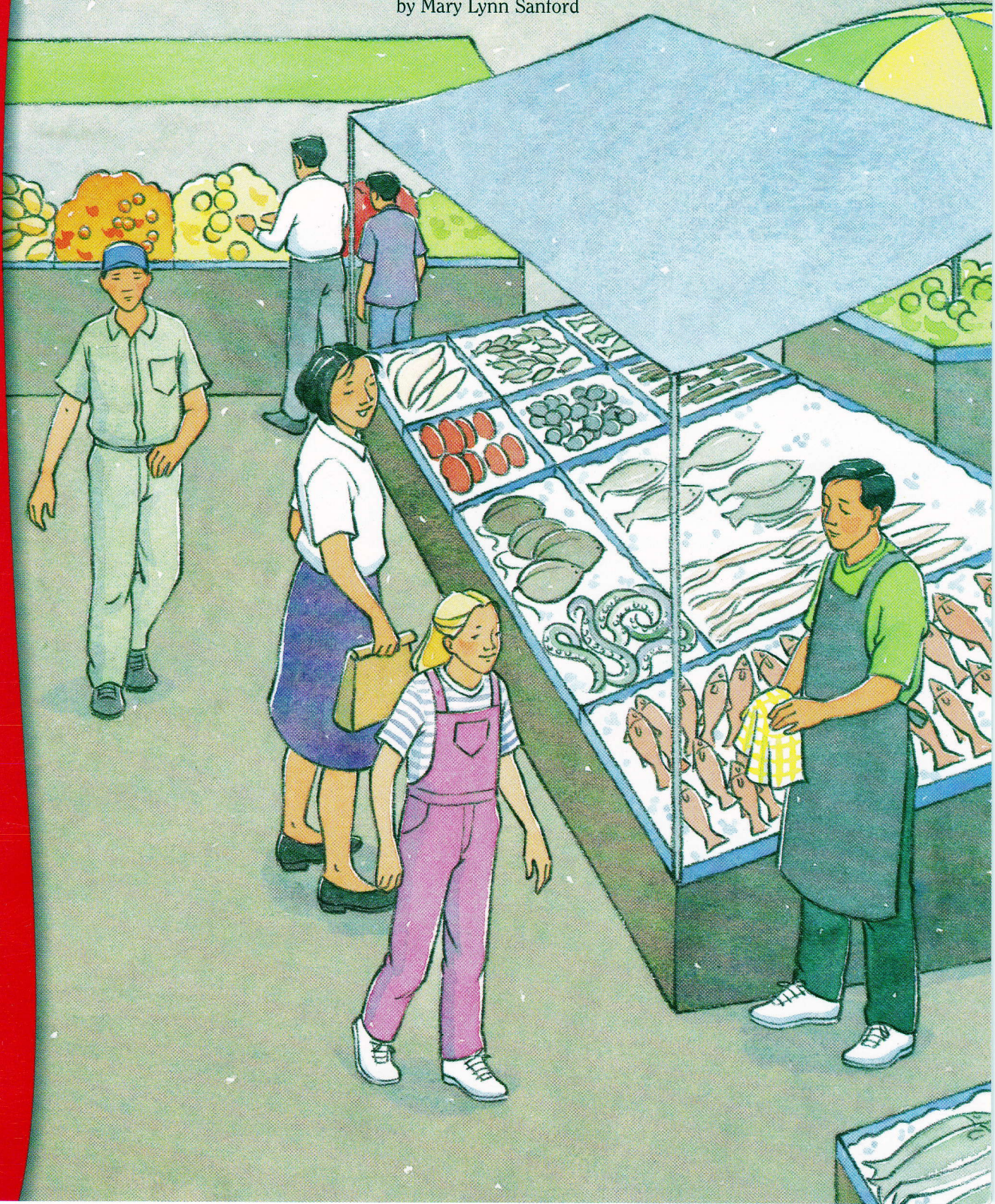



Gena's Japanese Adventure

by Mary Lynn Sanford

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- 1 Everyone in Gena Ross's family was excited. Mr. Ross's company was sending him overseas. One night at dinner, Gena's dad announced that the whole family would be moving to Japan for a year. They would leave in two months, right before summer vacation.
- 2 Gena was eager to visit a new country, but she would miss her friends. However, she was happy to hear that her family would only be staying for a year.
- 3 Gena could hardly wait to tell her friends at school. Most of them were happy for her. Yet Gena's best friend, Carrie, didn't seem so sure.
- 4 "Aren't you scared, moving so far away from home?" asked Carrie.
- 5 Gena hadn't even thought about being scared. "What's there to be afraid of?" questioned Gena.
- 6 "Well, for one thing, they don't speak English!" said Carrie. "How can you go to school if you don't understand what the teacher is saying?"
- 7 Gena laughed. "I was worried about that too. But Dad said that my brother, Mark, and I will be going to a special school. It's for children whose parents work in Japan."
- 8 Carrie didn't look convinced, but Gena wasn't worried. She always liked a good adventure.
- 9 Mr. Ross was learning to speak Japanese before the family left. One night, Gena happened to see one of his textbooks.
- 10 "What are those little drawings, Dad?" she asked, pointing to some Japanese symbols.
- 11 "Those are Japanese words, Gena." He showed her a symbol, . It looked like a window. "This stands for the word *day*."
- 12 "But how do you read them?" she asked. "They don't look anything like our words."
- 13 "That's right, honey. We grew up thinking in English. You have to think a different way to read Japanese. Our words are groups of letters. Japanese words are groups of lines arranged in different ways."
- 14 Gena looked troubled. Maybe Carrie was right to worry.
- 15 "Don't worry, Gena. Many Japanese people speak very good English. Besides, your school in Japan won't be that different from your school here. And you will probably have fun learning a little Japanese while we're there."
- 16 Finally, the big day arrived. It was Gena's first time riding in an airplane, and she loved it. She liked seeing everything from so far away. However, once the plane got over the ocean, there wasn't much to see. Gena fell asleep.
- 17 When she awoke almost twelve hours later, Gena was in a new world. In Japan's airport, there were crowds of rushing people, just like in the airport at home. Yet this airport echoed with the sounds of the Japanese language.
- 18 Gena's father seemed tense as they drove their rented car from the airport. The streets were very narrow. Motorbikes swarmed over the road. However, the scariest part was that her dad had to drive on the left side of the road instead of the right. Compared to America, everything seemed backward!
- 19 Gena felt a little better when she saw a hamburger sign over a restaurant. Even though the sign had Japanese letters, she knew what it was. At least one thing was like home!
- 20 Gena hadn't expected Japan and her home in Iowa to be so different. Even grocery shopping was full of surprises. Instead of a supermarket, there were dozens of outdoor stalls. Many of the stalls sold foods that Gena had never seen or heard of before.
- 21 Because they lived on an island, the Japanese people ate many kinds of seafood. Fish lay spread out on tables for people to see. Nothing was behind glass the way it was at home.
- 22 Gena and her mom had a difficult time figuring out how to buy things with Japanese money, called *yen*. But the people running the booths were very helpful.
- 23 After several months, Gena began to feel more at home in Japan. She had lots of Japanese and American friends. She and Mark were even learning to speak a few Japanese words. They could recognize some common symbols on road signs and stores. And Gena loved riding on the fast Japanese trains.
- 24 Gena began to realize that when she lived in the United States, she'd never thought about how people in other countries lived. She just assumed that everyone ate the same things, got around in the same ways, and spoke the same language. Now she knew that there were many different ways to do all those things.
- 25 The year seemed to fly by. Before Gena knew it, it was time to return home. She had many stories to tell her friends in Iowa.
- 26 Gena was glad to be home, but she now knew that she wanted to visit many other countries. She wanted to learn about other customs and understand why people did things in different ways. For Gena, Japan was just the beginning.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence.
Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 This story is about a family
 - a** getting used to a new country.
 - b** learning to speak Japanese.
 - c** getting ready to move.
- 2 Gena got a little worried when
 - a** she learned she was moving to Japan.
 - b** Carrie asked her about school in Japan.
 - c** her father explained the Japanese language to her.
- 3 Japan and America are different
 - a** in the way people drive cars.
 - b** in the way people shop for food.
 - c** Both **a** and **b**

- 4 Gena most likely learned to speak a little Japanese while she was in Japan because she
 - a** needed it for school.
 - b** saw and heard it so often that it became familiar.
 - c** wanted to impress Carrie when she got home.
- 5 The main reason that Gena wants to visit other countries is probably that she
 - a** wants to learn about other people.
 - b** likes Japanese food.
 - c** wants to fly on an airplane again.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 excited; very interested (2)
- 2 assured; persuaded (8)
- 3 characters; signs (10)
- 4 nervous; uneasy (18)
- 5 covered; crowded (18)
- 6 supposed; believed (24)
- 7 ways; practices (26)

C **too** = also

two = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

8 sea (9)

The boat sailed across the _____.

9 rode (18)

In Japan, people drive on the left side of the _____.

10 weighs (24)

People in Japan and America do some things in different _____.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** Some verbs do not add *-ed* to show that something happened in the past. These verbs are called irregular verbs because they do not follow a regular pattern when they tell about the past.

Today I *wear* my black sweater.
Yesterday I *wore* a blue sweater.

Read each sentence. Which verb in parentheses () makes sense in the sentence? Write the verb.

- 1 Gena sat with her father and (thinks, thought) about moving to Japan.
- 2 Gena packed a camera and (take, took) lots of pictures.
- 3 Mr. Ross will (drive, drove) on the left side of the road in Japan.
- 4 Gena now (knows, knew) how to speak a little Japanese.
- 5 Gena (bring, brought) back many gifts from Japan.

- E** Writers try to make stories more interesting by using colorful or funny language that doesn't mean exactly what the words say.

The man was *scared to death*.

This sentence means that the man was very scared. It doesn't mean that the man died.

Read the sentences. What does each sentence really mean? Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 6 Carrie was "down in the dumps" is another way of saying that Carrie was
 - a sad.
 - b at the junkyard.
 - c angry.
- 7 Gena "turned green" when she was riding in the car is a funny way of saying
 - a Gena wore too much makeup.
 - b Gena felt nervous.
 - c Gena's skin turned green.

- 8 Making friends is "a piece of cake" is a lively way of saying that

- a it's easy to make new friends.
- b you should share your cake with friends.
- c you make friends like you make cake.

- 9 "Lend me a hand with these groceries" is an interesting way of saying

- a put your hand in the grocery bag.
- b help me carry the groceries.
- c let me borrow your groceries.

- 10 The year "flew by" is a different way of saying the year

- a had wings.
- b seemed like an airplane.
- c went by quickly.

- F** Homographs are two (or more) words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and origins. A word's meaning will depend on how it is used.

My dad is a football *fan*.

He keeps cool with an electric *fan*.

The two words in **bold type** are homographs. In this case, the homographs are pronounced the same. Sometimes they are not.

Read each pair of sentences. If the words in **bold type** mean the same thing in both sentences, write *Same*. If the words do not mean the same thing, write *Different*.

- 11 Gena's family had **company** for dinner. Mr. Ross's **company** was sending him to Japan.
- 12 Japanese **symbols** look difficult. These **symbols** stand for different days.
- 13 Carrie gave Gena a **rose** to take on the plane. The plane **rose** into the air.
- 14 Gena was anxious for the plane to **land**. She was eager to see this new **land**.
- 15 Gena learned some Japanese **customs**. She was interested in the **customs** of other people.