

A Real Bargain

A few years ago Ed Jones was shopping at a thrift store in Indianapolis, Indiana. He walked past the used clothing and stopped at the used books. He looked at the books and then at some old dishes. Mr. Jones was looking for something that might be valuable. If he found something valuable, he would buy it cheaply and then resell it, perhaps to an antique dealer. But today Mr. Jones didn't see anything he wanted, so he started walking toward the door. Then something caught his eye. Leaning against a wall there was a large cardboard map.

Mr. Jones walked over for a closer look. The map was covered with dust, so Mr. Jones wiped it with his handkerchief. Under the dust was a color map of Paris. It looked old. On the back of the map, someone had written the price: \$3. Mr. Jones was quite certain that the map was worth more than three dollars, so he bought it. He thought he could probably sell it for \$40.

Later, at home, Mr. Jones looked more closely at the map. He decided it might be very old. Maybe it was worth even more than \$40.

The next day Mr. Jones took the map to a geography professor at a nearby university. The professor was a map expert. After looking at the map for a few minutes, he became very excited. "I've read about this map!" he exclaimed. Then he told Mr. Jones what he knew.

In 1671 the king of France, Louis XIV, asked a cartographer to make a map of Paris. The cartographer worked on the map for four years. The map he drew was beautiful—it was not just a map, but a work of art as well. The cartographer made several black and white copies of the map. Then he carefully colored one of the copies, using blue for rivers, green for trees, and brown for buildings. The professor said that one black and white copy of the map was in the British Museum in London, and another was in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. "I think," the professor told Mr. Jones, "that you've just found the color copy of the

map—in a thrift store in Indianapolis!" The professor suggested that Mr. Jones take the map to New York City. Experts there could tell Mr. Jones if the professor was right.

The New York experts said the professor was right. They told Mr. Jones that he had the only color copy of the map and that it was extremely valuable. "How much do you think it's worth?" Mr. Jones asked the experts. "Millions," they replied. "It's impossible to say exactly how much the map is worth. It's worth whatever someone is willing to pay for it."

Soon Mr. Jones discovered how much people were willing to pay for the map. Someone offered him 10 million dollars; then someone else immediately offered him 12 million. The most recent offer was 19.5 million dollars. Mr. Jones hasn't decided whether he will sell his three-dollar map at that price or wait for a higher offer. He is thinking it over.

But how in the world did this map find its way to a thrift store in Indianapolis? Here is what some experts think: The map was probably in a museum or in the home of a wealthy family in France. Then a thief stole it, perhaps during the confusion of World War I or World War II. The thief sold the map to an antique dealer in France. The French antique dealer, not knowing how valuable the map was, sold it to an antique dealer in Indianapolis. That antique dealer, who also did not know its value, gave it to a neighbor. For ten years the map hung on a wall in the neighbor's house. Then the neighbor got tired of it and sold it to the thrift store. The map sat in the thrift store for months. Finally, Mr. Jones discovered it.

When Mr. Jones went shopping at the thrift store, he was looking for a bargain. He wanted to find something that was worth more than the price he paid. He paid three dollars for the map, and it is worth at least 19.5 million dollars. Now *that's* a bargain!

2. VOCABULARY

LOOKING AT THE STORY

Which words have the same meanings as the words in the story? Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Ed Jones was shopping at a *thrift store*.
 - a. store that sells used things at low prices
 - b. store that sells expensive things at high prices
2. If he found something valuable, he could resell it, perhaps to an *antique dealer*.
 - a. person who fixes broken things
 - b. a person who buys and sells old things
3. Leaning against a wall of the store there was a large *cardboard* map.
 - a. made of heavy paper
 - b. made of plastic
4. Mr. Jones was quite *certain* that the map was worth more than three dollars.
 - a. worried
 - b. sure
5. The next day Mr. Jones took the map to a *geography* professor at a nearby university.
 - a. the study of the world's countries, cities, oceans, rivers, and mountains
 - b. the study of the world's history, languages, and customs
6. "I've read about this map!" he *exclaimed*.
 - a. said with strong feeling
 - b. said very quietly
7. Louis XIV asked a *cartographer* to make a map of Paris.
 - a. person who draws maps
 - b. person who writes books
8. The New York experts told Mr. Jones that his map was *extremely* valuable.
 - a. not really
 - b. very
9. "How much do you think it's worth?" Mr. Jones asked the experts. "Millions," they *replied*.
 - a. answered
 - b. asked
10. Someone *offered* him ten million dollars.
 - a. said, "Will you take ten million dollars for the map?"
 - b. told him, "I think your map is worth ten million dollars."
11. Some experts think the map was probably in a museum or in the home of a *wealthy* family in France.
 - a. famous
 - b. rich
12. When Mr. Jones went shopping at the thrift store, he was looking for a *bargain*.
 - a. something that can be bought cheaply
 - b. something that has been used

LOOKING AT SPECIAL EXPRESSIONS

Find the best way to complete each sentence. Write the letter of your answer on the line.

to catch one's eye = to get one's attention

1. Mr. Jones was walking toward the door _____
 2. She was leaving the museum _____
 3. He was walking through the department store _____
- a. when a painting by Renoir caught her eye.
 - b. when a large cardboard map caught his eye.
 - c. when a sweater caught his eye.

to be worth = to have a value of

4. Mr. Jones was quite certain that _____
 5. They paid \$100,000 for their house, but _____
 6. He tried to sell his old TV for \$500, but nobody bought it because _____
- d. the map was worth more than three dollars.
 - e. it wasn't worth more than \$250.
 - f. it was worth at least \$125,000.

to be willing to = to be ready to

7. The map was worth whatever _____
 8. Our teacher said that _____
 9. I won't have to take the bus home because _____
- g. he was willing to give us extra help after class.
 - h. my friend is willing to give me a ride.
 - i. someone was willing to pay for it.

to get tired of = to become no longer interested in

10. The neighbor got tired of the map and _____
 11. He got tired of hamburgers _____
 12. I'm getting tired of studying French; _____
- j. after eating them every day for a month.
 - k. sold it to a thrift store.
 - l. maybe I'll study Spanish next year.

3. COMPREHENSION/READING SKILLS

UNDERSTANDING CAUSE AND EFFECT

Find the best way to complete each sentence. Write the letter of your answer on the line.

1. Ed Jones went to the thrift store _____
 2. He wiped the map with his handkerchief _____
 3. The professor suggested that Mr. Jones take the map to New York City _____
 4. Experts in New York said the map was extremely valuable _____
 5. The map was a bargain _____
- a. because experts there could tell Mr. Jones if the professor was right.
 - b. because it was cheap but very valuable.
 - c. because he was looking for a bargain.
 - d. because it was the only color copy.
 - e. because it was covered with dust.

UNDERSTANDING DETAILS

Read the sentences from the story. One word in each sentence is not correct. Find the word and cross it out. Write the correct word.

1. The map was covered with paint.
2. Under the dust Mr. Jones found a color map of Rome.
3. The map looked new.
4. On the back of the map, someone had written the price: \$30.
5. The next day Mr. Jones took the map to a mathematics professor at the university.

Now copy three sentences from the story, but change one word in each sentence so that the information is not correct. Give your sentences to a classmate. Your classmate will find the incorrect word in each sentence, cross it out, and write the correct word. When your classmate is finished, check the corrections.

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

4. DISCUSSION

A. Think about these questions. Discuss your answers with your classmates.

1. After reading the story, do you think you might go to a thrift store to look for something valuable?
2. Have you—or has anyone you know—ever had an experience similar to Mr. Jones's experience? Have you ever bought something at a low price and then discovered it was worth more than you paid for it? Have you ever had the opposite experience? Have you ever bought something at a high price and then discovered that it was worth less than you paid for it?

B. Be a cartographer. Draw a map of a country you know. Put important rivers, mountains, cities, and tourist attractions on the map. Then show your map to a classmate. Tell your classmate about the places on your map.