

High-Intermediate 3
Unit 4 Reading
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HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?

A disconsolate young man was walking along a beach in southern California. What was making him sad was the fact that his ladylove wasn't with him. She was in Hawaii, and he was in California. Suddenly, on the sand in front of him, he spied what looked like a magic lamp. "I wonder if this is one of those magic lamps, like Aladdin's?" he mused. "I guess that there's only one way to find out." Picking up the lamp, he began to rub it.

disconsolate = unhappy, sad, dejected

What was making him sad was the fact that his ladylove wasn't with him.

What was making him sad => **Subjective Noun Clause**

that his ladylove wasn't with him => **Adjective Clause** (Modifying "the fact")

Hawaii /hə'wari/ = a state in the Western United States, located in the Pacific Ocean about 2,000 miles (3,200 km) from the U.S. mainland

spy = see, notice, spot

He spied what looked like a magic lamp.

what looked like a magic lamp => **Objective Noun Clause**

wonder = want to know

muse = think deeply

I wonder if this is one of those magic lamps, like Aladdin's.

if this is one of those magic lamps, like Aladdin's => **Objective Noun Clause**



The View of a Beach in Hawaii

Immediately, a genie popped out. Let me tell you, though—this wasn't your usual type of genie. This was a genie with an attitude.

"Thanks for letting me out, man. It was getting a little stuffy in there.... Anyway, you know the drill. You let me out; I grant you one wish. So what's your wish?"

"Wait a minute," said the young man. "I thought you always got three wishes when you let a genie out of a lamp or a bottle."

pop out = appear suddenly

though (adverb) = however (used especially at the end of a sentence or clause to add a fact or an opinion that makes the previous statement less strong or less important)

- *Tom was hunting for work. Jobs were scarce though.*
- *Our team lost. It was a good game though.*

though (conjunction) = although; even though

a genie with an attitude = an unusual and different type of genie

stuffy = airless

drill = procedure

grant = give; satisfy

"Yeah, well, times have changed," retorted the genie. "Inflation, you know. My contract says that whoever lets me out gets one wish. Take it or leave it. What's your fondest wish?"

The young man pondered the question. He took so long that the genie finally said, exasperated, "Hey, man, come on. I haven't got all day. What do you want?"

"You'll grant me whatever I wish?"

"Whatever."

retort = reply; react

inflation = a general increase in prices

contract = agreement

My contract says (that) whoever lets me out gets one wish.

(that) whoever lets me out gets one wish => Objective Noun Clause

whoever lets me out => Subjective Noun Clause & Embedded Clause

Embedded Clause = a clause inside another clause

fondest wish = the wish that you like more than the other wishes

ponder = think about

exasperated = annoyed, infuriate

You'll grant me whatever I wish?

whatever I wish => Objective Noun Clause

"I'm having a real problem figuring out what I want. The fact that you're restricting me to one wish really isn't kosher, you know. . . . But ... if you insist ... here it is. What I want is for you to build me a bridge to Hawaii."

"Say what?" the genie replied. "I thought you said you wanted a bridge to Hawaii. I'm going to have to get my hearing checked."

"I did say that. I want a bridge to Hawaii. You see, I'm afraid of flying. I flew one time, and I almost had a nervous breakdown, what with the possibility of plane crashes, and the airline food, and all."

"So take a boat."

"I get seasick on boats. Deathly ill. I can't travel on boats. But if you build me a bridge to Hawaii, I can drive there. And I really need to go to Hawaii."

figure out = understand

I'm having a real problem figuring out what I want.

what I want => Objective Noun Clause

restrict = limit

kosher = honest or legal

The fact that you're restricting me to one wish really isn't kosher.

that you're restricting me to one wish => Adjective Clause (Modifying "the fact")

What I want is for you to build me a bridge to Hawaii.

What I want => Subjective Noun Clause

I thought (that) you said (that) you wanted a bridge to Hawaii

(that) you said (that) you wanted a bridge to Hawaii => Objective Noun Clause

(that) you wanted a bridge to Hawaii => **Objective Noun Clause** & **Embedded Clause**

Point:

We can omit the conjunction “that” in objective noun clauses.

I **did say** that. = I really said that. => Emphasis

aerophobia = being afraid of flying

aerophobe = a person suffering from aerophobia

get/feel *homesick/carsick/seasick*

Chagrined, the genie asked, "Do you understand what you're asking me to do? I can't do that. Do you realize how far it is to Hawaii? It's 2,000 miles. I'd have to sink pilings into the ocean floor ... Do you know how much cement that would take? And I'd probably have to attach all kinds of pontoons, and it would take months just to do a geologic survey and prepare an environmental impact statement. I'm tired after all those centuries inside that lamp. I don't think I have the energy.... No, this request is simply out of the question. Ask me something else. I'll give you another chance. Is there someone special you want to see? I can transport whomever you'd like right here in the twinkling of an eye. The queen of England. Madonna. Whomever. I can bring however many people you want—a whole army. Or maybe there's some possession you desire. A Rolls-Royce, perhaps? Money is no object."

chagrin (n.) = annoyance

chagrined (adj.) = annoyed

piling (n.) = heavy stakes or posts installed to support the foundations of a superstructure

pontoon (n.) = an air-filled structure providing buoyancy

be out of the question = be impossible

in the twinkling of an eye = in the fraction of a second

Point:

Before a singular countable noun, don't use "all". Use "whole" instead.

Don't Say: My **all** family flew to Paris on vacation.

Say: My **whole** family flew to Paris on vacation.

whole = entire

Again the young man cogitated for a considerable time. Finally, he said, "Yes, I do have one more wish."

"All right," responded the genie. "Now we're getting somewhere. Make it; make it."

cogitate = think deeply

I **do have** one more wish. = Indeed, I have one more wish. => **Emphasis**

"Well," said the young man, "I've always been fascinated by the mysteriousness and the unpredictability of women. Have you ever been able to figure them out? I haven't. So that's my wish."

"What?" said the genie.

"To understand them. I've always wanted to know what makes women tick. I'll be satisfied if you can answer that question for me. That'll be my wish."

"So did you want two lanes or four on the bridge?" the genie said.

what makes women tick = what makes women behave in a particular way

Full Text:

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"Whatever."

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"So did you want two lanes or four on the bridge?" the genie said.

Sample Summary:

A disconsolate young man finds a magic lamp on a California beach and releases a genie with an attitude who grants only one wish. The man, afraid of flying and boats, initially asks for a bridge to Hawaii to visit his girlfriend, but the genie refuses, citing the impracticality. After much deliberation, the man changes his wish to understanding women, to which the genie—overwhelmed by the complexity—immediately offers to reconsider building the bridge instead.

Detailed Summary:

A lovesick young man is walking sadly along a California beach, missing his girlfriend, who is in Hawaii. As he strolls, he discovers what appears to be a magic lamp. Hoping it might grant wishes like Aladdin's, he rubs it, and a sarcastic, impatient genie emerges. The genie explains that, due to "inflation," he only grants one wish instead of the traditional three.

The young man struggles to decide but eventually asks for a bridge to Hawaii so he can drive there—explaining that he's terrified of flying (due to plane crashes and bad airline food) and gets violently seasick on boats. The genie is horrified, arguing that building a 2,000-mile bridge would require massive construction, environmental studies, and far too much effort. He begs the man to choose something easier, offering alternatives like summoning celebrities, granting wealth, or material possessions.

After more thought, the man changes his wish: he asks to *understand women*, admitting he's always been mystified by their behavior. The genie, stunned by the sheer impossibility of this request, immediately backtracks and asks, "*So did you want two lanes or four on the bridge?*"—implying that even constructing an impossible bridge is easier than deciphering the complexities of women.

The story humorously contrasts an outrageous physical challenge (building a trans-Pacific bridge) with an even greater philosophical one (understanding women), showcasing the genie's exasperation and the young man's naivety. The punchline highlights that some things—like the nature of women—are beyond even a genie's power to explain.