



Lookout Mountain Vocabulary Lesson

Hello, this is AJ Hoge. Welcome to the vocabulary lesson for “Lookout Mountain.” In this conversation Kristin talks to her mother. And her mother, Susan, talks about a trip, a family trip they took with Ethan and Kristin’s dad. Now Ethan is Kristin’s nephew. A child, a son of Kristin’s brother, a nephew. So Kristin’s mom, Kristin’s dad and Kristin’s nephew went on a short family trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Chattanooga is a city. And near Chattanooga there are some sights, some places to see. One is called Rock City. Another sight near Chattanooga is called Lookout Mountain. So Kristin’s mom, Kristin’s dad and her nephew Ethan, they all went to these places. And in this conversation, Kristin’s mom talks about the trip.

Alright let’s get started.

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So in the second sentence, Susan, Kristin’s mom says, “Oh, the trip was great. It was great. It was more fun than a barrel of monkeys.”

More fun than a barrel of monkeys. Now that’s an idiom. A very kind of old idiom and it means just a lot of fun. It’s kind of a joke. It’s kind of... Now if we say that, it’s a little bit old-fashioned. A little bit kind of from the past. So when you say it, it’s, y’know it’s kind of said in a joking way. But the meaning is, it was a lot of fun. It was more fun than a barrel of monkeys means, it was a lot of fun. It was really fun. More fun than a barrel of monkeys, very, very fun.

Okay, Kristin laughs and Mom says, “You know, we took Ethan...”

Again that’s Kristin’s nephew and he’s eight years old.

“and it was fun to watch him at y’know at the different places they went to.” Fun to watch him enjoying the activities. They bypassed the aquarium.

That means they went... They didn’t go to the aquarium. They went past the aquarium but didn’t go in.

Because they had already taken him to the Atlanta aquarium in the past. And Susan says, “We picked and chose and drew straws and decided we would go, first, to Rock City.”

Okay, to draw straws, or past is drew straws. It means to choose randomly. To choose randomly. So maybe you have five different things to do and you randomly choose two. Or you randomly choose one. That’s what to draw straws means. To choose randomly. Okay, it’s another idiom.

Okay and there they talk about going to Rock City and there was a place in Rock City called Fat Man’s Squeeze.



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It's just, it's a narrow place with two rocks and you have to go in between the two rocks, but they're close together. So if you're fat you cannot go through.

So Susan, Kristin's mom, laughs that ten years ago she could go through easily. But now, she's 64 years old. She's heavier and it wasn't easy to go through. And then after they went to Rock City they went to Lookout Mountain which is a big, big mountain. And they rode an incline railway.

Incline, of course, means going up. So it's a railway that went straight up. Straight up the side of the mountain.

And Kristin asked, "Did he like it?"

Did Ethan like the mountain?

It was overlooking Chattanooga. And she said, "Oh, he didn't like it as well as Rock City."

So he liked Rock City more.

"He was not as enthused about it..."

Was not as excited about it.

But Kristin's Dad enjoyed it. After that they went to eat at a restaurant named Ryan's.

Ryan's is the name of the restaurant.

And I guess Ethan likes Ryan's. Her little nephew likes Ryan's. And she said they didn't go to another restaurant, a place called Dirty Nellie's.

So maybe they usually go to Dirty Nellie's restaurant.

But it was closed. The reason it was closed is it got busted, got busted several years ago for selling to minors.

To get busted means to get in trouble or to get arrested. It often means to get arrested by the police or to get in trouble with the police. So their favorite restaurant, Dirty Nellie's had got busted so the police closed the restaurant. Why did they close the restaurant? They closed the restaurant because it was selling to minors. Selling what? Selling alcohol, she doesn't say it but that's what she means. So the restaurant was selling alcohol to minors. A minor is a person who is younger than 18 years old, I'm sorry younger than 21 for alcohol. So someone younger than 21 cannot buy alcohol and if a restaurant sells alcohol to someone who is



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too young, they can get busted. They can get in trouble with the police.

Okay, so they didn't go to Dirty Nellie's restaurant. They went to Ryan's. And she asked, "Did you go to any museums?" And Susan says, "Well, no." They went to a garden on the river and they did a cruise. And they had beautiful views. And there was a good captain who was narrating, who was talking about the city and talking about the views. And then they went back to the hotel... the motel that night and they swam. And then she said at the, at the motel they met a guy from India in the breakfast area and he was really nice. He was living in Chattanooga, he was there studying as a student. And getting his eyes full of American culture. Susan says, "He was getting his eyes full of the American culture."

So getting his eyes full of American culture just means he was seeing a lot of American culture. He was really seeing a lot of it. Getting his eyes full.

And then Kristin says, "Uh-huh." And then Susan says, "He was really funny. He wanted to exchange e-mails." And then after they met the Indian guy they went to a Children's Museum, a hands-on museum... like an exploratory. Kristin calls it an exploratory.

It's a kind of museum for children. It's hands on, it means the children can touch things, they can play with things. It's not just looking, you can also touch. That's a hand on museum or Children's Museum. Sometimes they're called exploratory museums.

So it was a Children's Museum. And they had a lot of fun there. And then she said y'know... Kristin said, "So it was a really a short trip." And Susan says, "Yeah, it was a good trip. Just overnight. But long enough." And she said, "We were starting to... Our tails were starting to drag."

Okay, so we were starting to drag. Or our tails were starting to drag. Tails here means your butt. Their butt was starting to drag. It just means they were getting tired. To drag. Or to start to drag means to start to feel tired or to start to be tired. So if I can say, "Oh, whew, I'm starting to drag." It means I am getting tired. I am starting to feel tired. Very common phrase. Anytime you begin to feel tired you can say, I'm starting to drag.

Okay, so they were starting to drag. At the end of the trip Susan and Kristin's dad, they were starting to feel tired. They were starting to drag. Then Kristin asks about the weather and Susan says, "It was a beautiful day. All summer, it was very nice." It was wonderful. Okay and then she says, "What was the favorite thing you did?"

So she wants to know what did her mom, what did Susan enjoy most.

And her favorite thing was the cruise, the cruise on the river. And she said and then Kristin's dad's favorite thing was the garden or the railway at Rock City. Kristin says, "Yeah, I remember liking Rock



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City when I was little.”

So when Kristin was a child she also had been to Rock City. She also went to Rock City when she was a child.

And then Susan said they had a bird sanctuary, a place where they take birds that have been sick or hurt and then they help the birds. They help the animals. And Susan says, “I’ll get on my soapbox for a minute...” And she says, “I think more places need to do that. More places need to take care of animals.”

Okay, to get on your soapbox or I’ll get on my soapbox. It means, I’m going to give a speech or I’m going to say something strong. It’s an idiom. It comes from the idea of being in public, being around people. And getting a box, standing on top of the box and then giving a speech. You can imagine in the past, long ago. If you want to give a speech maybe you stand on top of something. You can stand on top of a box, for example. And then everybody can see you. Right, so it comes from this idea of giving a speech. If you say, “I’m going to get on my soapbox now...” it means you’re going to give a speech. You’re going to tell your strong opinion about something. So her strong opinion is more places need to take care of animals. She has a strong opinion. This is a strong idea for Susan.

So she says, “I’m going to get on my soapbox...”

I’m going to tell you a strong opinion.

And Kristin says, “I agree.”

She agrees that more places need to take care of animals.

Susan says it was a great trip and Kristin says, “Yeah, I’m glad you guys had a good time.” And then they kind of finish the conversation. She says, “Nice talking to you. I’ll give you a call back later in the week.”

So I’ll call you again later.

And Susan says, “Okay. Hope to hear from you soon.” Kristin says, “Alright, tell Dad I said hi...” And that’s the end. They say, “Okay, okay, love you, love you, bye.” And that is the end of the conversation.

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So that is the end of the vocabulary for “Lookout Mountain.”