

THE TALE OF TWO GENIES

Story Summary

Donyazad and Shahzaman are fighting and decide to draw a line across their room. Neither may go on the other's side. When Shahrzad sees this, she tells them the following story:

A weary traveler named Mahmood is crossing the desert when he comes across a bottle and a lamp, buried in the sand. When he opens them, two genies pop out, who look nearly identical, but for some reason hate each other. They immediately begin to fight with each other, and Mahmood has to order them to stop. After repeatedly trying to get them to work together, Mahmood learns that the genies and their ancestors have hated one another for more than 1,500 years, due to petty family squabbles, which ultimately boiled down to perceived differences between "bottle" and "lamp" genies. Lamp and bottle genies are just different. They have never gotten along and never will. When they continue to fight, Mahmood has no choice but to order them back into their bottle and lamp. Mahmood drops the bottle and lamp back into the sand and rides away, hoping that someday they'll get over their differences and learn to live in peace.



Story Lessons

- Encourage children to resolve conflicts creatively and constructively, in an effort to try to get along with others.
- Help children understand that when people or groups hold onto grudges, everyone loses, as this behavior only leads to greater conflict and unhappiness.
- Fighting is a bad way to resolve disputes and, quite often, only leads to more fighting without resolving differences.
- It is important to resolve conflicts right away. The longer a conflict lasts, the longer it takes to resolve.



CLASS PLAN

Pre-Viewing Activity (Approximately 5 Minutes)

Ask students to think of a time they argued with a friend or a sibling. Suggest they pick an example in which one person accidentally did something to someone else, to which the other person responded with anger? How did they stop fighting and make up?

Have a short discussion about the following: When someone does something to offend or bother you, what *positive* options do you have? A positive reaction is one that does not make the situation worse. Some suggestions students might offer for resolving conflicts include apologizing, taking turns, agreeing to start again, and so on.

Watch or Read Episode (Approximately 10 Minutes)

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions (Approximately 5-10 Minutes)

Why did Donyazad and Shahzaman fight? Was it worth fighting? If Shahzaman had reacted differently, would they have been fighting?

(Discussion: Donyazad's ball accidentally knocked over Shahzaman's castle. Instead of starting an argument, Shahzaman could have asked Donyazad why she did that. She could then have responded that it was an accident and that she was sorry. Shahzaman could have politely asked Donyazad to help fix the castle. If this had happened, they could have gone back to playing nicely, without fighting.)

Was it right for Shahzaman to draw a line in the room? Why? Why not? How did Donyazad react? Was this a good reaction or a bad reaction?

(Discussion: Shahzaman reacted out of anger, and his reaction caused Donyazad to get angry. Both of them could have acted differently to resolve the problem.)

In the future, if Donyazad and Shahzaman start to fight, what are some positive ways they can work out their differences?

(Discussion: They can both take the time to calm down, maybe counting slowly to twenty, or taking deep breaths. They might apologize for their own behavior and say they'd like to do something fun together.)

If you were one of the genies, what would you do to stop fighting with the other one?

(Discussion: The genies could focus on all the ways they are similar. They could focus on how much better it feels to have friends than enemies and think of magical things they can do together.)

What happened when the genies stopped fighting and worked together? What happened when they began fighting again? What did they gain by fighting and what did they lose? Were they better off fighting or resolving their disputes?

(Discussion: When the genies were fighting, they were locked inside a bottle and a lamp, and when they got along, they created paradise. When they fought again, they lost everything, even their freedom. Getting along was much better than fighting.)



In-Class Activity – for 50-60 Minute Lessons (Approximately 30 Minutes)

In the heat of a dispute, it is sometimes difficult to respond rationally, positively, or creatively. That's why it is useful to practice effective conflict resolution with pretend scenarios. Tell each class member to find a partner for the following exercise, where one student will be Student One and the other will be Student Two.

Tell them that Student One doesn't like anybody using his or her things without permission. When Student One leaves the room one day, he or she comes back to find Student Two using his or her pen and becomes very angry. Student Two doesn't think he or she was doing anything wrong by borrowing Student One's pen and that Student One is getting angry for no reason.

Ask Student One and Student Two to discuss the issue. After five minutes, have them switch roles and try to resolve the issue again. Then have all the students sit back down in their chairs and discuss what happened. Have a discussion about the different ways Student One could react and how this makes the problem go away or makes the problem worse. Discuss the same for how Student Two could react to the different reactions of Student One and how Student Two's reaction can make the problem go away or get worse. Discuss how the reactions of both parties in any dispute contribute to whether a conflict persists or gets resolved.

