

19 Janitor's Dream Comes True



1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 87.

What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.

LAS CRUCES, NM, USA Primo Torres has learned that dreams can **come true**. ¹Born in Juárez, Mexico, Torres grew up in Texas in a poor family. ²As a child, Torres **was a bookworm** and he loved school. At 15, he already **dreamed of** being a teacher.

³One day at school, young Torres **dropped by** to see his guidance counselor. He told the counselor his plans for the future. "But this guy said, 'Primo, you will never be college material,'" Torres said. "When he told me that, I gave up. He **threw cold water on my dream**."

⁴After graduating from high school, Torres got a job as a janitor at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He cleaned bathrooms and swept floors. ⁵The years **went by**. **Now and then**, he talked to his wife about his childhood dream of being a teacher.

⁶One day, when Torres was 41 years old, his wife gave him some papers. She had enrolled him in college! "It was strange **going back** to school at my age," said Torres. "I felt like an old man around all those kids!"

⁷The words of his first professor changed his life. "Everyone in this room **is capable of** succeeding. You can all **make an A**," he said. Torres **hit the books** and made his first A in college.

⁸Torres finished college, and now he's teaching at Mayfield High School. His students love him. "Many students don't realize that I'm the same man who used to sweep the floors in this school," said Torres.

New idioms and expressions

come true	become real; change from dream to fact
be a bookworm	love to read
dream of (doing) something*	think about something that you want to happen in the future
drop by*	make a short visit
throw cold water on something	discourage a plan, an idea, a dream, etc.
go by*	pass
now and then	sometimes
go back (to a place)*	return (to a place)
be capable of doing something	have the ability to do something
make an A (a B, etc.)	earn a grade (A, B, etc.) in school
hit the books	study

recycled idioms: grow up, give up

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon and Appendix D)


 **2. Listen**

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story two or three times.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

 **4. Listen and Complete**

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

6. Answer the Questions

About the story.....

- a. What kind of child was Torres?
- b. What did he dream of doing?
- c. What happened when Torres spoke to his counselor?
- d. As the years went by, what did Torres talk about?
- e. Why did his first college professor change his life?
- f. What is the moral of this story? Do you know people like the high school counselor and the college professor?

About you.....

- g. Tell about a dream you had that came true.
- h. Are you a bookworm?
- i. For how long do you hit the books on a typical evening?
- j. What do you dream of doing in the future? Does your family encourage you to follow your dreams, or do they throw cold water on them?

7. Write About Yourself

- a. I often drop by _____ in order to _____.
- b. Someday I want to go back to _____ because _____.
- c. I dream of _____ and _____ in the future.
- d. Now and then, I _____.

8. Write a Poem

Write a poem about your dreams for the future using at least three idioms from the unit.

9. Take a Dictation

10. Complete the Dialogue

a. Read this true story and fill in the blanks with idioms from the box.

- went by
- a bookworm
- came true
- made an A
- go back
- dream of

Great-great Grandmother Graduates

San Juan, Puerto Rico At the age of 102, Ana Molina made an unusual decision. She decided to (1) _____ to high school.

Eighty-six years ago, Molina had to leave school. Her family had no money, and she needed to work. Many years (2) _____, but she continued to (3) _____ getting her high school diploma.

Eight months after going back to school, Molina's dream (4) _____. She graduated from high school. A native speaker of Spanish, Molina is very proud that she (5) _____ in English.

Molina is a poet and (6) _____. She reads literature to the children in her poor neighborhood. "I'm in love with life," says the great-great grandmother.

recycled idiom: be in love with

b. Read or tell the story to a partner.