



NAME:

COURSE:

Stranger than Fiction

When the Old and New Cities of Jerusalem were reunited in 1967, a recently widowed Arab woman, who had been living in Old Jerusalem since 1948, wanted to see once more the house in which she formerly lived. Now that the city was one, she searched for and found her old home. She knocked on the door of the apartment, and a Jewish widow came to the door and greeted her. The Arab woman explained that she had lived there until 1948 and wanted to look around. She was invited in and offered coffee. The Arab woman said, "When I lived here, I hid some valuables. If they are still here, I will share them with you half and half." The Jewish woman refused. "If they belonged to you and are still here, they are yours." After much discussion back and forth, they entered the bathroom, loosened the floor planks, and found a hoard of gold coins. The Jewish woman said, "I shall ask the government to let you keep them." She did and permission was granted.

The two widows visited each other again and again, and one day the Arab woman told her, "You know, in the 1948 fighting here, my husband and I were so frightened that we ran away to escape. We grabbed our belongings, took the children, and each fled separately. We had a three-month-old son. I thought my husband had taken him, and he thought I had. Imagine our grief when we were reunited in Old Jerusalem to find that neither of us had taken the child."

The Jewish woman turned pale, and asked the exact date. The Arab woman named the date and the hour, and the Jewish widow told her: "My husband was one of the Israeli troops that entered Jerusalem. He came into this house and found a baby on the floor. He asked if he could keep the house and the baby, too. Permission was granted."

At that moment, a twenty-year-old Israeli soldier in uniform walked into the room, and the Jewish woman broke down in tears. "This is your son," she cried.

This is one of those incredible tales we hear. And the aftermath? The two women liked each other so much that the Jewish widow asked the Arab mother: "Look, we are both widows living alone. Our children are grown up. This house has brought you luck. You have found your son, or our son. Why don't we live together?" And they do.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words (2 points)

a. Why did the Arab woman want to see her former house again?

b. What kind of treasure was there in the house and where was it?

2. Are the following statements true or false? (1 point)

a. The Jewish woman's husband was a soldier.

b. The Arab woman had left a three-year-old son behind.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to (1 point)

a. Small objects, jewellery which might be sold for a big amount of money.

b. Very great sadness.

4. Choose a, b or c in each question below. Only one choice is correct. (2 points)

