

Word Mapping #5

Verbal Advantage Vocabulary #41-50

The door crashed open and there, framed in the family room doorway, stood Uncle Bernard, his huge bulk wrapped in a **commodious** plaid bathrobe, his fat pale ankles overflowing his ragged bedroom slippers. There had been no warning, no sign of his approach. He had advanced through the house in uncharacteristic silence to appear suddenly before them. There had not even been the sound of the flushing toilet, the usual announcement that he had risen from his slumber to walk once more among them.

The family, scattered throughout the room on sofas and easy chairs, froze. They had just begun the traditional Christmas distribution of the presents from the base of the tree to their own individual **proximity**. Mr. Edmund Phillips, a defense lawyer whose **urbane** manner was usually the opposite of his crude lower class clients, wondered if it would be more **prudent** to apologize to his wife's unpredictable brother for starting without him or stay completely silent on the matter. He shot a look over to his wife, who was handing a brightly colored package to eight-year-old Bobby in his Spiderman pajamas. She gave her husband a little nod, indicating that she would say nothing.

Sarah Phillips had a **wry** sense of humor that sometimes made her seem **flippant**. The last thing they needed was for her to say something that would push her brother into one of his more **cantankerous** moods. Then their holiday would end. Bernard would argue over anything and everything. It didn't matter what it was, or how small. Someone would say something and he would turn toward him or her slowly. He would get red in the face, squint at his chosen opponent, draw in a deep breath until he seemed to inflate with purpose, and then lash out at the poor soul. His arguments, which were more like lectures because he usually did all the talking, were aggressive, non-stop, and filled with **jargon** intended to at least confuse if not impress his opponent. He didn't intend to inform, or even persuade, but to **subjugate** his victim.

None of this was wanted on a bright December morning and so the Phillips dared not speak or move before the giant in the doorway. Except for two-year-old Cassie, who rose unsteadily, wavering on her feet as though pushed by a sudden breeze, her blue eyes bright, her infrequent teeth sparkling in her grin. Then, like a pink bunny-suited missile, she toddled headlong across the room; her arms thrown wide to finally capture the thick rough shin of her uncle. Bernard slowly lowered his gaze until his eyes rested on the giggling, gurgling bundle now wetly attached to his leg. His bushy black eyebrows drew down like the dark clouds of a gathering storm, and then lifted. A smile, bright and wide as the dawn, spread across his face, and he laughed, a great crashing laugh that filled the room. They all knew, now. This day would be **inviolable**, as it should be.