

What was Ms. Ig Really Saying?

Did you notice that Ms. Ig’s emails to Matt always include a quote from a famous person? You may think that the quotes are just random, something interesting to think about, but author Fred Bowen chose the quotes very carefully so that they became part of the story. Here’s an example:

On page 3, Ms. Ig tells Matt to write about football and her email ends with the quote: “Write what makes you happy,” by O’Henry. On page 1 and 2 Matt was clearly having a very hard time with the writing assignment and so she suggested that Matt write about football because she knew that football makes him happy. So the O’Henry quote fits perfectly with her advice.

DIRECTIONS: Here is a list of quotes that Ms. Ig put at the end of her emails. Pick one quote (page numbers are noted). Reread Ms. Ig’s email that ends with that quote and reread Matt’s emails to her. Use evidence from their emails to explain what the quote means and why that quote fits with that part of the story.

“The best writing is re-writing.”—E.B.White, page 7

“I write to understand what I am thinking.”—Abraham Verghese, page 11

“Any life will provide the material for writing, if it is attended to.”—Wallace Stenger, page 20

“Ever tried? Ever failed? No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”—Samuel Beckett, page 39

“What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.” —Samuel Johnson, page 44

“You can learn a line from a win and a book from defeat.” —Coach Paul Brown, page 61

“You cannot open a book without learning something.” —Confucius, page 88

“You don’t write to say something; you write because you have something to say.”
—F. Scott Fitzgerald, page 97

“It’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get back up.”
—Coach Vince Lombardi, page 109