



# Learn English Through Stories

## D Series

### D4

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# 1. Seebo and the Thief

By Sudha Murthy (Modified)



The children had gone with their Grandma to the rice fields that morning. They were all city kids and did not know a thing about farming! On the way, Anand was surprised to see a bird's nest on top of the tree. He said to Grandma, "I wonder how birds decide where and how to make their nests!" Grandma said, "The straw in the nest is from the rice field.

Do you know, farming helps human beings as well as birds?" Krishna replied, "Grandma, I thought wheat and rice can be just plucked from trees, like mangoes. But today I realized there is so much work in farming."

That afternoon, after lunch, when they gathered around Grandma for the day's story, she looked sharply at the children. They enjoyed learning about farming activities like cleaning seeds and separating straw from rice. In the city, everything came from the supermarket, but here they saw how things were really produced.

Grandma said, "Farming is very important. If farmers do not grow any food, what will we all eat?"

Anand said thoughtfully, "If farmers do such important work, why are they so poor?"



"That's true, my dear," Grandma sighed, fanning herself. "Of course, there are rich farmers too, people who own lots of land. But many in our country plough small pieces of land, and so make less money."

Then seeing the kids' disappointed faces, she put down her fan, sat up and said, "But I can tell you of a poor farmer woman who did not remain very poor. All due to her sharp sense!"

"Tell Grandma! Please do tell us!" the kids demanded. So Grandma started her story.

Seebo's lazy husband annoyed her too much. There she was working like a donkey in the fields: ploughing; watering; managing a hard, dry piece of land, while her husband lay down happily at home! Why, once when a stranger came asking for some food and water, he just pointed towards the kitchen and went back to sleep. The stranger, thankfully, was an honest man and took only enough for himself and his horse. There wasn't much to steal in Seebo's little house anyway. They were poor farmers with only a patch of land where nothing seemed to grow. Somehow Seebo ploughed the land, did some odd jobs in the neighbourhood, and made ends meet.

The land was right next to a temple. On some days her husband would come along with her on the pretence of helping her. As soon as she would be busy doing jobs, he would sneak away to the temple courtyard and gossip with passing villagers.

One day, as she was working in the field, trying to dig up the ground so she could sow some seeds, a thin man with a big moustache appeared beside her. He was a thief, and did bad things. Seebo, of course, did not know this. She greeted him politely and went back to her work. Now the thief wanted to steal the coins that were given as offerings in the temple and perhaps even the ornaments on the idol. The only way into the temple was by digging his way in from Seebo's land. But how could he do anything there, with this tough, no-nonsense woman working away?

Guessing Seebo owned very little money, he whispered to her, "Sister, why are you working so hard on this barren land? I will give you one thousand rupees, sell it to me."

Seebo raised her eyebrows; why did he want to buy the land for so much

money? Surely something was wrong . . .

The thief sensed she was not about to sell it to him, so he raised his price:

“A thousand and fifty? No? Two thousand? No again? FIVE THOUSAND? No?”

Seebo kept shaking her head. She did not like this odd-looking man who was offering her so much money for the field. Clearly, he had some evil plans.

Finally, to keep him quiet, she made up a story. “I will never sell this land. You see, it belonged to my ancestors. Now we are poor, but I am told that once our family was very rich. Though we lost a lot of our money, much of it was also buried here, in this field by one ancestor, to keep it safe from robbers. Then people forgot about it for years and years. My husband found a clue to the location of the hidden treasure just a few days back. Why do you think I am digging this hard earth? Not to sow seeds, oh no, that’s just what everyone thinks. I am actually looking for hidden treasure!”

The thief was speechless. He felt this woman was really innocent, giving such important information to a stranger. He thought, why should I not take advantage of this situation? Here he was, hoping to steal a few coins from the temple, and this woman was telling him about hidden treasure! He replied in a very humble way, “Yes sister, I understand; after all, it is your family treasure. Only you should get it.” He pretended to walk away, and went and hid himself a little way down the road.

Night fell; Seebo packed up her tools and went home. The temple, too, emptied out and the priest locked it up for the night. Then at midnight, when all was quiet, the thief crept into the field.

All night he dug and dug, looking for treasure, but of course, there was no sign of it as there never had been any treasure, to begin with! By the time dawn broke, he realized Seebo had made a fool of him and all he could do now was get away from the field fast.



When Seebo reached the field she grinned to herself. Just as she had expected, the thief had spent the night digging up the land nicely for her. All she needed to do now was sow the seeds. She worked hard in the field for the next few months and managed to grow a good crop. She sold those and finally, they had some money. With a part of this money, Seebo bought some jewellery.

Many months later, the thief decided to show his face in the village again. He was careful to disguise himself, though. He trimmed his long moustaches, tied a colourful turban and pretended to be a travelling salesman. No sooner had he stepped into the village than he saw Seebo going about her work. But what is this...

Instead of the simple, unadorned lady he saw last year, she was now wearing jewellery which looked as though it had been in the family for years! She was wearing gold earrings, gold bangles on both wrists...

Surely she must have located that missing treasure finally! He was determined to look in her house and find the rest of her money and treasure.

That night, he appeared at Seebo's house and said to her husband, "I am a traveller and don't have a place to spend the night. Please give me shelter for the night."

Seebo's husband agreed immediately. Seebo, however, glimpsed the man from inside the house and saw through his disguise. She knew he must be planning some robbery, so she said in a loud voice, making sure the visitor heard her, "Oh dear, your dear aunt is all alone at night and has asked us to come stay with her. You know how the dark scares her when your uncle is not there. Come, let us go there for the night." Then lowering her voice a bit, yet making sure she was heard clearly, she continued, "Don't worry about the jewels. I

have hidden them in little holes in the house walls. No one will suspect the hiding spot.” Then she came out and in her normal voice told the thief, “Brother, you can sleep in the veranda. The house will be locked. Here is some food and water for you. We will come tomorrow morning.” The thief smiled to himself at Seebo’s foolishness.

Her husband, meanwhile, stared at her with an open mouth, wondering which aunt and what jewels she was talking about. When she firmly walked off, he followed obediently.

The thief could not believe his luck. He had the entire night to search through the house, tap all the walls and look for the hidden bag of gold ornaments. So he started. Tap, tap, tap. Kick, punch and shove. He moved and he tapped, he kicked and he pushed the walls, hoping to spot the jewels. Finally, he tore down all the walls. But, of course, there was nothing he could find. Badly tired, he fell asleep and woke only with the crowing of the cock as the sun rose. Quickly he found his little bundle of things and ran off. Within minutes Seebo and her husband returned.

“Oh Seebo, see what the bad man has done to our house! You gave him food and shelter and made me come with you leaving the man alone in the night,” her husband cried.

But Seebo was smiling! Then she broke into laughter and said, “Don’t worry. I had planned this all along. You see, I saved money from our last crop to rebuild the house. I needed to call in some labourers to help tear it down, but our guest has done it for us! Now we can make a larger house for ourselves, just the way we always wanted.”

The whole village heard the story and started admiring her intelligence.

Many months flew by. The thief was burning to take revenge. How dare that village woman trick him, that too not once but twice! He realized that she was very clever.

One day, he dressed up as a bangle seller and started wandering in the village.

Seebo spotted him and knew who he was at once. She said to her friends who were crowding around the bangle seller, “Oh dear, I would have loved to get some for myself. But ever since that good-for-nothing thief tried to steal all our money by tearing down our house, I have hidden everything in a little hole in a tree in the woods.”

“Which tree?” her friends asked.

“Oh no, I am not saying which tree, but it is, at last, safe and sound, out in the forest.”

The thief looked at her. Yes, Seebo was wearing an ordinary sari with no ornaments at all.

Her friends turned around in astonishment at the rush with which the bangle seller threw away his collection of bangles and went to the forest. Only Seebo watched with a grin on her face.

Out in the forest, the thief searched high and low for the jewels. He climbed trees, poked around in bushes, got bitten, scratched and growled at, but he would not give up. The jewels were there somewhere and he had to find them.

So that is where we will leave him, running around in the forest, looking for money and gold that don't belong to him. Everyone praised Seebo for her clever schemes to get rid of the thief from the village. She continued to work hard and made more money from her farming and became a rich old lady. Even her husband was ashamed of his lazy ways and not helping her.

As for the thief, who knows, perhaps he is still in that forest, looking for what was never his.

Now if only he had learnt to work hard like Seebo—he would have been as rich!

The children laughed and laughed when the story was over.

“The poor thief!” Anand and Krishna giggled. “Maybe he got eaten by a tiger!”

Grandma grinned. “See,” she told Anand, “sometimes with a bit of luck and lots of pluck, people can change any situation in which they find themselves!”



## 2. Little Boy Caught Stealing

Once in a village, lived a little boy with his mother. His Mother use to sell cow's milk to nearby houses to make a living. The little boy was good and used to help his mother with her work.

One day, the boy with his mother went to the village temple. There, a sweets offering was made to God by Priest.

Seeing sweets, the little boy couldn't resist his temptation and went behind the Idol of God to steal some sweets. When no one was looking, the little boy took some sweets from the plate.

But the little boy's mother saw him stealing sweets. She got very angry and held the little boy by his ears and dragged him outside the temple.

The little boy's mother angrily said, "How dare you steal inside the temple. God is watching everything, now God will punish you."

And she started beating the little boy. He started to cry, but to her mother this act of stealing was unacceptable.

Just then a neighbour came, and saw this. When she saw the little boy's mother beating him, she came to the little boy's rescue.

She asked, "Why are you beating him?"

"This silly boy was stealing sweets from the plate which was offered to God. How can he steal in front of God? Is this what I taught him?" The little boy's mother said in a sad voice.

The neighbour asked his mother to calm down and then she turned to the boy and said, "Stealing is a bad habit. Even if you steal small things, it is not good. God is always watching us."

"I took out sweets from the plate assuming that God was not watching me, just like the way my mother mix water in milk every day before selling it and asked me not to tell anyone. I never tell anyone about her secret, and now she is beating me and not keeping my secret." said the little boy sobbing.

The mother realised her mistake and then instead of beating him she apologised to the boy for her bad behaviour and promised to be an honest person in future.

**Moral: Kids follow what their parents do and Not what their parents say.**

### 3. Grammar Page

## Proper Nouns

**Proper nouns** are names for particular people, places or things. They always begin with a capital letter.



Beethoven

#### Word File

Here are some more names of people:

Ali Baba  
Florence Nightingale  
Derek Jeter  
Pauline  
Johnny Depp  
Patrick  
Harry Potter  
Pinocchio  
Robin Hood



Lisa

Santa Claus



Your own name and the names of your friends are proper nouns too.



The names of countries and their people are also proper nouns.



American



Egyptian



Indian



Italian



Thai



Japanese



Korean



Malay



Filipino



Pakistani

**Country**

America  
Egypt  
India  
Italy  
Japan

**People**

Americans  
Egyptians  
Indians  
Italians  
the Japanese

**Country**

Korea  
Malaysia  
Pakistan  
France  
Thailand

**People**

Koreans  
Malaysians  
Pakistanis  
the French  
Thais

The names of towns, cities, buildings and landmarks are proper nouns.



Hong Kong



Egypt



the Great Wall of China



the Statue of Liberty



Tokyo



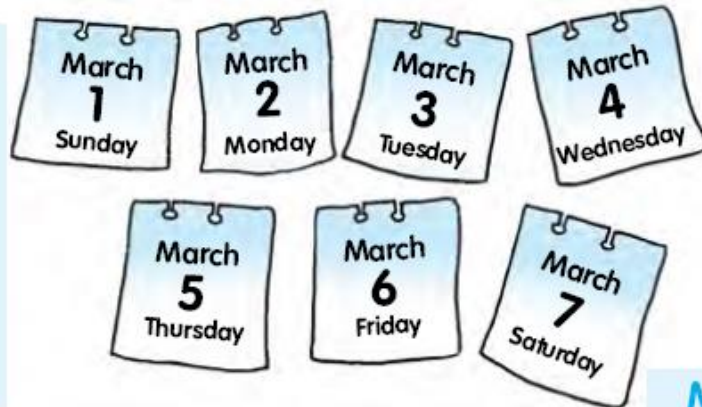
Sydney

- |          |                  |                           |
|----------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Bangkok  | New Delhi        |                           |
| London   | Denver           | the Grand Canyon          |
| New York | Central Park     | the Leaning Tower of Pisa |
| Paris    | the Eiffel Tower | Brooklyn Bridge           |
| Beijing  | Big Ben          | Pike's Peak               |

The days of the week and months of the year are proper nouns.

### Days

Sunday  
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday



### Months

January  
February  
March  
April  
May  
June  
July  
August  
September  
October  
November  
December



**January** is the first month of the year.

**Sunday** is the first day of the week.

A table that shows the months, weeks,  
days



The names of festivals, some special events and holidays are proper nouns, too.



Valentine's Day



Father's Day



Halloween



New Year's Day

### Word File

Here are more names of festivals and holidays:

Christmas	Mother's Day
Memorial Day	April Fool's Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	St. Patrick's Day