



# Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F9

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## 1. The Girl with the Loveliest Hair in the World

Once upon a time, in a city called Hoona, there lived a **merchant** who sold perfumes, and he had a daughter named Dorani whom he dearly loved. Dorani had a friend who was a fairy, and both Dorani and her fairy friend were able to sing more sweetly and dance more gracefully than anyone else in the kingdom. For this reason they were held in high favour by the king, or rajah, of fairyland. And the rajah's name was Indra.

Dorani had the loveliest hair in the world, it was like spun gold, and the smell of it was like the smell of fresh roses. But her hair was so long and thick that the weight of it was often **unbearable**. One day she cut off a shining **truss**. Wrapping the hair in a large leaf, she threw it in the river which ran just below her window.

Now it so happened that the king's son was out hunting, and had gone down to the river to drink when there floated towards him a folded leaf, from which came a perfume of roses. He opened it, and within he found a lock of hair like spun gold, from which came a faint, **exquisite fragrance**.

When the prince reached home that day he looked so sad and was so quiet that his father wondered if any ill had befallen him, and asked his son what was the matter.

The youth took the tress of hair which he had found in the river. Holding it up to the light, he replied, "See, my father, was there ever hair like this? Unless I can win and marry the maiden that owns that lock of hair, I must die!"

So the king immediately sent **heralds** throughout all his dominions to search for the maiden with hair like spun gold. At last, he learned that she was the daughter of the perfume merchant.

Rumour spreads quickly. Soon Dorani heard of this also. She said to her father, "If the hair is mine, and the king requires me to marry his son, then I must do so. But please ask the king to allow me this: after the wedding, though I will stay all day at the palace, I wish every night to return to my old home."

Her father listened to her with amazement, but answered nothing, as he knew she was wiser than he.

Of course, the hair was Dorani's, and soon the king **summoned** the perfume merchant and told him that he wished for his daughter to be given in marriage to the prince.

The father bowed his head three times to the ground. He replied, "Your highness is our lord, and all that you bid us we will do. The maiden asks only

this - that if, after the wedding, she stays all day at the palace, she may be allowed to return each night to her father's house."

The king thought this a very strange request but said to himself that it was, after all, his son's affair, and the girl would surely soon tire of going to and fro. So he made no difficulty, and everything was speedily arranged and the wedding was celebrated with great rejoicing.

At first, the condition attached to his wedding with the lovely Dorani troubled the prince very little, for he thought that he would at least see his bride during the day. But to his **dismay**, he found that she would do nothing but sit the whole time upon a stool with her head bowed forward upon her knees, and he could never persuade her to say a single word.

Each evening she was carried back to her house on a covered platform that was carried on poles on the shoulders of four men, a transport called a **palanquin**. Each morning Dorani returned soon after daybreak, and yet never a sound passed her lips, nor did she show by any sign all day long that she saw, heard, or heeded her husband.

Unhappy and troubled, the prince was wandering in an old and beautiful garden near the palace when he came upon the old gardener, who had served the prince's great-grandfather. When the old gardener saw the prince he came and bowed before him and said, "Child! Why do you look so sad - what's the matter?"

The prince replied, "I am a sad, old friend because I have married a wife as lovely as the stars, but she will not speak a single word to me, and I know not what to do. Night after night she leaves me for her father's house, and day after day she sits in mine as though turned to stone, and utters no word, whatever I may say or do."

The gardener asked the prince to wait for him. A little later he came back with five or six small packets, which he placed in the young man's hands. He said, "Tomorrow when your bride leaves the palace, sprinkle the powder from one of these packets upon your body. While continuing to see everything clearly yourself, you will become invisible to everyone else. More I cannot do, but may all go well for you!"

The prince thanked him, and put the packets carefully away in his turban.

The next night, after Dorani left for her father's house, the prince sprinkled the magic powder over himself and then hurried after her. Indeed he was invisible to everyone else, although he felt as usual, and could see all that passed before him. He speedily caught up with the palanquin and walked beside it to

the perfume merchant's dwelling. There his bride entered the house. He followed silently behind her.

Dorani proceeded to her own room where were set two large basins, one filled with rose oil perfume and one with water. In these, she washed herself, and then she arrayed herself in a robe of silver, and wound about her neck strings of pearls, while a wreath of roses crowned her hair. When fully dressed, she seated herself upon a four-legged stool over which was a canopy with silken curtains. These she drew around her. Then she called out, "Fly, stool, fly!"

Instantly the stool rose up in the air. The invisible prince, who had watched all these proceedings with great wonder, seized it by one leg as it flew away, and found himself being travelled through the air at a rapid rate.

In a short while they arrived at the house of Dorani's fairy friend, who, as I told you before, was also a favourite with the king, or rajah, of fairyland. The fairy stood waiting on the threshold, as beautifully dressed as Dorani herself was.

When the stool stopped at her door, the fairy friend cried in astonishment – "Why, the stool is flying all crooked today!

I suspect that you have been talking to your husband, so it will not fly straight."

But Dorani declared she had not spoken one word to him, and she couldn't think why the stool flew as if weighed down at one side. The fairy looked doubtful, but made no answer, and took her seat beside Dorani, the prince again holding tightly to one leg. Then the stool carried both on through the air until it came to the palace of Indra the Rajah.

All through the night the women sang and danced before the rajah Indra, while a magic **lute** played by itself the most bewitching music the prince had ever heard, and the prince was quite entranced. Just before dawn, the rajah gave the signal to cease. Again the two women seated themselves on the stool and, with the prince clinging to one leg, it flew back to earth and bore Dorani and her husband safely to the perfume merchant's shop.

Here the prince hurried straight on to the palace. As he passed the threshold of his own rooms he became visible again. Then he lay down upon a couch and waited for Dorani to arrive.

As soon as she came, she took a seat and remained as silent as usual, with her head bowed on her knees. For a while not a sound was heard. Presently the prince said, "I dreamed a curious dream last night, and as it was all about you I am going to tell it to you, although you heed nothing."

The girl, indeed, did not respond to his words and stayed as still ever. But in spite of that, he proceeded to relate every single thing he had seen the evening before, leaving out no detail. And when he praised her singing - and his voice shook a little - Dorani just looked at him, but she said nothing, though in her own mind, she was filled with wonder.

“What a dream!” she thought. “Could it have been a dream? How could he have learned in a dream all I have done?” Still, she kept silent. Only she looked that one time at the prince, and then remained all day as before, with her head bowed upon her knees.

When night came, the prince again made himself invisible and followed her. The same things happened again as had happened before, but Dorani sang better than ever. In the morning the prince a second time told Dorani all that she had done, pretending that he had dreamed of it. Directly after he had finished Dorani gazed at him. She said, “Is it true that you dreamt this, or were you really there?”

“I was there,” answered the prince.

“But why do you follow me?” asked the girl.

“Because,” replied the prince, “I love you, and to be with you is happiness.”

This time Dorani's eyelids quivered but she said no more, and was silent the rest of the day. However, in the evening, just as she was stepping into her palanquin, she said to the prince, “If you do love me, prove it by not following me tonight.”

And so the prince did as she wished, and he stayed at home.

That evening when she and her fairy friend flew through the air on the magic stool, it flew so unsteadily that they could hardly keep their seats. At last, the fairy exclaimed, “There is only one reason that it should jerk like this! You must have been talking to your husband!”

And Dorani replied, “Yes, I have spoken!” But no more would she say.

That night Dorani sang so marvellously that at the end the rajah Indra rose up and vowed that she might ask whatever she liked and he would give it to her. At first, she was silent. But when he pressed her, she said, “If you insist, then I request the magic lute.”

The rajah, when he heard this, was displeased with himself for having made so rash a promise, because he valued the magic lute that played by itself above all his possessions. But as he had promised, so he must perform.

“You must never come back again,” he said roughly, “for once having asked so much, how will you in the future be content with smaller gifts?”

Dorani bowed her head silently as she took the lute. She passed with the fairy out of the great gate, where the stool awaited them. More unsteadily than ever, it flew back to Earth.

When Dorani got to the palace that morning she asked the prince whether he had dreamed again. He laughed with happiness, because this time she had spoken to him of her own free will. He replied, “No, but I begin to dream now - not of what has happened in the past, but of what may happen in the future.”

That day Dorani sat very quietly, but she answered the prince when he spoke to her. And when evening fell, and with it the time for her departure, she still sat on. The prince came close to her and said softly, “Are you not going back to your house tonight, Dorani?”

At that she rose and threw herself into his arms, whispering, “Never again! Nay, never again will I leave you!”

So the prince won his beautiful bride. And though neither of them dealt any further with fairies and their magic, they learnt more daily of the magic of Love, which one may still learn, although fairy magic has long since fled away. However, thenceforth, they lived happily as a loving couple.

## Vocabulary

1. **Merchant:** trader
2. **Unbearable:** intolerable, unendurable; too painful, annoying or unpleasant to deal with or accept.
3. **Tress:** a section of someone's long hair.
4. **Exquisite fragrance:** strong pleasant smell.
5. **Herald:** messenger
6. **Summon:** order to come
7. **Dismay:** a feeling of unhappiness and disappointment.
8. **Palanquin (Palki):** a structure formerly used in East Asia for transporting one person. It consists of a box that is carried by four or six people by means of two long poles.



9. **Lute:** a musical instrument that has a body with a round back and a flat top, a long neck, and strings that are played with the fingers.





## 2. Grammar Page

# Question Tags

### Act out the conversation.

- Ryan : Hello, Archi, it's a lovely day today, *isn't it?*  
Archi : Yes, lovely. Yesterday was too hot, *wasn't it?*  
Ryan : Yes, it was. You heard about Atul, *didn't you?*  
Archi : No. I'm always the last to hear anything, *aren't I?*  
Ryan : He scooped five lakh rupees on the lottery.  
Archi : Really? He's lucky, *isn't he?*  
Ryan : Yes. We don't win things in a lottery, *do we?*  
Archi : Well, we can't stand here chatting all day, *can we?*  
Ryan : No. Let's go for a cup of tea, *shall we?*  
Archi : Yes, that's a good idea. There is a café at the corner, *isn't there?*  
Ryan : Yes. Let's go.



In the above conversation, the short questions '*isn't it, wasn't it, didn't you, aren't I, do we, shall we, etc*' are tag questions.

Question tags are short questions that are added to statements or imperatives to turn into questions. We use questions tags to confirm information.

You're a doctor, aren't you?

Positive Statement    Negative Tag

You're not going to leave, are you?

Negative Statement    Positive Tag

Group these sentences under the suitable headings.

- It's a lovely day today, isn't it?
- Yesterday was too hot, wasn't it?
- You heard about Atul, didn't you?
- There is a café at the corner, isn't there?
- He's lucky, isn't he?
- We don't win things in a lottery, do we?
- We can't stand here chatting all day, can we?

### Grammar Help

Negative sentences generally have negative words like **not, never, no, none, hardly, barely, scarcely, seldom**, etc.