



Learn English Through  
Stories.

B Series

B15

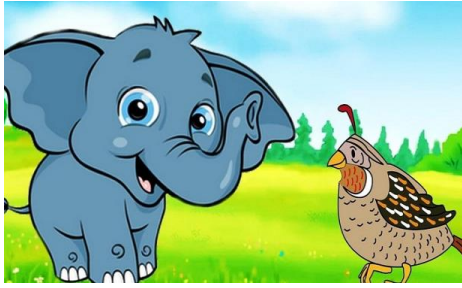
**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu.**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

## Contents

1. The Sparrow and the Elephant.
2. Potatoes in Her Stockings.
3. Tom the Dog.
4. The Crow Who Wanted to Be a Peacock.
5. Picture Dictionary.

# 1. The Sparrow and the Elephant



Once there lived a couple – he-sparrow and she-sparrow – on a big tree. They were living a happy life. They managed well in the winter. They always had saved enough food for a harsh winter. They also coped with hot summer without any problems.

One year, they built a new nest. She laid her eggs in the nest. As usual, one morning, they went out in search of food. It was a scorching, hot summer day. They spent their noon on the bank of a river.

While they were away, an elephant had come to rest under the tree. Something fell on the trunk of the elephant. The elephant became angry. Annoyed elephant broke a branch of the tree on which the nest was built. Unfortunately, all the eggs of the sparrow were broken. The she-sparrow was full of grief and began weeping for her eggs. Luckily she had many friends.

A woodpecker was a close friend of her. When he heard that she was crying, he came to her. He asked, “Dear Sparrow, what is matter? Why are you crying? Where is your husband?”

She replied, “My eggs had been crushed. My husband has gone get some straws. We have to make our nest again. That wicked elephant has done the damage. He broke the branches on which our nest was built. If you are a true friend of mine, do something quick. We have to take revenge on this cruel elephant.”

The woodpecker comforted her and said, “I got a friend. She is a fly and is very clever. We should go to her and take her opinion.”

They went to his friend the Fly. The woodpecker said to the Fly, “Good evening, dear Fly. We have come to you for help. This is my close friend Sparrow. She lived with her husband on the big tree. You know that big tree which is not very far from the river. She has lost all of her eggs. The culprit is an

elephant. He was angry about something. He pulled the branches on which my dear friend's nest was and her eggs."

The Fly thought for a moment then said, "Dear Sparrow, I understand your grief. I can sense what you are going through. Anyway, I have got a friend. He is quite close to me. He is a frog. We must take his opinion. The matter is very serious."

The next day, all three of them – the Sparrow, the Woodpecker and the Fly – went to the frog. When they reached, he was in a meeting with other frogs. They had their community issues. When the frog saw his close friend, the Fly, and some other creatures, he excused himself and came to meet his friend.

He said, "Hello, Fly, my dear friend. Long time no see. Where have you been? Who are your companions?"

The Fly explained everything.

The frog said, "What can an elephant do before a united crowd like us? Even though we are friends of friends. We are friends. Do what I tell you. Dear Fly, you go to the elephant at lunchtime. Hum a sweet tune into his ears. Dear Woodpecker, when the elephant closes his eyes, you take his eyes out with your spear-like beak. Now he is blind. The first thing, he would need water. I would sit on marshland croaking. He would think there is water. As soon as he would come to marshland, he would sink and die."

The next day in the noon, all the three played out the plan and the elephant was killed, when he drowned into a marshy area after being blinded by the woodpecker, when he closed his eyes in response to the music. Thus, with the smartness of all the three animals, the sparrow took her revenge on the elephant.

**Moral: Wit is superior to brute force.**

An old Punjabi song using the word sparrows:

ਸਾਡਾ ਚਿੱੜੀਆ ਦਾ ਚੰਬਾ ਵੇ  
ਬਾਬਲ ਅਸਾ ਉਡ ਜਾਨਾ  
ਸਾਡੀ ਲੰਬੀ ਅਡਾਰੀ ਵੇ  
ਬਾਬਲ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਨਾ ।

We are like a flock of sparrows.

Oh, Father, we will fly away.

We are on a long flight.

Oh, Father, we know not where we will end up.

## 2. Potatoes in Her Stockings



When sewing and darning was taught at schools, there was a little girl called Mary Jane. She learnt sewing and darning at school, and was really very good at it. But do you think she would ever bother to put a button on her shirt if it came off, or darn a hole in her own stocking? No - it was too much trouble!

The children used to laugh at Mary Jane when they saw holes in her stockings. “Look, Mary Jane has got potatoes in her stockings again!” they shouted. And really, it did look as if potatoes were sticking out. You could see her toes through in holes, or her heel peeped out like a round potato!

“You should be ashamed of walking about with holes in your stockings, Mary Jane,” said Miss Brown, her teacher. “You had top marks last week for darning in the sewing lesson - and yet you don't darn your own holes! Let's see that they are done before tomorrow.”

Now Mary Jane forgot all about mending the holes. She went off to school the next day with the holes still there. And she passed a little Brownie (a magic creature) called Mischief, who lived under the bushes in the lane!

Now Mischief was as bad as his name – and as soon as he saw Mary Jane running by with holes in her stocking, he grinned and sent a spell after her.

“Wheeeeeee-ip!” The spell caught her up and settled in her stockings. It set to work, and by the time Mary got to school she felt most uncomfortable. She had to stand in line with the others to sing the morning hymn - and really, she could hardly stand still! Something was very wrong with her feet.

“Mary Jane, you must come and stand out here in the front,” said Miss Brown, quite cross with the restless little girl. Mary Jane tried to walk, but she nearly fell over.

“What's the matter with your feet?” asked Miss Brown.

“There's something in my shoes,” said Mary Jane. “Stones or something.”

She took off her shoe - and what do you suppose was bursting out of the holes in her stockings? Why, real potatoes! The spell that Mischief the Brownie had sent after her was a spell for making real potatoes grow out through the holes in her stockings!

Mary Jane took out the potatoes and put them on her teacher's desk. She went very red. All the children stared at the potatoes and then they laughed. How they laughed! Miss Brown could not make them stop!

"Oh, Miss Brown, you are always teasing Mary Jane she has potatoes in her stockings, and now she really has!" cried a little boy.

Well, do you know? All that morning, poor Mary Jane had to keep taking her shoes off because potatoes would keep growing through her stockings! Miss Brown said there would soon be enough to cook for dinner for the whole school – you would never know, there might be enough to sell in the market next week!

Mary Jane couldn't walk home in her shoes and stockings - it was much too difficult to walk with potatoes bursting out everywhere. So she had to walk home in her bare feet.

And what do you suppose she did as soon as ever she got home? Yes - she got her needle and her wool, and she sat down and mended every single hole in her stockings! And from that day to now, no one has ever seen another hole in Mary Jane's stockings!

Note: In the olden days, it was embarrassing to have a hole in your stockings: nowadays, it is a fashion thing.



Old Punjabi song involving embroidery:

ਕੱਢਣਾ ਰੁਮਾਲ ਦੇ ਗਿਉ ਵੇ  
ਆਪੇ ਬੈਹ ਗਿਆ ਵਲੈਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਕੇ  
ਕੀ ਲੱਭਾ ਬੇਦਰਦਾ ਵੇ  
ਸਾਡੀ ਅਲੁੜਾ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਦ ਗਵਾਕੇ ।

You gave me your handkerchief to embroider.

Yourself, have gone to a foreign county.

Oh, hard-hearted, what did you gain?

By making an inexperienced, naïve one suffer.



### 3. Tom the Dog



There lived a dog named Tom. Mrs Kohli adopted him as a pet. She was a wealthy lady. She loved Tom. She had no family of her own. She only had far relatives. They had no interest in her other than her wealth. She looked after Tom well. In return, Tom tried his best to guard the home his owner. Whenever a thief or a burglar came near the home, Tom would bark as loudly as he could to scare them.

He was given three meals a day. He was always well hydrated – was given plenty of drink. His kennel (doghouse) was of a good size. It warm in the winter and cool in the summer. When night fell, he slept on a nice blanket inside his kennel. As soon as the day broke he had his food served before him in no time.

The neighbourhood dogs were not so lucky as Tom. They were jealous of Tom's fortune. Now and then, they would bark from outside the gate of Tom's house. They would utter curses at him. All this disturbed Tom a little. But he would only say, "Poor fellows, they have to struggle so much for their food while I am so lucky. I must not shout at them. I should try to be sympathetic towards them. I must not add to their misery."

So he kept quiet and went about his business, turning a deaf ear to their insults.

One day, as Tom was taking a walk with his owner. He saw that some young boys were throwing stones at some dogs. These were the dogs who insulted him. The dogs were terrified, and they had nowhere to go. They could not avoid what was going on. Many of them were bleeding and barking feebly in protest. But the boys were not in a mood to let go of them so lightly. They picked up heavier stones and threw them at dogs. The boys were having fun at the expense of the dogs.

Tom could not hold himself back. He was of a strong build and had a very deep voice. He knew that he could scare the boys. He managed to jerk his leash free out of his owner's hands. Then he ran towards the boys.

The boys were frightened at the terrible barking that Tom made. They dropped their rocks and ran away as fast as their legs could carry them.

“Go home,” Tom said to his abuser dogs, “no one will disturb you anymore.”

He ran back to his owner who had seen all that Tom did. She patted Tom and praised him for his courage.

That night, Tom's owner saw a strange sight. There were some dogs gathered near the gate of her house. They wanted to say something to Tom. She thought they might have come to thank Tom.

And right she was! From that day, Tom and his abusers had become friends. Tom's kindness had won over his abusers' hatred and he had earned their love, respect and admiration that nothing on earth could buy.

**Moral: Be good to all, even if they happen to be your enemies.**

## **My Dog**

My family got a new dog.

Its fur is short and white.

I absolutely love him.

But something is not right.

His ears are soft and long

And flop along the side.

His tail is quite short

But it is also very wide.

He's positively quiet.

He never makes a sound.

He's got a real cute jump.

I put him on the ground.

I'm sure when he grows up

He'll be massively strong.

His favourite food is carrots.

He eats them all day long!

## 4. The Crow Who Wanted to Be a Peacock



Once there lived a crow. He always wanted to be better than his Crow friends. He admired the feathers of peacocks. He secretly gathered some peacock feathers. One day, he took a dip in the river. He dried himself in the sun. Then he stuck the peacock feathers on his body. He looked at himself in the mirror. He thought to himself, "Not too bad. I will tease my crow friends." He went to see his Crow friends and showed off his feathers. They did not say anything. He laughed at them.

Then the crow went to the peacocks. He tried to mix with the peacocks. He was very friendly towards them. It was the time to spread their feathers as their evening ritual. They all spread their feathers. One of the peacocks said to the crow, "Hello, friend. Why don't you spread your feathers?"

The crow lied, "I don't feel well today."

They recognised that he was a duplicate peacock. They attacked the crow. They did not only take off the peacock feathers but also took off the crow's own feathers. They also battered him badly.

Now the featherless, badly battered crow went home. His old Crow friends wanted to laugh at him, but they did not. They felt sorry for him.

## 5. Picture Dictionary Page

### Food 1 Fruit



strawberries



raspberries



grapes



orange



lemons



peach



cherries



pear



plum



pineapple



dates



apple



watermelon



sandwich

Point, ask, and answer.  
>Do you like grapes?  
>Yes, I do. / No, I don't.



fig



melon



banana

# Vegetables



tomato



olives



onion



broccoli



beans



garlic



pepper



mushroom



potato





lettuce





peas



 eggplant  
 aubergine





 corn on the cob  
 sweetcorn



carrot



 zucchini  
 courgette



cauliflower



cabbage



cucumber