



Learn English Through Stories

C Series

C11

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

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1. The Magic Tinderbox

A soldier came marching along the high road: "Left, right, left, right." He had his backpack on his back, and a pistol at his side. He was coming home from the long wars. He was 27 years old. He was a tall, good-looking bloke. It was a hot summer day. He wanted to have some rest somewhere under a shady tree. He looked around and saw a tree at some distance. He went to the tree. When he reached, he was shocked to see a woman tied up to the tree.



The woman cried and said, "Please help!"

The soldier asked, "Who tied you up and why?"

The woman replied, "It's my relatives. They want my money and my land."

The soldier thought for a moment then he decided to free her. He took out his pistol from the pistol case and shot at the metal chain. The chain broke and the woman was free.

The woman was very tired and thirsty. The soldier took out his flask from the backpack and gave her water. She was very thankful to the soldier.

She told the soldier her story:

"I am very rich: a lot of money, gold and land. I live on my own. My relatives are very jealous of me. They are not good people. They are greedy people. They don't help the needy. I've got a special box. It is a tinderbox. It is not an ordinary tinderbox. It is a magic tinderbox. In the olden day, people did not have matches or lighters for lighting a fire. They used a tinderbox. The tinderbox has a piece of flint and a piece of steel in it.

A flint is a small piece of flint which can be struck with a piece of steel to produce sparks.



In fact, the tinderbox has no magic in it. Although it is an ordinary tinderbox, it has a special compartment at the bottom. It is full of expensive diamonds.

My relatives hired somebody to tie me to this tree. They are probably looking for the tinderbox in my house. They don't know I've got it in my rucksack. My mission was to sell these diamonds gradually and help poor people. You know there are so many problems in our country: unemployment; lack of education; poor health; lack of free medicine; rich getting richer – poor getting poorer; there is no end.

Now I tell you where I found the Tinderbox. Once, I went on holiday to South Africa. There, I went to a desert on a trip with many other people. I was separated from others and walked alone for a while. There, I stumbled on a small stone and fell. It was not a stone; it was this Tinderbox. One day, I wanted to clean and polish it. Then I found the secret compartment and the diamonds.

You have been a soldier. I assume: you wanted to protect our country; you wanted to protect our people. That was protection from outsiders –foreign countries. You have to protect the poor section of society in the country. You know the saying: a big fish eats a small fish; the rich eat the poor. The rich and successful stay rich and successful; the poor and unsuccessful stay poor and unsuccessful. Poverty begets hunger; hunger begets crime. Unfortunate people are trapped in a vicious circle.

I've got a lot more than enough money. I can carry on what I do. Please take this tinderbox. Help the needy: give free education; give them free medicine. If they are healthy and educated they can find some kind of employment. Help young girls. Empower them..."

They went to the town. They said goodbye to each other. She took a taxi and went home. He took a bus and went home.

He reached home. A housekeeper was waiting for him. He had no family. His parents died when he was young. His grandmother raised him but she passed away a year before. He went into his simple home and safely put away the tinderbox...

He was educated to year 10. His maths was excellent but not his English. He did not trust his far relatives. He wanted to do things himself. English is a must if you want to fill out permission forms to open a hospital or a school, etc.

One day he went to the town to withdraw his army pension. Then he went to a college to hire an English private tutor. Outside the college office, a young girl was waiting. She was highly educated. She had done an MA in English and a diploma in computer studies. A week earlier, the college advertised a post for an English teacher. She wanted to know more about the job that is why she

was waiting outside the office. When she saw him, she thought he was there probably for the same purpose.

She asked him, "Are you an English teacher?"

He answered, "No."

She said, "Why are you waiting here?"

He understood her, but he could not answer her back in English.

He said in Punjabi, "Can we speak in Punjabi."

"Of course, we can," said the girl in Punjabi.

Then they spoke in Punjabi.

"I am looking for a private tutor," said the boy.

"I am looking for a job to teach English," said the girl.

"Do you know? How much an English teacher earns a month?" asked the boy.

The girl said, "This is a private college. They don't pay much. I have no choice. I need a job. My mother is ill. She suffers from rheumatism."

He said, "You didn't tell me how much an English teacher earns a month."

She said, "This College's ad said up to 15000 rupees."

"If I pay you 20000 rupees a month, would you teach me?" said he.

The girl thought for a moment and said, "I teach you where?"

"I can come to your home. You can look after your mother and teach me," said he.

He did not only learn English but also learnt computing. For extra practice, he visited the website <https://learn-by-reading.co.uk...>

Three years passed by:

They opened a big free school and a free hospital and got married with a very simple wedding ceremony. Her wedding ring was not a diamond ring it was a stainless steel...

2. Bhua in England

“Jaspreet, is your Bhua coming to India this year?” asked Suman.

“Why?” said Jaspreet.

“She always brings nice and colourful shoulder bags,” said Suman.

“She normally comes in January. She says, in January, her business is slow. People don’t spend much money on things other than food. Many white people spend so much money on Xmas and when it comes January they have no money.”

Let’s see what Bhua does in England. Bhua has a market stall. She sells all kinds of bags.



History of Bhua:

She was a teacher in Punjab. She taught Geography and Social Studies in a private school. She got married there, but it lasted only a year. She was divorced. She went to England as a visitor to see her Massi. Massi was a popular lady. She was a regular Sikh temple goer. She had a lot of lady friends. Bhua also went to temples with her Massi...

Massi managed to arrange Bhua’s wedding to an Indian. He was late to get married. First, he didn’t want to get married. Then he was getting over 40 and could not find a suitable match for himself...

Anyway, Bhua is a married lady with two children. He works in a factory...

Why Bhua started the handbag business:

Bhua used to work in a clothing factory. She sewed jackets. Every Saturday she went to the stores and bought herself a new handbag. She was extremely fond of colourful handbags. If she did not like the bag she would return it and get a different one. Old bag is not a nice word in English. It is an insulting word.

One day, her husband said to her, “When you get older people will call you an old bag. Stop buying handbags every week. If you cannot stop, why don’t you start selling handbags? You can use it one week and sell it the next.”

Bhua agreed and started her business.

Bhua has got so many of her old bags and she cannot sell them even in her own stall because they are really out of fashion.

Every year Bhua goes to India, and she takes some of them with her and gives them to her nieces and their friends.

Bags



shoulder bag



bumbag /
fanny pack



handbag



rucksack/backpack



purse /
change purse



wallet



clutch bag



holdall / duffel bag



briefcase



attaché case



suitcase



trunk

If you want to know anything about the bags please talk to Bhua. +44...

3. The Fox and the Stork



Once, there was a small river in a forest. The fox and the stork were neighbours. They met each other every day.

One day, it was a scorching hot day. The wind was hot as well. They both were sitting under a shady tree. They had a long chat with each other.

“My friend Stork, do you like here? Sometimes, I don’t like this place. I am thinking of moving to somewhere else,” said the fox.

“It is not whether I like it or not. It is our place. My dad lived here. My granddad lived here. My great-granddad lived here. His dad lived here and so on. And also, there is no shortage of fish in the river” replied the stork.

“Thank you, Stork. I never thought about my ancestors...” said the fox.

When it was a little bit cooler in the afternoon they went home.

Then the monsoon came. For many days, it rained very heavily. The fox was stuck at home. He was getting bored every day. He wanted to amuse himself, somehow. He thought of a plan to play a trick on the stork. The fox went to the stork’s house and invited him for dinner. The stork agreed to come.

The fox prepared lentil soup. He added so many Indian herbs and spices: fresh ginger, black cumin, turmeric, red onions, and many more. The aroma of the soup was very appetising. Even if you had not been hungry you would have wanted to eat it. It was very tasty, too.

The stork did not eat lunch because he thought he would eat more with his friend in the evening. He took a bath in the river and cleaned his feathers with his long beak. The stork arrived early and said, “Fox, your food smells wonderful, what did you cook?”

“Just a lentil soup. I borrowed some Indian spices from a friend of mine who lives on the other side of the river. Are you ready to eat?” said the fox.

‘I cannot wait,” said the stork.



A soup dish



A flat - shallow plate

Although the fox had the soup dishes but he served the soup on two very shallow plates.



The fox ate the soup until he was full. He enjoyed the taste of his soup. The poor stork could not even eat a tiny bit because of his long beak.

The hungry stork was much displeased at the trick, but he was a calm. Instead, not long afterwards, he invited the fox to dine with him in turn. The fox arrived promptly at the time that had been set, and the stork served a fish dinner that had a very appetizing smell. But it was served in a tall jar with a very narrow neck. The stork could easily get at the food with his long beak, but all the fox could do was lick the outside of the jar, and sniff at the delicious odour. And when the fox lost his temper, the stork said calmly, “Do not play tricks on your neighbours unless you can stand the same treatment yourself.”



A **stork** is a large bird with a long beak and long legs, which lives near water.



A **fox** is a wild animal which looks like a dog.

Fox is also clever and good at deceiving.

4. Picture Dictionary Page

bought

from the verb to buy
I *bought* a present for my friend yesterday.
■ say *bawt*

bounce

bounces *bouncing* *bounced* *verb*
to spring up and down.



bounce *noun*

boundary

boundaries *noun*
the edge of a piece of land.

bouquet

bouquets *noun*
a bunch of flowers that has been specially arranged and wrapped.



■ say *bo-kay*

bow

bows *bowing* *bowled* *verb*
to bend from the waist as a greeting or a sign of respect.



■ rhymes with *now*

bow

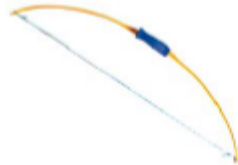
bows *noun*
the front of a ship.
■ rhymes with *now*

bow

bows *noun*
1 a knot with two loops.



2 a curved piece of wood with a string attached at each end, used for shooting arrows.



3 a wooden stick with horse hair attached at each end, used for playing musical instruments.



violin bow

■ rhymes with *go*

bowl

bowls *noun*
a curved, open container, usually used for food.



bowl

bowls *bowling* *bowled* *verb*
to roll a ball in ten-pin bowling.



box

boxes *noun*
a container to store things in.



cardboard box

boy

boys *noun*
a young male person.

brace

braces *noun*
a piece of wire that is fitted around your teeth to help straighten them.

bracelet

bracelets *noun*
a decorative band or chain that is worn around your wrist. Bracelets are usually made of metal or beads.



braille

braille *noun*
a type of writing where letters are represented by raised dots. People who are blind read the dots by feeling them with their fingertips.



■ say *brayl*

brain

brains *noun*
the part of your body inside your head that controls how you think and move.



brake

brakes *noun*
a part of a vehicle that slows it down or stops it.

brake

brakes *braking* *braked* *verb*
to slow down or stop a vehicle by using the brakes.

branch

branches *noun*
the part of a tree that grows out of the trunk.



trunk

branch

brass

brass *noun*
a hard, yellow-colored metal made from a mixture of copper and zinc.



brass door knocker

brave

brave *adjective*
willing to do something even though you are afraid.
The brave girl dived into the lake to rescue her brother.
■ comparisons *braver* *bravest*
bravery *noun*

bread

noun

a food made from flour and baked in an oven.



break

breaks breaking broke broken
verb

to damage something so that it cannot be used.



The cat is always breaking things.



break

breaks *noun*
a period of rest.

breakfast

breakfasts *noun*
the first meal of the day, eaten in the morning.



breathe

breathes breathing breathed
verb

to take air in and out of your lungs, through your nose or mouth.

breath *noun*

breathless

adjective

having difficulty in breathing.
Running for the bus made the old man breathless.

breed

breeds breeding bred *verb*
to keep animals so that they produce young.
She breeds racehorses.

breed

breeds *noun*
a particular type of animal.

A dalmatian is a breed of dog.



breeze

breezes *noun*
a gentle wind.

bribe

bribes bribing bribed *verb*
to pay someone secretly to do something that they shouldn't do.
The prisoner bribed the guard to set him free.

brick

bricks *noun*
a block made out of baked clay, used for building things.



bride

brides *noun*
a woman on the day she gets married.



bride

bridge

bridges *noun*
a structure that is built over an obstacle such as a railroad or a river.



brief

adjective
short in time.
He made a brief speech, lasting only five minutes.

bright

adjective
1 giving off a lot of light.
A car has bright headlights.
2 clever.
The bright pupil knew all the answers.
■ comparisons brighter brightest
brightly adverb

brilliant

adjective
1 very smart or clever.
The inventor had a brilliant idea.
2 very bright.
Diamonds are brilliant.

brim

brims *noun*
1 the edge of a hat.



brim /

2 the top of a container, such as a glass or a cup.



Full to the brim.

bring

brings bringing brought *verb*
to take something or someone with you when you go somewhere.
May I bring my friend along?

bristle

bristles *noun*
stiff hairs, usually on an animal or a brush.

nail-brush



brittle

adjective
easily broken.
Icicles are very brittle.

broad

adjective
very wide.



The river was broad at its mouth.
■ comparisons broader broadest

broadcast

broadcasts broadcasting
broadcast *verb*
to send sound or pictures by radio or television.
The Olympic games are broadcast all over the world.

broccoli

noun
a vegetable with edible green or purple buds. Broccoli is related to the cauliflower.



brochure

brochures *noun*
a small book that contains information.
■ say bro-shur