



# Learn English Through Stories

**D Series**

**D14**

**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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

## **Contents**

- 1. The Rabbit Man.**
- 2. The Donkey and the Statue.**
- 3. Grammar Page.**

# 1. The Rabbit Man

Once upon a time, there was a peasant called Ramu who lived happily alone. He had his own land, his own food, and his own company. If he got lonely, he sang himself a song. Life was hard, but he did not starve, and he was happy.

One day, a rich man who lived in a big house nearby came and knocked on his door.

“Ramu Nath!” said the rich man, smiling with his big teeth. “The time has come to pay your family debt.”

Ramu did not understand. “What family debt? Neither my father nor my mother ever mentioned such a thing.”

The rich man let out a noise of surprise. “But Ramu, how can it be? For the story of your family’s debt has passed down through my house for generations,” he said, shaking his head. “Your forefather was not a responsible person. He did not pay his debt. Your father was not a responsible person. He did not tell you about it. Shame on them.”

“My forefathers were good men,” said Ramu. “Now, if you don’t mind, my goat needs to be fed.”

Ramu tried to close the door, but the rich man caught it with his foot. Suddenly, his eyebrows lowered, and his eyes shone darkly.

“Ramu Nath,” he said coolly. “I must remind you that you are in my debt.”

Ramu saw now that there were some men behind the rich man, holding large bats. They were thick men who had grown on milk and meat every day. Ramu let go of the door.

Ramu did not even know this man’s name.

“Your forefather, seven generations ago, stole an apple from our tree. Now, my forefather was a generous man, so he made an offer: if the thief worked in his fields for three weeks, then he would forget anything had ever happened. The man refused, and so my forefather made a different offer: the thief could be in debt to him – this was a very expensive apple, the kind that is used to make the finest wine, I should add. Your forefather agreed, and so the debt has been passed down from generation to generation, collecting interest every year.

I must admit, I am quite surprised you had not heard of it. I thought your family’s huge debt would be common news in the area around here.”

Of course, the rich man did not tell him the truth: that Ramus's ancestor had been starving, that the master of the big house had offered him an apple, and then asked for payment afterwards, and that, when he had proposed the debt to him, the poor farmer had said, "Write down whatever you like, but I will never pay for that apple."

Ramu swallowed, as if he could taste the apple on his tongue.

"How much interest has collected?" he said quietly.

The rich man casually said the number and Ramu felt his stomach tighten, like a starving man who has just found his goat killed.

"Naturally, I am not a cruel man," said the master of the big house. "I will make the same offer to you as my forefather did to yours. You may come and work off the debt. Based on the interest that will be... three years of work."

Ramus's heart sank. But what could he do? He had not a single coin to pay the man with, and if he died without paying the debt, it might go to the other people in the village.

He sighed. "I agree to your deal."

"Good." The rich man clicked his fingers.

The master's men came in and quickly carried Ramu out of the building. He didn't even have time to say goodbye to his goat before he was carried to the big house.

For the next three years, Ramu worked hard, never shirking his duty or showing up late to work. He made the rich man a lot of money, and when the three years were coming to an end, the rich man thought, "I can't lose this man. Unlike the other peasants, he works like his life depends on it. And I suppose it does. How can I keep him here longer...?"

The next day, the master came to Ramu and said, "Ramu Nath, I have a new task for you. Take these hares and graze them for me, so that they go fat and delicious. But if you lose them, you will be in serious trouble..."

Ramu was tired from his years of work, so all he could do was nod and take the hares. But when he took them to the field to graze, the hares ran away and disappeared.

"Oh no!" he cried. "I have lost the master's hares. I'm sure he chose those hares because he knew they would run away, and he'll want to keep me working here longer... Argh, I would rather starve."

Just then, an old man came wandering through the field, carrying a pack on his back. He was blind, so Ramu said hello to him, and the old man asked him why he sounded so sad.

When Ramu explained his situation, the old man took a beautiful instrument out of his pack.

“This is a magic lyra,” he explained. “Play it, and see what happens.”



Instrument Lyra

So the peasant sat on a rock and tried to play the instrument. He had never held a musical instrument before, and it took him a long time to figure it out. He almost gave up, but when he finally produced a sound, it was beautiful, like a stream running through a clear valley, and the hares immediately ran back to him.

“Oh, thank you!” cried Ramu. But the old man was gone.

When the peasant returned to the big house, the master counted up his hares and was shocked to find all ten of them there. The next day, he sent Ramu out again, but asked his wife to go after him.

“Wear a disguise and find out how he is keeping those hares so close.”

So the wife dressed herself up in common clothes. Usually, she wore fine silks and heavy makeup, so just by wearing normal clothes, she looked like a completely different person.

She found Ramu sitting on a rock, singing to himself.

“Peasant!” she said, and then remembered that she was disguised as a common woman. “I mean, er, young man. What are you doing here?”

“I am grazing my hares,” he replied, looking at her strangely.

“Well? Where are they?”

So Ramu pulled out his instrument and played it, and all the hares came running to him. They danced around his feet, and he stroked one of their heads.

“Impressive,” said the woman. “For a peasant – I mean, for a handsome young man like you.”

“Handsome? Thank you.”

Ramu tried to return to his playing, but the woman said, “I would like to buy one.”

“Sorry. They’re not for sale.”

“I’ll pay a hundred rupees,” she said, pulling a bag of gold out of her pocket.

Ramu looked at her for a while, as if he was considering it, and then said, “No, I won’t sell to you.”

“Please, I’ll pay anything!” she said, taking his arm. It was much thicker than she expected – not with fat, but with muscle.

Ramu sighed. “Well, I suppose I might sell one of them, but only to someone who kissed me. And that’s on top of the hundred rupees.”

“Done,” said the woman, and before he could realise what was happening, she grabbed his cheeks and kissed him. Then she dropped the bag of money on the ground, picked up a hare and ran away.

“Miss, wait!” cried Ramu. “Don’t hold the hare so tight. You’ll strangle him.”

So she held the hare gently. It sat calmly in her arms, until suddenly, just when she was reaching the big house, it jumped out of her hands and ran away. What she didn’t know was that Ramu had waited, and played his music to call the hare back to him.

The wife explained to her husband what had happened, although she didn’t mention the kiss, and the next day he sent her out again, this time disguised as a man. She wore a moustache made of goat’s hair, but it looked ridiculous, and she tried to do a low, strong voice and ended up coughing.

“My price is the same as yesterday, miss,” said Ramu, clearly seeing it was her. “If you want to take my hare away from his grazing, you’ll have to feed me a kiss. And a hundred rupees, of course.”

So once again, the woman kissed him, and this time they kissed for quite a while, although the goat’s hair moustache made it very uncomfortable. Ramu warned her about holding the hare too tight, because they were such easy creatures to strangle, and once again he called the hare back with his magic instrument when she was halfway home.

The woman wasn’t thinking very clearly about what she was doing. So far, it was just a lot of fun, and she thought her stupid husband would keep sending her out, day after day, to buy hares from the peasant.

But she underestimated his love of money and cheap workers, so the next day, the master himself went to the field, disguised as a woman. His disguise was even worse than his wife's, but Ramu acted as if he were a charming young lady.

"They are such beautiful animals, aren't they?" said Ramu, picking up a hare and showing its long, soft ears. "My master gave them to me to graze, and I have been looking after them so carefully."

"Yes, yes," said the master. "How wonderful! I would like to own one myself. Now, how much do I have to pay you to buy one?"

"The price is a hundred rupees. But there's something you must do first before I will sell to you. I ask it of everyone, you see. Every time."

"And what is that, young man?"

"Oh, I don't think you'd be interested. You're too pretty to be interested in a poor peasant like me."

The master smiled sweetly. "Absolutely not. You're so handsome."

"All right, then," said Ramu, smiling. "You have to kiss me."

The master froze as he realised what the man was saying. He made a strangled noise and jumped so high in the air that his ridiculous disguise fell off. Then he ran back to the big house shouting, "Wife! Wiiiiife! What have you been up to?"

Ramu laughed until his sides were sore, and then he said, "Come on, my hares. We're not needed here anymore."

It was the last day of Ramu's contract, and he was free to go. His debt had been paid, interest and all. So he took the two hundred rupees he had won from the master's wife and went travelling. In every town he went to, the people thought he was just another poor, uneducated peasant, but when he played his instrument and the hares came to dance around him, they all clapped and gave him money.

Soon, his name spread through the land, and people saw him coming and cried, "Look, it's the rabbit man!"

When the hares realised this, they were not happy, and they bit anyone who called them rabbits and not hares. But "the rabbit man" sounded better than "the hare man", so people continued to make the mistake. Then, somehow, the hares bit only bad people and they did not harm any good person.

## 2. The Donkey and the Statue



There was once a man whose name was Ghumara. He had a donkey named Khota. The man made the donkey toll very hard. Ghumara whipped and lashed Khota with a stick. Khota was very unhappy.

One day, the villagers built a temple and asked Ghumara to bring a statue from the town. Ghumara went to the town with his donkey. On the way back, when Khota was carrying the statue of a religious deity – Ganesh - he had to stop on the road whenever devotees came forward to pay respect to the deity. The stupid donkey thought all the devotion was meant for him. He enjoyed all the attention. His master Ghumara saw the foolishness of Khota.

He hit Khota hard with a stick and scolded him saying, “Move along, foolish beast. Do you think that these people are paying respect to you? It is only the statue you are carrying that has created this devotion. Only fools take credit due to others.”

The donkey admitted his mistake. A year later, the villagers built a school for children. Ghumara went with his donkey to bring books for the children. On the way back, when the donkey was carrying the books on his back, nobody came to pay respect to the books.”

The donkey thought to himself, “My master and other people in the village call me a foolish donkey. They all bow down their heads before the statue but not before the books. The books are full of knowledge; the statue is clay with some artistic work. I think they are the biggest fool themselves – blind faith...”



### 3. Grammar page

## Interrogative Pronouns

The words **who**, **whom**, **whose**, **what** and **which** are called interrogative pronouns.

These pronouns are used to ask questions.

#### Who

**Who** is he talking to?

**Who** are those people?

#### Whom

**Whom** are you playing with?

**Whom** is he talking to?

#### Which

**Which** of these bags is yours?

**Which** do you prefer?

#### Whose

**Whose** is this umbrella?

**Whose** are these gloves?

#### What

**What** is your dog's name?

**What** are you talking about?

**What** is the time?



**Who** can be used as the **object** of a verb as well as the **subject**.

**Whom** is used only as the **object**. For example, you can say:

**Who** are you playing with?

or

**Whom** are you playing with?