



# **Learn English Through Stories**

**D Series**

**D17**

**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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# 1. A Dream Come True

By Satyajit

No one is ever fully satisfied with one's appearance. Ram might wish he had a little more flesh on his body - all his bones stuck out so! Shyam might wonder why he could not sing, when the fellow next door played the harmonium every evening and sang to his heart's content. Jodu might say - if only I could be a sportsman! Look at Gavaskar, he has created so many records and become so famous. Modhu's wish might be to become a film star in Bombay. If he could have his wish, money and glamour would both come pouring in.

Like most people, Nidhiram Datta too had a lot of unfulfilled desires. To start with, there were many things about himself that he did not like. For instance, he could see others eating fruit and enjoying it. Mangoes, lychees, apples, grapes... each fruit was well known for its taste and good qualities. People who ate them found such nourishment from each of them. But Nidhiram? He did not like eating fruit at all. He just wasn't interested. Why did God have to make him such a strange exception?

He was not happy with his appearance, either. He was reasonably good looking, but not very tall. Once he had got his height measured. It was five feet six inches. One of his colleagues was six feet tall. Nidhiram often looked at him and his heart filled with envy. If only he could gain a few inches!

Nidhiram worked in the office of Mukherjee Builders & Contractors. He had been there for the last fourteen years. His employers were quite happy with him. His salary was enough to keep him, his wife and his two children in reasonable comfort. But the truth was that Nidhiram did not like the idea of doing a job. So many people made a living by writing novels and stories. Of course, they had to work hard, but they were not forced to spend several hours, from ten in the morning to five in the evening, bent over a desk. Besides, one could make a name for oneself only by becoming a writer, or artist, or musician, not by doing a job in an office. But that was all Nidhiram felt he was destined to do. He would never know what it meant to bring joy to a large number of people. It was, to him, a great cause for regret.

One of his friends, Manotosh Bagchi, was an actor. He was really quite gifted, and had joined the theatre as a professional actor. He played the lead most of the time, and had, by now, become quite well known. Nidhiram had said to him, more than once, "Why don't you teach me how to act, Manotosh? I really

want to learn. If I could get even a couple of small roles in amateur theatre, people would come to know me!”

Manotosh’s reply had been, “Not everyone can do it, Nidhiram. You need a good, powerful voice to be an actor. You haven’t got that. If people in the back rows couldn’t hear you, they’d boo so loudly that you’d forget all your lines!”

This year, Nidhiram went to Puri during the Puja holidays. There, he found a sadhu baba. The baba was standing on the beach, surrounded by a group of about twenty men and women. The sight of a sadhu always made Nidhiram curious. This one, in particular, looked so powerful that he felt he had to go and see him more closely.

Nidhiram pushed his way through the crowd. Babaji’s eyes fell on him almost at once.

“What are you trying to do, Nidhiram?” he asked. “Why do you wish to be what you are not?” Nidhiram’s jaw fell open. How did the sadhu learn his name? Clearly, he had some psychic powers. “Why, n-no, I mean...” Nidhiram faltered.

“No? Are you denying it?” the sadhu cut him short. “I can see it all so vividly. Your body has been divided into two. One is what you are. The other is what you desire to be. It is your desire that’s getting stronger. What are you going to do?”

“You tell me!” Nidhiram cried. “Please tell me what’s going to happen. I am a simple man, Baba, I know nothing.”

“You will get what you want,” the sadhu replied. “But not right away. It will take time. After all, the whole thing must be uprooted. Then new roots must grow, and spread under new earth, to gain a foothold. It won’t be easy. But, as I just said, one day it will happen.”

Nidhiram returned to Calcutta a few days after this incident. One day, soon after his return, he suddenly felt like eating a banana. He spotted a man selling a whole basketful at the crossing of Bentinck Street. Nidhiram bought one from him, ate it, and found it quite tasty. Could this mean that, even at the age of thirty-nine, one might find one’s tastes changing? Nidhiram did not, at the time, think that this had anything to do with what the sadhu had said. But this was the first of the many changes that slowly came over him.

He went back to his office but, for several days, could not concentrate on his work. His mind kept going back to what the sadhu had told him in Puri. One day, Phoni Babu, his colleague who sat at the next table, lit a cigarette when it was time for their lunch break, and said, "Why are you so preoccupied, Mr Mitter? What's on your mind?"

Then he inhaled deeply, letting out in the next instant a cloud of smoke, which got into Nidhiram's throat and made him cough. This was surprising, since Nidhiram often smoked himself. He was used to it. Why then did it upset him today? Why, he had a packet of Wills in his own pocket! It suddenly occurred to him that he had not had the cigarette he normally had at around eleven, after a cup of tea. This had never happened before. So here was another change - a big one - that had crept into his daily habits. Nidhiram realized it, but said nothing about it to Phoni Babu.

After that day, Nidhiram began to change very quickly. He gave up wearing a lungi at home, and began wearing dhotis. Then he became a vegetarian, and started going to a homoeopath instead of his own doctor. He even switched the parting in his hair from the left to the right. He had always been clean shaven. Now he grew a small, thin moustache. His hair grew longer, over his neck.

One Saturday, Nidhiram took his wife to see a play. His friend, Manotosh Bagchi, was playing the hero. Nidhiram realized what a capable actor he was. He knew how to impress the audience; and the audience, too, showed its appreciation by breaking into frequent spontaneous applause.

Nidhiram felt a fresh longing to become an actor. He went to see his friend backstage after the show, and praised his acting prowess with the utmost sincerity. Then he added a few words of regret about his own failure to appear on the stage. Manotosh slapped his back. "Why do you wish to invite trouble, my friend? Do you realize how uncertain things are in the theatre?" he asked. "I may be here today, but tomorrow I may well be gone. You are better off with your steady job, far more secure."

Nidhiram had gone to the matinee show. On his way back from the theatre, he stopped in College Street and bought a few plays, as well as books on the theatre. Manorama, his wife, asked, "What will you do with these?"

"Read them," Nidhiram replied briefly.

“But I’ve never seen you read plays!”

‘Now you shall,’ said Nidhiram.

Manorama had not failed to notice the changes her husband had undergone. But she had not commented on them. She did not know anything about the sadhu or what he had told Nidhiram, for she had not accompanied him to Puri. On that occasion, she had had to go back to her own house to look after her ailing father. Nidhiram had decided not to tell her anything, either.

However, so many changes had occurred over the last few months that they were bound to attract his wife’s attention. To tell the truth, she was happy with these changes, for they were all for the better.

Nidhiram read all his new books over the Christmas holidays. Then he learnt a number of lines the hero of one of the plays was supposed to speak, and held a little performance for his wife. Manorama’s eyes nearly popped out. She could never have imagined that such talent was hidden within her husband.

Nidhiram was thirty-nine years old. No one at that age can possibly grow taller. The average male grows in height up to the age of twenty-five, at the most. But Nidhiram noticed one day that the sleeves of his shirts appeared shorter. He measured his height once more. It was now five feet nine inches. He did not disclose this extraordinary occurrence to anyone except his wife. Manorama had to be told because he needed to get new clothes made. It proved to be an expensive business, but overjoyed by this unexpected turn of events, Nidhiram did not mind spending the extra money. Besides, it was not just his height that had improved. His complexion now looked clearer, and his physical strength had increased considerably.

One day, he returned from work and spent a long time standing before the mirror fixed on his wardrobe. Then he took a decision. He would go to Shambazar, where most of the theatre companies had their offices. He had heard that the Samrat Opera Company had recently lost Moloy Kumar, who used to play their male lead. Nidhiram would go and talk to the manager of Samrat.

He did not waste any time. Soon, he was sitting face to face with the manager, Priyanath Saha. “Have you had any experience?” the manager asked.

“No, none,” Nidhiram admitted frankly, “but I can act. Would you like me to show you? I know all the lines Moloy Kumar spoke in your play Echoes.”

“Really?” said Priyanath Saha. “Akhil Babu!” he called a second later. A bald, middle-aged man lifted a curtain and entered the room.

‘Did you call me?’ he asked.

“Yes. Arrange an audition for this man. He says he knows Moloy’s lines. See if he’ll do.”

It did not take them long to find out. In only a few minutes, Nidhiram proved that he was not just good, but in fact, much better as an actor than their departed hero.

On the first of January, he resigned from his job and joined Samrat. His starting salary was two thousand five hundred. If the audience liked him, it would go up soon, he was assured.

No one in his old office had ever thought that he might leave them one day. “Well, change is inevitable, isn’t it?” Nidhiram said to his colleagues philosophically. “It would be a mistake to assume that every man would remain the same, or do the same thing, all his life!”

Even so, he could not cut himself off completely from his old friends and colleagues. One Monday, he turned up during their lunch hour for a chat, and learnt that his vacant post had been filled. It was Phoni Babu who gave him this news. “This new man,” he said, “is your opposite. I believe he used to be an actor before.”

Nidhiram felt curious. “An actor? What’s his name?” “Manotosh Bagchi. Apparently, he had met a sadhu in Puri. This sadhu told him that a lot of changes were in store for him. The man was quite tired of his life in the theatre. He says he’s far happier now with a quiet, steady job!”

## 2. Jokes

### Smoking

Once, Mr Sharma went to England. In the evening he went to attend a party given by Margaret Thatcher in a marvellous house. As he was passing through a gallery of that house, a guard stopped him and fined him with twenty-five pounds for smoking, as smoking was prohibited there. Mr Sharma searched through his pocket but he had only a fifty pound note. So he asked his wife, "Mrs Sharma, you smoke too."

### VCR

A Sardar walked into a household appliances store. The owner was busy tallying his accounts and his eyes were glued to his ledgers. The Sardar asked the owner "I want that VCR." Without taking the eyes off the ledgers, the owner replied, "No, Sardar, that is not for you."

Our Sardar felt insulted. He thought that the shopkeeper was biased against Sardars. Next day, he arrived at the shop clean shaven and without his headgear. He asked for the same VCR. The owner, who was again busy tallying his accounts replied without raising his head, "No, Sardar, that is not for you."

The Sardar was perplexed. How could the shopkeeper guess correctly that he was a Sardar? So, the next day, the Sardar went to the same shop disguised as a woman, in churidar pyjama and jumper, head covered with dupatta, and asked for the same VCR. The shopkeeper again replied without raising his head - "No, Sardar, that is not for you!"

Puzzled, the Sardar asked the shopkeeper how he guessed that he was a Sardar without raising his head. "Very simple," said the shopkeeper. "That is not a VCR. That is a washing machine!"

Boy: mom, aaj mera dost ghar aa raha hai... ghar ke sab khilone chhupa do

Mom: tera dost chor hai kya?

Boy: nahin, woh apne khilone pehchan lega.

Boy: Mom, my friend is coming to our house; please hide all the toys.

Mom: Is your friend a thief?

Boy: No, but he will recognise which toys are his.



### 3. Grammar page

## Adjective Endings

Adjectives have different **endings**.  
Some adjectives end in **-ful** or **-less**.



homeless people



playful puppies

a **beautiful** dress  
a **careless** driver  
a **faithful** dog  
a **harmless** insect  
a **useful** tool



An adjective that ends in **-less** is the opposite of the same adjective that ends in **-ful**.

For example:

careful – careless

useful – useless

colorful – colorless

harmful – harmless

The **-ful** ending means **having a lot of something**.

For example:

painful = having a lot of pain

hopeful = having a lot of hope

The **-less** ending means **without**.

For example:

leafless = without leaves

sleeveless = without sleeves

