



Learn English Through Stories

G Series

G12

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A Love Story in Reverse

By Sujir Pavithra Nayak

Sunday, 12 August 2012

And They Lived Happily Ever After!

“If the only prayer you said was thank you that would be enough.” - Meister Eckhart

And I mean it from the bottom of my heart. The benevolence and support that you all have showered upon this tiny blog has brought colossal contentment to our beloved Ramanima.

Mumbled in between sobs and sniffles, she said, “That stupid new technology (technology) and that fish net (Internet)... Say thank you to them, Putti... (*Sob! Sniff!*)... I don’t know how they knew! Truly God’s blessings; I thought I will die from a heart attack rather than old age. My Krishna has come back to his Radha. Hare Krishna!”

And that is how Ramanima expressed her gratitude to all of us.

I realized that love is not just about being romantic and mushy (emotional), but it is about strength and respect at the age of fifty-three.

The meeting finally took place at Cubbon Park, beside the big rock. The first reactions of the lovers took the whole crowd by surprise! Instead of a warm, yearning embrace, they looked at each other peculiarly. It was like watching two chimps in a zoo being moved into the same cell for the first time. Singhji curiously took Ramanima’s hand and started to peel off the band-aid that covered the tattoo off her wrinkled forearm whereas Ramanima kept brushing the long-pepper salt hair off Singhji’s forehead to check for the mark. Age had worn and withered both their physical appearances but some marks were forever. After they were satisfied with their findings, they suddenly locked themselves in an embrace, just like the audience had first expected. Cheers and claps followed, and the couple broke away from their embrace, suddenly conscious and overwhelmed by their surroundings. After a light-hearted speech everyone left for their respective homes, knowing that what they had witnessed that day was nothing short of a modern Cinderella fairytale.

Thirty years of hope, three lives, two hopeful lovers, and a modern fairy godmother and her ever so obliging helpers - these are the perfect ingredients for a contemporary-antiquated love affair!

Sunday, 15 July 2012

It's the Final Countdown.

"There are certain moments in life that are moments of impact. These are the moments that will affect your entire life." - *The Vow*

My evenings are only filled with blogging, probing and watching romantic movies on a minimized window on my laptop. My friends tell me that I am insane, my parents have given up on me and my bosses at the office would sack me without hesitation if I weren't employee of the year! Only you, my readers and supporters, understand what I am going through. It is because of you that two lives will be changed forever!

I know this journey has been lengthy and tedious, and I won't deny that more than fifty times I have decided to give up. But you, my readers, have been my motivation, and today I want to share with you the greatest surprise of all!

We may have finally found Singhji, and this time I did check out his story. I am 99 per cent sure it his him. After all, only Ramanima can be the judge of that. So I am going to share the story of how we finally were contacted by the 'real' Singhji.

Nearly two weeks ago I received a postcard from a chap in Dublin, Ireland. It read: "If you want to know the truth about Singh, then you must first hear a story. I will be available from 11.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. IST on this number +353 894..."

Strange! At first I thought this was a prank by yet another one of the many pranksters who have sent us fake letters, mails, emails, postcards, etc. But there was something intriguing about this card. So I called the number. What I heard next I would not have anticipated in a million years.

The voice at the other end was hesitant and had an unrecognizable accent. But there was also willingness and a sense of relief; like a heavy burden was being lifted off this man's chest!

"Errr... Hello, am I speaking to Miss Alicia?... Great! Hello again ... Before you ask me anything, let me tell you my tale:

About thirty years ago, when I was a hot-blooded young chap, I roamed the

free streets of Punjab with not a care in the world. I had no job, not much education, and like most young, hot-blooded Sikh boys, I would eat, spend time with my friends, run in the fields and tease girls. I had a way with the ladies and secretly dated many girls during my day, which was not accepted by society then. My father had heard a lot of rumours about my activities and wasn't pleased at all. He decided to send me to the south of India - to Mysore University - to get a good education and a job so that I wouldn't squander my life away. I was very unhappy about this decision but I respected him enough to obey his orders.

The university life was completely different from how I had lived in Punjab. I learnt about new things like discipline and respect for fellow students. There were very few girls who studied with us. But there was this one girl, Ramani. Even to this day my heart skips a beat whenever I think about her. She was the only one who could turn a hooligan like me into a little puppy with just her words. I had instantly fallen in love with her charms. It was hard to court a girl like her. She was the most beautiful of all the girls at the university. I courted her for ten months before she finally reciprocated my love.

Within a week of this development, I received a call from my brother. He said that our father had been killed and that riots had begun all over the north of India against the Sikhs. Devastated, I had to leave Mysore immediately. I left a friend's address with Ramani and told her to keep sending me letters to that address. She was heartbroken when I last saw her. Little did I know that it would be the last time I saw my beloved.

When I went back to Punjab, the state was in absolute disorder. People who considered each other brothers had turned into bitter foes. As soon as I reached home, I was met with a rude shock. My eldest brother was forced to join the Sikh extremist group. Currently, the members of this group were forcing my middle brother to join as well, saying that our family's lives were at stake. Within a month my eldest brother was killed and my middle brother was once again asked to join the group. When he refused, his wife was burnt alive. They also threatened to kill me, so he was forced to join the group.

A few days later, I was approached by a friend of my brother's. He told me that my brother had been captured by the police and they were coming after me since they did not want to leave anything to chance. He told me that the only way to get out of this mess was to leave the country in a shipping container and flee to the USA. All this while I was in touch with Ramani and we exchanged letters often. But I knew that I would never be able to see her again, so I wrote her my last letter. That same night I left in the container with forty other men heading to the USA. We travelled for twenty-seven days

with limited food and water.

But when we finally saw the light of day we were not in the USA!

We had landed in a strange country. Later, we were told that we were currently in Portugal, and the container would be shipped off to Mexico immediately, without food!

After another journey of twenty days we finally arrived at a port close to the USA - Mexico border. To cross over into the USA, you had to cross a river and a forest illegally. On the river, a bridge was being constructed, and the workers took a break for fifty minutes every day. This would have to be our time to move. All in all in a span of fifty minutes, we had to swim across the vast river. After that we had to cross the forest at night. Little did we know that the forest was not only home to wild animals but also Mexico's most feared mafia gang!

We lost about seven men in the waters, and another five to wild animals. The survivors ran for their lives through the forests. As expected, we were captured by the gang and held for ransom. Everyone was asked to get approximately a lakh of Indian rupees in exchange for their lives. Those who did not have anyone back in India were shot on the spot. The rest of us were held captive. Then one night, when the leader and his troops had gone out and the men guarding us had relaxed a bit, we managed to kill them all and escape.

We fled to the border only to be greeted by a fresh round of firing bullets. The border guards!

We screamed and begged and lifted our arms to signal surrender. We lost two of our friends to the bullets. The police then captured the remainder of us and held us at the police station for questioning. It was then that I saw a clock and a calendar for the first time since I'd left India.

It had been almost five months since I last ate a decent meal. Looking around, I saw that only twelve of my friends had survived! After that we asked for political refuge in the land of dreams. We were granted it, but we didn't realize that we were bound in the USA forever. It was only after another ten years that we finally were helped by a non-government organization. They fought for our rights and we were granted citizenship. After that, I joined a few other Indians and set up a small spare-parts business. And from there, there was no turning back. Today I head the Europe zone of the company. I have never travelled to India, nor tried to contact Ramani. Call it spinelessness or cowardice, but the truth is that I never wanted to see Ramani with any other man. Somewhere deep down, I was still that same hot-blooded Sikh.

Then about three months ago, my friend from Punjab called me up to say that some girl had come to our old home and had been asking about me. He sent me the details from the business card you had left. I used the Internet to find you, and what I came across was simply unbelievable! How much you had dedicated your life to finding me! I was ashamed. It took me three months to decide if I should contact you and I am glad I did. Alicia, I know this must be too much to take in; and if you still don't believe me, just ask Ramani to show you the tattoo on her hand. It will read 'Shyam', which is another name for Lord Krishna. And tell her you have found her Krishna for her. Also, don't forget to add that her Krishna has a scar on his forehead from the day he cut himself while fighting thirteen boys in college to prove his love for her. You believe me, Alicia?"

I was flooded with emotion; I actually had a lump in my throat. It was different - it was victory mixed with a sense of witnessing true love unfold. And I justly have to thank and give most of the credit to my friends who supported us through our blockbuster journey which we made together.

The wait has finally ended for all of us. The location is booked and the message has been spread. We all gather at the rock in Cubbon Park, near the Victoria statue, at 4 p.m. sharp on the 12 August 2012. Let us all be dressed in something red, symbolizing love, when we bear witness to this stunning moment in front of our eyes.

Oh God! I am so wound up! I'm finding it difficult to get myself to wait for a month.

Imagine having to wait for thirty years!

Sunday, 1 April 2012

I Am a Love Fool!

What a coincidence? Today is the first of April and here, at our tiny NGO office, we have already received twenty-nine prank postcards (I must applaud the timing!), sixteen emails (all pranks, of course!) and even seven prank calls. And in good humour I thank all our readers for cheering us a bit with all these pranks.

But I am nowhere close to finding Singhji. I just returned from my fourth trip to Jalandhar and unfortunately it has still yielded no results. The only good news is that I finally tracked down Singhji's original house, which is now occupied by some other family. This piece of crucial information was shared by a Miss Harpreet, our dedicated reader from Punjab. She even helped us track down the house. I am really overwhelmed at how much support we have been receiving from all our beloved readers. Thanks again, guys. I can

never really thank you guys enough!

Let me tell you why this story is so important: I have been in and out of relationships and no one has really stuck on. And I am sure that most people today think that commitment is something that weighs us down. I see marriages breaking up around me and people already on the 're-bound' after such great commitments - even before they have time to call their friends and family. Society has advanced so much now that we have no time for anything!

When I first heard Ramanima's story, I felt like I was being told the plot of a movie. We study the examples of Romeo and Juliet, or Salim and Anarkali, as part of history and literature. Epic love has always been referred to in the past tense since we have no such examples to provide in the present!

Personally, I feel that all of us are slowly losing faith in the great love story, and the Prince Charming theory now only seems applicable to the real-life royal families!

My cause is a little selfish, I must state. I have never found true love. Even so, a part of me has always wanted to be a part of one great love story. So when I heard Ramanima's tale, I decided that I was going to become the modern-day Fairy Godmother to this ever-so-hopeful Cinderella, and help her find her true Prince Charming.

This Fairy Godmother is on a mission!

Sunday, 4 December 2011

The Very Beginning!

I have a mission to embark upon. A chance encounter on my trip to Mysore has left me with no option but to use this medium of mass reach to start a hunt. No, it's not duck season, but it is the season of love. I had met a woman who told me her story of lost love - and it was so heartwarming that I got swept away by it.

For the past five months I have turned hundreds of pages of directories, and used various people finders and search engines. I've travelled three times to Jalandhar, Punjab, and even carefully tracked the Mysore University records from 1982 to 1985 *just* to be thorough in finding a Mr Gurmeet Singh - the hero of our love story.

I was driving from Bangalore to Mysore with a couple of friends, when one of my friends suddenly had to pee. And since we were passing a village we

randomly knocked on the door of a pretty house. A sweet middle-aged woman opened the door and welcomed us into her home! We had an instant connection with her and told her that we were on our way to the Mysore University, and one thing led to another and suddenly we were listening to a story which changed our lives.

Ramani - lovingly known to us as Ramanima - was a student at the university thirty years ago. While studying there, she fell in love with a Sikh boy. She had her best memories there and she narrated her story with such passion that we got lost in the details. In fact, right from the first moment she laid eyes on him, she knew he was the one! (How can anyone know that?) But while India may have got her freedom, society was still bound by tradition and love was misunderstood. The stolen glances, the meetings in the park, the large group of friends accompanying them on their outings - it was all like a 1960s' movie! Incidentally there is even a part where she put Singhji through a test to prove his love.

One thing led to another and he was made to beat up thirteen guys, cutting his forehead in the process, and was nursed back to health by Ramanima. (So cute!)

Their love story was cut short when he suddenly left for Jalandhar when the riots broke out there. The two of them were in touch for a while, writing letters for a few weeks. But then he disappeared completely from the face of the earth!

She told us that in her heart she knew he was out there somewhere. She had been waiting for him for about thirty years.

When she showed us the letters, we were stunned! On our way back, as a joke, we took up the mission to find Ramanima her true love. But today I have realized that the mission has become an obsession for me. So I have a request, my dear readers. I need your help!

Anyone interested in helping me out can post their comments on this blog or write to me at mission_r_s@gmail.com! I am also starting a Facebook page. Please 'like' it and spread the word!

Together we can make a miracle happen, and we will!

2. Social media Sites

With the cut-edge technology of today we can communicate with other people throughout the world without almost any difficulty. Many people claim that this is a good thing in uniting people together, while other people believe that social media influence young people negatively to their ability to form meaningful relationship. Like any other channels of communication such as television, radio, new-papers, etc. - social media sites have their own pros and cons. Before we discuss the merits and demerits of social let's first consider what is meaningful relationship.

Meaningful relationship is based on mutuality between two people: openness and honesty; affection and trust; and commitment and fulfilment. People have a choice to meet either in person or on the internet – face to face or screen to scree. Meeting people in real world is very different from seeing people onscreen. When we meet people face to face, we not on share words but also facial expressions and gestures; body language cues tell us a lot more about person's behaviour and feeling; and we converse at almost equal level. However, this medium of communication is not suitable for everyone.

Some people are self-conscious and it take them long time even to break ice, face to face experience intimidates them. It is much better for them to start exchange messages in small chunks.

3. Jokes

Houses of Daughters-in-law and Daughters

Rulda was only ten years old when he married his young bride Ruldi. The village of Rulda was near Kapurthala and the village of Ruldi was near Hoshiarpur.

One day, when he was 20, his mother patted him on the back and said, "Rulday, go and bring your wife."

Those were the good old days, when people had to walk long distances from one place to another and the travellers had to ask for shelter for the night. The requests were generally granted. What happened to Rulda's request?

Rulda walked all day. He was near Adampur when the night fell. He met an old man walking near a village. Rulda asked, "Is there a *dharmshala* in the village? The man replied, "There is but it is locked because the *pundit* has gone to Hardwar. You have to knock at other people's houses and ask for shelter."

Rulda knocked at a door and asked for one night's stay. The old man snapped back, "Sorry, young man, we have young *bahus* and *betis* in this house. Try next door."

He tried next door. This house also had young *bahus* and *betis* and the young man was asked to try the next door. He tried a number of houses and to his dismay, he got the same answer everywhere.

Dejected and tired, he sat on the village platform for a while. It was a cold night. He gathered his courage and thought, "I must try at least one more house."

He knocked at the door. An old lady holding a *thaapi* (wooden washing bat) opened the door and asked "Oh *puter*, what do you want?"

"*Mataji*, do you have young *bahus* and *betis* in your house?"

"Yes, why do you ask?" enquired *Mataji* suspiciously.

"I want to spend the night here, it is very cold outside," replied Rulda.

No sooner had he said this than *Mataji* started beating him with the *thaapi*...

4. Grammar Page

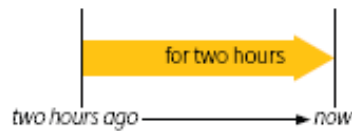
Unit
12

for and since when ... ? and how long ... ?

A We use **for** and **since** to say how long something has been happening.

We use **for** + a period of time:

- We've been waiting **for two hours**.



for		
two hours	a long time	a week
20 minutes	six months	ages
five days	50 years	years

- Sally has been working here **for six months**. (not since six months)
 I haven't seen Tom **for three days**.

We use **since** + the start of a period:

- We've been waiting **since 8 o'clock**.



since		
8 o'clock	April	lunchtime
Monday	2001	we arrived
12 May	Christmas	I got up

- Sally has been working here **since April**. (= from April until now)
 I haven't seen Tom **since Monday**.

B We often leave out **for** (but not usually in negative sentences):

- They've been married **for ten years**. or They've been married **ten years**.
 They **haven't had** a holiday **for ten years**. (you need **for**)

You can use **in** instead of **for** in negative sentences (I **haven't** ... etc.):

- They **haven't had** a holiday **in ten years**. (= **for** ten years)

We do not use **for** + **all** ... (**all day** / **all my life** etc.):

- I've lived here **all my life**. (not for all my life)

C Compare **when ... ?** (+ *past simple*) and **how long ... ?** (+ *present perfect*):



- A: **When** did it start raining?
 B: It started raining **an hour ago** / **at 1 o'clock**.
 A: **How long** has it been raining?
 B: It's been raining **for an hour** / **since 1 o'clock**.



- A: **When** did Joe and Kate first meet?
 B: They first met **a long time ago**.
 A: **How long** have they known each other?
 B: They've known each other **for a long time**.
 B: They've known each other **since they were at school**.

D We say:

it's (= it is)	a long time	since something happened
or it's been (= it has been)	six months (etc.)	

- It's **two years since** I last saw Joe. or It's **been two years since** ... (= I **haven't seen** Joe for two years)
 It's **ages since** we went to the cinema. or It's **been ages since** ... (= We **haven't been** to the cinema for ages)
 How long is it since Mrs Hill died? or **How long has it been since** ... (= when did she die?)