



**Learn English Through
Stories
D Series**

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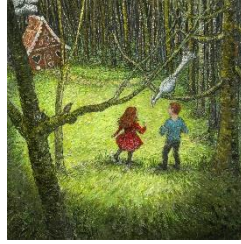
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1. Hansel and Gretel



Once upon a time a brother and sister named Hansel and Gretel lived with their father. Their mother died when they were very, very young. Their father was a poor woodcutter. They lived near a forest. They had a small hut made of wood. Their father went to the woods every day to bring home wood. Once a week, he would load his cart and go to the town market to sell it. This way they lived just from hand to mouth.

Both of the children were good kids. They helped their father with everything. They washed clothes in the stream nearby. They fetched water from the stream. They helped him with the cooking and cleaning. Gretel even learnt to mend and sew clothes with a needle and thread. Hansel took the goats to the fields for grazing. He had also asked his dad to get him a small axe. So he could practice chopping wood.

Father was an uneducated man. He could count only up to ten. The market wholesaler cheated him when he sold his wood to him. Father wanted his son to learn how to count. He could only teach him up to ten. That was not good enough.



One day, it was sunny, windless and cloudless. There was not a single cloud in the sky. The sky was gloriously blue. You could see many birds high up in the sky. He loaded his cart with all sorts of wood: cedar, redwood, pine, etc. He left for the town market. It was a long journey as usual. Despite he was drenched in sweat he kept pulling his cart. He had a load of good wood and was expecting a decent price for it. He, finally, reached the market and sold his load. Then the weather suddenly changed. It was not only raining but it was pouring down. It was raining worse than cats and dogs. It was not possible to

pull the cart under these sorts of conditions. He left the cart in the market in the wholesaler's yard and went to see his Bhua.

Bhua lived not very far from the market. He had not seen her for many months. He thought, "Maybe it is a blessing in disguise." He reached Bhua's house in no time. Bhua greeted him warmly and gave him something to eat. While he was chatting with Bhua a girl from next door came to see her. The girl wanted to borrow some money from Bhua to buy a goat for milk. Bhua said, "Sorry girl, I have no money today. I haven't received my widow's pension for this month yet."

The girl looked really stunning. When Adam looked at her she smiled. Adam thought to himself, "Maybe fortune is smiling at me today. I made good money from my load today and the girl keeps smiling at me." Then he said to the girl, "I've got a spare goat. When I come to the market next time I can bring it and give it to you."

This time the girl smiled and winked at him.



The Scandinavian smile of the girl triggered some thoughts in Adam. Something that he always denied was to remarry. Now he wanted to get married if it was possible.

He said to the girl, "My name is Adam and I am a timber merchant. What is your name?"

Bhua found this introduction to be hilarious: suddenly, a woodcutter becomes a timber merchant.

The girl smiled again and replied, "My name is Anna. I love goats. When I was little I had two goats. They were white goats. I don't have any proper profession yet. But I would like to be a goatherd girl."



As luck would have it, the heavy rain made Adam's day. He forgot all about his children and he was only thinking and looking at Anna.

Bhua wasn't sure whether to encourage this romantic chat or not. Bhua did not know much about the girl because she had moved, recently, to Bhua's neighbourhood.

Adam got up and called his Bhua. When he got up, all the silver coins jingled from his shabby Jacket, and this made Anna smile even wider.

He said to Bhua, "Could you hold my coins while I wash my face."

Bhua asked, "How many are they?"

"Ann can help you count," said he.

He went to the nearby well to have a wash and Anna counted the coins. Bhua could count only up to ten as well. Anyway, they were twenty-seven silver coins. While he was away, Bhua told Anna everything about him. Then Anna went away to have a wash. Bhua told Adam everything about Anna. The next day, Bhua performed a simple wedding ceremony and they were married...

For a couple of years, the life of Adam, his children and his new wife went smoothly. He became almost a timber merchant. Now the range of wood extended. He was not only selling, cedar, redwood, and pine but also ebony, mahogany and bark. He had a new cart with two donkeys. Kids had new clothes. His wife had new dresses. Adam had a new suit.



The size of the goat herd was bigger than twenty. They started growing crops and vegetables in the fields nearby. They build a new wooden hut near the old one. They bought new garden tools including a wheelbarrow.



A mixture of good and bad news: Anna was pregnant and Bhua passed away.

As they say: Richness of wealth can corrupt your soul or money is the root of all evil.

Anna was pregnant and started getting jealous of her stepchildren: Hansel and Gretel. All names have meaning attached to them. Adam = Man of the earth; Anna = God's favourite; Hansel = Goodness gracious; Gretel = a pearl.

In reality, we will see what happens next:

Anna thought if Hansel and Gretel stay alive the property and money would be divided between all children. Otherwise, only her children would get the shares. So she became evil...

She made life very hard for Hansel and Gretel. The children were not allowed to eat until she had eaten. She would deliberately cook small meals. After she had eaten there was hardly anything left for the children. Most of the time, there was only a crust of bread left. And all day long was hard chores for them to do.

Hansel and Gretel tried to tell their father about this but he would not hear of it. It seemed the only one he would listen to was his wife. She must have cast a spell on her husband. In fact, he was always busy. Even though he had other people working for him, it did not spare him to be home.

Anna did not ever hit the children. But they were tortured otherwise. It was like a slow-motion killing. She was starving them to death. Each day there was less and less food for the boy and girl to eat. Yet the stepmother gave them more and more hard work to do. The husband was not given time to think about what was going on at home. Whenever he arrived home he was entertained by charming praises for him by his wife. She was a great manipulator. The husband was unable to see her evil motives.

One night, Father was away on business. The two children were not allowed to sleep in the hut. Their warm clothes were locked up in a suitcase. Outside in the cold, they shivered and tried to keep each other warm. Winter was coming, and the clothes they wore were so thin it felt almost as if they had no clothes on at all.

The next morning when the sun rose, Gretel turned to her little brother. "Hansel," she said, "we cannot stay here. We must escape now, today, into the woods! Surely we will find more to eat when we are on our own than what we get here at home."

“Do you think?” said Hansel. “But what if we get lost?”

“We won’t!” said Gretel. “I will take bread. We will drop breadcrumbs behind us. If we have to, we can follow the crumbs back home.”

And so the two of them went off into the woods and left their hard life behind.

They went deeper and deeper into the woods. Gretel was careful to drop one crumb and then after a bit, another.

But alas! They looked and looked for any sign of something to eat - an apple tree, pear tree, some nuts on the ground, or even dried-up berries. There was nothing to eat! They got hungrier and hungrier. At last, poor Hansel and Gretel knew they must return to their hut or they would surely starve. They would just need to find the breadcrumbs and that would lead them home. Yet when they looked for breadcrumbs, there were none to be found - all the breadcrumbs were gone!

A bird whooshed up into the air and in its beak was a large crumb. Hansel and Gretel were struck with grief – the birds must have taken all their breadcrumbs! A wolf howled in the distance. The sun was setting. Hansel and Gretel were lost and hungry. Now they were scared, too.

“Gretel,” whispered Hansel in fear, “what will we do?” She did not know what to say. All she could do was to hug her little brother. Each minute it was getting darker and darker. Again, a wolf howled in the distance.

All of a sudden, Gretel saw a small light shining far away. Could it be someone's hut this deep in the woods? “We must find out!” cried Gretel.

“Maybe whoever lives there is kind and will take us in.”

The two children sped as fast as they could to the light.

When they got closer, they could not believe their eyes! As you can imagine – from top to bottom the hut was made all of the candy! From its gingerbread roof, with frosting all over the walls, and with candies tucked into the frosting, what a sight to see!

“Gretel!” Hansel cried out. Before Gretel could say, “I bet it will be okay if we have just a little taste,” both of them were already biting off small chunks and licking the sweet candy.

A sharp voice! “**Who** is nibbling on my house?” Hansel and Gretel spun around. An old witch!

It was an old witch whose name was Buree Churel.

Stunned, Gretel could only curtsy. “If you please, ma’am,” she said, as sweetly as she could. “There was so much candy on your house. And we are so hungry!”

“You have that right, **my** house!” snapped the witch. Her voice dropped. “Well then,” said the witch in a gentler tone, “come inside. I’ll get something for you to eat.”

Hansel and Gretel looked at each other in delight. They skipped into the witch’s hut.

It was a fine meal of soup and bread. As they licked the last crust of bread and looked around the hut, what the brother and sister saw made their hearts turn cold and they trembled. It was a shocking scene. Piles and piles of bones in the corners! Yet the two children were very tired so they fell asleep.

The next morning when they woke up, Hansel found himself locked in a cage. The witch roared, “That’s where your brother will stay! Every day I will fatten him up. Soon he will make me a fine dinner!” She laughed and laughed, rubbing her hands with joy and glee. “Till then,” she said sharply to Gretel, “you will work for me.”

Indeed, Hansel was well fed and Gretel worked hard all day doing chores for the witch.

Each morning the witch said to the boy, “Show me your finger. I will feel how plump you are getting.” Because the old witch could not see well, Hansel held out his finger as he was told. The witch smiled when she felt how plump he was getting.

“Gretel,” Hansel whispered in fear. “What are we to do? Soon I will be plump enough and the witch will want to eat me!” His sister wished she had a plan, but could not think of anything.

One day, Gretel found some old medicine in the house. Whenever the witch was not home Gretel gave this medicine to her brother. These were fat metaboliser tablets.



After that, her brother was not getting fatter anymore...

Time went on...

One day witch brought a big animal for roasting. She put this big animal in the biggest oven for roasting. Four hours later she called Gretel to help her to take out this big roasted animal.



The moment the witch was half inside Gretel quickly pushed the door. The witch fell inside the oven and got roasted herself.

Then Gretel asked her, "Where is the key to your cage?"

"On the mantelpiece and under the blue vase," he replied.

She freed him and they were just to leave the house when Gretel said, "We must not take this medicine with us otherwise our stepmother will feed this to us and make us a skeleton of bones."

Then they went to Witch's special room to put the medicine back. On the bedside table, they saw a small bag filled with something. They took a risk to check it. It was worth it. The bag was full of gold coins. They could not count them but they were more than seventy. They took the bag and left the house.

Then they said 'Eeny, meeny, miny, moe' and took a direction. It was the best direction they could take. They hardly walk more than a mile when they saw woodcutters cutting the trees. They approached them and ask for the direction of their hut. The woodcutters were more than happy to see them as they were looking for them...

The children were apprehensive about when they get to their hut. They were not sure how their stepmother would react to coming home back...

Their apprehension was removed as soon as they saw a large number of people waiting for their arrival...

Their stepmother was the first one to greet them...

While they were away, Father turned every stone to find them...

While they were away, their stepmother gave birth to twins: a girl and a boy. They were named: Gretel the Junior and Hansel the Junior. The stepmother was profusely apologetic for what she had done to the children before. The children forgave her and they gave one gold coin to their little sister and one to their little brother...

When Father saw his children back at home, he leapt into the air with pure joy and embraced them...

They all lived as a happy family ever since.

2. Grammar page

Numbers are adjectives, too. They tell you how many people, animals, or things there are. Sometimes they are called **adjectives of quantity**.



one giant



two princes



three princesses



four mermaids



five witches



six fairies



seven elves



eight puppets



nine dwarfs



ten angels

eleven hens
twelve geese
thirteen birds
fourteen mice

fifteen frogs
sixteen snails
seventeen kittens
eighteen ants

nineteen lizards
twenty butterflies