



**Learn English Through
Stories**
E Series

E22

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1. The Bell of Atri



A long time ago, in Italy, there was a good king, who wanted all the people in his kingdom to be treated fairly.

He asked for a tower to be built in the town of Atri and a fine bell to be hung in it.

When the bell tower was finished, the King came to see it. All the people of Atri gathered in the market-square. "This bell is for everyone in the town," the King explained. "The bell rope is long enough for any man, woman, or child to reach. If someone treats you badly, you only have to ring the bell and one of my judges will come right away to set things right and see that justice is done."

The people of Atri were very grateful to the King.

Sure enough, as the King promised, a judge came whenever the bell was rung. Every injustice was put right at once, even the troubles of the smallest child.

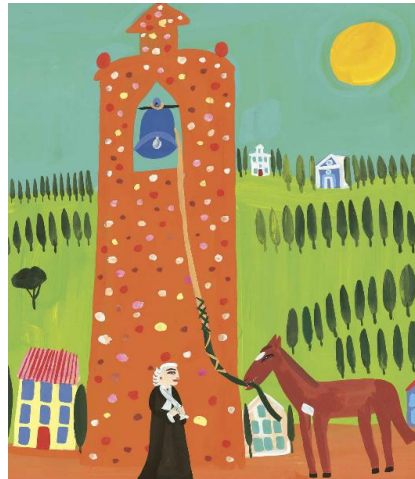
As years went by, people learned that it was best to be kind and fair toward each other, and the bell of Atri was hardly rung at all.

One morning, the Mayor of the town was walking past the tower and noticed that the bell rope had frayed away at the end. "We must replace this rope," the Mayor told his secretary. "The King insisted it should be long enough for every man, woman, and child to reach."

"But there isn't a rope maker in Atri," said the secretary. "I shall have to send for a new one to be made elsewhere."

"Then that's what we'll do," agreed the Mayor. "In the meantime, I have a long grapevine growing in my garden. It's very strong. You can cut a piece and repair the bell rope with that, and make sure it hangs low enough for the smallest child to reach."

So the secretary cut a length of the grapevine in the Mayor's garden and attached it firmly to the bell rope. The very next morning, everyone in the town was woken by the bell ringing loudly. They dressed themselves and came rushing into the square. To their surprise, they saw a lame old horse, trying to eat the leaves of the grapevine. Each time he tugged at the vine, he pulled on the bell.



The Judge arrived, still buttoning up his coat. "Who rang the bell so urgently?" he asked.

"It's a bony old horse looking for a bite to eat," said a woman in the crowd. "Look at his dirty coat and skinny ribs. I've never seen such a starved, neglected animal."

"Who does he belong to?" asked the Judge.

The town postman stepped forward. "I know this horse," he said. "He used to belong to the old soldier who lives on the hill. He carried the soldier into battle many years ago and even saved his master's life. When they came home from the war, he worked on the soldier's farm, until he was too old and weak to pull the plough. But instead of giving him a stable and a well-earned rest, his master turned him away and left him wandering without a home, living on whatever he could find to eat at the roadside."

The Judge listened with a frown. "Bring the old soldier here," he demanded.

The old soldier was brought to the market square. He was very puzzled to see the whole town gathered around a half-starved, miserable-looking horse, munching on a grapevine.

“Is it true that you unfairly abandoned this horse, who served you well for many years?” asked the Judge. Then the old soldier looked again and recognized the poor creature. He nodded and hung his head in shame.

“I order that you take him home, give him a comfortable stable, and feed him well,” said the Judge. “He has a right to be cared for kindly until the end of his days.”

The old soldier agreed. “I see that I have treated you most unfairly, my friend,” he said to the horse. “I promise you’ll be well looked after from now on.”

The Judge smiled with satisfaction. “The King will be pleased to hear that even a horse may pull the bell of Atri, to see that justice is done!” he said.



Then the old horse nuzzled his master happily and the good people of Atri cheered.

2. The Magic Bicycle



Banta lives in Williamsburg, New York City (NYC), USA with his parents. It was Banta's birthday. He had many presents, but one of them was very special — ?

He had a lovely new bicycle for his birthday. It was painted bright red with a yellow seat, and on the handlebars was a bright silver bell. It was a fine bell, and had a very loud ring. You should have seen everybody jump when Banta cycled up and rang it just behind them.

Banta went out on his bicycle every day after school, just before tea. It was great fun cycling up and down the lane, ring-ringing all the way.

But one afternoon a strange thing happened to Banta. He was cycling along whistling happily to himself, watching rabbits scamper along the grassy verge.

When he came to the little hill that ran down to the sweetshop at the bottom, he took both his feet off the pedals and had a lovely ride – but, do you know, when he reached the bottom of the hill the bicycle wouldn't stop.

No, it went on, all by itself without Banta doing anything to help it. He was so surprised.

'What a funny thing!' he thought. What's happened to my bicycle, why is it going by itself? Ooh! It's going faster! My goodness, I hope we don't run into anyone.

On and on went the little red bicycle, with Banta holding on tightly. It went faster and faster, and Banta had to hold on tightly to his cap, in case it blew away.

The bicycle raced through the village and made everyone jump quickly out of the way. It nearly knocked over Mr Plod, the policeman. Poor Banta couldn't possibly say he was sorry because the bicycle didn't stop.

On and on it went, up hills and down hills, along the country lanes, past fields and farmyards. At last the little red bicycle ran into a village Banta had never seen before. It was a strange place. The houses all looked like doll's houses, and there was a farm exactly like Banta's toy farm in the bedroom at home, with funny wooden-looking trees standing in rows, and wooden-looking cows grazing in the fields.

And what do you think were in the street? Why, toys, all standing about and talking to one another, or shopping busily. 'This must be Toy Town,' said Banta to himself in astonishment. 'Perhaps my bicycle came from here and felt homesick suddenly, and raced back home...'

In the middle of the street was a wooden policeman, holding up his hand to stop the traffic. The bicycle tried to get past – but the policeman grabbed the handlebars and stopped it. Off fell Banta, landing with a bump.

'Why didn't you stop?' cried the policeman crossly. 'Didn't you see my hand put out?'

'Yes, but my bicycle wouldn't stop,' said Banta. 'It won't do what I tell it to!'

'I don't believe a word of it,' said the policeman, getting out his notebook. 'Show me your bicycle licence, please.'

'But I haven't got one,' said Banta in surprise. 'You don't need to have a bicycle licence where I come from – you only have licences for motorcars and television sets.'

'In Toy Town you have to have a licence for bicycles too,' said the policeman sharply. 'You must come to the police station with me, and pay a fine.'

'But I haven't any money,' said Banta, quite frightened.

'Never mind,' said the policeman. 'You can pay your fine in chocolate money instead...'

'I don't have any chocolate money either,' wailed Banta. But it made no difference. The policeman took him by the arm, and marched him down the street.

Suddenly there came a great noise of shouting not far off, and a big brown teddy bear rushed by, carrying a little bottle of brightly-coloured sweets.

‘Stop thief, stop thief!’ cried a little wooden shopkeeper dressed in a stripy apron. And all the toys standing around in the street began to chase the teddy bear, but he jumped into a toy motorcar and whizzed off at top speed.

Two more toy policemen rushed up. ‘Who has another motorcar that we can use to chase him?’ they cried. But nobody had. Then Banta had an idea.

‘I’ll go after him on my bicycle!’ he said. ‘Jump up behind me, policemen, and I’ll scoot after that naughty teddy.’

In a second he was back on his bicycle, and behind him crowded the three wooden policemen, and another teddy bear who wanted to join in the fun.

Banta pedalled as fast as he could, and soon he could see the teddy bear up ahead of him in the toy motorcar.

The teddy looked behind him and saw that he was being chased. He went faster still, but Banta pedalled as hard as he could and soon he had nearly caught up.

Suddenly the clockwork motorcar the teddy was driving began to run down. It went slower and slower, until finally it stopped. The teddy got out to wind it up again – but before he had given it more than one wind, Banta had pedalled alongside.

The policemen jumped off and grabbed the naughty teddy. They made him give up the bottle of sweets and said he must clean the whole sweetshop from top to bottom to show that he was sorry.

‘Well,’ said the wooden policeman who had stopped Banta when he first arrived in the little village, ‘that was a very good idea of yours, to let us chase that teddy on your bicycle.’

‘That’s quite all right,’ said Banta. ‘I was glad to help.’

‘Thanks very much anyway,’ said the policeman. ‘I won’t say any more about you not having a bicycle licence. You can go home now – but please be sure to have a licence if you come to Toy Town again.’

'Thank you,' said Banta, sitting down on the grassy roadside. He was very hot and tired after his long cycle ride. 'It's been a great adventure. But I do wish I didn't have to cycle all the way home again. This bicycle of mine won't seem to go by itself any more, and I shall have to pedal it up all of those hills.'

'Dear me, I didn't think about your being tired,' said the policeman, very much upset. 'Look here, get into this car with me – the one the teddy used. You can put your bicycle in the back. Can you drive a car?'

'No,' said Banta, 'not even a toy one, I'm afraid.'

'What a nuisance,' said the policeman. 'I can't drive either...'. Then the clever policeman had a wonderful idea.

'Hey, Teddy Bear!' he cried to the miserable bear who was still being marched off down the road. 'You can drive this car, can't you? You can do something else useful to make up for all the trouble you've caused.'

'Oh! Yes,' said the bear, pleased to show how clever he was. 'Jump in, everyone, and I'll drive Banta all the way home, if he will tell me where he lives.'

Off they all went, right through Toy Town and back to the village where Banta lived. How his friends stared when they saw him drive up with three wooden policemen and two teddy bears – but before they could ask them any questions the toys had driven off again, and Banta was left standing by his gate with his little red bicycle.

'What an adventure,' he said. And it certainly was, wasn't it?

3. My Neighbour

Mr Gareeb Das is my neighbour. Although his name is Gareeb, he is not poor. He is fatty rich. Gareeb Das owns a big business, and he makes large profits. He is very mean with his workers and does not pay them fair wages.

The name of his wife is Shanti Devi, but she is never in peace. She is always looking for a fight. Shanti Devi is so fat — almost like a cow-elephant. Once she was stuck in the mud, we had to bring a crane to pull her out.

Gareeb Das owns a spacious bungalow and a car. His house is well furnished. It is equipped with all the comforts of life. I am, however, sad to see that he does not have very good relations with his neighbours. Once he called police against one of his neighbours. It happened just because he thought that his neighbour's children had broken his window glass. The children had of course denied it. He has a servant. This poor boy is not given enough food to eat and I have seen him beating him once or twice. He never donates any money for any cause. I wonder why he behaves in such an ignoble manner. May God grant him wisdom!

4. Grammar Page

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

- Some verbs have **an object**. The object of a verb is the person or thing that is affected by the **action** of the verb. Look at this sentence:



The **subject** of the verb is **Alice**. She is the person who does the action: **she eats**. The **object** of the verb is **a banana**. **A banana** is affected by the action of the verb. So in this sentence, the object of the verb 'eat' is 'a banana'. Verbs that have objects are called **transitive verbs**.

Here are some sentences with **transitive verbs**. The verbs are printed in bold and their objects are printed in color.

- John likes **likes** **apples**.
- My sister cooks all **cooks** **our meals**.
- Dad buys **buys** **tea** at the market.
- Sam knows **knows** **the answer** to the question.
- My brother rides **rides** **his bike** in the street.
- Mom writes **writes** **stories** in her spare time.

- Some verbs don't have an object. A verb that does not have an object is called an **intransitive verb**. Here are some sentences with **intransitive verbs**.

- In China, lots of people walk to work.
- The boys play in the yard after school.
- Mr. Carter always drives very carefully.
- Doris is a very successful businesswoman.
- Michael and I both entered the race. He won but I lost.

- Some verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. Notice that the transitive meaning and the intransitive meaning are sometimes different.

transitive verbs	intransitive verbs
The pilot flies flies the plane very well.	Eagles fly high in the sky.
The boys play play football on weekends.	The boys play in the yard on weekends.
My mom runs runs her own company .	My mom runs in the park for fun.
We walk walk the dog every evening.	We walk on the beach every evening.