



Learn English Through
Stories
L Series

L1

**Adapted and modified by
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Contents

**365 Bedtime Stories:
January 1 to 8.**

January 1: Baby New Year



Father Time with a lamp and a scythe

It was midnight on New Year's Eve. The church bells were ringing; the fire siren was blowing. Doors were thrown open as people stepped out onto their porches to shout "Happy New Year!" to each other.

Old Father Time, leaning on his scythe and stroking his long white beard, sighed and shook his head as he listened to them. "Now why are they so happy about New Year? I don't understand it; New Year's only a baby, and babies are a lot of trouble, aren't they? Then why do people like them so much?"

Down the road behind him came the bouncing baby New Year. "Hello, Father Time!" he called happily as he passed. "I'm on my way into the world! Listen to everybody cheer! Isn't it fun? Oh, I'm going to give them the merriest year they ever have had! Good-bye, Father Time!"

Old Father Time shook his head again, but with a smile this time. "Maybe that's why people like babies! What a bundle of fun they are!" he said. He watched the baby New Year trotting merrily down the road, singing a rollicking song in time to the cheerful rhythm of the bells.

"Happy New Year," Father Time said with a smile. "Yes, that's what he is — happy New Year. And look where he's heading — I might have known it! He's making straight for the most cheerful spot in the world — he's going to live on What-a-Jolly Street! Well, now there's no doubt about it, no doubt at all — he's going to be a happy, happy New Year!"

January 2: What – a – Jolly Street



Mitten

The name of the street was really Trufflescootems Boulevard. Nobody called it that, though, because the street wasn't long. It was very short, and twenty-two children lived on it.

Twenty-two, imagine that!

Where twenty-two children live and play and scream and shout and ride their tricycles and toy-carts and bikes and play with their dogs and cats and rabbits and turtles and monkeys and parrots—well, you just can't call a street like that Trufflescootems Boulevard, can you?

So nobody did. When they came to that block, they always smiled and said, “My word, what a jolly street!” And pretty soon that was the name of it — “What-a-Jolly Street.”

The day after New Year's, all of the twenty-two children were outside playing. Even little Polly, the Carter baby, was in her baby-walker, waving her blue mittens and shouting, “Hi! Hi! Hi!” at the snowflakes drifting down on her plump red cheeks and little button nose.

Her brother Timmy giggled and giggled, watching her. ‘You can't catch snowflakes, Polly Carter!’ he said. “But I can! Watch me, Polly! Watch me!” Timmy bounced up and down, flapping his arms like a little red rooster. He clapped his mittened hands together on one snowflake after another, but when he peeked — there never was any snowflake there!

“Well, what do you know? I can't catch a snowflake myself!” Timmy chuckled. It was such a joke on him that he tipped his head back and laughed out loud, “Oh, fuf-fuf-fuf!”

Then he shut his mouth very suddenly. “Why, I did catch a snowflake!” he cried. “I caught lots of them — in my mouth! They are cold and they are icy and...”

January 3: Twin Snow Men



Next door to Timmy lived Jack and Jerry Watson. They were twins, and they looked so much alike that sometimes their own sisters couldn't tell them apart. They looked so much alike that sometimes they got very, very tired of it!

This morning Jerry decided, "I'm going to make a snow man!"

"So am I!" Jack shouted.

Jerry frowned. "Not like mine, you aren't!"

"Of course not!" Jack cried.

All morning they worked on their snow men. Jack's had straw hair and coal buttons and tree-branch arms with stick fingers.

Jerry's snow man wore a funny bonnet and a raggedy apron, and had broomstick arms.

"There!" the twins said proudly. "Guess they don't look alike!"

In the afternoon it started to snow again. The wind blew hard. Ice pattered against the windows. It was such a blowy, snowy storm that Jack and Jerry had to stay inside. Not until almost dark could they peek out again to see their snow men.

"They're still there!" Jerry shouted.

"But — but look at them!" Jack cried.

For the snow men had changed. The wind had whipped away the old bonnet and the straw hair, and buried the apron under fresh snow. Snow had hidden the buttons, and piled so thickly on the arms that the boys couldn't tell which were broomstick, and which were tree-stick!

"Why, they're just alike!" Jerry cried.

"Isn't that something?" Jack grinned. "We made twins!"

January 4: The North Wind



The big blustering bully, North Wind, howled down What-a-Jolly Street. He whistled through the Watson yard.

“Whooooooeeeeee!” he shrieked as he circled the twin snow men that Jack and Jerry had made. “What’s this? Are there really two of you or am I seeing double?”

“Don’t be so noisy,” scolded Jerry’s snow man. “You give me a headache with all that screaming.”

“You’re giving me a headache!” North Wind retorted angrily.

“How can I decide which of you is which, or whether there’s only one which!”

“Don’t call me a witch!” cried Jack’s snow man. “I’m a respectable snow man, minding my own business, and that’s more than you can say!”

“Why, why —” sputtered North Wind, “—you impudent good-for-nothing, I’ll blow you down!”

He puffed out his cheeks and let loose an icy blast that sent snow flying, thick as pea-soup fog.

“Whooooooeeee!” he screamed. But when the snow settled, there stood the two snow men as solidly as ever. North Wind danced in rage; he howled and stamped and jumped up and down. He huffed and puffed and shrieked and whooped until he was so worn out that he dwindled down, down, down... down to nothing at all!

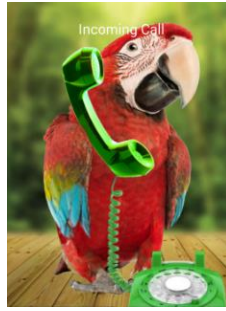
Silence settled over What-a-Jolly Street. Windows stopped rattling; the moon came out.

“What a nice quiet night!” sighed Jerry’s snow man happily.

“Yes, indeed. There’s nothing I like better than a nice quiet night,” agreed Jack’s snow man.”

Then, very solemnly, they winked at each other!

January 5: Hustle - Bustle



Across the street from Timmy lived the Browns. Mike Brown was two, Peter was almost six, Mary Lou was nine, and Hustle - Bustle was thirteen. Hustle-Bustle was a parrot.

First thing every morning Hustle-Bustle opened his cage door with his strong curved beak, and climbed to the top of his cage. His long feet held the wires tightly, and his head bobbed this way and that as he looked for company.

"Hello? Hello?" he shouted.

If the children weren't up to answer him, he called them just as their mother did at eight o'clock.

"Mareeee! Get up now! Peeeeter! Mary Looooo!"

Sometimes it fooled the children, and they got sleepily out of bed and started to dress way ahead of time.

Hustle-Bustle liked to pretend he was talking over the telephone. From listening to Mrs. Brown, he had learned a whole string of sounds almost like words.

"Well, well, gab-goo-pilly-bow-biggildy-guck!" he would say whenever Mrs. Brown sat down at the phone. "Fuddy-fop-goopity-wum-wa-ferty-fay!"

He always finished very loudly, "Well, good-bye now! Good-bye! Good-bye! Sometimes the person talking to Mrs. Brown thought Mrs. Brown was saying good-bye, and hung up.

"That parrot!" Mrs. Brown would complain.

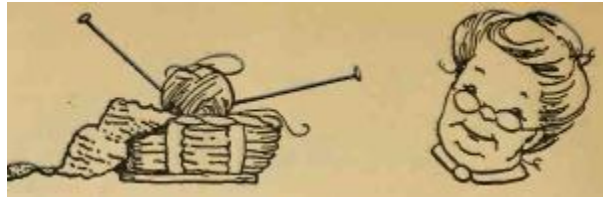
"That parrot!" Peter and Mary Lou would frown when Hustle-Bustle got them up early.

"Maybe we ought to sell him," Mr. Brown would twinkle.

Mrs. Brown and Mary Lou and Peter and little Mike would stare at him round-eyed. "Sell Hustle-Bustle? Oh, no!"

Then Hustle-Bustle would chatter happily, "Well, well, hello!"

January 6: Twelfth Day



At the end of What-a-Jolly Street lived old Mrs. Apricot. Yes, that was really her name — Mrs. Apricot, and she looked like one, too, soft and rosy and plump.

Mrs. Apricot was teaching the big girls on What-a-Jolly Street to knit. They were all at her house this afternoon, working slowly and carefully on their bright yarn squares.

As their needles clicked, Mrs. Apricot said, “Well, today is Twelfth-Day. My word, I remember how we used to celebrate it when I was a girl—we had masked parties, games, gifts!”

“Twelfth-Day?” asked Betty Watson, “what's that?”

“The twelfth day after Christmas; what they used to call Old Christmas,” Mrs. Apricot explained. “The eve of Twelfth-Day — Twelfth-Night — was the night the wise men were supposed to have brought their gifts to the baby Jesus.”

Ruth Barrett said softly,

“On the Twelfth Night they came from afar.

Bearing fine gifts, and led by a star.”

“Oh, wouldn't it be nice if we could give some baby a present to celebrate the day?” Mary Lou Brown asked. “Only we haven't got a baby, or a present either!”

“There's little Polly Carter,” suggested Susan Ling.

“And we have these squares!” cried Betty Watson. “Oh, Mrs. Apricot, couldn't we sew them together somehow —”

“And make a carriage robe for Polly?” asked Mrs. Apricot. That's just what they did! Mrs. Apricot crocheted a pretty edging around it, and it was as lovely a blanket as any baby could want! Polly cooed and clapped her fat hands when she saw it, and never guessed that she was helping celebrate Twelfth-Day.



January 7: Not – So – Easy – Money



At the other end of What-a-Jolly Street from Mrs. Apricot's house lived Paul Smith and his little sister, Ellen, and their big collie dog, Butch.

One afternoon Paul came whistling into his yard. "H'yuh, Butch!" he called. "We're going to the store! I have a quarter to spend — see! Found it on the street! How's that for easy money?"

Butch sniffed at the quarter and barked noisily as he raced Paul down the block to Mr. Gay's Handy Grocery.

"Mr. Gay! Mr. Gay! I'm a rich man today!" Paul sang as he peeked into all of Mr. Gay's counters. Let's see, what should he buy? There were gumdrops and licorice and barber-pole candy and gum. There were peanuts, too, and fresh doughnuts, and frosted rolls! And sweet red apples and bright golden oranges and rich purple plums! And hundreds of cookies!

Up and down went Paul, faster and faster. Deciding on something was so hard! Should he buy peanuts and an apple? Candy and gum? Cookies?

The door opened and little Sally Nolen came in, crying.

"Why, Sally, what's the matter?" Mr. Gay asked.

"I'm supposed to buy a one loaf of b-b-bread for M-Mother!" Sally sobbed.

"And I, T lost the money!"

Paul looked at Sally. "Was it a quarter?" he asked.

"Y, y, yes," wept Sally.

"Here!" said Paul. He clapped the quarter into Sally's hand. "Here, take it; it must be yours. I found it in the street." He shook his head as he went out with Butch. "Boy, and am I glad to get rid of it! I thought it was easy money, Butch, but spending it was too tough for me!"

January 8: The Game of Words



Paul and Ted were playing at Bob's house one blizzardy Saturday morning. "I know a game," said Paul, watching Bob's two cats wrestle each other lazily on the floor. "You take a word like cat, and then you think up a word that describes cat, like 'meowing' cat, or 'fighting' cat, see? Only first of all, it has to begin with a. The fellow who can't think of any more a words is out, and the others go on to b."

"Sure, I get it!" said Ted. "Alley cat!"

"Aged cat!" cried Paul.

Bob thought hard. "Angry cat!" he shouted.

It was Ted's turn again. He rolled his eyes and scratched his head and scowled, until finally he yelled, "Afraidy-cat!"

Bob and Paul shouted with laughter. "Okay, okay," agreed Paul, "I guess we'll take that. Active cat!"

Bob was still laughing. "I'm out!" he said. "You go on to b."

"Black cat," said Ted promptly.

"Big cat," said Paul.

"Barn cat!"

"Busy cat!" cried Ted.

"Baby cat!"

Paul said, "You've got me. I can't think of another one."

"I can!" shouted Bob. "Easiest one of all. Bob's cat!"