



Learn English Through
Stories

L Series

L2

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Contents

**365 Bedtime Stories:
January 9 to 16.**

January 9: Tom and Tiger



In the Nolen house on What-a-Jolly Street everyone was asleep but Tom and Tiger, the Nolen cats. Tiger was big and golden with brown stripes like a real tiger; he liked to act very fierce. Tom was coal-black with white paws and vest and nose; he thought he was the handsomest cat in the world.

Tonight Tom and Tiger had been snarling crossly at each other ever since bedtime. Tom wanted to clean every last bit of snow and mud from his coat, and Tiger wanted to sleep.

“Haven't you finished yet?” Tiger grumbled. “You're keeping me awake.”

Tom licked his white vest carefully. “I think I look like Mr. Nolen,” he purred, “when he's all fixed up in his dress suit.”

“Hah!” snorted Tiger. “You look more like a penguin to me! Silly, squawking penguin, that's you!”

“I am not!” hissed Tom. “Take that back!”

“Try and make me!” yowled Tiger, knowing Tom hated to fight and ruffle his smooth coat.

Tonight, however, Tom forgot his coat. He sailed into the air like a black-and-white rocket and landed plump on Tiger.

Ssssttt! Scrrrrritch! Zing! Wow! A mixed-up ball of brown and black fur shot up and rolled across the floor. It crashed into the wall, and untangled into two cats—with Tom on top!

“Ooooof !” said Tiger, scrambling to his feet. “I take it back — you're no penguin!” He added admiringly, “Fact is, you're more like a tiger. Very, very fierce!”

“Hmmm, that so?” Tom purred, looking pleased.

He climbed back into the box and helped Tiger lick his ruffled fur. “Beautiful fur you've got, Tiger,” Tom admitted. “I believe stripes are handsomer than plain black and white!”

January 10: Rusty



Today was David Barrett's ninth birthday. Paul and Ted and Bob, Mary Lou, Susan, and Betty all came to his birthday party.

"What'll we play?" David asked them eagerly.

"Oh, let's ride Rusty!" cried Susan.

Rusty was the Barretts' Shetland pony. He liked children, and was glad to give them rides. The snow had kept him in his shed for several days now, and he felt so frisky about getting out that he bounced around like a rocking horse!

"Wait, I'll saddle him," said David.

"Shucks, I can ride him bareback!" boasted Bob. "C'mon, Rusty, let's show these kids some real riding. Yippee!"

He gave a cowboy yell, and waved his leather helmet like a broad-brimmed sombrero.

Maybe the yell made Rusty feel like a cowboy's pinto, for he gave a skittish leap and reared up on his hind legs! Bob slid backward over Rusty's tail, and landed — boomp! — on the hard frozen ground!

"Wow!" said Bob, getting up and touching himself gently to see if he were broken. "Feels as if I'll have to eat your birthday cake stand up, Dave!"

"No, you won't!" laughed David. "Mother's kept a special pillow in the dining room ever since we got Rusty, and you aren't the first one to need it!"

January 11: Monkey Business



Kathy was playing with her doll, and paying no attention to the chattering little brown monkey perched on the toy-shelf. Kathy was cross at Beppo for climbing into her dollhouse this morning and scattering the furniture every-which-way.

“What a dirty, dirty face!” she scolded her doll. And she scrubbed it hard with a washcloth.

Beppo pressed against her arm. She turned to frown, and she found she couldn't frown at all. She just had to smile.

For Beppo, hoping to please her, was scrubbing his face with a doll blanket!

“Oh, Beppo!” laughed Kathy, hugging him. “You’re not a doll!”

But who knows — maybe Beppo thought he was! Maybe that's why he'd climbed into the dollhouse!

January 12: A Funny Story



Mother asked Doris to read little Amy her bedtime story while Mother finished work in the kitchen. Doris felt very pleased and proud for she hadn't known how to read very long. She called Amy, and they went off together.

Soon both little girls came running back to the kitchen.

"Mamma," said Doris, "Amy won't keep still and let me read!"

"Mamma," said Amy, "I don't like that story!"

"What's all this?" asked Mother. "Doris, did you know all the words?"

"Oh, yes," said Doris.

Mother wasn't sure about that. "Read it out here where Amy and I can both hear it," she suggested.

Doris opened the book again, and began to read fast and loud. This is what she read:

"The red fox said to the little red hen **tail rabbit-ears** where are you going **little buttonhook rabbit-ears**. The little red hen said **tail rabbit-ears** that's for you to find out **tail sir baseball-bat rabbit-ears**."

"My goodness!" said Mother. "Let me see the book, Doris." When she looked at the story she laughed until Doris and Amy had to laugh, too. "Oh, Doris, you were reading the commas and quotation marks and things right with the story! You just skip them, dear; they're only put in to make reading easier."

"Oh, don't you read them?" asked Doris. "Okay, Amy. Then this is what it says. The red fox said to the little red hen, 'Where are you going?' The little red hen said, 'That's for you to find out, sir!'"

"Now it's a good story," said Amy, settling down to listen.

January 13: Polly Plays Tug-of-War



Baby Polly was having her bath. She sat in her little tub and grabbed for the washcloth as Mother rubbed it over her.

“Ahhhhh!” she cried in joy as she caught it at last. Straight to her mouth it went, and she chewed it hard!

“Oh, Polly, no, no!” Mother laughed. She tugged at the washcloth. Polly clamped all four of her teeth on it and held on tight. It was just like a game of tug of war!

Mother tugged again. Polly held on harder. Mother had an idea. The sunshine coming through the window reflected on Polly's bath water, and made dancing lights on the ceiling as the water moved. Mother stirred the water briskly and then pointed to the ceiling.

“Look, Polly,” she said. “See the pretty rainbows!”

Polly looked up. When she saw the bright dancing flickers on the ceiling, she laughed aloud.

“Hi! Hi! Hi!” she shouted, reaching for them.

Of course when she laughed, out of her mouth dropped the washcloth! Mother quietly picked it up and went on with Polly's bath, and Polly, laughing at the pretty lights, never knew she'd lost that game of tug of war!

January 14: The Lost Mittens



Jane Ling had lost her mittens.

“Oh, Jane, that's the second pair!” sighed Susan. “When will you learn to remember where you put things?”

Mother bought Jane another pair, bright red.

“Oh, I'll never lose them!” Jane smiled.

She wore them proudly to kindergarten the next morning. It was a snowy, blowy day, so they didn't go out to recess. Instead, they played games inside, and Jane had such fun she forgot she was supposed to remember anything at all.

At noon she struggled into snow-pants and coat and hood. Jane was always the last kindergartner out of school. Finally she pulled on her boots; they were big boots because they had been Toby's, so usually they went on easily. But today they didn't, and by the time Jane had fastened them, the older children were getting out. Jane saw Susan.

“Wait, Susan!” she cried.

“Are you still here?” Susan cried. “Where are your mittens?”

“In my pockets,” Jane said. But they weren't there.

Both she and Susan looked. There were no red mittens to be seen!

“Oh, Jane!” cried Susan. “Did you lose your new pair?”

Jane blinked back two tears, and followed Susan home. She went into the house and began to pull off her boots.

And then, as the first boot came off, Jane shouted, “Susan! I did remember! I put them in here to keep them safe!”

Out of the toe of one boot she pulled a red mitten, and out of the toe of the other came another red mitten.

“I remembered all right,” Jane said proudly. “Only thing is, I forgot to remember what I remembered!”

January 15: A Quilt for Arabella



Mary Lou was cutting quilt patches for Mrs. Apricot. "It would be lots easier to cut a dozen at a time instead of just one," sighed Mary Lou.

Mrs. Apricot laughed. "So I thought once upon a time, too. I was just a little girl, and I wanted to make a quilt for my doll, Arabella. I chose a round-the-world pattern because I liked the way the colours marched in big circles, but like you, I found it dull to cut one patch at a time. So I snipped them by the dozen, and when I lost my cardboard pattern, I just used the patches as a pattern.

"Well, when I came to set them together, the colours went round and round all right, but they never did meet at the other end! Each group of patches I'd cut had been a mite bigger than the group before, until when they were sewed together they looked like nothing so much as a pinwheel!

"My mother said, 'Well, child, perhaps you should call it a Patience Quilt. As long as you keep it, let it remind you to be patient and careful.'"

Mary Lou said softly, "Do you still have that quilt?"

Mrs. Apricot smiled. "I wouldn't be a bit surprised!"

January 16: Fun in the Dark

As the clock in the Browns' living room struck midnight, all the toys woke up. The Teddy bear tried to climb out of Mike's cot. "Help me!" he called to two dolls who were going past.

The dolls, Snow White and Ingrid, stopped. "Can't you squeeze through?" they asked.

"No," yelled Teddy. "I'm stuck!"

"We'll get somebody bigger," the dolls promised.

They went downstairs and found the other toys in the kitchen. There were Judy, the wobbly rag doll, squeaky little Do-Do who took baths with Mike, the farmer from Peter's barnyard set with all his animals, and the cowboy from Peter's dresser."

We're going to get that pie down from the cabinet," they told the dolls. "The cowboy will hold up Farmer Brown, and one of you can climb on Farmer Brown's shoulders."

"Us?" cried the dolls. "We might break!"

"I'm too wobbly," explained Judy.

"I squeak," said Do-Do. "I might wake Hustle-Bustle."

"Well, I'll try," Ingrid said. She scrambled to the farmer's shoulders. "Oooooo!" she squealed. "I'm slipping!"

"Fall on me. I'm soft," said Judy.

Hustle-Bustle, the parrot, grumbled in his sleep. "Fuss, fuss!"

At the sound of his voice, Ingrid jumped into Judy's soft arms. The farmer drove his animals away. The cowboy dashed off without firing a shot and the other dolls ran upstairs.

In the morning the toys were all where they belonged, but Mike wondered how his Teddy bear had got jammed between the cot bars so that Daddy had to come and pull him out!