



**Learn English Through
Stories
D Series**

D25

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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1. Mr Pink-Whistle Interferes

By Enid Blyton

I hope you remember dear old Pink-Whistle, the little man who is half a brownie, and has pointed ears? He can make himself invisible if he wants to, and he goes about the world trying to put wrong things right.

One day Mr Pink-Whistle walked into the village of Little-Trees. There was a market there, and he wanted to buy some fish for Sooty, his cat. In the middle of the market were three stalls, and one man and his wife ran all of them.

One was for groceries, one was for fruit and vegetables, and the third one was for fish. Mr. Pink-Whistle looked at the man who was serving at the fish-stall, and he didn't much like what he saw.

“What a nasty-looking fellow!” thought Pink-Whistle. “What a toothy smile — and what horrid little eyes, set so close together that they're almost touching! And his wife isn't much better.”

He didn't think he wanted to go and buy anything from the fish-stall, but it seemed to be the only one there. So he went up to buy.

“Who's the man who runs these stalls?” he asked an old dame next to him.

“It's Tom Twisty and his wife,” said the old woman. “Like name, like nature, I say! We never seem to get our proper weight of goods, or the right amount. But everyone's afraid of Tom Twisty. He owns half the houses in our village, and once he turned one of us out because we dared to complain about his goods.”

Mr. Pink-Whistle watched Tom Twisty carefully. He was counting out some oranges for a little girl. “Let me see, you want twenty. Hold out your basket. That's right. Now—one, two, three—oh, that nearly rolled out, didn't it? Five, six, seven — wait a bit, that's a bad one—oh, no, it isn't—nine, ten, eleven, twelve — how's your mother to-day, dear? Better, I hope. Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen—will there be enough room in the basket? Ah, yes—nineteen, twenty!”

Well, I don't know if you have managed to see how Tom Twisty cheated the little girl out of five oranges, but he certainly did. If you read his little speech again, you will soon find out! She paid him for twenty oranges and went off with only fifteen in her basket!

Mr Pink-Whistle was smart, and he saw at once that Tom Twisty had cheated the little girl. He stood still and watched, getting very angry indeed.

He saw Tom Twisty weigh out two pounds of flour, but Mr Pink- Whistle was quite sure there were not two pounds there. He saw him empty eight pounds of potatoes into somebody's basket—but quite a pound of dirt went in with them too, and was paid for as potatoes. Dear, dear, dear—what a rogue Twisty was, to be sure!

Mr Pink-Whistle went up for his fish. He asked for two pounds, and Tom Twisty's wife served him. She was not all smiles like her husband —she was a sulky-looking woman. She slapped the fish down in her scales, and although Mr Pink-Whistle was sure that it did not weigh two pounds, down tipped the fish to one side, balancing the pound weights the other side.

“Is that really two pounds?” said Pink-Whistle. The woman glared at him.

“How dare you say I'm cheating you!” she cried in a shrill voice.

“I'm not saying that you are,” said Pink-Whistle, in a mild sort of voice. “I just asked you if that was really two pounds? I want to know.”

Mrs Twisty picked up the fish and threw it straight at Mr Pink- Whistle. It knocked his hat off. He picked up the fish, wrapped it in a bit of paper, paid for it, raised his hat, and went off without a word. Mrs Twisty stared after him.

“I'll get the policeman here next time you come!” she yelled after him. “That, I will. Accusing honest people of cheating! Ho, you wait till next time!”

Mr Pink-Whistle slipped into a shop. The shop-man was a friend of his and nodded to him. “May I use your scales for a moment?” asked Pink- Whistle, politely, and popped his packet of fish on the scales there. He put a two-pound weight on the other side. Down it went, and Mr Pink-Whistle stared solemnly.

“That fish can only weigh about a pound and a half,” he said. “Yet I saw that it went down on the scales with a bump when it was weighed before — and I paid for two pounds.”

“You've been to old Twisty's stalls!” said his friend. “He's a bad lot, and so is his wife. Cheating all the time. But he's rich and powerful and people are afraid to complain. They say he is friendly with the policeman too — pays him to keep away from the market when he's there with his stalls.”



"DON'T YOU MEDDLE WITH TWISTY," ADVISED MR. PINK-WHISTLE'S FRIEND.

"Hum!" said Mr Pink-Whistle. "Well, well! What a shame to cheat all the little girls and old women and busy housewives. I've a good mind to put this right."

"Don't you meddle with Twisty," said his friend "He'll get the better of you. He's as sharp as a bagful of monkeys."

"Well, maybe I'm as sharp as two bags full," said Pink-Whistle, with one of his big grins. "Anyway, thank you for the use of your scales, friend. Good-bye."

Now Mr Pink-Whistle was quite determined to look very closely at the scales and the weights on Tom Twisty's stall, so he went back in the dinner-hour and waited for Twisty and his wife to leave for a meal.

But they didn't. They sat and ate their dinner close by their stalls. Still, that didn't worry Pink-Whistle much. He decided to make himself invisible and do a little examining of the scales without being seen.

In a trice the little man had disappeared. He was quite invisible! He walked over to the three stalls and began to examine a pair of scales. He tipped them up, and saw that something was stuck to the underside of the scale into which the goods were tipped for weighing.

"Aha!" said Pink-Whistle to himself. "Oho! So this is another little trick — to stick something heavy under the scale-pan to make goods weigh more than they do! That is how my one and a half pounds of fish seemed to weigh two pounds. What horrid cheats!"

Tom Twisty and his wife heard the scales rattling a little and they looked up, wondering if anyone was meddling with them. But there was no one to be seen. Pink-Whistle was quite invisible, of course.

“Funny,” said Twisty to his wife. “I quite thought I saw that scale-pan move.”

“Nonsense,” said his wife.

Pink-Whistle then took up the weights, and weighed them carefully in his hands. They seemed unusually light to him. Perhaps the Twistys used weights that were too light—so that they did not have to give so many apples, or so much sugar or butter! The cheats!

He took the weights over to another stall, belonging to a man called Bill Bonny. Bill had gone off to his dinner. Pink-Whistle popped one of Bill's pound weights into one side of the scales there, and put Twisty's into the other side. Down went Bill's weight with a bang, and up went Twisty's! “Oho! So it's what I thought. Twisty is using weights that are much too light. His pound weight is not a pound weight, and his half-pound weight only weighs about six ounces instead of eight. The rogue! He must have cheated scores of people all the time he has been here!”

He put back the weights beside Twisty's scales. Twisty heard a little noise and looked up, puzzled. But there was nothing to see, of course. Pink-Whistle looked into the sacks of potatoes. All of them had plenty of dirt as well as potatoes! Every little nasty trick that could be used to cheat people out of their goods was here.

“Time this was put right,” said Pink-Whistle to himself. “High time! And I'll put it right too. I'll stand by Twisty's stall this afternoon, and give him a shock!”

So that afternoon, when people came to the market once more to buy, Mr Pink-Whistle was standing close to Twisty at his stall. But nobody could see Pink-Whistle. He was still invisible! He was grinning to himself, because he knew he was going to have a good time. So was everyone, except Twisty and his wife!

A little boy came up with a bag. “Twelve grapefruit, please,” he said. Twisty beamed all over his nasty face. He took up a grapefruit and tossed it into the bag. “One—two—three—I say, that was a fine big one, wasn't it—I'll choose you another fat one—here it is—five—and another, six...”

“Hey, you can't count!” boomed a voice right in Twisty's ear, making him jump violently. He wondered which of the crowd round him was shouting like that, and was quite prepared to throw something at him. But he couldn't see anyone shouting.

“Count your grapefruit, sonny,” boomed Mr Pink-Whistle, making Twisty jump again. “Have you got six?”

“No, five,” said the little boy.

“Story-teller. I gave you six!” shouted Twisty.

“You gave him five!” yelled Pink-Whistle, putting his mouth close to Twisty's ear. “Begin again! And I'll count this time!”

Twisty was scared. He looked round for the man with the fierce voice, but he couldn't see him at all. The little boy tossed the grapefruit on to the stall, grinning. Twisty, looking rather alarmed, began to count again. “One, two three” — but a voice boomed in his ear “**I'm Counting This time**” And then the voice went on, as Twisty threw the grapefruit one by one into the boy's bag. “One, two, three — isn't it a lovely day — three, four, five — you're a nice little boy, you are! Four, five, six, seven — that was a nice fat one, wasn't it — seven, eight, nine, ten — did you say you wanted twelve? Ah, yes, nine, ten, eleven, twelve! There you are—take the lot!”

Of course, you can quite well see that dear old Pink-Whistle was playing Twisty's trick the other way round, giving the little boy far more grapefruit than he asked for, instead of less! Everyone began to shriek with laughter. Twisty was too frightened to say anything, and he meekly let the little boy pay him for twelve grapefruit, when he really had eighteen.

“But I've got eighteen gra...” began the little boy in surprise.

“That's all right,” said Mr. Pink-Whistle's voice, in Twisty's ear. “Twisty's pleased about that, aren't you, Twisty?”

Twisty wasn't. But he didn't dare to say so. Then someone went to Mrs Twisty's stall, and asked for twelve pounds of potatoes. Pink-Whistle popped over to her at once.

He watched the masses of dirt going into the scales with the potatoes.

Before Mrs Twisty knew what was happening, Pink-Whistle had tipped up the sack and emptied quite half a dozen more pounds into the scales.

“Sorry there's so much dirt,” said Pink-Whistle's booming voice, right in Mrs Twisty's ear. “You shall have a few extra pounds of potatoes instead. Can't bear to cheat anyone, you know!”

Mrs Twisty jumped. Where did that voice come from? And how did the potato sack suddenly tip itself up like that and empty more potatoes into the scales? She began to tremble. All the same, she wasn't going to let so many potatoes go! She picked out about six.

A sharp slap made her drop them into the pan. “Naughty, naughty!” said the voice. “Put a few more in for that.”

And to Mrs Twisty's horror, the sack of potatoes appeared to lift itself up and empty another score or so of potatoes into the big scale-pan!

Who had slapped her? She glared round at everyone, but there did not seem to be anyone near enough. All the people were laughing. What a joke! They didn't quite know what was happening, and most of them were feeling very puzzled, but all the same, how they were enjoying themselves! The Twistys were cheats — and now, for the first time, they were being punished well and truly in full view of the market! What a joke!

Mrs Twisty said no more about potatoes. She turned away and pretended to be busy. Somebody went up to buy a pound of flour from Twisty. He slapped his pound weight on one side of the scale, and emptied flour into the other.

“That's not a pound!” said the Voice, from somewhere near his ear. “Here, put this weight on — it really does weigh a pound!”

And, to Twisty's horror, a pound weight was put into his scales, and his own weighed against it. Everyone cried out in scorn.

“Huh! Look at that! Twisty's weight has gone up and the other has gone down! Twisty's doesn't weigh a pound!”

Twisty began to shake at the knees. “Good people, it's a mistake,” he stammered. “There's some trickery going on here...”

“There certainly is,” said the Voice, “and there has been trickery going on for a long time! Good people, tell Twisty to turn up his scale- pans! See what is underneath!”

Twisty tried to look fierce. He looked round for the man with the voice. Where could he be? "I'll slap your face hard!" cried Twisty, bravely. "Go on, then!" mocked Pink-Whistle, and poked Twisty in the chest.

"Slap me! Here I am!"

Twisty was terrified. He couldn't bear being punched by someone who wasn't there. The people roared at him.

"Lift up your scale-pans, Mr and Mrs Twisty! Lift up your scale-pans, and let us see underneath!"

Pink-Whistle lifted them up himself, and there, stuck underneath the pans into which goods were put to be weighed, were lumps of clay, flattened on to the pans to make them weigh more than they should.

Then the people went quite mad. They made for the sacks of potatoes and apples, they went for the sacks of flour and bags of pepper, they rushed at the slabs of fish—and before the two bad Twistys knew what was happening, they were being pelted with potatoes, apples, and fish, and having flour and pepper emptied all over them!

"You'll be sorry for this," sobbed Mrs Twisty, trying to get a fish out of the neck of her dress. "I'll turn you all out of your houses!"

"WHAT'S THAT?" boomed the Voice that the Twistys now feared more than anything. "Say that again!"

"No, no!" said Twisty, scared to death. "She didn't mean it. We're both sorry for all the wrong things we've done. People can help themselves to any of our market goods they please today!"

"And will you behave yourselves in future?" boomed the Voice. "Yes, yes," said Twisty. "Certainly. No doubt about that."

The Twistys left the market in a hurry, and went home. The people helped themselves to all the goods on the stalls, laughing and chattering. Pink-Whistle laughed too, then made himself visible again and went after the Twistys.

When he got to their house he saw them coming out with their bags. They were off and away! They were too scared to stay in the Village of Little-Trees any longer. They caught the first bus that came along, and Mr Pink-Whistle got in with them. The bus would soon pass his own house, so that was very convenient for him.

The Twistys saw the little man opposite them and heard him humming a little tune. Mrs Twisty suddenly noticed his pointed ears, and she nudged her husband.

“Look! That man's half a brownie. Look at his ears. Oh, Twisty do you think he had anything to do with that upset at the market?”

Pink-Whistle saw them looking at him, and he grinned to himself. Aha! The Twistys wouldn't play such tricks anymore! They would be very, very careful in future.

He took out his packet of fish and sniffed at it. Then he looked at Twisty. “I bought this at the market today,” he said, “and do you know, though it only weighs a pound and a half, the fellow who sold it to me said it weighed two pounds. And...”

But the Twistys had leapt out of the bus and gone. They had recognised that Voice. Ooooooh! They were too scared to ride in the bus any longer. Where they went to nobody knows and certainly nobody cares.

Pink-Whistle chuckled. “Another thing put right!” he said. “Won't old Sooty laugh when he hears this tale!”

And Sooty certainly did!

2. Grammar page

Use the **superlative** form of an adjective to compare three or more nouns. Lots of superlatives end in **-est**.



dark



darker



darkest



thick



thicker



thickest

clean	cleaner	cleanest
easy	easier	easiest
fat	fatter	fattest
flat	flatter	flattest
heavy	heavier	heaviest
hot	hotter	hottest
narrow	narrower	narrowest
noisy	noisier	noisiest
simple	simpler	simplest
thin	thinner	thinnest
wet	wetter	wettest



long



longer



longest



You often add **the** before the superlative form. For example, you say:

Mount Everest is **the** highest mountain in the world.

Peter is **the** tallest boy in his class.