



Learn English Through
Stories

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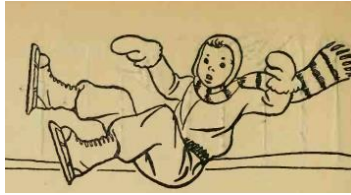
**Adapted and modified by
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Contents

**365 Bedtime Stories:
January 17 to 24.**

January 17: Toby's Crash Landing



Toby had received a pair of ice skates for Christmas. He thought they were beautiful and exciting, and he was sure that skating would be almost as thrilling as flying.

Each day he strapped on the skates and practiced on the packed-down snow of What-a-Jolly Street. When he could take a few careful little strokes, he decided he was ready to try by the creek back of his house.

The wind had blown away the snow, and the ice looked smooth and sparkling in the sunshine. Toby put on his skates and stepped boldly out onto it.

Whoosh! Before he could say “Toby Ling,” he was flat on his back, with his feet in the air!

“What happened?” Toby cried. Cautiously he stood up, and his skates promptly skidded out from under him again!

“Huh!” said Toby. “This isn’t much like flying! I don’t know why ice has to be so awfully slippery!”

He got to his feet once more, and this time managed to stand on his skates and even coast a little way. He took a stroke, and another —

“Wow!” he shouted. “Now I am flying!”

Then — splat! Down he went again! He sat up scowling, rumbling to himself like a thundercloud, and there, right ahead of him, he saw a space where the ice was so thin that water washed over it! If Toby had managed another stroke or two, he’d have gone splash into it.

“Well, I guess flying’s all right,” Toby decided, “but it doesn’t hurt to land now and then to look things over!”

January 18: Jack, the Painter

Ellen loved the pictures she found on the windows these winter mornings.

“Look!” she'd beg Paul. “There's a big castle on a hill—”

“And there's the old witch climbing up to it,” Paul teased.

“Oh, no, Paul, a fairy, a beautiful fairy! What makes the pictures?” asked Ellen.

“Jack Frost paints them,” Paul told her. “Every night he comes, with an icicle for a paintbrush, and snow-pies for his paint-box. First he breathes on the window like this—” Paul blew on the pane and it clouded a misty grey, “—then, fast as fast, he draws his pictures.” With his finger, Paul drew a comical face. “See?”

“But it's fading away, Paul!”

“Well, I didn't have an icicle paintbrush,” Paul explained.

“That's the difference.”

Ellen didn't know whether she quite believed him or not, but she thought it a lovely story anyway.

After breakfast Ellen put on snowsuit and boots and mittens and hood and went out to play in the yard with Butch, the collie.

They romped in the snowbanks and tumbled on the ice. The morning was half gone in a twinkling.

“Better come in and warm up a bit,” Ellen's mother called.

And then she laughed. “Goodness! Jack Frost has certainly painted your nose!”

Ellen tugged off her boots hurriedly. She ran to a mirror, but there were no castles and fairies on her nose—only a bright red colour that was already fading!

“Well,” Ellen decided, “I guess Jack didn't have his icicle paintbrush today. He just had to use his finger, like Paul.”

January 19: Hurry! Hurry!



Little Jane Ling was a slowpoke (slowcoach).

“Hurry!” her big brother Toby would call as he started to school at eight-thirty.

“Hurry!” her big sister Susan would warn as the clock hands reached quarter to nine.

“I’m hurrying,” Jane always said, dreamily, eating her breakfast food one kernel (a tiny morsel) at a time.

One morning when Jane came down to breakfast, minutes and minutes after Toby and Susan had finished, her mother saw a big hole in the heel of Jane’s yellow sock.

“Goodness!” cried Mrs. Ling. “Better put on another pair of socks after breakfast, Jane.”

“Yes,” said Jane, pouring cream spoonful by spoonful.

“Hurry, Jane!” called Toby, bouncing out the door.

“Hurry, Jane,” Susan cried, “or I can’t wait for you!”

Jane ate her breakfast and drifted slowly upstairs. She found a pair of red socks and sat down and slowly unfolded them.

“Jane!” shouted Susan. “I’m going!”

“Wait, Susan!” Jane called. “I’m hurrying!”

The front door banged shut. Oh, dear, it must be very late indeed if Susan wouldn’t wait! Jane scrambled into socks and shoes, ran downstairs, flung on snowsuit and boots, and galloped wildly after Susan.

She reached her kindergarten room just as the bell rang, and flopped down on the floor to pull off her boots.

“Hurry, Jane,” said the teacher with a smile.

“Yes,” said Jane. But she had decided never to hurry again, because she’d put on one red sock and one yellow sock, and the yellow sock was the one with the hole in it!

January 20: Mrs. Apricot's Dream



The Dream Fairy smiled when she found old Mrs. Apricot dozing in her bed by the sunny window. “I’ll surprise her!” she whispered, touching Mrs. Apricot with her star-tipped wand.

Suddenly Mrs. Apricot wasn't old at all! She was a little girl again waking from her nap in the same room she'd slept in as a child!

The room was cold as tinkling icicles just as it always used to be, for the only heat came from stoves in the kitchen and parlour. The little girl danced up and down to keep warm as she buttoned her dress and brushed her hair. She skipped downstairs, and ran to the parlor window to breathe on the frosty pane and make a peephole to look out at the world. It was a white world—nothing but snow to be seen. Not even another house, for the nearest one was two miles away.

“Oh, dear!” sighed the little girl. “I’d be so happy if I had some children to play with!”

Then to her surprise she heard voices laughing and chattering outside!
Children's voices!

“My goodness!” cried the little girl. “Am I dreaming?”

She opened her eyes wide—and suddenly she was old Mrs. Apricot again, waking from her nap in the sunshine. There were voices outside! The children of What-a-Jolly Street were coming to call.

“My, my word,” beamed Mrs. Apricot, bustling to the door. “Isn't it lucky that I baked cookies this morning!”

The Dream Fairy smiled as she faded softly out of sight. “I thought I'd give her a happy dream,” she whispered, “but I do believe she's happier awake!”

January 21: Priscilla's Adventure



Doris and Ted had two squirrel friends named Paddy and Priscilla who lived in a cottonwood tree in the Johnson yard.

On summer days the squirrels came skittering over the roof of the house every morning to look for peanuts on the children's window ledges. They would sit on the ledge, eat a peanut or two, then tuck one into each cheek and skitter away.

During the winter Paddy and Priscilla usually stayed snug in their home, living on the nuts they hadn't eaten in the summer.

On a warm winter day, though, when the sun was shining there was sure to be a scratch of little feet on the roof, and then the children would get the peanuts ready.

One nice winter morning Doris left her storm window open when she went to school. There was no patter of feet to remind her to put peanuts on the ledge, so the peanuts stayed in their bowl on her table by the window.

When she came home at noon, Doris went up to her room. There on her table sat Priscilla, eating peanuts!

"Why, Priscilla!" cried Doris.

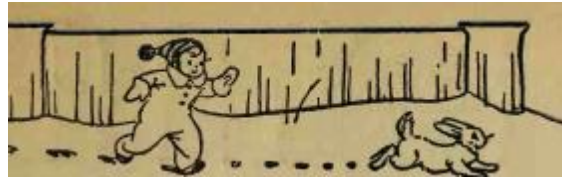
The sound of her voice frightened the squirrel. Priscilla gave a flying leap to the window sill, and went out so quickly that she lost her footing and tumbled off!

Only her two front paws still gripped the ledge, while her back paws fought for a hold on the wall beneath.

Doris wanted to run to the window, but she knew that would frighten Priscilla still more, so she stayed very still. At last she heard Priscilla skittering over the roof again!

Doris sighed with relief. "I'll always put out peanuts after this, so Priscilla won't have to go exploring ever again!"

January 22: Where is Mike?



Mike Brown was supposed to play in his own yard, but there were such interesting things outside his yard that he was always stepping out to take a peek.

Today the interesting thing was the Lings' turtles. Mrs. Ling had just set their pan in her sunny front window. Mike loved the turtles—such funny little things, ducking their heads in and out of their shells! He went over and watched them until he saw a rabbit hopping through Mrs. Apricot's yard. Then, of course, he had to follow the rabbit to see where it hopped.

The rabbit was out of sight before Mike reached Mrs. Apricot's yard, so the little boy sat down in a snowbank to rest.

The snow had grown very soft in the sun. When Mike sat on it, it went squish! And Mike sank through to the ground!

“Oomph!” he said.

Then he thought how nice this soft snow would be for rolling, so he rolled and rolled down the slope of Mrs. Apricot's yard until he was completely covered by the snow.

At home his mother missed him. “Mike,” she called.

His trail of footprints in the snow led her out of the yard. In the Lings' yard were his green mittens. Near Mrs. Apricot's walk lay his green scarf.

“Mike!” called Mrs. Brown as she hurried down the hill.

Right beside her the churned-up snow rose and gave itself a shake. From inside it, Mike said, “Hi, Mamma!”

“My goodness!” Mrs. Brown cried, pretending not to know the snowy little figure. “Who are you?”

“Mikie Brown,” answered Mike.

“Well, maybe so,” his mother laughed, “but you look more like Mikie White to me!”

January 23: Timmy Makes a Friend



Timmy was making snow-pies with his mother's cookie cutters. He had a heart-shaped pie, a cloverleaf pie, and a tiger pie lined up on the sidewalk when he saw the puppy.

It was a little white puppy, peeking at him from a bush.

“A puppy!” yelled Timmy. He made a big jump and grabbed the little dog before it could get away. “A puppy! A puppy!”

The frightened puppy wriggled and squirmed to escape from Timmy's tight hold. At last he got free, and tumbled to the sidewalk—right on top of Timmy's snow-pies!

“Oh! Oh!” cried Timmy, not laughing at all now. “Oh, you bad puppy!” He caught up a snowball and threw it.

“Ki-yi-yi!” squealed the puppy, running away fast.

Timmy sat on the porch steps, frowning. He took a cookie from his pocket. Just then he saw the puppy again, watching him from behind a bush. Or maybe it was watching the cookie.

Is he hungry, do you suppose? Timmy wondered.

He held out a bite of cookie, and this time he spoke softly: “Here, puppy, puppy!”

The puppy was hungry, and hunger made him creep closer. At last he could reach the cookie. Timmy didn't grab for him this time; he broke off another bite and held it out. The puppy ate all the cookie.

Timmy patted him gently. “Nice puppy!” he crooned. The puppy forgot about being scared and he snuggled against Timmy.

“Oh, fuf-fuf-fuf!” Timmy laughed, but softly this time. “I've got a brand-new friend!”

He'd found out how to stay friends, too; not by grabbing and shouting and throwing things, but by gentleness and kindness.

January 24: Who Won?



Sally was having a party to celebrate her sixth birthday.

“I’m coming, too!” her sister Ann begged.

“Oh, Ann, you're too little to play our games,” Sally told her. “You may have ice cream and cake with us, though.”

Ann said, “I can too play games!” But Sally didn't hear.

When everybody came that afternoon, they voted to play musical chairs. Sally's mother played the piano, and the children marched round and round the long row of chairs, dropping into them with wild giggles when the music stopped. There was always one less chair than there were children, so each time a child found himself without a chair, until finally only Ruth and Toby were walking around the last chair. Mrs. Nolen played slower and slower... the children walked slower... and slower

Nobody noticed little Ann playing musical chairs all by herself in the corner. Solemnly she walked around her own little stool when her mother played, and dropped into it when the music stopped.

When Mrs. Nolen stopped this time, a yell went up! Ruth and Toby had leaped for the last chair! The chair had tipped over, Ruth and Toby had bumped heads, and now they sat on the floor laughing at each other!

“Who won?” shouted the children.

“Me!” said little Ann. And there she sat proudly, the only child left with a chair!

How Sally and the children laughed! “All right, Ann, you won!” Sally agreed.

“And I guess you're big enough to put your chair beside ours, and play the next game with us!”