



# Learn English Through Stories

M Series

M7

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# The Secret Garden

## 2. Mary in Yorkshire

They arrived at a very large old house. It looked dark and unfriendly from the outside. Inside, Mary looked around the big shadowy hall, and felt very small and lost. They went straight upstairs. Mary was shown to a room where there was a warm fire and food on the table.

‘This is your room,’ said Mrs Medlock. ‘Go to bed when you’ve had some supper. And remember, you must stay in your room! Mr Craven doesn’t want you to wander all over the house!’

When Mary woke up the next morning, she saw a young servant girl cleaning the fireplace. The room seemed dark and rather strange, with pictures of dogs and horses and ladies on the walls. It was not a child’s room at all. From the window she could not see any trees or houses, only wild land, which looked like a kind of purple sea.

‘Who are you?’ she asked the servant coldly.

‘Martha, miss,’ answered the girl with a smile.

‘And what’s that outside?’ Mary continued.

‘That’s the moor,’ smiled Martha. ‘Do you like it?’

‘No,’ replied Mary immediately. ‘I hate it.’

‘That’s because you don’t know it. You will like it. I love it. It’s lovely in spring and summer when there are flowers. It always smells so sweet. The air’s so fresh, and the birds sing so beautifully, I never want to leave the moor.’

Mary was feeling very bad-tempered. ‘You’re a strange servant,’ she said. ‘In India we don’t have conversations with servants. We give orders, and they obey, and that’s that.’

Martha did not seem to mind Mary’s crossness.

‘I know I talk too much!’ she laughed.

‘Are you going to be my servant?’ asked Mary.

‘Well, not really. I work for Mrs Medlock. I’m going to clean your room and bring you your food, but you won’t need a servant except for those things.’

‘But who’s going to dress me?’

Martha stopped cleaning, and stared at Mary.

‘Tha canna dress thysen?’ she asked, shocked.

‘What do you mean? I don’t understand your language!’

‘Oh, I forgot. We all speak the Yorkshire dialect here, but of course you don’t understand the... I meant to say, can’t you put on your own clothes?’

‘Of course not! My servant always used to dress me.’

‘Well! I think you should learn to dress yourself. My mother always says people should be able to take care of themselves, even if they’re rich and important.’

Little Miss Mary was furious with Martha. ‘It’s different in India where I come from! You don’t know anything about India, or about servants, or about anything! You... you...’ She could not explain what she meant. Suddenly she felt very confused and lonely. She threw herself down on the bed and started crying wildly.



*Martha stopped cleaning, and stared at Mary.*

‘Now, now, don’t cry like that,’ Martha said gently. ‘I’m very sorry. You’re right, I don’t know anything about anything. Please stop crying, miss.’

She sounded kind and friendly, and Mary began to feel better and soon stopped crying. Martha went on talking as she finished her cleaning, but Mary looked out of the window in a bored way, and pretended not to listen.

'I've got eleven brothers and sisters, you know, miss. There's not much money in our house. And they all eat so much food! Mother says it's the good fresh air on the moor that makes them so hungry. My brother Dickon, he's always out on the moor. He's twelve, and he's got a horse which he rides sometimes.'

'Where did he get it?' asked Mary. She had always wanted an animal of her own, and so she began to feel a little interest in Dickon.

'Oh, it's a wild horse, but he's a kind boy, and animals like him, you see. Now you must have your breakfast, miss. Here it is on the table.'

'I don't want it,' said Mary. 'I'm not hungry.'

'What!' cried Martha. 'My little brothers and sisters would eat all this in five minutes!'

'Why?' asked Mary coldly.

'Because they don't get enough to eat, that's why, and they're always hungry. You're very lucky to have the food, miss.' Mary said nothing, but she drank some tea and ate a little bread.

'Now put a coat on and run outside to play,' said Martha. 'It'll do you good to be in the fresh air.'



*'I don't want it,' said Mary. 'I'm not hungry.'*

Mary looked out of the window at the cold grey sky.

'Why should I go out on a day like this?' she asked.

'Well, there's nothing to play with indoors, is there?'

Mary realized Martha was right. 'But who will go with me?' she said.

Martha stared at her. 'Nobody. You'll have to learn to play by yourself. Dickon plays by himself on the moors for hours, with the wild birds, and the sheep, and the other animals.' She looked away for a moment. 'Perhaps I shouldn't tell you this, but - but one of the walled gardens is locked up. Nobody's been in it for ten years. It was Mrs Craven's garden, and when she died so suddenly, Mr Craven locked it and buried the key - Oh, I must go, I can hear Mrs Medlock's bell ringing for me.'

Mary went downstairs and wandered through the great empty gardens. Many of the fruit and vegetable gardens had walls round them, but there were no locked doors. She saw an old man digging in one of the vegetable gardens, but he looked cross and unfriendly, so she walked on.

'How ugly it all looks in winter!' she thought. 'But what a mystery the locked garden is! Why did my uncle bury the key? If he loved his wife, why did he hate her garden? Perhaps I'll never know. I don't suppose I'll like him if I ever meet him. And he won't like me, so I won't be able to ask him.'



*Just then she noticed a robin.*

Just then she noticed a robin singing to her from a tree on the other side of a wall. 'I think that tree's in the secret garden!' she told herself. 'There's an extra wall here, and there's no way in.' She went back to where the gardener was digging, and spoke to him. At first he answered in a very bad-tempered way, but suddenly the robin flew down near them, and the old man began to smile. He looked a different person then, and Mary thought how much nicer people looked when they smiled. The gardener spoke gently to the robin, and the pretty little bird hopped on the ground near them.

'He's my friend, he is,' said the old man. 'There aren't any other robins in the garden, so he's a bit lonely.' He spoke in strong Yorkshire dialect, so Mary had to listen carefully to understand him.

She looked very hard at the robin. 'I'm lonely too,' she said. She had not realized this before.

'What's your name?' she asked the gardener.

'Ben Weatherstaff. I'm lonely myself. The robin's my only friend, you see.'

'I haven't got any friends at all,' said Mary.

Yorkshire people always say what they are thinking, and old Ben was a Yorkshire moor man. 'We're alike, you and me,' he told Mary. 'We're not pretty to look at, and we're both very disagreeable.'

Nobody had ever said this to Mary before. 'Am I really as ugly and disagreeable as Ben?' she wondered.

Suddenly the robin flew to a tree near Mary and started singing to her. Ben laughed loudly.

'Well!' he said. 'He wants to be your friend!'

'Oh! Would you please be my friend?' she whispered to the robin. She spoke in a soft, quiet voice and old Ben looked at her in surprise.

'You said that really nicely!' he said. 'You sound like Dickon, when he talks to animals on the moor.'

'Do you know Dickon?' asked Mary. But just then the robin flew away. 'Oh look, he's flown into the garden with no door! Please, Ben, how can I get into it?'

Ben stopped smiling and picked up his spade. 'You can't, and that's that. It's not your business. Nobody can find the door. Run away and play, will you? I must get on with my work.' And he walked away. He did not even say goodbye.



*Ben stopped smiling and picked up his spade.*

In the next few days Mary spent almost all her time in the gardens. The fresh air from the moor made her hungry, -and she was becoming stronger and healthier. One day she noticed the robin again. He was on top of a wall, singing to her. 'Good morning! Isn't this fun! Come this way!' he seemed to say, as he hopped along the wall Mary began to laugh as she danced along beside him. 'I know the secret garden's on the other side of this wall!' she thought excitedly. 'And the robin lives there! But where's the door?' That evening she asked Martha to stay and talk to her beside the fire after supper. They could hear the wind blowing round the old house, but the room was warm and comfortable. Mary only had one idea in her head.

'Tell me about the secret garden,' she said.

'Well, all right then, miss, but we aren't supposed to talk about it, you know. It was Mrs Craven's favourite garden, and she and Mr Craven used to take care of it themselves. They spent hours there, reading and talking. Very happy, they were. They used the branch of an old tree as a seat. But one day when she was sitting on the branch, it broke, and she fell. She was very badly hurt and the next day she died. That's why he hates the garden so much, and won't let anyone go in there.'

'How sad!' said Mary. 'Poor Mr Craven!' It was the first time that she had ever felt sorry for anyone.

Just then, as she was listening to the wind outside, she heard another noise, in the house.

'Can you hear a child crying?' she asked Martha. Martha looked confused. 'Er - no,' she replied. 'No, I think... it must be the wind.'



But at that moment the wind blew open their door and they heard the crying very clearly.

'I told you!' cried Mary.

At once Martha shut the door. 'It was the wind,' she repeated. But she did not speak in her usual natural way, and Mary did not believe her.

The next day it was very rainy, so Mary did not go out. Instead she decided to wander round the house, looking into some of the hundred rooms that Mrs Medlock had told her about. She spent all morning going in and out of dark, silent rooms, which were full of heavy furniture and old pictures. She saw no servants at all, and was on her way back to her room for lunch, when she heard a cry. 'It's a bit like the cry that I heard last night!' she thought. Just then the housekeeper, Mrs Medlock, appeared, with her keys in her hand.



*Just then Mrs Medlock appeared.*

'What are you doing here?' she asked crossly.

'I didn't know which way to go, and I heard someone crying,' answered Mary.

'You didn't hear anything! Go back to your room now. And if you don't stay there, I'll lock you in!'

Mary hated Mrs Medlock for this. There was someone crying, I know there was!' she said to herself. 'But I'll discover who it is soon!' She was almost beginning to enjoy herself in Yorkshire.

## 2. Grammar Page

### Four Kinds of Sentences

1. Declarative sentence
2. Imperative sentence
3. Interrogative sentence
4. Exclamatory sentence

**And there are only three punctuation marks with which to end a sentence:**

1. Period or full stop
2. Question mark
3. Exclamation point

Using different types of sentences and punctuation, students can vary the tone of their writing assignments and express a variety of thoughts and emotions.

A. A **declarative sentence** simply makes a statement or expresses an opinion. In other words, it makes a declaration. This kind of sentence ends with a period.

Examples:

“I want to be a good football player.” (makes a statement)

“My friend is a really good writer.” (expresses an opinion)

B. An **imperative sentence** gives a command or makes a request. It usually ends with a period but can, under certain circumstances, end with an exclamation point.

Examples:

“Please sit down.”

“I need you to sit down now!”

C. An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. This type of sentence often begins with who, what, where, when, why, how, or do, and it ends with a question mark.

Examples:

“When are you going to turn in your writing assignment?”

“Do you know what the weather will be tomorrow?”

D. An **exclamatory sentence** is a sentence that expresses great emotion such as excitement, surprise, happiness and anger, and ends with an exclamation point.

Examples:

“It is too dangerous to climb that mountain!”

“I got an A on my book report!”