



Learn English Through Stories

K Series

K7

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Contents

Cheeky Charlie:

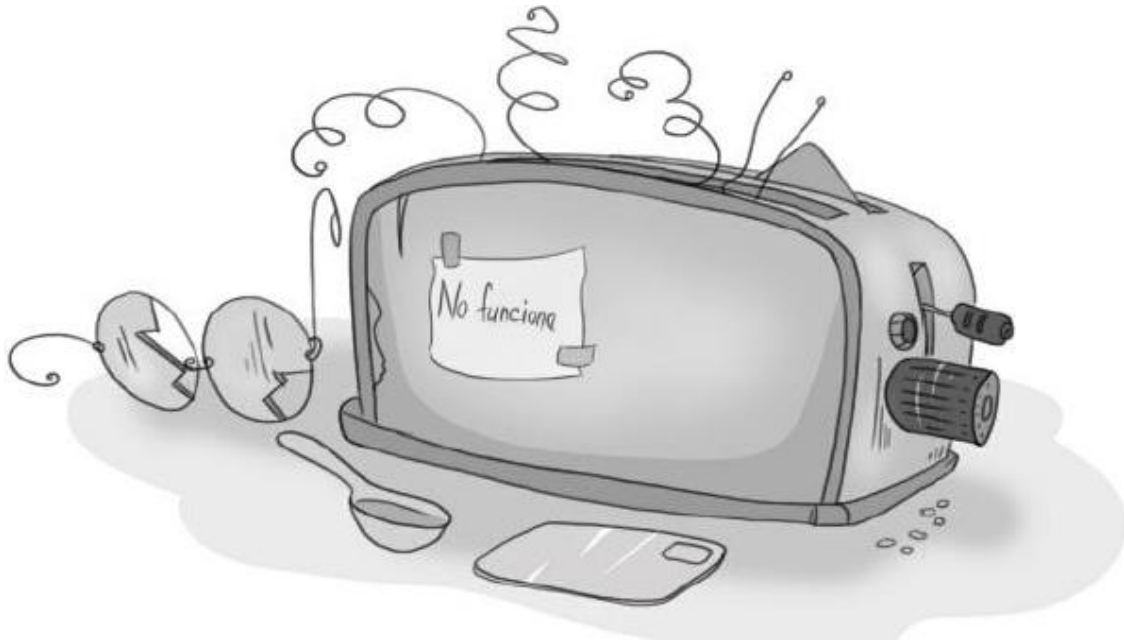
Chapter 5: Waterslides Part 1.

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Have you ever stayed in a hotel? We have. It was last year, in the summer. We flew to Spain in an aeroplane. It was night when we arrived. As we stood at the top of the steps waiting to get off you could feel the warm wind on your face; there was a funny smell, too. 'Just like one of Mummy's trumps (farts), but nicer,' said Dad.

But forget about that, because I want to tell you about the amazing hotel. There was a machine where you could buy crisps and drinks whenever you wanted and a restaurant where you could have cherry yoghurt and ham for breakfast - every morning. And if you wanted toast you had to do it yourself, which was fine with me because I'm an expert chef.

We only used the toaster for a few days, though, because halfway through our holiday there was a big sign on it saying — No funciona — which means 'Not working' in Spanish. Lots of springs and metal bits were hanging out and next to it, on the tray, were all sorts of blackened, twisted things that had been put through the toaster.



Charlie and I poked around: we could see a plastic spoon, a piece of someone's sunglasses, one of those special cards that you use to get into hotel bedrooms instead of keys, and...

'Is my hellyfant!' said Charlie, picking up a lump of stinky grey plastic.

Now most children would be very grumpy if their favourite toy was ruined - even if it was their fault, because they had been trying to make elephant on toast. Not Charlie.

'Look, my hellyfant is all melty!' he shouted, and he ran back to Mum with a grin on his face.

I saw her look at the lump. She looked at the toaster. And then she shook her head. Charlie put his melty hellyfant into the change bag.

But the best thing about our hotel wasn't the toaster, it was the swimming pool. I don't know what the swimming pool in your town is like, but the one near my house is boring. It's a rectangle with ropes in it. Grown-ups swim from end to end looking like they need a poo. You can't run, you can't jump, you can't splash. Boring.

But not the one at this hotel. It was shaped like a jelly that has been dropped on the floor, with curvy edges and extra little blobby pools around the outside that Mum called Jacuzzis but Charlie called 'bubble baths'. All around, raised up on stilts, were two twisty-turny water slides: a blue one called The Hamster, and a green one called The Dragon.

The Hamster was long and slow. People waved at their friends as they travelled on the special mats. At the end you plopped out into one of the big pools next to the stairs, ready to have another go.

But The Dragon was very different. Even at the start, the place where you put your mat, it was really steep and fierce jets of water squirted out right next to your bottom.

On the first day we sat in the chairs by the pool and you could see people holding on to the bars at the top and trying to sit on their mats. But the water made them slip, and they usually disappeared into the tube sideways or backwards, screaming. Then you heard them scream some more as they went around the bends. At the bottom they shot out of a dragon's mouth into the main pool, right in front of everyone, still screaming. They made a massive 'kersploosh!' as they landed, and went right under the water. That usually stopped them screaming.

Even though I'm really good at swimming, I didn't want to go on The Dragon. I was a bit afraid of The Hamster too, which is strange because I'm not afraid of real hamsters, even when they do a wee on my school uniform like my friend's hamster does.

'It's just like the slides at the soft play, but with water,' said my Dad as we all sat in one of the Jacuzzis. He does talk rubbish sometimes.

Charlie was trying to press the button to turn on the bubbles. He only has chubby little fingers so I pressed it for him. 'No I wanna do it!' he screamed in my face.

I stuck my tongue out at him and he screamed again. He's really easy to annoy sometimes. Mum was just telling him to calm down when the bubbles started. They came out everywhere: by your feet, on your back, even up your bum a bit when you sat in the special seats. The water turned completely white with bubbles so you couldn't even see your knees.

'Check me out!' said Dad, floating on his back. Dad was wearing massive blue shorts with pink flowers on them - his 'baggies', he called them.

Something odd was happening. Dad's baggies were getting bigger. Much, much bigger. They were blowing up like James' Giant Peach, or a hot air balloon.

'Did you have beans for breakfast?' asked Mum.

'Beans, beans, good for your heart, the more you eat I shouted. My friend Jade taught me that. You couldn't hear the last words because Mum put her hand over my mouth.

By now Dad's shorts were so big it looked like he was going to explode. He poked them and they puffed straight back up again.

Do you ever do pile-ons with grown-ups? It's where you all shout 'Pile on!' and climb on top. If you're at the bottom you can hardly breathe and you have to scream until they get off.

Charlie loves a pile-on and from where he stood on the side this looked like the perfect chance. 'Pie Ron!', he yelled, throwing himself right onto Dad's inflatable shorts.



'Ooof!' shouted Dad as the weight of Charlie bent him in half.

'Cool!' I shouted.

'Oh Charlie,' sighed Mum.

Charlie probably shouted something else too but we didn't hear him because he had disappeared under the bubbles.

Dad reached under the water, scooped him out and sat him on his lap. Water was running down his face, which Charlie hates.

'That was a bit daft wasn't it, Charlie?' said Dad, giving him a cuddle.

Charlie sniffed a bit, then went quiet.

I done a wee/ he said quietly.

'I think it's time for us to get out now/' said Mum firmly

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After we'd had a toasted sandwich in the cafe we went back out to the main pool. There were sun loungers lined up in a row. We threw our towels over the ones at the end and climbed on.

'What are we going to do?' I asked.

'Well I don't know about you but I'm going to catch some rays and have a kip,' said Dad, leaning back and closing his eyes.

'You can go and play,' said Mum, 'but make sure you stay where I can see you.' And she picked up her magazine.

We were by the pool where The Dragon ended but nobody was coming down the slide. Grown-ups were just sitting around; some of them were reading, but many of them were asleep. It was hot and there was nothing to do.

I picked up Dad's mirror sunglasses and tried them on. They made everything look dark like night was coming and it was nearly time for bed. Why would you want that?

'Do I look cool?' I asked Mum. She just smiled and carried on reading.

Charlie copied me. He's always copying me. Do you have a little brother or sister that does that? It drives me mad. He pulled Mum's sunglasses off her face and put them on. They were way too big and kept falling off his nose.

'If you break those I'm going to be hopping mad,' said Mum. That was a mistake, of course, because then Charlie started trying to hop round and he screwed up his nose to make himself look mad. The sunglasses fell onto the floor.

'Shoo!' said Mum, examining them for scratches. 'Go and make mischief somewhere else, I'm off duty.'

'That's a bit rude,' I said. 'Come on Charlie, let's explore.'

I grabbed his hand and we walked along the edge of the pool.

Now here's something else that's really annoying about Charlie: everyone likes him. People smile, pat his wavy, hairy head, or tell Mum what a 'cutie' they think he is. Charlie doesn't even say thank you! He just stands there looking really serious, like he does when he's trying to decide which flavour milkshake he wants.

This time was no different.

'Hello!' said the old lady on the blue towel.

'Hola!' said the woman on the red towel.

(Hola means 'Hello' in Spain, my Mum told me that.)

A man with the headphones winked at him and made a chick-chick sound out of the side of his mouth.

Charlie just kept on walking.

The last sun-lounger was empty. I sat down but Charlie crawled underneath and started to tickle my legs.

'Charlie! Stop it!' I said. 'You're not at home now! Get out!'

At home Charlie is always crawling under the table. He'll sit there pretending to be a dog and licking your knee or chewing the laces on your shoes. Once, when Mum had lots of friends for tea, he started to shout out what colour pants Mum's friends were wearing. 'Blue pants! Black pants! Black pants again!' he'd said, and all Mum's friends had started screaming with laughter.

'Little pants! Big pants!' he'd continued, but then he started getting silly, like he always does. 'Stinky pants! Poo poo pants! She got no pants on!'

At that point Mum had pulled him out from under the table and asked him to say sorry to her friends with the stinky pants and the poo poo pants. The woman with no pants on said that he had made a mistake, and that they were just too small for Charlie to see.

So it wasn't a surprise when Charlie climbed under my sun lounger. I found something to do because I realised you can dip your toe into the pool and then draw pictures on the tiles in water. They fade quite quickly, but you just get your toe wet and do it again.

I'm not sure how long I was painting pictures for, but I stopped when a man got out of the pool and walked his wet, hairy monster feet right over my painting. He ruined it. I looked up to see Charlie and realised that he'd crawled back to Mum and Dad through the tunnel of sun loungers.

As I walked back towards them the first woman I walked past was looking for something, muttering angrily to herself. The next woman put on a pair of sunglasses and the first woman started pointing at her face, and getting shouty.

On the next sun lounger, a man was sleep with a hat over his face. A large, bright pink hat with a floppy rim.



Next in the row was a woman reading a book. I nearly tripped over her shoes and that was hardly surprising because they were huge blue Crocs. They looked like canoes. My Grandad has massive feet but these were extraordinary. It didn't make sense: this woman, asleep on her sun lounger, was tiny! Her little legs ended in little feet with little painted toes. It seemed a shame she couldn't get shoes the right size.

Next to her was the English couple who had sat near us at breakfast. She was doing that thing where women lie on their front and undo their tops. I don't know why they do that - perhaps the straps are a bit itchy. The man was putting sun-cream on her back. But just as he picked up the bottle the woman with the tiny feet reached out and snatched it out of his hand!

'Oi! What are you playing at?' he shouted.

Tiny toes shouted something back in Spanish that I didn't understand - but I don't think she was asking if he liked cherry yoghurt for breakfast.

'What's the matter, Gary?' asked the woman, twisting her neck round to see.

'This nutter has just stolen our sun-cream!' said Gary, pointing at tiny toes.

'Seriously, she just grabbed it!' 'But that's not our suncream, babe/' said the woman. 'Ours is in an orange bottle.'

'It must be,' said Gary. 'It was under my towel!'

Tiny toes was now standing beside the woman. She had her hands on her hips and a very red face. Perhaps she did need more suncream after all.

'You wan my suncream?' she said. 'Here, have my suncream,' and she took the top off the bottle and poured the white liquid out all over the woman's back. It went everywhere, splashing onto her towel and dripping onto the ground.

Have you ever dropped a vanilla ice cream? I have. Mum had to cut the bits off that might have touched dog wee and then she scooped the rest back into the cone with her fingers. It still tasted the same. Anyway, that's what this sunscreen looked like, splashed all over the place.

'Aaargh! Are you out of your mind?' the woman cried, getting up. But then she remembered that she didn't have a top on so she snatched her towel, tipping all her stuff onto the ground.

'Watch out Soph, that's my phone!' said the man as his shiny mobile clattered onto the tiles.

'That's not your phone, Gary. Not unless you've bought a Minnie Mouse case. Why have you got someone else's phone?'

Something seriously strange was going on and it was happening to everyone I walked past. People all around the pool were talking and pointing at each other. I hurried past a man who was wearing big pink sunglasses and rubbing his eyes. I heard another tell his friend, 'But I put the car keys just there! If we can't find them, we're stuffed. We should call the police.'

Finally I reached Mum and Dad. I watched as people argued, swapped sunglasses, lifted up their sun loungers and emptied their bags.

'Why has everyone got ants in their pants?' asked Dad.

'I'm not sure,' said Mum, 'but... Charlie, does this have anything to do with you?' Charlie was looking at the sky, picking his nose.

'Charlie? I'm talking to you. Have you been up to your shenanigans again?'

Slowly, Charlie put his finger in his mouth, sucked it, and smiled a big smile. 'I want nanny kittens!' he said. 'I love nanny kittens!'

'Nanny kittens?' said Dad. 'What have kittens got to do with the price of fish?'

'Don't like fishies,' said Charlie.

'Are we having fish tonight, Dad?' I asked.

Mum groaned loudly. 'Why can't you lot talk normally? Give me strength,' she said. So Charlie ran over and started to squeeze her muscles.

A bunch of people at the other end of the pool were pointing at us. 'Hmm... I think it's about time we did a runner,' said Dad, quickly gathering up our things. 'Come on kids, let's skedaddle (run away).'

'Ski-what?' I said. 'What's a daddle. Dad?' Now I was confused. Was Dad talking Spanish?

'Never mind that now,' said Dad, pulling Charlie by the hand. 'Let's get out of here.'

A bunch of car keys fell out of Charlie's shorts. 'Ow!' he said as they landed on his toes.

Before we could say anything Dad gave them a little kick with the side of his foot and slid them under our neighbour's sun lounger.

'Come on kids, time to explore,' he announced, pulling us firmly by the hand away. 'Nothing here for us to worry about?'