



Learn English Through  
Stories

H Series

H10

**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

## **Contents**

### **Adventures of Feluda:**

- 1. The Emperor's Ring: Part 8.**
- 2. Grammar Page: In/at/on (position) 1**

## The Emperor's Ring: Part 8

### Eight

It was getting dark. The lights in the train had just come on. We were speeding on our way to Bareilly. There were seven people in all. Feluda and I had one berth, Baba and Srivastava had another and on the third sat Bonobihari Babu and the sannyasi. Bonobihari Babu had placed a large trunk and a wooden packing crate on the bunk over the berth Baba and Srivastava were sharing. A stranger was sleeping in the berth over mine. He was all wrapped up in a sheet. All I could see were his toes. He had not stirred since we left Lucknow.

I looked around. Bonobihari Babu was sitting crosslegged, smoking his pipe, Srivastava was reading the Gitanjali, and Baba looked as though he was trying very hard to keep awake. He kept rubbing his eyes as he tried to sit up straight.

The sannyasi didn't seem interested in us at all. He was turning the pages of a Hindi newspaper.

Feluda was singing a song in Urdu, tapping his feet to the rhythm of the wheels:

*Jab chhor chaley Lucknow nagri; Kahen haal ke hum par kya guzri.*

He hummed the rest of it. I could tell he didn't know the words beyond the first two lines. Bonobihari Babu spoke unexpectedly.

'How do you happen to know this song of Wajid Ali Shah?'

'An uncle of mine used to sing it,' Feluda replied. 'He was a very talented thumri singer.'

Bonobihari Babu inhaled deeply, stared out at the red western sky and said, 'Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was an amazing man. He was both a singer and a composer. He composed the first Indian opera— very much in the style of Western operas. But he was not a warrior. So the British took Lucknow, and the Nawab left for Bengal. His last days were spent in Matiaburuz, where all the Muslim tailors of Calcutta now live. What was most interesting was that Wajid Ali got together with Rajen Mullik, who was well known for his wealth, and planned the first zoo in Calcutta.'

He rose to his feet and opened his trunk. Then he took out a tape-recorder.

'Allow me to play some of my favourite music,' he said. He lifted the top and pressed a key.

Something inside the recorder began whirring.

‘If you really wish to enjoy this music, look out of the window.’ I did. In the quickly gathering dusk, I saw a whole jungle rush past our window, and from its depths came the harsh cry of a wild cat. Or so it seemed.

‘I have kept the volume low,’ said Bonobihari Babu, ‘so it would seem as though the sound was coming from afar.’

The cat was followed by the hyena. It was fascinating. The train was tearing through a jungle, and it seemed as though the hyena’s laugh was coming from outside, echoing through the trees. Then came a different sound.

‘Kir-r-r-r-r-r kit kit! Kir-r-r-r-r-r kit kit!’

My heart beat faster. Even the sannyasi had sat up and was listening intently.

‘Rattle-snake,’ Bonobihari Babu explained. ‘That noise might frighten you, but the snake makes it simply to let the other animals know of its existence, so that it doesn’t get trampled on.’

‘You mean it wouldn’t normally attack man?’ Baba asked.

‘No, not normally. But then, nor would any other snake. But if it was cornered or provoked, most certainly it would turn aggressive. For instance, if it was held captive in a small room and you happened to be in it, I’d say your chances of being attacked would be pretty strong. There is one other thing. These snakes can see in the dark.’

He switched the recorder off, and said, ‘Unfortunately, the other inmates of my zoo are not represented here. Two of them—the spider and the scorpion—are, of course, totally silent. Now if I get that python, I’m going to record its hiss.’

‘It felt weird to hear those sounds,’ said Baba.

‘Yes, it must have done. But it is different for me, you see. What you just heard, to my ears, is sweeter than music. Since I cannot take my animals with me when I travel, I carry their voices—so to speak.’

The train pulled in at Bareilly. A waiter came in with our dinner, and the sannyasi left.

Having finished what was on his own plate, Feluda coolly helped himself to a leg of chicken from mine.

‘Chicken is good for the brain when it’s being exercised so much,’ he said by way of explanation. ‘I see. And am I not exercising my brain?’

‘No. For you the whole thing’s no more than a game.’

‘So where have you got to, with all your brain power?’

Feluda lowered his voice, so that only I could hear what he said. 'I have got an idea which spy Pyarelal had tried to talk about.' He refused to say any more.

The train left Bareilly.

'We have to get up at four in the morning,' said Baba. 'It's time for bed, I think.' Bonobihari Babu switched the lights off.

'I shan't sleep,' he said. 'But rest assured, I'll wake you before we get to Haridwar.'

I stretched out on one half of our berth, leaving the other for Feluda. Looking out of the window, I could see the moon. It seemed to be travelling with us.

What were we going to do in Haridwar? The moon, for some odd reason, made me think. There was plenty to see in Haridwar, I knew. But if we came away simply after a look at the Ganges and the temples, it would all be rather tame. Something had to happen. I wanted something exciting to happen. The train was making such a racket. How could anyone sleep in this? But, of course, people did. It was strange. If, at home, there was a constant clanking noise and someone kept shaking my bed, would I ever be able to sleep a wink? I had to ask Feluda.

'If a particular noise goes on for a long time,' he replied, 'the ears get used to it; so after a point, it doesn't disturb. And the rocking actually helps one to sleep. Haven't you seen babies being rocked to sleep? As a matter of fact, if the noise or the movement stopped, you'd wake instantly, which is why, very often, one wakes when a train stops at a station.'

Feluda was right. Soon, my eyes grew heavy with sleep and I began to see things. For a minute, I thought the man who was sleeping on the upper berth climbed down and moved around in the compartment. Then I heard a laugh—it could have been a man or a hyena. But there was no time to think for I was lost in the Bhoorbhulaia, going crazy trying to find my way out. Each time I turned a corner, there was a huge spider blocking my way and staring at me through green, luminescent eyes. Then it lifted one of its large hairy legs and laid it on my shoulder. At that moment, I opened my eyes and found Feluda shaking me by the shoulder.

'Get up, Topshe. Here's Haridwar!'

## 2. Grammar Page

### In/at/on (position) 1

#### In

We use **in** to talk about a position that is inside a bigger space, such as a box, a house, a city or a country. The clothes are in the wardrobe. The children are playing in the park. There's a bookshop in the shopping centre.

1. There's no-one in the room / in the building / in the garden.
2. What do you have in your hand / in your mouth?
3. When we were in India, we spent a few days in New Delhi.
4. I have a friend who lives in a small village in the mountains.
5. There were some people swimming in the pool / in the sea / in the river.

#### At

Look at these examples of **at**. Chamchi is sitting at her desk and doing her work. The cat sat at the window for most of the day. Someone is at the door.

1. Who is that man standing at the bus stop / at the door / at the window?
2. Turn left at the traffic lights / at the next junction / at the roundabout / at the temple.
3. We have to get off the bus at the next stop.
4. When you leave the hotel, please leave your key at reception. (= at the reception desk)

#### Compare in and at:

1. There were a lot of people **in** the shop. It was crowded.
2. Go along this road, then turn left **at** the shop.
3. I'll meet you **in** the hotel lobby. (= in the building)
4. I'll meet you **at** the entrance to the hotel. (= outside the building)

#### On

We use **on** to refer to a position on any surface:

1. I sat on the floor / on the ground / on the grass / on the beach / on a chair.
2. There's a dirty mark on the ceiling / on your nose / on your shirt.
3. Did you see the notice on the wall / on the door?
4. You'll find details of TV programmes on page seven of the newspaper.
5. The hotel is on a small island in the middle of a lake.

## Exercise

Complete the sentences. Use in, at or on + the following:

**the window**      **his hand**      **the mountains**      **that tree**  
**my guitar**      **the river**      **the island**      **junction 14**

1. There were some people swimming .....
2. One of the strings ..... is broken.
3. Leave the motorway ..... and then turn left .
4. He was holding something ..... , but I couldn't see what it was.
5. The leaves ..... are a beautiful colour.
6. You can go skiing ..... near here. There's plenty of snow.
7. There's nobody living ..... It's uninhabited.
8. He spends most of the day sitting ..... and looking outside.

## Answers

Complete the sentences. Use in, at or on + the following:

**the window**      **his hand**      **the mountains**      **that tree**  
**my guitar**      **the river**      **the island**      **junction 14**

1. There were some people swimming **in the river**.
2. One of the strings **on my guitar** is broken.
3. Leave the motorway **at junction 14** and then turn left .
4. He was holding something **in his hand** , but I couldn't see what it was.
5. The leaves **on that tree** are a beautiful colour.
6. You can go skiing **in the mountains** near here. There's plenty of snow.
7. There's nobody living **on the island**. It's uninhabited.
8. He spends most of the day sitting **at the window** and looking outside.