



Learn English Through Stories

D Series

D31

Adapted and modified by

Kulwant Singh Sandhu

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

Contents

- 1. My Cousin Rachel.
Chapters 3 and 4.**
- 2. Grammar Page.**

1. My Cousin Rachel

by Margaret Turner

Chapter three: The Villa Sangalletti

I had a terrible journey. The roads were noisy and dirty. The weather got hotter every day. By the time I reached Florence, it was the 15th of August.

I found a room in a hotel and washed and changed my clothes. When I went out again, the streets were full of people. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and still very hot. I stopped a carriage.

'Villa Sangalletti,' I said to the driver. He nodded and pointed up the hill.

The horse pulled the carriage slowly up a long, twisting road. At last, the driver stopped in front of a gate in a high wall. I made signs to him to wait.

There was a bell beside the gate and I pulled it hard. I waited a few moments, but no one came. I rang the bell again. I heard the sounds of a dog barking and a child crying. It was very hot. Then I heard footsteps and the gate slowly opened. A servant woman stood in the gateway. There was a long, wide path behind her. It led to the villa.

'Villa Sangalletti? Signor Ashley?' I asked.

The woman tried to shut the gate, but I pushed past her. A man appeared and the woman shouted to him in Italian. I heard the words: 'Ashley . . . Inglese . . .'

The man stared at me. 'I speak a little English, signore,' he said. 'Can I help you?

'I have come here to see Mr Ashley,' I said. 'Are Mr and Mrs Ashley at the villa?

The man looked worried.

'Are you Signor Ashley's son, signore?' he asked.

'No,' I said, 'I am his cousin. Tell me quickly. Is he at home?'

'You are from England, signore?' the man asked slowly. 'You have not heard the news? Signor Ashley, he died three weeks ago. Very sudden. After the funeral, the contessa, his wife, shut up the villa and went away. We do not know if she will come back again.' I did not say anything. There was nothing I could say. 'Signor,' the man said kindly, 'I will open the villa for you. You can see where Signor Ashley died.'

I was not interested in where I went or what I did. The man began to walk up the path, taking some keys from his pocket. I followed.

The villa was very beautiful. All the windows were closed and shuttered. The man

opened the big door. He and the woman began to open the shutters. The rooms were large and the air was dry and dusty.

‘The Villa Sangalietti is beautiful, signore, very old,’ said the man. ‘The Signor Ashley, this is where he sat. This was his chair.’

I looked at the chair. I could not think of Ambrose in this house, in this room.

I went to the window. Outside, there was a little courtyard. It was open to the sky, but shaded from the sun. In the middle of the courtyard, there was a fountain and a little pool. A laburnum tree stood beside the pool. Its golden flowers had died. And its small, green seeds lay on the ground.

‘Signor Ashley, he sat here every day,’ the man said. ‘He liked to listen to the water falling. He sat there, under the tree. In summer, they always sat here, Signor Ashley and the contessa. They drank their tisana here, after dinner. Day after day, always the same.’

It was very cool there in the courtyard and very, very quiet. I thought of how Ambrose had lived at home — walking, riding, always cheerful and busy.

‘I will show you the room where Signor Ashley died,’ the man said quietly. I followed him upstairs into the plain, bare room.



Outside, there was a little courtyard.

I looked at the small, hard bed where Ambrose had died.

‘He died suddenly,’ the man told me. ‘He was very weak from the fever. But sometimes he shouts, like a madman. Then one morning, the contessa called for me.

‘He was lying very still. It was the sleep of death. He had a peaceful face. The pain and the madness had all gone.’

‘Madness? What do you mean?’ I said.

‘The madness of the fever,’ the man replied. ‘He suffered much pain. Sometimes, I had to hold him down in his bed. Then came the fever and the madness. I tell you, signore, it was terrible to see.’

I turned away.

‘Why was nothing done?’ I said. ‘Why did Mrs Ashley let him die? What was this illness? How long did it last?’

‘At the end, it was very sudden, like I told you,’ said the man. ‘But he had been very ill all winter. And he was sad. All winter he was sad.’

We walked through another room and out onto a long terrace. In front of us were the most beautiful gardens I had ever seen.

‘I think,’ the man said slowly, ‘that the contessa will not come back again. Too sad for her. Signor Rainaldi told us that perhaps the villa will be sold.’

‘Who is Signor Rainaldi?’ I asked quickly.

‘He arranges things for the contessa,’ the man replied. ‘Money, business, everything. I give you his address. He speaks English very well.’

He closed the shutters. We walked downstairs again and stood by the big door.

‘What happened to his clothes?’ I asked. ‘Where are his books, his papers?’

‘The contessa took everything with her.’

‘And you don’t know where she went?’ I asked.

The man shook his head.

‘She has left Florence. That is all I know. Signor Ashley was buried here in Florence, signore, then the contessa left.’

The woman suddenly spoke to her husband and opened a chest near the wall. She came back carrying a big straw hat — Ambrose’s hat. The hat that he had sometimes worn at home, in the sun. The woman gave it to me and I stood there with it in my hands.

‘Take it with you, signore,’ the man said softly. ‘It is yours now.’

Chapter four: I Meet Rainaldi

On my journey back to Florence, I thought of only one thing. I had to speak to Signor Rainaldi. He must know more about Ambrose's death.

The servant at the villa had given me Signor Rainaldi's address. I found the house at last, in a quiet, dark street. Signor Rainaldi was at home and a servant took me to his room.

Rainaldi looked surprised when he saw me. He was a thin man, about forty years old, with a proud, hard face.

'My name is Ashley — Philip Ashley,' I said.

'Yes,' Signor Rainaldi answered. 'Will you sit down? You are Ambrose Ashley's cousin - and his heir. You look very like him. I did not expect to see you here. When did you arrive in Florence?'

'This afternoon,' I replied. 'I have been to the Villa Sangalletti.'

Signor Rainaldi smiled. 'Then you have not seen your cousin Rachel,' he said. 'She left Florence very suddenly. Your cousin's death was a great shock to her.'

'It was a shock to me, too, Signor Rainaldi,' I said. 'Why wasn't I told about Ambrose's illness?'

'Mrs Ashley always hoped he would get well,' Rainaldi answered. 'She did not want to worry you.'

'But I had these letters,' I said. 'That is why I came to Florence.' And I handed Rainaldi the last two letters from Ambrose. When he had read them Signor Rainaldi said slowly, 'Yes, the doctors warned Mrs Ashley of this.'

'What do you mean?'

'They told her that your cousin had a tumour on his brain. That is why he wrote these letters. First the tumour destroyed his brain and then it killed him.'

I shook my head. I could not believe it.

Rainaldi held out a paper. 'This is a copy of the death certificate,' he said. 'I sent another copy of it to you in Cornwall and one to Mr Kendall. As your guardian, he had to be told about Ambrose's death.'

'Mr Kendall is my guardian?' I asked in surprise. 'Ambrose never told me that.'

'It is in your cousin's will,' Rainaldi replied. 'Mr Kendall will explain when you return home.'

'But what about these letters?' I cried. 'Ambrose wrote them to warn me. He was not sick, but in great danger.'



‘Your Cousin Ambrose was sick in his mind,’ Rainaldi answered. ‘His sickness gave him strange ideas. Because Mrs Ashley was with him all the time, he suspected her. A sick man often thinks that his dearest friends are his enemies.’

‘If I had been here, Ambrose would be alive now,’ I said.

Rainaldi shook his head. ‘No,’ he said. ‘That is not true. No one could do anything for him.’

I turned and moved towards the door.

‘When Mrs Ashley returns, tell her I know about the letters,’ I said.

‘Your cousin Rachel left Florence very suddenly,’ Rainaldi said. ‘I do not think she will come back.’

I walked out of the cold house and into the dark streets. I did not believe Rainaldi’s story. Ambrose had died in great pain and unhappiness. And my cousin Rachel had been the cause of his pain. I was sure of that.

I promised myself that one day I would bring pain and unhappiness to my cousin Rachel. I would punish this woman who had killed my dear Ambrose, far away from his home and his friends.

2. Grammar page

Interrogative Determiners:

Use the words what, which and whose before nouns to ask about people or things. These words are called interrogative determiners.

1. What size do you wear?
2. What kind of bird is that?
3. What time is it?
4. What colour is her hair?
5. What kind of clothes do you like to wear?
6. Which school do you go to?
7. Which doll is your favourite?
8. Which road leads to the zoo?
8. Which runner is the winner?
9. Do you know which girl won the prize?
10. Whose footprints are these?
11. Whose baby is this?
12. Whose dog was barking in the middle of the night?
13. Which way is the pharmacy?
14. Which movie do you want to watch?
15. Which restaurant did you go to?
16. Whose jacket is this?
17. Whose house is up for sale?
18. Whose iPhone was stolen?
19. Whose are these shoes?
20. Whose is that limo outside?

Interrogative Pronouns

What:

1. What do you want for dinner? *I will have daal and roti.*
2. I wonder what we're doing tomorrow. *We are painting the house tomorrow.*
3. What is your friend's name? *His name is Banta Singh Rangeela.*
4. What time are we supposed to be there? *Not later than 5'o clock.*

Which:

1. Which colour do you prefer? *Pink colour is my favourite.*
2. Which of these ladies is your mother? *The one with a red sari is my mother.*
3. She asked which train to take. *She should take Coventry to London train.*

Who:

1. Who is that? *She is my grandmother.*
2. Who was driving the car? *My brother was driving the car.*
3. I'm wondering who will be at the party. *Your friend Reeta will definitely be there.*
4. Who is going to take out the trash? *You, of course, who else?*

Whom:

1. Whom did you speak to? *I spoke to Hema Malni.*
2. Whom do you prefer to vote for? *Mr Beans.*
3. Whom do you live with? *I live with myself.*

Whose:

1. Whose sweater is this? *This is my brother's.*