



**Learn English Through
Stories
D Series**

D40

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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

George Kershaw

Nothing but the Truth



Nothing but the Truth part 4

By George Kershaw

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The moment of truth

In an office in the Upper School building, Verity Truman was sitting, staring at her telephone.

'Come on, Wiwat. Come on!' She looked at her watch again. Nearly twelve o'clock.

Meanwhile, in another part of the school, Hu and her mother and father were waiting outside the principal's office. They could hear voices from inside. Hu and her mother and father said nothing.

Hu thought about her parents. They had been surprisingly calm when she had told them her story. Her mother had been unhappy about Aunty Wang's ring. 'It's been in the family for a long time!' she had said. 'Your Aunty Wang had it, her mother, and now you!'

But her father didn't think it was so very important. 'Aunty Wang had so many jewels, she won't notice,' he had said. Then, very sadly, he added, 'Hu, it was your ring, and your decision. You are almost an adult, a young adult. Now this is your problem, your responsibility. It was yours to sell. But you should not have sold it secretly.'

Hu's father had seemed sad, not angry, Very carefully, he had questioned Hu for every detail of her problems with Mr Stanyer. Like a good lawyer, he had got the whole story from her - he had even made her show him the book where she had written down the dates of the classes and the money she had paid Mr Stanyer.

'But why didn't you tell me?' he had asked.

'Because you want me to be a doctor so much, and with bad results in English, they won't let me do the IB. I didn't want to disappoint you, father.'

It was late when Hu's father was satisfied that he had the whole story. He told Hu to go to bed, but before she left, she asked him.

'Father, do you believe me?'

Hu's father didn't answer immediately.

'I want to believe you,' he said at last. 'You wanted to improve your results, so you did extra lessons. That is not a bad thing, although you should have told us. But these are terrible things you say about Mr Stanyer. I want to believe you, but there have been too many lies, and too many secrets. And I haven't met Mr Stanyer yet. I want to believe you, but I must decide tomorrow in the meeting. Now, good night, little one.'

Mr Grisman stood very tall and serious in his black suit and Cambridge University tie. He stood at the door of his office and asked Hu and her parents to come in.

'Do sit down. Let me introduce you,' Mr Grisman said.

Sitting at the long table in Mr Grisman's very grand office were three other men in suits. By the door Mr Stanyer sat, staring at nothing.

Hu and her mother and father sat down at the table. Mr Grisman took his seat opposite Mr Stanyer and the Hu family. On his left Mr Riding sat, leaning back and playing with his empty pipe. On his right was Khun Preecha, chair of the Board of Governors. He was a tall Thai man with grey hair and he looked at Hu steadily with sad, intelligent eyes. He didn't smile.

Mr Grisman continued in his important voice.

'This is a very serious matter, very serious indeed. Your daughter has said some very serious things about our Mr Stanyer. Your daughter's behaviour is quite unacceptable. She has deliberately tried to harm him,' Mr Grisman raised his voice, and the good name of the Academy itself.' He paused. Khun Preecha looked embarrassed.

Hu looked at her mother and father. Her mother looked pale and frightened. Her father's face showed no emotion at all. He simply sat and stared at Mr Grisman without expression.

Mr Grisman continued. 'I have invited Khun Preecha to be here because we must decide if, because of the things she's said about Mr Stanyer, Hu can continue to study at the Academy.'

Hu's father said nothing, and the expression on his face didn't change. Hu's mother was looking down, afraid to meet Mr Grisman's eyes. Mr Stanyer was trying not to smile. Hu closed her eyes.

In her office, Verity Truman was walking up and down. She picked up the telephone to see if it was working and quickly put it down again. 'Wiwat, where are you? They must have started by now!' she said to herself.

'Now,' said Mr Grisman, 'we must consider just exactly what Hu Jian Ming has said about Mr Stanyer.'

Mr Stanyer nodded, but he looked uncomfortable.

'Firstly, that he has been giving her private lessons for money in the school itself, outside of school hours. This is clearly untrue. That would be a very serious matter indeed. Mr Stanyer has told me that he simply wished to give Hu some extra work after class, a very kind and generous offer on his part. Of course, no money was involved.'

Hu's mouth fell open. Hu's father's face didn't change. Mr Grisman hurried on.

'Secondly, she says that Mr Stanyer gave Hu bad results in order to persuade her to take these "private lessons". A very serious matter.' Mr Grisman looked at Hu angrily. 'You are a student, Miss Hu; Mr Stanyer is a teacher, a professional.'

Still Hu's father's face didn't change.

'Thirdly,' Mr Grisman continued, 'that on one occasion Mr Stanyer invited her back to his apartment for further lessons and "to be more comfortable".' Mr Grisman looked at Hu's parents angrily. 'I hope you realise just how serious this is?'

There was a long silence. Hu's father stared back at the school principal. He said nothing.

'And lastly, she says that other female students have been in the same situation. We needn't discuss that. There have been no other complaints.'

There was another long silence.

'Now, Hu Jian Ming,' said Khun Preecha, softly. 'What have you got to say for yourself?' He looked at her in a kind and interested way.

Quietly and with dignity, Hu's father spoke. He looked first at Khun Preecha and then at Mr Grisman.

'Principal, my daughter has told me about the things that happened with Mr Stanyer. I will try to explain her point of view.'

The men on the other side of the table looked at each other. Mr Grisman, Declan Stanyer and David Riding seemed to be smiling. Khun Preecha was not. He turned to look at Hu Jian Ming. His eyes didn't leave hers.

Verity Truman looked at her watch again. She reached for the phone. 'May I speak to Wiwat Phalavadhana?' she asked. 'Left his office?... When?... Coming here?... No, no. Thank you, thank you.' She replaced the phone. She placed her hands together and made a prayer. 'Please, please don't let the traffic be too bad!'

Hu's father spoke very well, but the three men facing him didn't seem to believe him. He showed them the book Hu had used to write down the times and money for her private lessons. Suddenly Mr Riding sat forward.

'Principal, may I have that?' Mr Grisman gave it to him. 'Hmph!' He laughed briefly. 'This is pure teenage story telling.' He laughed some more. Mr Riding's laugh was not a happy or a funny laugh.

'It's not unusual for teenage girls to have strong feelings for older men, particularly men in an important position. A teacher perhaps. Hu makes up a story about Mr Stanyer giving her bad results because she doesn't like the truth.

The truth is that her results in English just aren't good enough. And she can't tell her father because she's afraid of him.'

Hu's father showed emotion at last. He went very red in the face.

'And then...' Mr Riding spoke slowly, smiling. 'And then we have the invitation back to Mr Stanyer's apartment.' He turned and looked at Hu. 'Would you like Mr Stanyer to invite you back to his apartment?'

Hu looked at Mr Stanyer. He was smiling back at Mr Riding. She looked at her father. She had never seen him so angry. Khun Preecha was not smiling. He was looking down; she couldn't meet his eyes.

'At last!' said Verity Truman looking up. Wiwat Phalavadhana was standing in the door of her office, holding up his bag. He was a small, bright-eyed man of about forty, well-dressed and with a proud and happy smile.

'I have it, Verity!' he said.

'Let's go!' They hurried out of her office.

'I think we must make a decision,' said Mr Grisman. 'And this is it. Mr Riding has shown that Hu Jian Ming has some very serious problems. I think it is these problems which have led her to say these things about our friend and colleague, Mr Stanyer.' Mr Riding nodded.

Then the door of the principal's office opened.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A path to the future

'Mrs Truman!' said Mr Grisman angrily. 'I am in an important meeting. I...' He stopped. He was embarrassed. He didn't want the chair of the school's Board of Governors, Khun Preecha, to see him shouting at his head of Upper School. Then he noticed the person standing behind Verity Truman.

It was Khun Wiwat Phalavadhana. Mr Grisman knew how important he was. Wiwat gave Mr Grisman a very warm smile.

'I...' Mr Grisman began again. 'I'm sorry. This is a very important meeting about one of our teachers.'

'That's what we want to talk to you about,' said Verity Truman. 'I think... we're sure that what Hu Jian Ming has been saying about Mr Stanyer is true.'

Khun Preecha stared at Mrs Truman. He was listening carefully.

'Surely there must be some misunderstanding,' said Mr Grisman. 'But come in, come in.'

Verity and Wiwat entered the office.

'We don't think so. We don't think Hu has misunderstood at all,' said Verity, opening her bag and bringing out some papers. 'And other people don't think so either. There are other students involved, female students. I've spoken to their parents and some of the students too. Mr Stanyer's little game has been going on for some time...'

'Stories, Verity,' said Mr Riding. 'Teenage stories made up by teenage girls. They don't understand their own feelings, they talk together... Then they make up some story. If one girl tells a story, if six girls tell a story, it's still a story.' He looked at the principal. Mr Grisman looked nervous.

'They're all telling the same story, Mr Riding,' Verity Truman threw the papers down on the table in front of the principal. 'And I've been checking the results of the students Mr Stanyer has been giving "private lessons" to. They all had good results until they came to his class, and the older ones have had good results since they left his class. I think he's been changing the results... downwards.'

'But Mrs Truman, you're not an English teacher. You are attacking a colleague...' Mr Grisman was very angry.

'And the girls all tell the story about being invited back to his apartment to be "more comfortable".'

'A story,' said Mr Riding, but he seemed less certain now.

'Perhaps I can speak now?' said Wiwat Phalavadhana, taking some papers from his case. He gave them to Khun Preecha who nodded his head in thanks. The papers were in Thai. 'Mr Stanyer does not have permission to work in Thailand.'

A small administrative problem, Khun Wiwat. I was not responsible for giving Mr Stanyer the job,' Mr Grisman said.

'Mr Stanyer asked for permission to work in Thailand about three months before he joined the Academy,' Wiwat said. 'He wanted to work for a small private school - Audio English - on Siam Square. There was a problem. I telephoned the director of Audio English. He told me they had checked Mr Stanyer's qualifications back in the USA...'

Mr Grisman looked at his hands.

'... and found that there was no student called Mr Declan Stanyer at Ohio State University. No record. They didn't believe he was qualified. Since then Mr Stanyer has been coming in and out of Thailand on tourist visas every few months.'

Mr Grisman was shaking his head. 'I was not responsible for giving Mr Stanyer a job. My head of Upper School, Dr Nyondo, gave him the job. But surely it's an administrative problem?' said Mr Grisman, looking at Wiwat.

'It's the law, Mr Grisman,' said Khun Preecha, quietly.

'And I think you'd better see these,' said Verity. She handed Mr Grisman a large brown envelope. 'I found them in Mr Stanyer's desk drawer.'

'You've been looking in the drawer of his desk, Mrs Truman?' Mr Grisman was shocked. He took the envelope and pulled out a pile of magazines.

Mr Grisman was silent for a moment. His face went white. Everyone was looking at him as he looked at the magazines. He opened one of the magazines and shut it again quickly. He shut his eyes. Then he stood up. He screamed:

'Mr Stanyer!'

But Mr Stanyer wasn't there. His chair was empty. The door of the principal's office was open.

Mr Stanyer had left them.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The right career

Hu found her parents standing outside the school hall with Verity Truman and the principal, Mr Grisman. It was a warm night. The summer was coming. Hu was still wearing her make up and her costume, her special clothes as Dorothy. Hu felt wonderful, the show was a success!

As she came closer to the group of adults, she could see that Mr Grisman was talking very quickly and waving his arms.

'Just disappeared! Three weeks now, and no-one's seen him. Of course the police are still interested. But I had no idea! I was away when he was given the job. The head of Upper School then, Mr Nyondo, had made the arrangements. And of course, the school will pay back the money Hu spent on the, er...' Mr Grisman laughed nervously. 'The "private lessons". But your daughter was wonderful, wonderful. A Chinese Dorothy!' Mr Grisman seemed to find this very funny.

'Wonderful!' said Verity Truman, taking Hu's arm and smiling warmly.

Sean and Thomas joined the group. Sean was also still in costume and make up.

'Sean, you were wonderful!' shouted Verity.

Everyone was talking at once. John Truman and his sister, Mary, joined them. Marwa and Yoshiko joined the group. They all told Hu and Sean how wonderful the show had been.

'Hu, I'd like you to meet someone,' said Verity.

A tall Thai woman in a lovely silk dress came over and joined the group. Hu's mother admired the woman's dress. Hu's father simply stared. Hu was embarrassed.

'This is Dr Irene, Director of the Bangkok Operatic Society,' said Verity.

'Is this the star? Hu Jian Ming?' said Dr Irene. 'I thought your performance was wonderful, Hu. You sing beautifully. Have you had any training?' Hu introduced Dr Irene to her mother. They soon began talking about opera together.

Hu took the opportunity to speak to Thomas. She hadn't seen him since the Khao Yai field trip because he had been in hospital.

'Thomas, I'm sorry you couldn't be in the show,' said Hu. 'Are you OK now?'

'Yes, thanks to him,' said Thomas. He pretended to hit Sean. Sean pretended to fall over. 'I don't like hospital. Too many doctors.'

Hu's mother came towards them.

'Dr Irene wants you to sing with the Operatic Society, Hu,' Hu's mother said in an excited voice. 'And she's a professional singer!'

'I'm a semi-professional singer,' said Dr Irene. 'I'm a professional doctor.'

'She's the senior doctor at the Pattana Clinic, Hu,' said Hu's father. He was full of pride for his daughter. 'She wants you to sing in their new show.'

'Do you like Mozart, Hu?' asked Doctor Irene. 'Our next show at the Operatic Society is a Mozart opera.'

Hu looked at Dr Irene.

'Well?' said Dr Irene.

Then Hu looked at her father.

'A singer and a doctor?' she said to her father, smiling. 'Or a doctor and a singer?'

Her father just smiled, and smiled.

- THE END -