



# Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F28

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# 1. The Hundred and One Dalmatians

By Dobie Smith

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Happy Couples

Not long ago, there lived in London a young married couple of Dalmatian dogs named Pongo and Missis Pongo. They were lucky enough to own a young married couple of humans named Mr and Mrs Dearly, who were gentle, obedient, and unusually intelligent. They understood quite a number of barks: the barks for "Out, please!", "In, please!", "Hurry up with my dinner!", and "What about a walk?" And even when they could not understand, they could often guess.

Mr. Dearly, who had an office in the City, was particularly good at arithmetic. Many people called him a wizard of finance. He had done the Government a great service (something to do with getting rid of the National Debt). Also the Government had lent him a small house on the Outer Circle of Regent's Park - just the right house for a man with a wife and dogs.

Before their marriages, Mr Dearly and Pongo had lived in a bachelor flat, where they were looked after by Mr Dearly's old nurse, Nanny Butler. Mrs Dearly and Missis had also lived in a bachelor fiat where they were looked after by Mrs Dearly's old nurse, Nanny Cook. The dogs and their pets met at the same time and shared a wonderfully happy double engagement. Neither of the Nannies was capable of running a smart little house in Regent's Park. Nanny Cook and Nanny Butler met and after a few minutes of deep suspicion, took a great liking to each other. And they had a good laugh about their names: "What a pity we're not a real cook and butler. That's what is needed now."

And then they both together had a great idea: Nanny Cook would train to be a real cook and Nanny Butler would train to be a real butler.

And so when the Dearlys and the Pongos got back from their joint honeymoon, there were Nanny Cook and Nanny Butler, fully trained, ready to welcome them into the little house facing Regent's Park. And soon after that something even happier happened. Mrs Dearly took Pongo and Missis across the park to St. John's Wood, where they called on their good friend, the Splendid

Veterinary Surgeon. She came back with the wonderful news that the Pongos were shortly to become parents. Puppies were due in a month.

"Let us all go for a walk, to celebrate," said Mr Dearly, after hearing the good news; so off they all set along the Outer Circle. The Dearlys led the way. Then came the Pongos, looking noble. They had splendid heads, fine shoulders, strong legs, and straight tails. The spots on their bodies were jet-black and mostly the size of a two-shilling piece; they had smaller spots on their heads, legs and tails. Their noses and eye-rims were black. They walked side by side with great dignity, only putting the Dearlys on the leash to lead them over crossings. Nanny Cook (plump) in her white overall and Nanny Butler (plumper) in a well-cut tail-coat and trousers completed the procession.

It was a beautiful September evening, windless, very peaceful. There were many sounds but no noises. Birds were singing their last song of the day. "I shall always remember this happy walk," said Mr Dearly. At the moment, the peace was broken by a motor-horn. A large car was coming towards them. It stopped at a big house just ahead of them and a tall woman came out on to the front-door steps. She was wearing an emerald satin dress, several ropes of rubies, and absolutely simple white mink cloak which reached to her ruby-red shoes. One part of her hair was black and the other white - rather unusual.

"Why, that's Cruella de Vil," said Mrs Dearly. "We were at school together. She was expelled for drinking ink." The tall woman saw Mrs Dearly and came down the steps to meet her. So Mrs Dearly had to introduce Mr Dearly.

"Come in and meet my husband," said the tall woman. "But you were going out," said Mrs Dearly, looking at the chauffeur who was waiting at the open door of the large car. It was painted in black and white stripes.

"No hurry at all. I insist on your coming."

The Nannies said they would get back and take the dogs with them but the tall woman said the dogs must come in, too. "They are so beautiful. I want my husband to see them," she said.

As they walked through a green marble hall into a red marble drawing-room Cruella's absolutely simple white mink cloak slipped from her shoulders to the floor. Mr Dearly picked it up.

"What a beautiful cloak," he said. "But you'll find it too warm for this evening."

"I never find anything too warm," said Cruella. "I wear furs all the year round. I worship furs, I live for furs! That's why I married a furrier."

Then Mr de Vil came in. He was a small, worried-looking man who didn't seem to be anything besides a furrier. Cruella introduced him and then said: "Where are those two delightful dogs?" Pongo and Missis were sitting under the grand piano feeling hungry. "They are expecting puppies," said Mrs Dearly, happily.

"Oh, are they? Good!" said Cruella. "Come here, dogs!"

Pongo and Missis came forward politely.

"Wouldn't they make beautiful fur coats?" said Cruella to her husband. "For spring wear, over a black suit. We've never thought of making coats out of dogs' skins. They would go so well with my car and my black-and-white hair." Pongo gave a sharp bark.

"It was only a joke, dear Pongo," said Mrs Dearly. Then she said to Cruella: "I sometimes think they understand every word we say."

And it was true of Pongo. Missis did not understand quite so many words as he did.

"You must dine with us next Saturday," said Cruella. And as Mrs Dearly could not think of a good excuse (she was very truthful) she accepted.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Puppies Arrive

Cruella de Vil's dinner party took place in a room with black marble walls, on a white marble table. The food was rather unusual. The soup was dark purple. And what did it taste of? Pepper! The meat was pale blue. And what did that taste of? Pepper! Everything tasted of pepper, even the ice-cream which was black. Cruella shivered and huddled herself in her absolutely simple white mink cloak. Mr and Mrs Dearly left as early as they felt was polite.

"What a strange name de Vil is," said Mr Dearly. "If you put the two words together, they make devil. Perhaps Cruella is a lady-devil! Perhaps that is why she likes things so hot!"

Mrs. Dearly smiled, for she knew he was only joking.

Then she said: "Oh, dear! As we've dined with them, we must ask them to dine with us. And there are some other people we ought to ask. We'd better get it over before Missis has her puppies."

It must have been about three weeks later that Missis began to behave in a very peculiar manner. She explored every inch of the house, paying particular attention to cupboards and boxes. And the place that interested her most was a large cupboard just outside the Dearly's bedroom. The Nannies kept buckets and brooms in it. "Bless me, she wants to have her puppies there," said Nanny Cook.

Mr. Dearly consulted the Splendid Veterinary Surgeon; the Vet said that Missis needed a small enclosed place where she would feel safe. And she'd better have the broom cupboard at once and get used to it.

So out came the brooms and buckets and in went Missis, to her great satisfaction. The dinner party was to be that very night. As there were quite a lot of guests the food had to be normal. Cruella used so much pepper that most of the guests were sneezing. Cruella was busy peppering her fruit salad when Nanny Butler came in and whispered to Mrs Dearly. Mrs Dearly asked the guests to excuse her, and hurried out. A few minutes later, Nanny Butler came in again and whispered to Mr Dearly. He excused himself and hurried out. Those guests who were not sneezing made polite conversation. Then Nanny Butler came in again.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said dramatically, "puppies are arriving earlier than expected. Missis has never before had been a mother. She needs absolute quiet." The guests rose, drank a whispered toast to the young mother, and tiptoed from the house.

All except Cruella de Vil. "I must see the darling puppies," she cried. Cruella flung open the door and stared down at the three puppies. "But they are mongrels - all white, no spots at all!" she cried. "You must drown them at once."

"Dalmatians are always born white," said Mr Dearly. "The spots come later."

"Are you sure those horrid little white rats are pure Dalmatian puppies?"

"Quite sure," snapped Mr Dearly. "Now please go away. You are upsetting Missis."

Nanny Butler firmly showed her out of the house.

There was now a fourth puppy. Missis washed it and then Mr Dearly dried it, while Mrs Dearly gave Missis a drink of warm milk. Soon she had a fifth puppy. Then a sixth - and a seventh. Eight puppies, nine puppies! Surely that would be all? Dalmatians do not often have more in their first family. Ten puppies! Eleven puppies! Then the twelfth arrived and it did not look like its brothers and sisters. Instead of kicking its little legs, it lay quite still. The Nannies said that it had been born dead.

Mr. Dearly held the tiny creature in the palm of his hand and looked at it sorrowfully. Something he had once read came back to him. He began to massage the puppy and suddenly its legs moved! Its mouth opened! It was alive!

Mr. Dearly quickly put it close to Missis so that she could give it some milk at once, and it stayed there until the next puppy arrived - for arrive it did. That made thirteen!

The front door-bell rang. It was the Splendid Vet. "Excellent!" said the Splendid Vet. "And how is the father bearing up?"

The Dearlys felt guilty. Pongo had been shut up in the kitchen. They wanted to have him up. At that moment there was a clatter of toenails on the polished floor of the hall - and upstairs, four at a time, came Pongo.

"Careful, Pongo!" said the Splendid Vet because mother dogs did not usually like to have father dogs around when puppies had just been born. But Missis was weakly thumping her tail. "Go down and have your breakfast and a good sleep," she said - but nobody except Pongo heard a sound. His eyes and his wildly wagging tail told her all he was feeling, his love for her and those fine pups enjoying their first breakfast. He went downstairs with his head high and a new light in his fine, dark eyes. For he knew himself to be the proud father of fifteen.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Perdita

"And now," said the Splendid Vet to the Dearlys, "you must get a foster mother."

Missis would do her best to feed fifteen puppies, doing so would make her terribly thin and tired. And the strong puppies would get more milk than the weak ones. The puppy Mr Dearly had brought to life was very small and would need special care.

The Splendid Vet said the foster mother would have to be some poor dog who had lost her own puppies but still had milk to give. And until the foster mother was found, they could help Missis by feeding the pups with a doll's feeding bottle or old-fashioned fountain-pen filler.

As soon as the shops opened, Mrs Dearly went out and bought a doll's feeding bottle and a fountain-pen filler. And then Mr Dearly and the Nannies took turns at feeding puppies. Mrs Dearly fancied this job herself but was busy telephoning, trying to find a foster mother. The Nannies were too fat to be comfortable in the cupboard, so soon Mr Dearly got the feeding job all to himself and became very good at it and just a bit bossy.

Neither the Splendid Vet nor Mrs Dearly could find a foster mother anywhere in London. Mrs Dearly now started to ring up Lost Dogs' Homes outside London. It was late afternoon when she heard of a mother dog with some milk to give, nearly thirty miles from London. So she got the car from the old stable at the back of the house and drove off hopefully. But when she got to the Dogs' Home she found that the mother dog had already been claimed. Mrs Dearly was glad for the dog's sake, but terribly disappointed.

It was now almost dark, a gloomy, wet October evening. It had been raining all afternoon. As she started back for London, the weather made her feel more and more depressed. She was driving across a lonely stretch of common when she saw what looked like a bundle lying in the road ahead of her. She slowed down and as she drew closer she saw that it was not a bundle but a dog. She stopped the car and got out. The dog was so plastered with mud that Mrs Dearly couldn't see what kind of dog it was. What she could see, by the light from the car's headlights, was the poor creature's pitiful thinness. She spoke to it gently. Its drooping tail gave a flick, then drooped again.

She patted it and tried to get it to follow her. It was willing to, but its legs were wobbly. She picked it up and carried it. It felt like a sack of bones. Then she saw that this was a mother dog and that in spite of its starving condition it still had some milk to give.

Mrs. Dearly sprang into the car and drove as fast as she could. In London suburbs she stopped at a little restaurant. Here the owner let her buy some milk and some cold meat and lent her his own dog's dishes. The starving dog ate and drank and settled to sleep.

She got home just as the Splendid Vet was arriving to see Missis and the puppies. He carried the stray dog in and down to the warm kitchen. "She ought to have a bath," said Nanny Cook, "or she'll give our puppies fleas." The dog was carried into a little room which had been fitted up as a laundry. The stray seemed delighted with the warm water.

Pongo stood on his hind legs and kissed the wet dog on the nose, telling her how glad he was to see her and how grateful his wife would be. At that moment, Nanny Cook began to wash off the soap - and everyone gave a gasp. This dog was a Dalmatian, too! But her spots, instead of being black, were brown - which in Dalmatians is called not "brown", but "liver".

"We'll call her Perdita," said Mrs Dearly, and explained to the Nannies that this was after a character in Shakespeare. "She was lost. And the Latin word for lost is "perditus". Though Pongo had very little Latin, he had, as a young dog, tried Shakespeare (in a tasty leather binding).

Perdita was able to feed two little puppies. She had fed and washed them and was now having a light supper. Then she told Pongo her story. A farmer, her owner, let her run wild. He never gave her the love all Dalmatians need. She had eight puppies, but the farmer didn't give her extra food. One afternoon she woke to find not one puppy in bed with her. She searched the farmyard and ran on to the road, where cars nearly ran over her. Hungry and utterly broken-spirited, she collapsed. Not long after Mrs Dearly found her.

Pongo sympathized with all his heart and did his best to comfort her.

## 2. Grammar Page - Tenses

### Uses of Present Continuous 1:

#### A. For an action going on at the time of speaking.

1. What are you doing? I'm cleaning my flat.
2. What is your sister doing? She's reading in the garden.
3. What are your brothers doing? They're standing in the rain.
4. What is Banta doing now? He's doing his maths homework now.
5. What is happening in the ground? The girls are playing in the there.

#### B. Actions happening in a period around the present moment in time.

1. Whose account are you working on? Mr Khanna's, they are due next week.
2. What is Reeta doing nowadays? She's studying hard for her final exam.
3. You look busy, what's happening? I am working on a new project.
4. What are you doing now days, I mean study-wise? I'm reading Jane Austen's novel 'Northanger Abbey' these days.

#### C. Future plans and arrangements.

1. They are coming to stay with us in June; we'd better repair air-condition.
2. I'm going to give an interview on April 20.
3. What are you doing tomorrow afternoon? I'm going to the cinema to watch a new movie 'One Day'.
4. I'm no well, so I am not going to the party tonight.
5. Is he visiting his parents next weekend? Maybe, maybe not.
6. I'm going to a concert this evening. Excellent, I hope you enjoy it.
7. My sister is arriving tomorrow, and I'm going to pick her up from the station.
8. We are going to Shimla next month for two weeks.