



# Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F29

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# 1. The Hundred and One Dalmatians

By Dobie Smith

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Cruella de Vil Pays Two Calls

The next day, five more puppies were brought down to Perdita and she fed them splendidly. Perdita now had her bed in the dresser cupboard where there would not be too much light for the puppies' eyes. These began to open in eight days. And a week after that, the puppies' spots began to show.

What a day it was when Mr Dearly saw the first spot! After that, spots came thick and fast. In a very few days it was possible to recognize every pup by its spots. There were seven girls and eight boys. The prettiest of all the girls was the tiny pup whose life Mr Dearly had saved at birth, but she was very small and delicate. Mr Dearly called her "Cadpig". Patch, born with a black ear, was still the biggest and strongest puppy. He always seemed to be next to the Cadpig, as if these two already knew they were going to be special friends. There was a fat, funny, boy-puppy called Roly Poly, who was always getting into mischief. And the most striking pup was one who had a perfect horse-shoe of spots on his back - and had therefore been named "Lucky".

By now it was December but the days were fine and surprisingly warm so the puppies were able to play in the area several times a day. One morning, when the three dogs and fifteen puppies were taking the air, Pongo saw a tall woman looking down over the area railings.

He recognized her at once. It was Cruella de Vil. As usual, she was wearing her absolutely simple white mink cloak, but she now had a brown mink cloak under it. Her hat was made of fur, her boots were lined with fur, and she wore big fur gloves.

Cruella opened the gate and walked down the steps, saying how pretty the puppies were. Lucky, always the ring-leader, came running towards her and nibbled at fur round the tops of her boots. She picked him up and placed him against her cloak, as if he were something to be worn.

"Such a pretty horse-shoe," she said, looking at the spots on his back. "Are they old enough to leave their mother yet?"

"Very nearly," said Nanny Butler. "But they won't have to. Mr and Mrs Dearly are going to keep them all."

"How nice!" said Cruella, and began going up the steps still holding Lucky against her cloak. Pongo, Missis and Perdita all barked sharply and Lucky reached up and nipped Cruella's ear. She gave a scream and dropped him. Nanny Butler was quick enough to catch him in her apron.

Every day now, the puppies grew stronger and more independent. They now fed themselves, eating meat and soaked bread and milk puddings. Missis and Perdita were quite happy to leave them now for an hour or more at a time, so the three grown-up dogs took Mrs Dearly and Nanny Butler for a good walk in the park every morning, while Nanny Cook got the lunch and kept an eye on the puppies.

One morning, when she had just let them out into the area, the front door-bell rang. It was Cruella de Vil and when she heard Mrs Dearly was out she said she would come in and wait. She asked many questions about the Dearlys and the puppies and then said she would walk in the park and hope to meet Mrs Dearly. Nanny Cook went to the window to point out the nearest way into the park. She noticed a small black van in front of the house. At that very moment it drove off at a great pace.

Cruella suddenly seemed in a hurry. She almost ran out of the house and down the front-door steps.

"Can't think how she can move so fast in all those furs," thought Nanny Cook, closing the front door. She hurried down to the kitchen and opened the door to the area. Not a pup in sight.

"They've been stolen, I know they have!" she cried, bursting into tears. "They must have been in the van I saw driving away."

Cruella de Vil seemed to have changed her mind about going into the park. She was already half-way back to her own house, walking very fast indeed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Hark, Hark, the Dogs Do Bark!

Through her tears, Nanny Cook could now see Mrs Dearly, Nanny Butler, and the three dogs, who had just turned for home. As they came across the Outer Circle, Nanny Cook ran to meet them - crying so much that Mrs Dearly found it hard to understand what had happened. The dogs heard the word "puppies", and rushed down to the area. They went dashing over the whole house, searching. Mrs Dearly telephoned Mr Dearly. He came home at once, bringing with him one of the Top Men from Scotland Yard. The Top Man found a bit of sacking on the area railings and said the puppies must have been dropped into sacks and driven away in the black van. He warned the Dearlys that stolen dogs were seldom returned unless a reward was offered. Mr Dearly was willing to offer it.

He rushed to Fleet Street and had large advertisements put on the front pages of the evening papers and arranged for even larger advertisements to be on the front pages of the next day's morning papers.

At last night fell on the stricken household. Worn out the three dogs lay in their baskets in front of the kitchen fire. A terrible suspicion was forming in Pongo's mind. Long after Missis and Perdita had fallen asleep, he lay awake. All through the night he put two and two together and made four. Once or twice he almost made five. He would say nothing about his worst fears until he was quite sure.

No good news came during the day. In the afternoon Pongo and Missis showed that they wanted to take Dearlys for a walk. Perdita didn't. She was determined to stay at home in case any pup returned and was in need of a wash.

From the first, it was quite clear the dogs knew just where they wanted to go. They led the way right across the park, across the road, and to the open space which is called Primrose Hill. What did surprise the Dearlys was the way Pongo and Missis behaved when they got to the top of the hill. They stood side by side and they barked.

They barked to the North, they barked to the South, they barked to the East and West. Each time they began the barking with three very strange, short, sharp barks. "Anyone would think they were signalling," said Mr Dearly.

And they were signalling. It was "Dogs' Barking Time". The sharp barks meant: "Help! Help! Help!"

Within a few minutes, the news of the stolen puppies was travelling across England, and every dog who heard at once turned detective.

Pongo and Missis made contact with the dogs near enough to answer them, those dogs would be standing by, at twilight the next evening, to relay any news that had come along.

The next day, a great many people who read the advertisement rang up to sympathize. (Cruella de Vil did.) But no one had anything helpful to say.

Just before dusk, Pongo and Missis again showed that they wished to take Dearlys for a walk. Again the dogs led the way to the top of Primrose Hill. By this time, though no human ear could detect it, the barks were slightly different. They meant "Ready! Ready! Ready!"

The dogs who collected news all over London replied first. Reports had come from the West End and from the East End and South of the Thames. They were the same: "No news of your puppies. Deepest regrets."

Poor Missis! She had hoped so much that her pups were still in London.

Again and again Pongo and Missis barked the "Ready" signal, each time with fresh hope. Again and again came bitter disappointment. At last the Great Dane over towards Hampstead barked: "Wait!" A most wonderful thing had happened. A Pomeranian had heard a message from a Poodle who had heard it from a Boxer who had heard it from a Pekinese. Dogs of almost every known breed had helped to carry the news. The message had travelled over sixty miles as the dog barks.

This was the strange story that now came through to Pongo and Missis: an elderly English Sheepdog, living on a farm in a remote Suffolk village, had just been discussing the missing puppies with a tabby cat at the farm. She was a great friend of his. Some little way from the village, was an old house completely surrounded by an unusually high wall. Two brothers, named Saul and Jasper Baddun lived there, but were only caretakers for the real owner. The place had an evil reputation - no local dog would have dreamed of putting its nose inside the tall iron gates.

The Sheepdog's walk took him past this house, and at that moment, something came sailing out over the high wall. It was an old, dry bone, and on it were the

letters S.O.S. Someone was asking for help! The Sheepdog barked a low, shrill bark. He was answered by a high, shrill bark. The Sheepdog picked up the bone in his teeth and raced back to the farm. He showed the bone to the tabby cat, together they hurried to the lonely house. The cat climbed the tree, went along its branches, and then leapt to a tree the other side of the wall. Through the overgrown shrubbery she came to an old brick wall which enclosed a stable-yard. From behind the wall came whimperings and snufflings. She leapt to the top of the wall and looked down.

One of the Baddun brothers saw her and threw a stone at her. She jumped from the wall and ran for her life. In two minutes she was safely back with the Sheepdog. "They're there!" she said. "The place is seething with Dalmatian puppies!"

The Sheepdog was a formidable Twilight Barker. Tonight he surpassed himself. And so the message travelled, by way of farm dogs and house dogs, great dogs and small dogs.

"Puppies found in lonely house. S.O.S. on old bone -"

Missis could not take it all in. But Pongo missed nothing. There were instructions for reaching the village, offers of hospitality on the way. And the dog chain was standing by to take a message back to the pups. Pongo barked clearly: "Tell them we're coming! Tell them we start tonight! Tell them to be brave!"

Then Missis found her voice: "Give them all our love! Tell Patch to take care of the Cadpig! Tell Lucky not to be too daring! Tell Roly Poly to keep out of mischief!"

## CHAPTER SIX

### To the Rescue!

While the Nannies fed the Dearlys, the dogs made their plans. Perdita at once offered to come to Suffolk with them. Both Pongo and Missis knew she was a beautiful puppy-washer but her job must be to comfort the Dearlys. "If only we could make them understand why we are leaving them!" said Missis sadly. "If we could do that, we shouldn't have to leave them," said Pongo. "They would drive us to Suffolk in the car. And send the police."

Dogs can never speak the language of humans and humans can never speak the language of dogs. Barks are only a small part of the dog language. A wagging tail can mean so many things. Then there are the snufflings and sniffings, the pricking of ears - all meaning different things. And many, many words are expressed by a dog's eyes.

At eleven o'clock the dogs gave Mrs Dearly's hands one last kiss and took Mr Dearly out for his last run. Then all the three dogs went to their baskets in the warm kitchen and the house settled for the night.

Shortly before midnight, Pongo and Missis got up, ate some biscuits they had hidden, and took long drinks of water. Then they said a loving good-bye to Perdita, who was in tears, nosed open a window at the back of the house, and got out.

The night was fine, the stars were brilliant, but the wind was keen. Pongo saw Missis shiver. To warm up he started off briskly along the Outer Circle, looking very spirited. Missis kept pace with him. Pongo knew that if he could not cheer up she would never be able to face the hardships that lay ahead. So he began a little speech to give them both courage.

"We should never lose our liking for adventure, never forget our wild ancestry. Oh, I know we are worried about the puppies but the more we worry, the less we shall be able to help them. We must be brave, we must be gay, we must know we cannot fail. Think of the day when we come back with fifteen puppies running behind us. But I do wish we could have brought your coat."

"I don't," said Missis bravely. "For if I wore a coat, how should I know how cold the puppies were? They have no coats. Oh, Pongo, how can they make the journey from Suffolk in such wintry weather?"



"They may not have to make the journey yet," said Pongo.

Missis stared in astonishment. "But we must get them back quickly or the dog thieves will sell them."

Pongo knew it was time to tell his wife the truth. He said gently:

"Dear Missis, our puppies were not stolen by ordinary dog thieves. Try not to be frightened. Our puppies were stolen by Cruella de Vil's orders - so that she can have their skins made into a fur coat. Oh, Missis, be brave!"

Missis had collapsed. She lay, her eyes full of horror.

"But it will be all right, dear Missis! They will be safe for months yet. They are much too small to be - to be used for a fur coat yet."

"I will go back!" she cried. "I will go back and tear Cruella de Vil to pieces."

"That would do no good at all," said Pongo, firmly. "We must rescue the puppies first and think of our revenge later. On to Suffolk!"

"On to Suffolk, then!" said Missis. "But we shall come back, Cruella de Vil!"

"I wasn't quite sure until this evening at the Twilight Barking. You didn't hear as much as I did, Missis. Our puppies are at Hell Hall, the ancestral home of the de Vils." And he knew, though he kept this from Missis, that the S.O.S. on an old bone meant "Save Our Skins".

## 2. Grammar Page - Tenses

### Uses of Present Continuous 2:

#### D. Gradual change and trends.

1. The children are growing so fast.
2. The price of things is going up by day.
3. Levels of pollution present in the atmosphere are increasing.
4. The price of land and houses are rising rapidly.
5. My health is getting worse. I think I'm getting older.

#### E. For a temporary action which may not be actually happening at the time of speaking.

1. I am living in an apartment with a friend of mine.
2. I am taking computer classes this month but not enjoying it.

#### F. Drawing attention.

1. Look! She is coming here.
2. Look, they are fighting.
3. Hurry up! The bus is leaving soon.
4. Do not make a noise! The child is sleeping.
5. They always go to school on foot but today, they are riding on a horse.

#### G. Adverbs used:

**Now, still, at present, at the moment, at this time, this morning, afternoon, evening, next-day, week, month, year, soon, in the near future, tomorrow morning, etc.**

1. They are walking on the road now.
2. He is still sitting under the tree.
3. I am going overseas in the near future.
4. We are organizing a party this evening.