



Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F30

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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

Contents

1. The Hundred and One Dalmatians.
Chap 7, 8 and 9.
2. Grammar Page



1. The Hundred and One Dalmatians

By Dobie Smith

CHAPTER SEVEN

At the Old Inn

Pongo had no difficulty in taking the right road out of London, for he and Mr Dearly had often driven to Suffolk in their bachelor days. They had decided they must always travel by night and rest during daylight. For they felt sure Mr Dearly would advertise their loss and the police would be on the lookout for them.

They had barely entered the sleeping village when they heard a quiet bark. The next moment, a Golden Retriever was greeting them: "Pongo and Missis Pongo? All arrangements were made for you. Please, follow me." He led them to an old inn. "Please drink here, at my own bowl," he said. "Food awaits you in your sleeping quarters but water could not be arranged." (For no dog can carry a full water-bowl.) Pongo and Missis gulped thirstily and gratefully.

"We are putting you in the safest place any of us could think of. Naturally every dog in the village came to the meeting after the Late Barking - when we heard this village was to have the honour of receiving you. Step this way." At the far end of the yard were some old stables, and in the last stable of all was a broken-down stagecoach.

"Just the right place for Dalmatians," said Pongo, smiling, "for our ancestors were trained to run behind coaches and carriages. Some people still call us Coach Dogs or Carriage Dogs."

"And your run from London has shown you are worthy of your ancestors," said the Golden Retriever.

There was a deep bed of straw on the floor of the coach and neatly laid out on the seat were two magnificent chops, half a dozen of iced cakes, and a box of peppermint creams. "From the butcher's dog, the baker's dog, and the dog at the sweet-shop," said the Retriever. "I shall arrange your dinner. Will steak be satisfactory?" Pongo and Missis said it would indeed. Then they settled down in the straw, close together, and got warmer and warmer.

How gloriously they slept! It was their first really deep sleep since the loss of the puppies. Even the Twilight Barking did not disturb them. It brought good news, which the Retriever told them when he woke them, as soon as it was dark. All was well with the pups, and Lucky sent a message that they were getting more food than they could eat. This gave Pongo and Missis a wonderful appetite for the steaks that were waiting for them.

The Retriever told Pongo how to reach the village where the next day was to be spent - this had been arranged by the Twilight Barking. The steaks were finished and a nice piece of cheese was going down well when the Corgi from the Post Office arrived with an evening paper in her mouth. Mr Dearly had put in his largest advertisement yet - with a photograph of Pongo and Missis (taken during the joint honeymoon).

Pongo's heart sank; the route planned for them was no longer safe. It led through many villages, where even by night they might be noticed. He said: "We must travel across the country."

"But you'll get lost," said the Retriever's wife.

"Pongo never loses his way," said Missis proudly.

"And the moon will be nearly full," said the Retriever. "You should manage. But it will be hard to pick up food. I had arranged for it to await you in several villages."

Pongo hated to think dogs might be waiting up for them during the night.

"I will cancel it by the Nine o'clock Barking," said the Retriever.

Outside, two rows of dogs were waiting to cheer. But no human ear could have heard the cheers, for every dog had now seen the photograph in the evening paper and knew an escape must be made in absolute silence.

Pongo and Missis bowed right and left, gratefully sniffing their thanks to all. Then, after a last good-bye to the Retriever, they were off across the moonlight fields.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Cross Country

They were well rested and well fed and they soon reached a pond where they could drink. Pongo was relieved to see how well Missis ran and what good condition she was in. "You are a beautiful dog, Missis," said Pongo. "I am very proud of you." After a minute or so he said: "Do you think I'm looking pretty fit?" Missis told him he looked magnificent, and wished she had said so without being asked.

They ran on, shoulder to shoulder, a perfectly matched couple. The night was windless and therefore seemed warmer than the night before, but Pongo knew there was a heavy frost; and when after a couple of hours across the fields, they came to another pond, there was a film of ice over it. They broke this easily and drank, but Pongo began to be a little anxious about where they would be by daybreak, for they would need good shelter in such cold weather.

"Should we rest a little, Pongo?" said Missis, at last.

"Not until we've found some dogs to help us, Missis," said Pongo. Then his heart gave a glad leap. Ahead of them were some cottages! It was full daylight now and he could see smoke twisting up from several chimneys. Surely some dog will be about?

They reached the first cottage. Pongo gave a low bark. No dog answered it. They went on and soon saw that this was not a real village but just a short row of cottages, some of them empty and almost in ruins. As they reached the very last cottage, a little boy looked out of a window.

He saw them and quickly opened the door. In his hand was a thick piece of bread and butter. He appeared to be holding it out to them.

"Gently, Pongo," said Missis, "or we shall frighten him."

They went through the open gate and up the path, wagging their tails and looking with love at the little boy - and the bread and butter. The child smiled at them fearlessly and waved the bread and butter. When they were only three or four yards away, he picked up a stone, and threw it with all his force. He laughed when he saw the stone strike Pongo, then went in and slammed the door.

"Are you hurt, Pongo?" cried Missis, as they ran. Then she saw that he was limping. They stopped behind a haystack. Pongo's leg was bleeding. Missis licked his wound and said there was nothing a good rest would not cure. She scabbled at the haystack, saying: "Look, Pongo, you can creep in and get warm. Then sleep for a while. I will find us some food - I will, I will! The first dog I meet will help me."

She knew she must find food for them both. Pretending to Pongo that she felt brave had made her really feel a little braver and her tail was no longer down. The first cottage she reached was the one where the little boy lived. And now he was at the back, looking at her! This time, he had an even larger piece of bread and butter, with some jam on it. He ran towards her, holding it out.

'Perhaps he really means it now,' thought Missis. 'Perhaps he's sorry he hurt Pongo.' And she went forward hopefully - though well prepared to stones. The child waited until she was quite close. He was on grass, with no stones handy. So, instead, he threw the piece of bread and butter. He threw it with rage, not love, but that made it no less valuable.

Missis caught it neatly. 'Bless me,' she thought, 'he's just a small human who likes throwing things. His parents should buy him a ball.' She took the bread and butter back to the haystack and laid it down by her sleeping husband's nose. Again she pulled the hay round him, and then ran to the road. Now she ran in the opposite direction.

She was beginning to think she must go back, when she came to an old red-brick archway. Her spirits rose. Surely this must be the entrance to some big country house with many dogs, large kitchens, plenty of food. Joyfully she ran through the archway. But the path was wild. It seemed more like a path through a wood than the approach to a house. More and more frightened, she ran round one more bend - and suddenly she was out in the open, with the house in front of her. The windows twinkling in the early morning sunshine looked cheerful and welcoming, but there was no sign of life anywhere.

'It's empty!' thought Missis, in despair.

But it was not empty. Looking out of an open window was a Spaniel, black except for his muzzle, which was grey with age. "Good morning," he said. "Can I be of any help to you, my dear?"

CHAPTER NINE

Hot Buttered Toast

It was wonderful how quickly the Spaniel took in the story Missis poured out to him, for he had not heard any news by way of the Twilight Barking. "Haven't listened to it for years," he said. "There isn't another dog for miles. Anyway, Sir Charles needs me at twilight - he needs me almost all the time."

They were now in a large, stone-floored kitchen. He went on: "Breakfast before you tell me anymore, young lady." Missis took one delicious gulp. Then she stopped. "My husband -" The Spaniel interrupted her. "We'll see about his breakfast later. Finish it all, my child."

So Missis ate and ate and then had a long drink from a white pottery bowl. She had never seen a bowl like it. "That's an eighteen-century dog's drinking bowl," said the Spaniel, "handed down from dog to dog in this family. And now before you get too sleepy, you'd better bring your husband here."

"Oh, yes!" said Missis eagerly. "Please tell me how to get back to the haystack."

"Just go to the end of the drive and turn left."

"I'm not very good at right and left," said Missis, "especially left."

The Spaniel smiled; then looked at her paws. "This will help you," he said.

"That paw with the pretty spot - that is your right paw."

"Then which is my left paw?"

"Why, the other paw, of course."

"Back or front?" asked Missis.

"Just forget your back paws. Look at your front paws and remember: Right paw, spot. Left paw, no spot. Turn on the side of the paw which doesn't have a spot. I will show you the haystack," he said, and led her out.

Missis raced off happily across the frosty fields, and feeling very proud when she reached the haystack without getting lost. Pongo was still heavily asleep, with the bread and butter by his nose.

Poor Pongo! Waking up was awful, the pain in his leg, and his horror at learning Missis had been dashing about the countryside alone. But he felt

better when she told him the news. And though his leg hurt, he found he could run without limping.

The Spaniel was waiting for them. "I've settled Sir Charles by the fire," he said, "so I've an hour or so to spare. Come to breakfast, my dear fellow." Pongo ate and drank. "And now for a long sleep," said the Spaniel.

He led them up a back staircase to a large, sunny bedroom. "Sir Charles likes me on the bed," said the Spaniel. "Jump on, both of you. No one will come up here till this evening. Sleep well, my children." Pongo and Missis jumped on and relaxed.

The sunlight, the firelight, the tapestried walls were all so beautiful that it seemed a waste not to stay awake and enjoy them. So they did - for nearly a whole minute. The next thing they knew was that the Spaniel was gently waking them. The sun was already down, the room a little chilly. A silvery bell tinkled. "There! Sir Charles is ringing for me. Tea's ready. Do just as I tell you."

He led them into a large room at the far end of which was an enormous fire. In front of it sat an old gentleman, there was a screen round the back of his chair. "Please lie down at the back of the screen," whispered the Spaniel. "Later Sir Charles will fall asleep and you can come closer to the fire."

There was a large table beside Sir Charles - and everything necessary for tea. The man put a slice of bread on a toasting fork four feet long. It was meant for pushing logs. But it was just what Sir Charles needed. He handled it with great skill avoiding the flaming logs and toasting the bread where the wood was red hot. A slice of toast was ready in no time. He buttered it thickly and offered a piece to a Spaniel, who ate it while Sir Charles watched.

Missis was a little surprised that the Spaniel had not offered her the first piece. She was even more surprised when he received a second piece and ate that too. She began to feel very hungry. Then a third piece of toast was offered - and this time Sir Charles happened to turn away. Instantly the Spaniel dropped the toast behind the screen. Piece after piece travelled this way to Pongo and Missis. Missis felt ashamed of her hungry suspicions.

At last Sir Charles rose, put another log on the fire, settled back in the chair and closed his eyes. Soon he was asleep. Pongo and Missis sat on the warm hearth and looked at the old gentleman. Somehow he had a look of the Spaniel - or the Spaniel had a look of Sir Charles. Both of them were lit by the firelight

and beyond them was the great window, now blue with evening. It was so warm, so quiet, and they were both so full of buttered toast that they fell asleep.

Pongo awoke with a start. Surely someone had spoken his name!

The old gentleman was awake and leaning forward. "Well, if that isn't Pongo and his missis," he said, smilingly. "What a pleasure! Can you see them?" said the old gentleman, putting his hand on the Spaniel's head. "Don't be frightened. They won't hurt you. You'd have liked them. Let's see, they must have died fifty years before you were born. They were the first dogs I ever knew. I used to ask my mother to stop the carriage and let them get inside - I couldn't bear to see them running behind. So in the end, they just became house dogs. How often they sat there in the firelight."

Then Pongo knew that Sir Charles thought they were ghost dogs. "Pongo" was a name given to many Dalmatians of the earlier days when they ran behind carriages. Sir Charles had taken them for Dalmatians he had known in his childhood.

"Probably my fault," the old gentleman went on. "This house is supposed to be full of ghosts but I've never seen any... Well, Pongo and his pretty wife, after all these years!" Soon his breathing told them he was fast asleep again.

The Spaniel rose quietly. "Come on with me now," he whispered. "You have given my dear old pet a great pleasure. I am deeply grateful."

They tiptoed out of the hall and thanked the Spaniel and said good-bye.

Just before midnight they came to the market town. Pongo paused as they crossed the bridge over the River Stour. "Here we enter Suffolk," he said.

2. Grammar Page - Tenses

Uses of Present Continuous 3:

H. More adverbs of time used:

1. You are learning English now. 2. You are not playing chess now.
3. "Are you sitting?" "No, I'm not sitting. I'm standing on a chair."
4. Now, they are reading their books; all this morning they were playing in the garden.
5. What are you doing now? Why aren't you doing your homework?
6. I am reading the book Tom Sawyer. I am not reading any books right now.
7. I am drinking coffee at the moment.

G. Present simple and present continuous.

1. Normally, my sister not selfish but today, she is being selfish.
2. You look well today.
3. You are looking well today.
4. How do you feel now?
5. How are you feeling now?
6. I usually feel tired in the evening. Not I am usually feeling tired in the evening.