



Learn English Through Stories

H Series

H18

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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Kailash Chowdhary's Jewel

By Satyajit Ray

Part 4

He didn't speak to me on our way back. When he gets into one of these moods, I don't like to disturb him. Normally, if he is agitated about something, he starts pacing in his room. Today, however, I saw him throw himself down on his bed and stare at the ceiling. At half past nine, he got up and started to scribble in his blue notebook. I knew he was writing in English, using Greek letters. So there was no way I could read and understand what he'd written. The only thing that was obvious was that he was still working on Mr Chowdhury's case, although his client had dispensed with his services.

I lay awake for a long time, which was probably why I didn't wake the following morning until Feluda shook me. 'Topshe! Get up quickly, we must go to Shyampukur at once.'

'Why?' I sat up.

'I rang the house, but no one answered. Something is obviously wrong.'

In ten minutes, we were in a taxi, speeding up to Shyampukur Street. Feluda refused to tell me anything more, except, 'What a cunning man he is! If only I'd guessed it a little sooner, this would not have happened!'

When we reached Mr Chowdhury's house, Feluda saw that the front door was open and walked right in, without bothering to ring the bell. We crossed the landing and arrived at Abanish Babu's room. The sight that met my eyes made me gasp in horrified amazement. A chair lay overturned before a table, and next to it lay Abanish Babu. His hands were tied behind his back, a large handkerchief covered his mouth. Feluda bent over him quickly and untied him.

'Oh, oh, thank God! Thank you!' he exclaimed, breathing heavily.

'Who did this to you?'

'Who do you think?' he sat up, still panting, 'My uncle—Kailash Mama did this. I told you he was going crazy, didn't I? I got up quite early this morning, and decided to get some work done. It was still dark outside, so I switched the light on. My uncle walked in soon after that. The first thing he did was switch the light off. Then he struck my head, and I fell immediately. Everything went dark. I regained consciousness a few minutes before you arrived, but could neither move nor speak. Oh God!' he winced.

'And Kailash Babu? Where is he?' Feluda shouted.

‘No idea.’

Feluda turned and leapt out of the room. I followed a second later. There was no one in the drawing room. We lost no time in going upstairs, taking three steps at a time. Kailash Chowdhury’s bedroom was empty, although the bed looked as though it had been slept in. The wardrobe had been left open. Feluda pulled a drawer out and found the small blue velvet box. When he opened it, I was somewhat surprised to see that the blue beryl was still in it, quite intact.

By this time, Abanish Babu had arrived at the door, still looking pathetic. ‘Who has the key to the attic?’ Feluda demanded. He seemed taken aback by the question.

‘Th-that’s with my uncle!’ he said.

‘OK, let’s go up there,’ Feluda announced, grabbing Abanish Babu by his shoulders and dragging him up the dark staircase.

We reached the roof, only to find that the attic was locked. A padlock hung at the door. Anyone else would have been daunted by the sight. But Feluda stepped back, then ran forward and struck the door with his shoulder, using all his strength. On his third attempt, the door gave in noisily. A few old rusted nails also came off the wall. Even I was surprised by Feluda’s physical strength.

The room inside was dark. We stepped in cautiously. A few seconds later, when my eyes got used to the dark, I noticed another figure lying in one corner, bound and gagged exactly like Abanish Babu. Who was this? Kailash Chowdhury? Or was it Kedar?

Without a word, Feluda released him from his bondage and then carried him down to the bedroom.

The man spoke only when he had been placed comfortably in his bed. ‘Are you . . . the . . .?’ he asked feebly, staring at Feluda.

‘Yes, sir. I am Pradosh Mitter, the detective. I suppose it was you who had written me that letter, but of course I never got the chance to meet you.

Abanish Babu, could you get him some warm milk, please?’

I stared at the man in amazement. So this was the real Kailash Chowdhury! He propped himself up on a pillow and said, ‘I was physically strong, so I managed to survive somehow. Otherwise . . . in these four days . . .’

Feluda interrupted him, ‘Sh-sh. You mustn’t strain yourself.’

‘No, but I have to tell you a few things. Or you’ll never get the whole picture. There was no way I could meet you personally, you see, for he captured me

the day I wrote to you. He dropped something in my tea, which made me virtually unconscious. He could never have overpowered me in any other way.'

'And he began to pass himself off as Kailash Chowdhury from that day?'

Kailash Babu nodded his head sadly, 'It is my own fault, Mr Mitter. I cannot blame anyone else. Our entire family suffers from one big weakness. We are all given to exaggerating the simplest things, and telling tall stories for no reason at all. I had bought that stone in Jabalpure for fifty rupees. I have no idea what possessed me to tell Kedar a strange story about a temple in a jungle, and a statue with that stone fixed on its forehead. He swallowed the whole thing, and began to eye that stone from that day. He envied me for many reasons. Perhaps he could not see why I should be so lucky, so successful in life, when he appeared to fail in everything he did. After all, we were identical twins, our fortunes should not have been so very different. Kedar had always been the black sheep—reckless and unscrupulous. Once he got mixed up with a gang that made counterfeit money. He would have gone to jail, but I managed to save him.

'Then he went abroad, after borrowing a great deal of money from me. I was glad. Good riddance, I thought. But only about a week ago, I came back home one day and found the stone missing. I never imagined for a moment that Kedar had come back and stolen it from my room. I rounded up all the servants and shouted at them, but nothing happened. Two days later, I wrote to you. Kedar turned up the same evening, and returned the stone to me. He was absolutely livid, for by this time, he had learnt that it had no value at all. He had been dreaming of getting at least a hundred thousand for it. He said he needed money desperately, would I give him twenty thousand? I refused. So he waited till I ordered a cup of tea, then managed to drug me and carry me up to the attic. When I woke, he told me he'd keep me there until I agreed to do as told. In the meantime, he'd pretend to be me, and he'd tell my office I was on sick leave.'

'He obviously did not know you had written to me,' Feluda added, 'So when we turned up, he took ten minutes to write a fake anonymous note and then gave us a cock-and-bull story about an imaginary enemy. If he didn't, he knew I'd get suspicious. At the same time, my presence in this house or in his life was highly undesirable. So he tried a threat on the telephone, then got in a car and tried to run us over.'

Kailash Chowdhury frowned. 'That makes perfect sense,' he said. 'What doesn't is why he left so suddenly. I did not agree to give him a single paisa. So why did he leave? Surely he didn't leave empty-handed?'

'No, no, no!' Shouted a voice at the door. None of us had seen Abanish Babu return with a glass of milk. 'Why should he leave empty-handed?' he screamed, 'He took my stamp! That precious, rare Victorian stamp has gone.'

Feluda stared at him, wide-eyed. 'What! He took your stamp?'

'Yes, yes. Kedar Mama has ruined me!'

'How much did you say it was worth?'

'Twenty thousand.'

'But—' Feluda turned to Abanish Babu and lowered his voice, 'according to the catalogue, Abanish Babu, it cannot possibly fetch more than fifty rupees.'

Abanish Babu went visibly pale.

'The Chowdhurys are prone to exaggerate everything to make an impression,' Feluda continued, 'and you are their nephew. So presumably, you inherited the same trait. Am I right?'

Abanish Babu began to look like a child who had lost his favourite toy. 'What was I supposed to do?' he said with a tragic air. 'I spent three years going through four thousand stamped envelopes. Not one of them was any good, except that one. Oh, all right, it wasn't much, but people believed my story. I got them interested!'

Feluda started laughing. 'Never mind, Abanish Babu,' he said, thumping his back, 'I think your uncle is going to be suitably punished, and that should give you some comfort. Let me ring the airport. You see, I had guessed he might try to escape this morning. So I rang Indian Airlines, and they told me he had a booking on their morning flight to Bombay. I began to suspect your uncle only when he said he couldn't remember having bought a new bottle of Dettol just a few days ago.'

The police had no problem in arresting Kedar Chowdhury; and Abanish Babu's stamp was duly returned to him. Feluda was paid so handsomely by Kailash Babu that, even after eating out three times, and seeing a couple of films with me, he still had a substantial amount left in his wallet.

Today, as we sat having tea at home, I said to him, 'Feluda, I have been thinking this through, and have reached a conclusion. Will you please tell me if I am right?'

'OK. What have you been thinking?'

'It's about Kailash Chowdhury's father. I think he knew what Kedar had done. I mean, maybe a father can tell the difference between identical twins. Perhaps that's the reason why he was throwing such murderous glances at his son.'

'That may or may not be the case. But since your thoughts appear to be the same as mine on this subject, I am hereby rewarding you for your intelligence.'

So saying, Feluda coolly helped himself to a jalebi from my plate.

2. Grammar Page

Noun + Prepositions (2)

noun + in: an increase / a decrease / a rise / a fall **IN** (prices etc.)

There has been an **increase in** the number of road accidents recently.

Last year was a bad one for the company. There was a big **fall in** sales.

My **taste in** clothes has changed over the last years.

There is a **delay in** the delivery of the shoes I bought on the internet.

noun + to: damage TO:

The accident was my fault, so I had to pay for the damage to the other car.

Did you get an **invitation to** the wedding?

a solution TO a problem / a key TO a door / an answer TO a question / a reply TO a letter / a reaction TO something:

I hope we find a **solution to** the problem.

I was surprised at her **reaction to** my suggestion.

His **attitude to** his job is very negative.

What is the **answer to** the first question?

More examples: noun + TO

The court ordered that **access to** his children would be restricted to alternate Sundays.

It was his **contribution to** molecular biology that won him the Nobel prize.

Addiction to alcohol is perhaps as serious as addiction to drugs in this country.

noun + with ... / between ...

Do you have a good **relationship with** your parents?

The police want to question a man in **connection with** the robbery.

The police believe that there is no **connection between** the two crimes.

There are some **differences between** British and American English.

I have no **quarrel with** his teachers. I think they did all they could to deter him.

The **bond between** mother and child is one that can never be broken.

Exercise

1. Complete the sentences using these nouns + a preposition:

cause connection contact damage invitation
key map photos reason reply

1. On the classroom wall there were some pictures and a the world.
2. Thank you for the your birthday party.
3. Anna has little her family these days. She rarely sees them.
4. I can't open this door. Do you have a the other door?
5. The the fire at the hotel is still unknown.
6. Did you get a the email you sent?
7. The two companies are separate. There is no them.
8. Jane showed me some the city as it looked 100 years ago.
9. Emily has decided to give up her job. I don't know her doing this.
10. It wasn't a bad accident. The the car wasn't serious.

2. Complete the sentences with the correct preposition.

1. There are some differences British and American English.
2. Money isn't the solution every problem.
3. There has been an increase the amount of traffic using this road.
4. The advantage having a car is that you don't have to rely on public transport.
5. There are many advantages being able to speak a foreign language.
6. Everything can be explained. There's a reason everything.
7. When Paul left home, his attitude many things seemed to change.
8. Ben and I used to be good friends, but I don't have much contact him now.
9. James did a very good drawing his father. It looks just like him.
10. What was Sarah's reaction the news?

Answers

1. Complete the sentences using these nouns + a preposition:

1. On the classroom wall there were some pictures and a **map of** the world.
2. Thank you for the **invitation to** your birthday party.
3. Anna has little **contact with** her family these days. She rarely sees them.
4. I can't open this door. Do you have a **key to / for** the other door?
5. The **cause of** the fire at the hotel is still unknown.
6. Did you get a **cause of** the email you sent?
7. The two companies are separate. There is no **connection between** them.
8. Jane showed me some **photos of** the city as it looked 100 years ago.
9. Emily has decided to give up her job. I don't know her **reason for** doing this.
10. It wasn't a bad accident. The **damage to** the car wasn't serious.

2. Complete the sentences with the correct preposition.

1. There are some differences **between** British and American English.
2. Money isn't the solution **to** every problem.
3. There has been an increase **in** the amount of traffic using this road.
4. The advantage **of** having a car is that you don't have to rely on public transport.
5. There are many advantages **in / to** being able to speak a foreign language.
6. Everything can be explained. There's a reason **for** everything.
7. When Paul left home, his attitude **to / towards** many things seemed to change.
8. Ben and I used to be good friends, but I don't have much contact **with** him now.
9. James did a very good drawing **of** his father. It looks just like him.
10. What was Sarah's reaction **to** the news?