



# Learn English Through Stories

## D Series

### D41

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## 1. How the Seasons Got Their Share

It was an unusually hot afternoon, and there was a power cut. The children were sitting in the house, wiping their foreheads and complaining. 'How do you stay without electricity, Grandpa?' asked Raghu. 'In Mumbai, in our apartment, if ever the electricity goes off, the generator comes on automatically. We never even know that the power has gone.' Grandpa looked around at the hot, sweaty faces, and said, 'All right, I'll show you a place which is as cool as an AC room. And it stays that way without any electricity! Come on everyone, grab a mat each and follow me.'

The children were intrigued. Grandpa walked out into the garden, crossed it, right till the old neem tree that stood in a corner. Grandpa told them to spread their mats under the tree and lie down. It was deliciously cool and comfortable under the tree. Everyone lay down and looked up at the gently moving leaves on the great branches over their heads. This was so much more fun than lying in a closed room! Grandpa too had pulled up a comfortable old easy chair and was nodding off. After some time he said, 'This is why I love summer! What seasons do you children prefer?'

Immediately Anand said, 'I too like summer, because there is no school, and we can eat ice cream and mangoes. We can also go swimming.'

'I don't like summer, I like winter. You can wear colourful sweaters and eat different kinds of fruits. It is nice and cosy to be at home. You can drink hot soup and hot chocolate,' said Krishna.

'I don't like winter, I get ear pain. I prefer the rainy season. It is so nice when it rains and all the trees look so fresh and happy,' said Meenu.

'What about you, Raghu? Why are you silent?' Grandpa asked.

'I like all the seasons, provided someone like you or Grandma is there with us.'

Grandpa smiled. 'Well, each season has its own beauty and use. We could not do without even one.'

'How is that?' asked the children.

'Okay, I will tell you a story about what happened once when the seasons started fighting with one another.'



God stepped back and looked happily at the Earth he had just created. He had filled it with humans, animals, trees and seas and it looked a wonderful place to be in. But something was missing. After thinking for a while, he called out to six brothers: Day, Night, Summer, Winter, Monsoon and Wind. He commanded the six brothers to go down to Earth and help the creatures there live comfortably and prosper. 'You must help the creatures on Earth grow food and live comfortably. I have divided Time into two parts—twenty-four hours and 365 days. You must share this among yourselves so that people on Earth get all that they need.' The six brothers nodded obediently, but no sooner was God's back turned than they all started quarrelling!

Everyone wanted a big share of the time available to spend on Earth. Day and Night decided each would get twenty-four hours each. But the seasons kept quarrelling. Summer was the eldest, so he said, 'I will be on Earth for 365 days first!'

Rain said, 'If I don't show up all the water on Earth will disappear, so I will come next.'

Winter said, 'After the rains I help trees to flower, so I will come in the third year.'

Poor Wind was the youngest and no one paid him any attention, so he got the last year.

So life started on Earth. For twenty-four hours at a time there was Day, then twenty-four hours of Night. Summer continued for one whole year. While in the beginning the heat helped the crops to grow, soon it became too hot for anyone to do anything. All the water dried up and there was great discomfort. The people of Earth pleaded with Summer to stop and he had to leave before his year was up.

Then it was the turn of Rain. When he started pouring down, how happy everyone was to get some respite from the year's summer. But soon the lakes, ponds, rivers, oceans all filled to the brim and started overflowing. The crops got spoilt in the rain and there was nothing for anyone to eat. When people prayed for him to stop, he had to step aside and make way for Winter.

With relief people greeted Winter. Now there was neither the scorching sun nor the pouring rain. But when day after day went by like this they started falling sick from the constant cold, the plants started dying because of less sunshine. At the people's request Winter too had to stop.

Now it was the turn of Wind. Within a few days of his constant huffing and puffing people were scared to step out anywhere. Trees were uprooted, the roofs of houses went flying and there was chaos all around.

The brothers realized what they had done would displease God mightily. So they decided to change their ways. Instead of each taking a year they decided to share one year among each other. But again, Wind being the youngest got left out and got no time for himself. He sat in a corner and sulked.

During summer time people sowed their crops and waited for the rains. Rain came with loads of water but there was no wind to distribute it equally. Some parts of Earth got buckets of rain and other parts none at all. Now everyone realized that Wind was as important. They called out to him and he finally agreed to do his work. But he did not get a separate time for himself. He was allowed to blow all through the year. So in Summer he blew and helped reduce the heat. During rains he blew the clouds from one place to another and took rainwater everywhere. In Winter he still blew and made it even colder!

Day and Night too learnt from the four brothers and decided to divide the twenty-four hours equally. So one half was Day and the other was Night.

Now everyone on Earth was happy, and the six brothers learnt to share their time.



By this time Grandma called from the house, 'The electricity is back. You can come inside now.' But the children were happy to remain outside and enjoy the breeze.

## 2. The Island of Statues

One day, early in the morning, the children heard a loud voice booming outside. 'Where are your grandchildren? I have come to take them to my place.' They went running out to see a very tall man with twinkling eyes and a grey beard sipping coffee with their grandparents. He wore a crisp white dhoti and shirt and a black cap. His smile was so charming that the children instantly warmed to him. Grandma was shaking her head and saying, 'Rehmat, there's no way Peerambhi can manage four children. Take them out for the day, why do you want to have them over for the night?' But the man called Rehmat shook his head. 'No no, I will take them for a night's stay. My Usman is a great cook and will look after everything. Peerambhi will not be troubled at all.'

Grandma saw the questioning look on the children's faces and explained, 'This is Rehmat. A long time back when your Grandpa was a schoolteacher, he was your Grandpa's student. He lives a little far away now. He has a mango grove there, and a large house. All his children live abroad. In his house there's a large library of books and what can be called a mini zoo with goats, cows, peacocks, pigeons and parrots. He wants to have you all over for the night. I'm sure you'll have a good time, but do you want to go?'

'He also tells very beautiful stories,' added Grandpa.

Rehmat grinned and said, 'Masterji, don't exaggerate. I started reading children's storybooks only after my grandchildren were born. Then I remembered the stories you used to tell us in school and passed off some of them as my own.' He turned to the children and said, 'So what do you think, kids, will you come with me? I will show you a different part of the village.'

Everyone was thinking, when Raghu spoke up, 'Can we bring our friends with us?'

'Oh, you mean Vishnu Kaka's grandchildren? Of course they can come. The more the merrier. Peerambhi will love having so many children in the house.'

Raghu ran to Sharan's house to give the news.

Rehmat Chacha, as everyone called him, had brought a jeep and soon all seven had packed a change and their toothbrushes and piled into it. Rehmat Chacha's house was far, about thirty kilometres away, and on the way they had to go through a forest. The road cutting through the forest was narrow and winding. Tall trees stood on both sides. It was a dark, scary place. Suma looked around nervously and said, 'Will anyone ever cut down these trees and widen the road?'

Rehamt Chacha shook his head. 'Oh no, the villagers will never allow it. We love our trees and try to see as few are cut down as possible. Trees must never be cut unnecessarily. Do you want to listen to a story about a kingdom that cut down all its trees?'

Of course the children did, so Rehmat Chacha began his story.



Once there was a beautiful verdant green island. It had forests filled with huge trees, waterfalls gushing with clear blue water and mountains where there was a quarry of a unique kind of stone. This stone was valued for its attractive white colour. It was also easy to turn into sculptures.

The island had been ruled for years by a king who was now old. He looked after his people well and loved the natural beauty of his land above all. His closest friend was a sculptor called Amar. Amar too loved the land more than anything else. He had a school where students from far and wide came to learn the art of creating sculptures out of stone. But Amar had one odd condition for the students who studied in his school. He insisted they bring their own supply of stone! Only for their final sculpture were they allowed to use a piece of stone from the island's quarry. Many grumbled at this rule. After all, dragging tons of stone to an island in the middle of a sea was difficult, but Amar was adamant.

Once his king asked him the reason for this condition, and this is what wise old Amar had to say: 'This stone and indeed everything on this remarkable land of ours is a gift which we need to preserve. Unless we use it wisely how will we be able to save this quarry for our children? If we start using the stones and woods from trees without a thought they will soon finish and then we will be left with an empty, barren land. This is why I insist that students learning the craft of sculpting bring their own material, and only when they make their final piece of art can they use this unique stone from our land.'

The king applauded this thought in his mind and let Amar run his school the way he wanted. But then a day came when the king, now very old, died, and his son took over the throne. Rajdip, the new king, wanted to do everything differently from his father. He started changing many laws. One day he remembered the art school and went to visit it. There he saw the students working on their sculptures. But his ministers whispered to him the complaints that other students, who had not wanted to bring their own material, had made about Amar's rule.

Rajdip realized that if he lifted the rule then many more people would come to study in the school. Their fees would add to the prosperity of the island and in addition they would create lovely works of art that could be used to beautify the towns. He ordered Amar to step down as the teacher and brought someone else to run the school.

Soon the island was full of students chipping away on the stone. Their demands increased the mining at the quarry. They created large sculptures which now needed to get transported back to the town. Trees were cut down to make carts and to clear roads. Without trees to provide wood for their boats the fishermen of the island could not go out to sea. They started fishing near the land and got into fights frequently with one another. New houses were not strong as both wood and stone were scarce. It was difficult for farmers to make good ploughs and so farming suffered. All the mining created so much of pollution that plants started dying out, diseases spread, and the tinkling waterfalls fell silent as water became scarce. The climate changed, it became hotter and drier.

Soon there were famines and the once beautiful green island was reduced to a wasteland of weeds and scrub.

Rajdip's wishes of lining his capital city and palace with giant sculptures was fulfilled. Each student in the art school made a beautiful huge statue and gifted it to him. Soon these statues filled up the entire kingdom. Where once there were deep forests and blue rivers and streams, the island was a barren land now. The forests were gone. The rivers had turned into dirty trickles of water. The climate had become hot and dusty as the rains no longer came on time. People started leaving the island. The houses, schools and palaces slowly fell silent as they were abandoned. With time, everyone forgot about this island. Many, many years later when explorers landed here, they found hundreds of statues strewn all over a bare island: a land destroyed by the king's greed.





How everyone enjoyed the story. The rest of the journey was spent in each one acting out a part from the story, with Rehmat Chacha taking on the role of the wise old king. Cheerful and at the same time very hungry, they soon reached their new friend's house.

It was a huge rambling place. Peerambhi was waiting for them at the doorstep. She told Usman to make a sherbet of mango, and Shurukumbha (a kind of kheer) for lunch. There was also paratha, biriyani, and all kinds of mouth-watering dishes which Usman was more than happy to prepare. After lunch they roamed around the house, examined the books in the library and the many awards Rehmat Chacha had received for his innovative skills in agriculture.

### 3. Grammar page

Use **is** and **are** with the word **there** to say what you can see and hear.



**There is** a castle on the hill.  
**There are** some clouds in the sky.



**There is** a wasps' nest  
in the tree.

**There is** a fence around the school.

**There are** a lot of books in the library.

**There are** two guards at the gate.

**Is there** any food in the fridge?

**Are there** any apples left on the tree?

How much rice **is there**?

**There are** a few sharks in the bay.

**There are** enough candies for everyone, **aren't there**?

**There are** two pigeons on the roof.