



Learn English Through Stories

A1 Stories

Elementary Level

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Gelert

By Deborah Meyers

CHAPTER ONE

The Wolf

A prince called Llewellyn once lived in a big stone castle in Wales. He had only one baby son. His beautiful wife died when the baby was born. Llewellyn loved his son more than anything in the world.

Prince Llewellyn was rich and important. He had a lot of brave soldiers and loyal servants. He also had an old, loyal dog called Gelert.

Gelert always travelled with the prince and fought with him in a lot of battles. He was the bravest dog in Wales and the prince's most loyal friend. Gelert loved Llewellyn's son very much and always protected him.

'You're my best friend, Gelert,' the prince often said. 'I trust you more than anyone in the world. Only you can look after my son.' Gelert was always happy when the prince spoke to him.

One sunny day there was a big hunt on Prince Llewellyn's lands. There were a lot of hunting dogs and hunters on their horses near the castle. Llewellyn heard the hunting horns and got ready for the hunt.

'I must go hunting today, Gelert,' said the prince. 'It's the first hunt of the season and it's a beautiful day.'

Gelert looked at his master and barked happily. He liked hunting and wanted to go too.

'No, Gelert,' said the prince. 'You must stay by my son's cradle and protect him until I come back.'

Gelert looked up at the prince and listened carefully.

'Protect my son with your life,' said the prince. 'I trust only you, because you're my most loyal friend. I know you understand me.' He patted Gelert lovingly and the dog wagged his tail happily.

The prince's son slept in the wooden cradle in his bedroom. Gelert went to the cradle and looked at the sleeping baby. Then he lay down on the floor next to the cradle and put his nose between his paws. Prince Llewellyn was ready for the hunt and looked at the cradle again before leaving.

'Sleep well, my dear son,' said the prince, smiling. 'You're safe with old Gelert. He'll look after you until I come back.'

Then Prince Llewellyn left the castle with the other hunters.

Everything was peaceful and silent for some time in the baby's bedroom. But after a few hours Gelert heard a noise. Something was standing outside the door and was trying to get in. Gelert knew there was danger because he could hear growling

He got up quietly, went to the door and saw a wolf looking at him. He was much taller than Gelert, but he was thin. He was very hungry because it was difficult to find food at the end of winter. He smelled the baby inside the room and he wanted to eat it.

Gelert looked angrily at the wolf's eyes. They stood at the door for a few minutes growling at each other. Then suddenly the hungry wolf jumped towards the cradle.

CHAPTER TWO

The Fight

Gelert jumped on the hungry wolf and pulled him away from the cradle with his strong teeth. He did not want to wake up the sleeping baby. The black wolf was a strong fighter. He bit Gelert's neck and legs but the old dog continued fighting bravely. Nothing could stop Gelert.

It was a long, terrible fight. But the baby slept peacefully and did not wake up.

Suddenly the cradle turned over and the baby fell onto the stone floor, but still he did not wake up. During the fight, both animals were hurt and there was blood on the floor, on the walls and on the baby's white blanket.

Gelert was badly hurt but he did not stop fighting. He knew he had to protect the prince's son. He bit the wolf's throat very hard, and suddenly the wolf was silent. He slowly went to a dark corner of the room and died.

Gelert went to the sleeping baby and looked at him. He took the white blanket with his teeth and pulled it over the baby. Then he lay down and fell asleep. He was very tired after the long fight, but he was happy because the baby was safe.

That night Prince Llewellyn returned from the hunt. He immediately went to see his son. When the prince walked into the room, Gelert got up and went to him.

The prince saw the empty cradle.

‘What happened here?’ he cried, looking at Gelert.

Then he saw the blood on the walls, on the floor, on the white blanket and on the baby’s face. But he did not see the dead wolf in the dark corner of the room.

‘Oh, no!’ cried the prince. His face was red with anger. ‘Gelert, what did you do? You killed my son — my only son! And I trusted only you!’

He took his sword and raised it high above the dog’s head. Gelert jumped up and barked happily. He wanted to play. He wanted praise because he saved the baby’s life. He looked at the prince with his big, brown eyes, trying to tell him something. But the prince was very angry and killed Gelert with his sword. The poor dog fell at the prince’s feet.

Suddenly the baby woke up and started crying. He was on the cold, stone floor and he was hungry.

When Prince Llewellyn heard the baby, crying his sword fell on the floor. He was alive! He looked around the room and saw the dead wolf in a dark corner. Then he understood.

‘There was a terrible fight in this room between Gelert and the wolf,’ he thought. ‘The wolf wanted to eat my son and Gelert protected him...’

‘What did I do?’ he cried angrily. ‘I killed Gelert. Oh, what a terrible mistake!’

He put his face in his hands and started crying. He could not stop.

He looked at Gelert’s body and saw the bites of the wolf. He slowly took the dog’s body in his arms.

‘My great and loyal friend!’ said the prince, crying. ‘You fought bravely against the wolf and saved my son’s life. But I didn’t understand — I’m very sorry, Gelert!’

Prince Llewellyn looked at his dog and said, 'I'll always remember the first time we went hunting. And all the battles we fought together... Oh, what will I do without you, Gelert?'

Prince Llewellyn could never forget that terrible day. He decided to bury Gelert in the graveyard of the village. On that day, people from the castle and the village were there. Everyone was very sad.

Every morning Prince Llewellyn brought beautiful flowers to Gelert's tomb and said, 'Good morning, old friend!'

If you visit the graveyard of Beddgelert in Wales today, you can see the old tombstone and read Gelert's story there.

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