



Learn English Through Stories

A1 Stories

Elementary Level

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Orca

By Phillip Burrows

CHAPTER ONE

Let's Do It!

Jack Griggs stands on his boat. The wind is strong and his boat moves quickly over the sea. A big, white bird goes past and makes a noise. 'Keyaaaa', it cries.

Jack smiles and says: 'Hello, bird. How are you, today?'

Jack's friends laugh and give some fish to the bird.

'Ah,' says Jack. 'Hungry, I see.' Jack's friends are Max and Sasha, and his wife's name is Tonya.

'I am hungry, too,' says Jack. 'Sandwiches and drinks everybody? Tonya. Can you steer?'

Half an hour later they are eating. 'What are we going to do now?' asks Jack.

'Oh, I am going to read my book. Then I'm going to sleep,' says Tonya.

'No - what about tomorrow...? Next month...? Next year?' Jack looks at everyone. 'We have lots of money from our old business, but...'

'We can start another business,' says Max.

'A sailing business?' says Sasha.

'I don't want to work anymore,' says Tonya. 'We don't need to work.'

'OK, listen to me,' says Jack. 'I am thinking about sailing around the world.'

Max, Tonya and Sasha look at Jack.

'What? From here to Australia?' says Tonya.

'Of course,' says Jack. He is getting very excited now. 'Max, what do you think?'

'I think we must talk about it,' says Max.

They talk for hours. It is night when Max, Sasha and Tonya say excitedly: 'OK. Let's do it!'

They have to do a lot before they leave. Jack talks to a man who knows about sailing around the world. He tells Jack that it is hard work.

‘Does the sea frighten you? Your boat is very small. Do you know your friends well? Are they good at sailing?’ he asks.

‘We know each other well. They are the best people in the world,’ says Jack.

The four friends look at lots of maps. Sasha wants to see a whale. Max wants to see Africa.

‘I want to sit in the sun and catch fish to eat,’ laughs Tonya.

It is exciting for all of them. And at first everything is easy.

The big day arrives - they are leaving. Some of their friends and family come to watch. Their friends stand by the water and say goodbye.

‘Good luck,’ one of them says.

‘Don’t forget us!’ says Sasha’s sister.

‘Write to me every day,’ says Tonya’s friend. ‘Give the letters to a bird.’

Sasha begins to cry. ‘What are we doing? Do I really want to go?’ she thinks. Max takes her hand. All of them are quiet, excited, and a little unhappy.

‘Bye,’ says Jack quietly.

CHAPTER TWO

Sailing South

The wind is strong and the boat moves faster and faster. Jack, Max, Sasha and Tonya are happy at sea. There is a lot to do on the boat. The wind is behind them and soon they cannot see England. They are not unhappy now.

They are sailing south. In France they stop at L’Orient and Biarritz. In Spain, they visit La Coruna, and in Portugal they stop in Lisbon. The sun gets hotter and they feel good.

Sasha catches a big fish and they eat it for tea.

Soon, they are sailing past Africa. Here, everything is different. They stop in Gambia and people look at them. Small children bring beads and shells and cloth. Tonya buys a green hat. There is a lot of colour and noise and excitement.

They sail for weeks and weeks past Africa. They stop at many small towns and villages by the sea.

'Africa is so interesting, so big,' says Sasha. 'It goes on and on. I look at it on the map, but...'

'This is why we are here,' says Jack. 'Talking to different people, seeing different things. The boat, the sea, the wind. Nothing is better than this, is it?'

Some days later they see a big fishing boat. It is moving very fast.

'Hello!' they shout at the boat. The men on the boat look at them angrily. Max looks carefully at the boat through his binoculars.

'There is something wrong with their fishing net,' he says. Max moves the binoculars and sees something in the sea. 'I can see some net over there.' He points to their left. 'Why are they leaving it? Let's have a look.'

They get nearer to the net and Tonya takes the binoculars. 'What in the world...' says Tonya. 'What's that? There is something in the net. It's alive, but what is it?'

Very slowly they move nearer to the net. The thing in the net is big and it is making a lot of noise.

'I can see it now,' says Tonya. 'It's an orca - a killer whale - and it's hurt. There is blood in the water. What can we do? How can we help it?'

'I can see it too. It is a baby but we must be careful,' says Max.

Jack is in the water. He is carrying a long paddle. 'I am going to help it. I can get the net off its fin,' he says.

'Where's its mother?' asks Sasha. She looks at the sea. 'I can't see any other whales, but they are near here, I think. Be careful, Jack.'

Jack gets the net off the baby killer whale. There is a big cut on its fin, but it swims away. Suddenly there are other killer whales near the boat.

'Jack!' Tonya shouts. 'Get in quickly.'

Jack swims to the boat as fast as a fish.

'That baby killer whale... I am going to call it Lucky,' he says.

CHAPTER THREE

The Big Wave

It begins to rain as they move away from the killer whales. Suddenly it is raining very hard and there is a lot of wind. The sky is black.

Jack says: 'This is bad. We must get away from the wind. I can see a town over there. Let's go.'

'I'm frightened,' says Tonya. It is difficult to hear her because of the wind.

'We're all frightened,' says Jack. 'But everything is OK.'

The town gets nearer but the waves get bigger and bigger. Suddenly a very big wave hits the boat. There is water everywhere.

'Is everyone OK,' shouts Jack. 'Max?'

'Yes,' says Max.

'Sasha?'

'My arm hurts but I'm OK,' says Sasha.

'Tonya...? Tonya...? Where's Tonya?' shouts Jack.

'She's not in the boat,' says Sasha. 'She's in the water. But where?'

They look in the cold, dark water for hours.

'Tonya! Say something, Tonya. Where are you?' shouts Max.

The wind gets stronger and the boat is full of water. Another big wave hits the boat. Sasha's arm hurts a lot now.

'Jack, we must stop. Do you want us all to die?' says Max. He puts his arm around Jack. 'We can't do any more. Tonya is wearing a lifejacket and she can swim very well. Let's sail to the town.'

Jack puts his head in his hands. 'This can't happen. It can't!' he says.

Max begins to steer the boat. But the wind is too strong. Some time later the boat hits a beach. The three friends get out. They are very tired.

They stop there. Max and Sasha sleep on the beach, but Jack sits near the water. He looks at the sea, thinking about Tonya.

CHAPTER FOUR

Tonya

Tonya is five hundred metres away out in the sea. She begins to swim, but the waves are too big and the water is too cold. She finds some wood and puts her arms around it.

Tonya is thinking: 'I must be strong. I am not going to die. I want to see the sun again. Jack is going to find me.'

Tonya sees a boat far away. She calls to it. 'Help! Help me! I'm over here!' She moves her arms and shouts, but nobody hears her. The wind moves her away from the boat.

'Oh, Jack. I'm sorry,' she says. Her head goes down on to the wood. In the arms of the sea, she sleeps.

Suddenly Tonya is not sleeping. There is no wind and she can see the sun. She looks everywhere. There is a beach in front of her - but she cannot swim to it.

'I am too cold and too tired,' she thinks. 'I must see a boat soon.'

She looks at the sea. There are no boats, no people, but some birds.

'Can the birds help me?' she thinks sleepily.

Tonya listens to the sea. She likes the noise. Then she hears something different.

'Is it a baby crying?' she thinks and looks up.

Ten metres in front of her is a big fin... a very big fin. Under the fin is a killer whale. The whale is making the noise. But it is not a baby - it is five metres long. Behind it is another whale. And another. And another.

'Killer whales eat people. I am going to die,' thinks Tonya.

The killer whales come nearer and nearer. Tonya can't feel her legs. 'It's OK, they are cold. That's all,' she thinks. She starts to swim away from the big fins.

'Help me!' she shouts. 'Help, help, help!'

The killer whales are all around her. She closes her eyes and waits. But she does not die.

The biggest killer whale is under her. Suddenly she is on his back.

'What is happening? Perhaps they are not hungry.' Tonya thinks.

The killer whale moves slowly to the shore. He is taking Tonya to the beach.

Tonya puts her hands on the fin in front of her.

'This is a very big fish - too big for my tea!' she thinks. She smiles and puts her head on his big back. Soon, she is sleeping again.

CHAPTER FIVE

'Tonya? Is That You?'

Jack sits on the beach. The sun is in the sky. Behind him, Max and Sasha sleep.

'I must do something,' he thinks. 'I can't take my boat but I must look for Tonya.'

He begins to walk along the beach. 'There is a town near here. I can get a new boat, then I can look for Tonya.'

Just then Jack sees something on the beach. He walks nearer. It is a woman.

Jack runs to the woman on the beach.

'Tonya?' he shouts. 'Tonya! Is that you?'

Tonya moves her head slowly.

'Jack! Oh, Jack. You're OK!'

Jack puts his arms around Tonya. He kisses her face and cries. He can't speak - he is too happy.

Tonya says: 'What about Max and Sasha? Are they OK, too?'

'Everyone is OK,' answers Jack.

They sit on the beach and look at the sea.

Jack says: 'We are very, very lucky.'

Tonya sits up and sees a small fin in the water. It has a cut on it. The fin waves slowly and moves out to sea. It is waving goodbye, thinks Tonya.

'Lucky. Yes, Lucky,' she says quietly to Jack.

- THE END -