



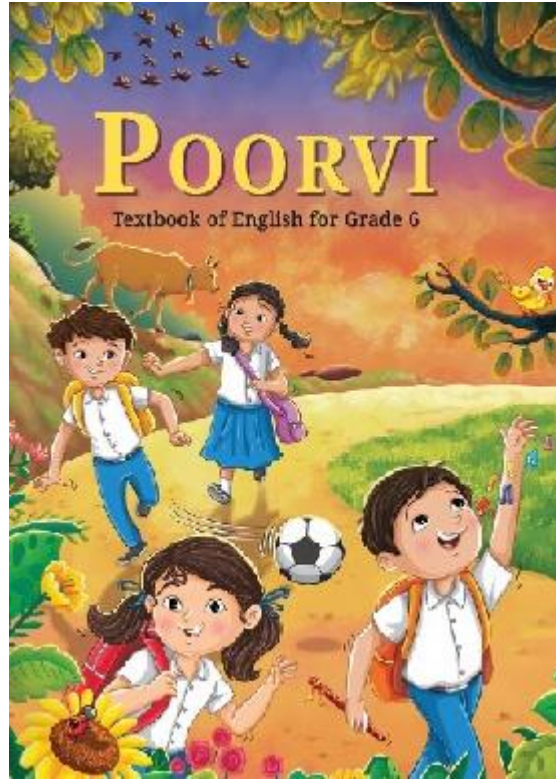
Learn English Through Stories

A1 Stories

Elementary Level

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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1. A Bottle of Dew

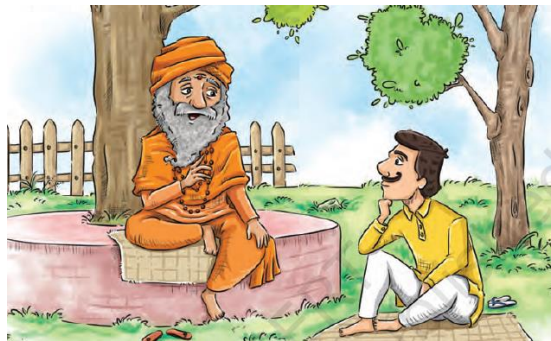
By Sudha Murty

Rama Natha was the son of a rich landlord. His father left him large tracts of land when he died. But Rama Natha did not spend even one day looking after his land. This was because he had a funny idea—he believed there was a magic potion that could turn any object into gold. He spent all his time to learn more about this potion. People cheated him often, promising to tell him about it, but he did not give up. His wife, Madhumati, was tired of this and also worried because she saw how much money Rama Natha was spending. She was sure that soon they would be without money.

One day, a famous sage called Mahipati came to their town. Rama Natha became his follower and asked him about the potion. To his surprise the sage answered, “Yes, in my travels in the Himalayas, I heard how you could make such a potion. But it is difficult.”

“Tell me!” requested Rama Natha, not believing his luck.

“You have to plant a banana plant and water it regularly with your hands. In winter, the morning dew is on the leaves. You have to collect the dew and store it in a bottle. When you have five litres of dew, bring it to me. I will chant some magic words, which will turn it into the magic potion. A drop of the potion will change any object into gold.”



Rama Natha was worried. "But winter is only for a few months. It will take me years to collect five litres of dew."

"You can plant as many banana plants as you want. But remember, you must look after them yourself and collect the dew with your own hands."

Rama Natha went home, and after talking to his wife started cleaning his large fields, which had been lying empty all these years. There he planted rows and rows of banana plants. He tended them carefully and during the winter months collected the dew that formed on them with great care. His wife helped him too. Madhumati gathered the banana crop, took it to the market and got a good price for it. Over the years, Rama Natha planted more and more plants and they had a huge banana plantation. At the end of six years, he finally had his five litres of dew.



Carefully, he took the bottle to the sage. The sage smiled and muttered something over the water. Then he returned the bottle and said, "Try it out." Rama Natha sprinkled a few drops on a copper vessel and waited for it to turn to gold. To his surprise nothing happened!

"This is cheating," he told the sage. "I have wasted six precious years of my life."

But sage Mahipati only smiled and called Madhumati to come forward. She came with a big box. When she opened it, inside shined stacks of gold coins!

Now the sage turned to the very surprised Rama Natha and said, "There is no magic potion that can turn things into gold. You worked hard on your land and created this plantation. While you looked after the trees, your wife sold the fruits in the market. That's how you got this money. It was your hard work that created this wealth, not magic. If I had told you about this earlier, you would have not listened to me, so I have played a trick on you."

Rama Natha understood the wisdom behind these words and worked even harder on his plantation from that day on.

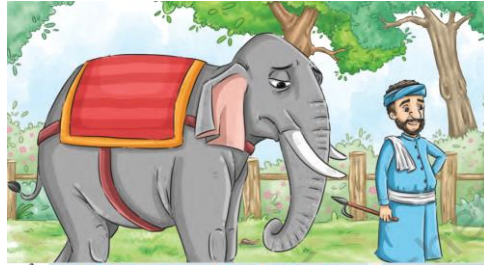
2. The Raven and the Fox

By Jean de La Fontaine

Mr Raven was perched upon a limb,
And Reynard the Fox looked up at him;
For the Raven held in his great big beak,
A morsel the Fox would go far to seek.
Said the Fox, in admiring tones: "My word!
Sir Raven, you are a handsome bird.
Such feathers! If you would only sing,
The birds of these woods would call you King."
The Raven, who did not see the joke,
Forgot that his voice was just a croak.
He opened his beak, in his foolish pride—
And down fell the morsel the Fox had eyed.
"Ha-ha!" laughed the Fox. "And now you know,
Ignore sweet words that make you glow.
Pride, my friend, is rather unwise;
I'm sure this teaching is quite a surprise."

3. The Unlikely Best Friends

By Subba Rao



Gajaraj, the elephant, lived in the best booth of the royal stables. The king was fond of Gajaraj, and he had ordered that the elephant should be well looked after.

In spite of royal comforts, Gajaraj was sad because he had no friends. The mahout, or elephant trainer, was the only one he ever interacted with. The mahout was a kind man who served Gajaraj food, and gave him a bath in the elephant pond daily. He was a good caretaker, but not a friend.

“I wish I had a friend I can play with,” thought Gajaraj. One late evening, a dog strayed into the stable. Gajaraj could see that the visitor was tired and hungry. He pushed some of the food he was munching towards the dog. The visitor wagged his tail, looked up at the elephant to convey his thanks, and then turned his full attention to the food in front of him. As soon as he finished eating, he fell asleep.

The next morning, the mahout found the stray dog in the stable. He did not mind the dog. He also noticed that Gajaraj seemed to like the company. So, he threw some crumbs to the dog, which the animal accepted wagging his tail.

When the elephant went out for a bath, the dog accompanied his friend.

Plunging into the water, the elephant gave himself a shower using his long trunk, as the dog watched. The elephant took a trunkful of water and playfully splashed the water on his friend. The dog yelped for he hated taking showers. The mahout laughed.



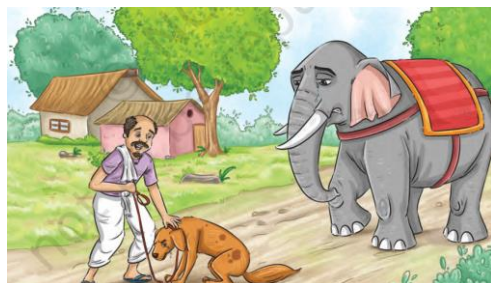
On their way home, the elephant picked up the dog with his trunk and placed him on his back. The dog was delighted to get a ride.

A farmer passing by saw the dog. "Buntree," he yelled. The dog ran to him. The farmer hugged the dog and told the mahout that he was looking for his dog ever since he disappeared from his house. He was glad he found him now. The mahout had no objection to the farmer taking the dog home. The farmer tossed a rope round the neck of the dog, saying, "Come Buntree, let's go home."

Only when the farmer pulled the rope did the dog realise that he was being taken away from his friend. He yelped, the elephant winced, but neither the farmer nor the mahout noticed that the two friends were in tears.

The next day at lunch time the mahout served Gajaraj his favourite food.

When the mahout came back after finishing his other chores, he was surprised to see that the food had remained untouched.



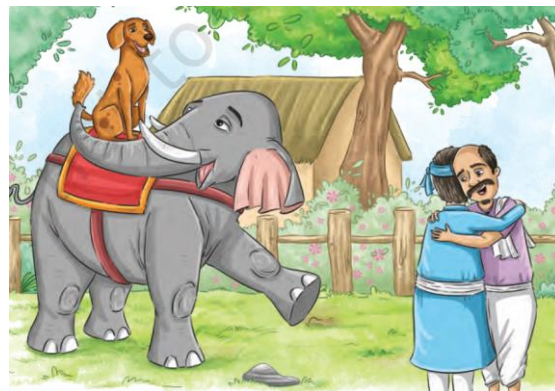
“Why Gajaraj, aren’t you hungry?” he asked concerned. The elephant did not react. “He may have slight indigestion. Let me not force him to eat,” thought the mahout.

That night too, Gajaraj did not touch his food—nor the next day. Now, the mahout was worried. He ran his hand on Gajaraj’s tummy and felt there was nothing wrong. “Why was he not eating then? Is he missing his friend, that dog?” the mahout wondered.

Meanwhile at the farmer’s house, the dog had also not touched his food ever since he was brought home.

“Are you missing your friend?” asked the farmer remembering the happy look on Buntree’s face while sitting on the elephant’s back. “I cannot see you go hungry,” said the farmer, “If you miss your friend so much, go to him.”

The farmer removed the rope with which he had tied the dog. The dog, though weak, sprang to his feet. He licked the farmer’s hand once and then ran. He stopped only when he arrived at the stable.



The elephant picked up the dog with his trunk and gave him a joyous swing. The mahout was relieved. He quickly brought the food. “Both of you eat first,” he said.

By then the farmer who had followed the dog, joined him. The two of them watched with satisfaction the two friends eating food. “It’s not only Gajaraj who has found a friend,” said the mahout hugging the farmer, “I’ve also found one.”

4. A Friend's Prayer

By Jill Wolf

**May my friendships always be
The most important thing to me.
With special friends I feel I'm blessed,
So let me give my very best.
I want to do much more than share
The hopes and plans of friends who care;
I'll try all that a friend can do
To make their wishes come true.
Let me use my heart to see,
To realise what friends can be,
And make no judgements from afar,
But love my friends the way they are.**