



Learn English Through Stories

D Series

D44

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1. The Horse in the Burrow

Niranjan was a very clever man. One day, as he was walking down the road, he met his friend Jayadev, who was returning from somewhere. He looked very sad, and in his hand he held the tail of a horse. 'What is the matter?' asked Niranjan.

'My horse died in an accident. By the time I heard about it and reached the place, a fox had taken away the body and only the tail was left.'

Jayadev was a poor farmer, and the horse had been his one expensive possession. Niranjan felt sorry for him. 'Give me the tail,' he told his friend. 'I will get a new horse for you.'

Jayadev had no idea how Niranjan would produce a new horse using only a tail, but he knew how clever Niranjan was, so he gave the tail to him and went back to his farm.

Niranjan walked down a forest path and saw a rabbit's burrow. He placed the tail at the mouth of the burrow and sat down next to it, holding on to the tail. Soon a rich merchant passed by, riding a beautiful horse. He looked in amazement at Niranjan sitting there holding the tail in his hands. 'What are you doing?' he asked.

'I was walking with my magic horse down this path when it ran into this burrow. You see, it can sense treasure and follow it anywhere. It has gone down the burrow to get the treasure and I am holding on to its tail. I will be rich when it comes up.'

The silly merchant believed this story. Then Niranjan said, 'I don't have a bag to keep the treasure. Can you give me one?'

Quickly the merchant replied, 'This bag has a hole in it. Why don't you go back to your village and get a bag? I will hold on to the tail till you come back. Here, take my horse, that will be quicker.'

Niranjan left riding the horse after pretending great reluctance. An hour passed by, but there was no sign of Niranjan, nor of the horse emerging from the burrow. The merchant pulled the tail and fell back! When he peeped into the hole, he saw of course there was nothing—no horse, no treasure, not even a rabbit!

Niranjana often used his wit to teach people a lesson. Once he met Dayananda, the milkman. Dayananda cheated his customers by adding water in their milk. That day he was carrying a large mud pot on his head, filled with milk. As soon as he saw Niranjana he said, 'You think you are so clever! But you won't be able to cheat me.'

Niranjana smiled and said, 'Dayananda, why should I cheat you? Particularly today, when there are so many clouds in the sky! It will rain any moment and I don't want to get drenched in the rain.'

'Oh, I have a long way to go! Is it going to rain?' Dayananda said, and forgetting the pot on his head, looked up. The pitcher fell and broke, and the milk spilt all over the road. That day Dayananda could not sell his milk mixed-with-water to anyone!

2. The Very Expensive Coconut

Chandrakant was a miser. He hated spending money on anything and his wife was tired of his stingy ways. One day, Chandrakant went to a wedding. There he was served coconut burfi. Chandrakant felt he had never tasted anything so good and decided that he would have some more...

He went back home and asked his wife to make him some. His wife looked at him and said, 'You hardly give me enough money to cook dal and rice. How will I make burfi? Go and buy a coconut at least and then I will make burfi for you.' So Chandrakant set off for the market. He saw a man sitting by the roadside with a heap of coconuts. He selected one and asked, 'How much is this for?' The man—who knew Chandrakant and his miserliness well, like everyone else in the bazaar—said, 'Five rupees.' Chandrakant nearly fainted when he heard this. Five rupees for a coconut! Seeing his face, the shopkeeper said, 'Walk ahead. You will come to a coconut grove ten kilometres from here. There you will get coconuts for three rupees.'

Chandrakant thought this was a wonderful idea. What if he had to walk ten kilometres, he would save two full rupees! So he walked, and after an hour reached the grove. When he saw the coconuts, he felt that even three rupees was a very high price for them and asked the gardener, 'Will you give it to me for one rupee?'

The gardener was busy. Without looking around he said, 'Ten kilometres from here, there is another coconut grove. There you can get it for one rupee.'

He would save two rupees more! Chandrakant set off at once. Tired, he reached the next coconut grove. But when he saw the coconuts, he felt like haggling again and asked the gardener, 'Will you give me a coconut for fifty paise?'

The gardener was upset. 'Walk ten kilometres further and you will reach the seashore where there are many coconut trees. Just pluck one, you will get it for free.'

Free! Chandrakant would walk to the end of the earth to get anything for free. He walked and walked and finally reached the seashore. Sure enough, there were rows of trees, with coconuts hanging from them. Anybody could just climb up and take one.

Chandrakant started climbing. Up and up he went. On the highest treetop he grabbed a delicious-looking coconut. Just then a gust of wind shook the tree and he lost his hold. He held on to the coconut for dear life. 'Help!' he shouted. A man came by on an elephant. When he saw Chandrakant hanging on to the coconut, he went up to the tree. Chandrakant begged him, 'Sir, will you stand on the elephant and hold my legs so that I can get down?'

The mahout said, 'I am in a hurry. But if you give me a hundred rupees, I will do it.'

A hundred rupees! But Chandrakant would break his bones if he remained there. He would have to pay up. He agreed sadly. The man stood on his elephant and grabbed his legs, but just then the elephant moved away and both of them were left hanging there.

Chandrakant was even more worried. Then, they saw a horseman and both of them begged, 'Will you stand on the horse and hold our feet so that we can get down?'

The horseman said, 'Only if you give me a thousand rupees.'

There was no other way out, so Chandrakant agreed.

But when the man grabbed their feet, the horse got scared and galloped away. Everyone fell in a heap and a bunch of coconuts fell on them. They broke bones, and Chandrakant had to pay a thousand rupees for their treatment. And all because he would not pay five rupees for a coconut!

3. The Wise King

In the city of Manmathapura, which stood by the sea, there lived a young boy named Veeravara. He was brave and intelligent. He also longed for adventure, and when he became eighteen years of age, he took up a job on a ship so that he could travel and see other countries.

He travelled to many places on the ship and had many adventures. One day, when the ship was out at sea, a fierce storm began. The ship was tossed about and everyone was thrown overboard, including Veeravara. He managed to clutch on to a piece of wood and save his life. As he was floating in the sea, he lost consciousness. When at last he woke up, he found himself lying on the sandy shore of an unknown island, under the piercing rays of the sun.

Glad to be alive, he got up. He was on a large island, and some miles inland, he could make out a city. Veeravara started walking in that direction. When he reached the city, to his surprise, he was greeted by a great crowd which was cheering him. Somebody came and garlanded him. He did not know what was happening. An elephant was brought forward and he was made to climb on to its back and sit on the howdah. A sad-looking old man was also sitting there silently. The elephant marched towards a palatial building. Veeravara asked the old man, 'Why did the people welcome a stranger like me in this grand fashion? What are they celebrating, and where are they taking me?'

The old man now looked sadder. 'This is an unusual island,' he explained. 'The people here are very intelligent but they have some funny rules. They are prosperous but they don't have a king. They feel if they choose a king from someone within themselves, he will be partial. So they wait for an unknown person to come to this island. When someone like you, a shipwrecked traveller, gets washed up at the shore, they make him their king. They are taking us to the palace. You are our new king now.'

'What happens to the previous king? And who are you?' Veeravara asked.

'I was the king till you came along. The old king is given a day to teach the new one the ropes. Then he is sent off to the next deserted island, where he has to look after himself. That's the rule.' Saying this, the old man pointed to an island. Veeravara could see it was covered with dense forest.

Now he knew why the old man was sad.

Veeravara was crowned king with great pomp. He quickly learnt his new job and became a good and fair king. But deep inside, a little part of him remained unhappy. When would the next shipwrecked person show up and he be sent off to the other island to live till the end of his days with wild animals and other retired kings?

As he thought about this, he came up with an idea. As long as he was the king, he had absolute power. He ordered his men to go to the island and to clear a part of the forest. There he ordered roads and houses to be built.

Soon there were roads, shops and pretty little houses on the island. People would go to the forest and see the wild animals; they gathered honey and fruits from the trees there, and in a few years, the island was no longer deserted but a cheerful little town.

Now Veeravara was not worried at all. When the next king appeared, he would not have to fend for himself in a forest. Instead, he would live in a little cottage and grow vegetables. Years passed and he got older. The people loved him and were sad whenever they thought he would no longer be their king. Then one day Veeravara called his people and said, 'It is good when you make a person from outside your king. He is fresh and unbiased. But this may not always be a good idea. What if the next person who comes here is a crook? You will make him king without knowing anything about him. Instead, let us have a system where the cleverest people of this island are chosen and rule the place together. Then no one person will have absolute power, and if anyone turns dishonest, you can always remove him from the council.'

The islanders liked the idea, and in a few days, chose their new rulers. Veeravara handed over charge of the kingdom to them and retired happily to his cottage, where he stayed till the end of his days.

4. A bottle of Dew

Ramanatha was the son of a rich landlord. His father left him large tracts of land when he died. But Ramanatha did not spend even one day looking after his land. This was because he had a funny idea, that there exists a magic potion which, if touched to any object, turns it into gold. He spent all his time trying 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 Ramanatha was spending. She was sure that soon they would be left paupers.

One day, a famous sage called Mahipati came to their town. Ramanatha 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 a difficult process.'

'Tell me!' insisted Ramanatha, not believing his luck. 'You have to plant a banana tree and water it regularly with your own hands. In winter, the morning dew will settle on its 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 a secret mantra, which will turn it into the magic potion. A drop of this potion will transform any object into gold.'

Ramanatha 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 trees as you want. But remember, you must look after them yourself and collect the dew with your own hands.'

Ramanatha went home and, after talking to his wife, started clearing his large fields which had been laying empty all these years. There he planted rows and rows of banana trees. 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, Ramanatha planted more and more trees 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 a mantra over the water. Then he returned the bottle and said, 'Try it out.'

Ramanatha sprinkled a few drops on a copper vessel and waited for it to turn to gold. To his dismay, 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 glinted stacks of gold coins!

Now the sage turned to the astonished Ramanatha 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 not have listened to me, so I played trick on you.'

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

5. Grammar page

Have and Has

The verbs **have** and **has** are used to say what people own or possess. They are also used to talk about things that people do or get, such as illnesses. These words are the simple present tense of the verb **have**.



We **have** breakfast at 7:00 A.M.



Peter **has** a sore knee.



Monkeys **have** long tails.

He **has** a lot of stamps.

She **has** long hair.

Our house **has** large windows.

I **have** a younger brother.

We **have** art lessons on Mondays.

Have a cookie, if you like.

Dad **has** a cold.

Jenny often **has** sandwiches for lunch.