



Learn English Through Stories

C Series

C35

**Adopted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

Content

1. The Runaway Goats.

2. Picture Dictionary Page.



1. The Runaway Goats

By Cheryl Rao

If you go to Poznan in Poland, you will see a strange sight in the square of the Old Town. After the clock tower strikes 12 at noon, two cut-outs of goats appear and they butt each other.

'What?! What are goats doing up there on the clock?' you will ask. And then you will hear this story – or a version of it:

Long ago, there was a young man named Stanislaw who lived on a farm outside the city of Poznan in Poland. He was the youngest in his family and his mother's favourite. For her, he was Stan, but his brothers (he had no sisters) called him 'Slaw' and then changed it to 'Slow' after an English trader had passed their way and mistaken the word 'Slaw' for 'Slow' and had told them the meaning of slow.

But Stan was not slow at all. In fact, his head was full of so many different things that he was always trying to do two or three things at a time. Not a very good idea for anyone, and Stan too found that he constantly got into trouble because he would invariably slip up and make a mess of at least one thing he was doing.

'Oh no!' he would say and hit his head in dismay. 'I was so busy collecting the eggs to take to the market that I didn't notice that the cow was mooing away and waiting to be milked!'

'Oh dear! The cat has put its head in the butter churn again! I forgot to close the door when I went out for a moment to fill the soup tureen with water from the well so that I could surprise everyone with hot broth for lunch ...'

Stan meant well. But often there was a gap between his intentions and the results. When his brothers grew up, some of them left the farm to find their fortunes elsewhere. Some of them stayed on.

Stan, who had always helped his mother in the kitchen, in the vegetable patch and with the animals, became quite a good cook. 'That was a delicious meal!' said his second brother Szymon (pronounced Simon) when he came home from the city one Sunday. 'No one can cook like you can, Mother!'

His mother smiled. 'Actually, I didn't cook that. It was young Stan who prepared lunch today – all on his own.' (Stan was nearly 20 years old, but he would always be 'young Stan' for his family.)

Szymon was surprised. 'What? Is he no longer a bumbler and daydreamer?

Why didn't he do more of this when I was home?' he joked. 'I may have stayed on longer and not gone to seek my fortune in the city!'

Stan, of course, was not around now that the meal was over. He was outside in the vegetable patch, checking on the herbs he had planted.

Suddenly, Szymon straightened up. 'You know, the mayor of Poznan keeps an excellent kitchen. He loves to entertain and he takes a personal interest in what his cooks prepare and he treats them well.'

His mother and father nodded but didn't say anything. He continued, 'I heard that there is an opening for a couple of kitchen helpers. Maybe Stan should come back to Poznan with me and try for a job in the mayor's kitchen ...'

'Young Stan? Leave home?' protested his mother. 'But he's still so young ...'

'I left home when I was nineteen, Mother. That's a year younger than he is now ...'

'But who will help me? I'm not keeping so well now ...' continued Mother, clutching desperately at straws.

'There are still three other brothers at home,' pointed out Szymon. 'And two of them have wives ...'

'Stan needs to find his way in the world,' said Father. 'He's been too protected here. He should learn to be more organized, more methodical.'

'That's just it!' cried Mother. 'What will happen if he starts daydreaming and forgets his duties? He will be punished – maybe even beaten! I can't let that happen to him!'

Father muttered below his breath, 'Maybe it's what he needs ...'

Szymon said, 'Oh come on, Mother. If he could prepare such a wonderful meal, it means he is focusing better now. Working for someone else will be good for him. He will learn responsibility and how to stick to one job and not flit from one thing to another ...'

None of them knew that Stan had returned to the house and was standing just outside the door, listening to them. Did he flit from one thing to the other? Was he irresponsible? He had always thought he would learn a lot more by doing many different things. He didn't know that this was what his family thought of him!

Stan's father stood up. 'It's settled,' he said firmly. 'Stan will go with Szymon tomorrow morning.'

That is how, without a chance to really consider what he felt about leaving home, Stanislaw suddenly found himself on the way to Poznan the following day. There was a lump in his throat as he looked back and waved to his mother and this prevented him from saying anything to Szymon as he talked of all the attractions of city life. Also, his ears still rang with all that he had heard the previous night and he resolved to keep his head down and his mind on whatever task was given to him. Then, when the outskirts of the city were in sight, he had a sudden thought. 'What if I don't get the job?' he asked timidly.

'You can find something else to do,' said Szymon cheerfully. 'After all, I had no prospects when I came here – and now look at me: happy in the timber trade!'

'Can I come and work with you instead?' Stan wanted to ask, but he was afraid. Szymon would surely tell him to be independent.

Luckily, however, when the brothers reached the mayor's large home in the centre of the town, there was a lot happening. A trade delegation was in the city and the mayor was eager to impress them. A big dinner was planned. The cooks were overworked. Everyone was running around busily – and one more hand to help was welcome.

'Prove yourself,' Stan was told by the head cook. 'If you work well today, you will have a job from tomorrow.'

'You heard that?' hissed Szymon in his ear before he left. 'Do exactly what you are told. Don't let your mind or your legs wander. Stay at the task you are given ...'

Stan nodded obediently. There was so much noise and confusion that he wanted to run away and hide. When he was given a bucket of turnips and told to start peeling, he went to a quiet corner near the kitchen door and set to work. While his hands moved, his ears took in all the conversation. No one sounded unhappy or overworked. They hurried here and there, it was true; there seemed an impossibly long list of tasks to be done, but people around him were doing them.

Once the turnips were peeled, Stan found a bucket of something else nearby. Without being asked, he set to work on that – and the next and the next. He liked to do different things – and there was plenty of variety here.

Stan didn't even notice that he was hungry until late in the afternoon. 'You've done well,' said the man who had spoken to him first. 'Help yourself to a chunk of bread from the larder there or you'll be drooling into this evening's dinner. You can help to fill tureens and bowls to be placed on the table.'

This too wasn't too much for Stan to handle. 'This is a good place to work,' he thought, forgetting for a moment that he was far from home and would not see his mother and father, and that he had to sleep at night at his brother's lodgings.

Thus, Stan settled into the mayor's kitchen and in a few months, he was no longer given only menial tasks. He was helping with the main work of cooking and he was constantly learning.

Soon, another big occasion arrived. It was the spring festival. A great feast was planned by the mayor for all the important people in town.

The cooks and their apprentices, Stan among them, were up before break of day. By mid-morning, a huge chunk of venison was roasting over the fire. Everyone was in a festive mood. Outside, they could hear music and laughter and the sound of rushing feet. Maybe people were going towards the river to witness the drowning of a human-shaped effigy to symbolize the end of winter.

'I'll be back in a little while,' said the head cook to Stan. 'Keep an eye on everything. Don't let greedy little hands go into any of the pots of food ...'

Stan nodded and kept on with what he was doing. After a little while, however, he noticed a strange silence around him. He turned – and there was nobody left in the kitchen. Everyone had gone out to celebrate!

'How unfair!' he thought. 'No one said a word to me! No one even asked me if I wanted to go out and watch! It is the first time I've been here for the spring festival!'

He wiped his hands on his apron. He went to the door and looked out to see whether his co-workers were lining the street – but no, they were nowhere in sight!

'What? Where are they?' he asked.

He went into the street. People who were passing by clapped him on the shoulder as if he was an old friend. Someone caught his hand and pulled him along. 'No! No!' he protested. 'I can't go with you – I have a responsibility! I have a job to do!'

But his voice couldn't be heard over the singing and clapping and he was swept away by the crowd. That is what had probably happened to the others too, he realized.

When at last Stan could get away from the crowd, he found himself far from the mayor's house. He slipped into a side street and hurried back. His boss would be back, he thought. What would he say when he saw him?

But as Stan approached the kitchen all thoughts of the head cook went out of his head. He could smell burning. He broke into a run and burst into the kitchen – and saw a huge chunk of charred venison and smoke everywhere!

'Oh no! What am I going to do? What will the guests at the feast eat?' cried Stan. He hauled the venison off the spit and held his head in his hands. He went to the door to get away from the smoke – and just then his eyes fell on a couple of billy goats tied to a cart parked on the side street.

'I can do that! No one will know the difference!' he thought. 'I can skin those goats and put them over the spit in no time. Haven't I done it several times on the farm?'

He picked up one of the cleavers from the kitchen and tucked it into the sash of his apron and headed towards the goats. He untied them from the cart, talking softly to them to keep them calm, and then he dragged them towards the kitchen. As he did so, the cleaver fell out and clattered on the cobbled street, narrowly missing the leg of one of the goats. Stan shouted and lunged for it and in that moment, the two goats got free from his grasp.

They bleated loudly. The man who had been so gentle a moment ago was not to be trusted, it seemed. They looked at each other—as if telling one another to run for it—and then took off.

Stan was desperate. He took off behind them. It was a crazy sight but luckily there was no one to see it because everyone had gone off to the river. Stan chased the goats with his cleaver raised. Somehow, he managed to corner them in a blind alley – and they stood there uncertainly, still bleating.

'Hush! Hush!' said Stan. 'You won't feel a thing! It will be over in one stroke, I promise you!'

He approached them slowly. He knew that he could get at least one of them. But just then, the goats spied a half-open door and they ran in through it. The door led up to the bell tower of the town hall and the goats sprang nimbly up the steps, climbing up higher and higher, with Stan panting behind them. On one of the landings, the goats found another open door and they rushed out into one of the rooms. They could hear voices in the hall but their bleating did not seem to draw enough attention. No one came to find out why there were goats here!

What could the poor desperate goats do? They head-butted each other. They butted the walls. They butted the doors. And all that noise brought help at last!

Several members of the town council ran in. They saw the goats and Stan trying to get close to them with his cleaver!

That was the end of poor Stan's stint as a cook's apprentice! He didn't wait to try and explain. He just turned and fled. He threw down his cleaver. He pulled off his apron.

And he left Poznan from the direction opposite to where most of the townspeople were gathered.

Of course, the mayor was angry that the feast he had planned was incomplete. But when he heard about the drama created by the goats, he burst out laughing. They didn't need all that much meat today, did they?

The two billy goats were restored to their owner. The story of their monumental butting session spread. Statues of the goats were made and placed near the town square. And when a clock was put up on the tower of the town hall many years later, it was decided that the two billy goats would be commemorated by adding their butting session at noon.

Luckily no one knew Stan's name. The head cook had always called him 'You there!' and had not bothered to learn his name. So the head cook had to take the blame for the burnt venison roast – but by the time he was called upon to explain, everyone was too busy laughing to care about the lost meat!

As for Stan, he went home quietly and stayed there. He became an even better cook than before. And he never again left a roast unattended.

To commemorate this comic incident, the fighting goats in the clock tower in Poznan were put up in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. About a hundred years later, they were destroyed by lightning, along with a large part of the tower. When the tower was rebuilt, the goats were ignored – or forgotten. It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that the fighting goats returned to add an element of interest to the town clock.

The present fighting goats on the front of the town hall clock date back seventy years. They were destroyed during World War II and restored after the end of the war.

2. Picture Dictionary Page

drum

drums *drumming* **drummed** *verb*
to tap or hit continuously,
or to play a drum.



duet

duets *noun*
a piece of music to be played
or sung by two people.



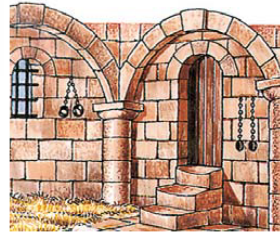
A violin duet.
■ say doo-et

dune

dunes *noun*
a hill of sand, near the sea
or in a desert, that is made
by the wind.

dungeon

dungeons *noun*
an underground prison cell
in an old building, such as
a castle.



■ say dun-jun

duty

duties *noun*
things that you ought to do
or feel you should do.
*It is the guard's duty to make
sure the doors are locked.*

dvd

noun
a plastic disc that contains
digital recordings of sounds
and images (see **abbreviations**
on page 246).

dye

dyes *dyeing* **dyed** *verb*
to change the color of
something by soaking
it in colored liquids.



*These balls of yarn have been
dyed different colors.*
dye *noun*

dry

adjective
not wet.
*They came in from the rain
and changed into dry clothes.*
■ comparisons **drier** **driest**
■ opposite **wet**
dry *verb*

dull

adjective
1 not bright.
It was a dull day.
2 not exciting.
*I thought the movie was
very dull.*
■ comparisons **duller** **dullest**

duplicate

duplicates *noun*
an exact copy.



*One key is
a duplicate
of the other.*
■ say doo-pli-kat

duck

ducks *noun*
a water bird that has oily,
waterproof feathers and
webbed feet for swimming.
Ducks eat fish, small plants,
and small animals. Male
ducks are called drakes.



duck
(female)

dummy

dummies *noun*
a model of a
person's body,
often used for
making or
displaying
clothes.



dressmaker's
dummy

during

preposition
1 at some time in.
I fell asleep during the movie.
2 the whole time of.
*During the summer months
we go swimming in the sea.*

dusk

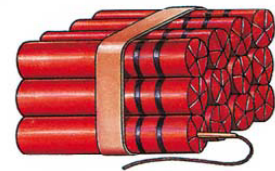
noun
the time of evening when
it starts to get dark.
■ opposite **dawn**

dust

noun
tiny pieces of dirt that
float in the air and settle
on surfaces.
dusty *adjective*

dynamite

noun
a powerful substance that
explodes when it is burned.

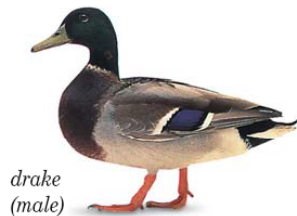


dynasty

dynasties *noun*
a series of rulers from
the same family.
■ say die-nu-stee

dyslexia

noun
a learning difficulty that
can affect reading, writing,
or spelling.
■ say dis-lek-see-uh
dyslexic *adjective*



drake
(male)