



Learn English Through Stories

C Series

C37

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# 1. Mini Stores 1

By M A Hill

## Story 1



Three young men were playing with a gun in a street in a quiet area of the town after dark when one of them fired it by mistake without aiming it at anything. The bullet broke a window in an old lady's house.

The young men made off at once when they saw the damage they had done, but the old lady looked out of a window when she heard the explosion, and she recognized one of them as the son of a man and woman who lived not far from her.

The old lady complained to the police, and a detective came to her house. The old lady gave him a detailed account of everything that had happened, and then the detective asked her if she knew where the young man lived. The old lady told him that too, so the detective went to the young man's house. He and his companions tried to hide, but the detective found them and the gun and took them to the police station.

There his chief officer questioned the young men to find out which of them owned the gun, but none of them was willing to say. The young man who owned the gun did not dare to admit that he did, because he did not have a licence for it.

At last the chief officer decided to put an end to the conversation, so he turned to the detective and demanded to know whether he had got an officer's permission to take the gun away from the young man who owned it.

The detective felt anxious when he heard this question. "No, sir," he answered nervously, "I didn't get it."

"In that case," the officer declared angrily, "you were quite wrong to take it away from him. You'd better return it immediately, or there'll be trouble!"

This made the young men smile happily at each other, and as soon as the detective held the gun out and said, "Here you are," one of them put his hand out in order to get it back.

That is how the officer finally discovered whom the gun belonged to.

## Story 2



Mr Gray travelled a lot on business. He sold machines of various kinds to farmers. It was not really a very exciting job, but Mr Gray had always been interested in farming, and he was quite satisfied with his life.

He had a big car, and usually enjoyed driving it long distances, but he was quite satisfied to go by train sometimes too, especially when the weather was bad. He was a little frightened of driving in rain or snow, and it was less tiring to sit comfortably in a train and look out of the window without being worried about how one was going to get to the next place.

One of Mr Gray's problems was often where to stay when he reached some small place in the country. He did not expect great comfort and wonderful food, but he found it annoying when he was given a cold room, and there was no hot water or good food after a long and tiring day.

Late one winter evening, Mr Gray arrived at a small railway station. The journey by train that day had not been at all interesting, and Mr Gray was cold and tired and hungry. He was looking forward to a simple but satisfying meal by a brightly burning fire, and then a hot bath and comfortable bed.

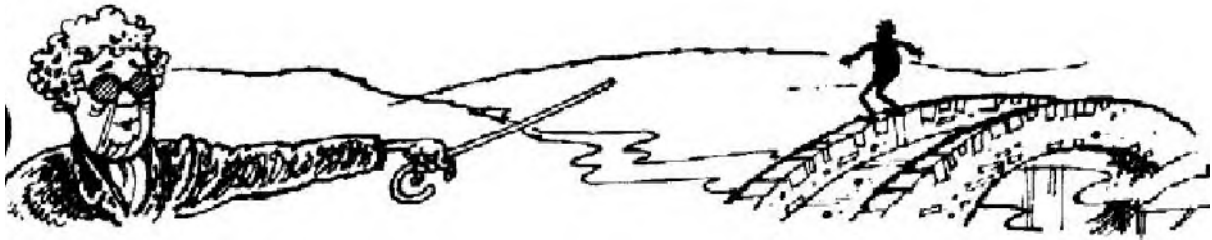
While he was walking to the taxi rank, he said to a local man who was also walking there, "As this is my first visit to this part of the country and I was in too much of a hurry to find out about hotels before I left home, I would very much like to know how many you have here."

The local man answered, "We have two."

"And which of the two would you advise me to go to?" Mr Gray asked then.

The local man scratched his head for a few moments and then answered, "Well, it's like this: whichever one you go to, you'll be sorry you didn't go to the other."

## Story 3



Mrs Hammond was old and blind, but she was determined to do everything for herself. She even used to go for walks alone from her cottage once a day for exercise and fresh air, and found her way by touching things with her white stick. She learnt where everything was, so she never lost her way.

But then one day some men came and cut down some of the familiar pine trees at the side of one of the paths which she followed. When she reached that place that evening, she did not feel the trees with her stick, so she was in difficulties.

She stopped for a minute and listened, but she did not hear any other people, so she went ahead for a kilometre or two, and then she heard water beneath her.

"Water?" she said aloud, and paused. "Am I lost? I suppose so. I must be on a bridge, I suppose, and there must be a river under me. I've been told that there's a river in this part of the country, but I don't know its exact position. How am I going to get back to my cottage from here?"

All at once she heard a man's friendly voice near her. It said, "Excuse me, can I help you?"

"How kind of you!" Mrs Hammond answered. "Yes, please. I'm lost. Some of the trees which I follow when I go for my walk every evening had been removed today, and if I hadn't been lucky enough to come across you, I don't know what I'd have done. Can you please help me to get home?"

"Certainly," the man answered. "Where do you live?" Mrs Hammond told him, and they began walking. The man took Mrs Hammond to her cottage, and she invited him in and gave him some coffee and a piece of cake. She told the man how grateful she was that she had met him.

"Don't thank me," he answered. "I want to thank you."

"Thank me?" Mrs Hammond said. "Whatever for?"

"Well," the man answered quietly, "I was balanced on the edge of that bridge for ages in the dark, because I was trying to make up my mind to throw myself into the river and drown myself. But I'm not going to do it now."



## Story 4



Jim lived with his parents until he was twenty-one years old, and then he got a job in the office of a big factory in another town, so he left home. He found a comfortable little flat which had two rooms, a small kitchen and a bathroom, and he lived there on his own.

At first he cleaned it himself, but he did not want to have to go on doing this, so he determined to find someone else to do it instead of him. He asked a lot of his fellow workers at the factory what they did about this, and at last one of the men said, "Oh, Mrs Roper comes and cleans my flat regularly. She washes the dishes, irons my shirts and keeps the place neat and tidy and so on. I'll introduce her to you, if you like. She's a charming old lady. She does her best, but she hasn't got much energy."

"Well, you'd better ask her to come and see me, please," Jim answered. So the next evening Mrs Roper came to see him, and she agreed with pleasure to come to his flat every morning for an hour.

After she had been working for Jim for two weeks, he looked at the mirror in his bedroom and thought, "That mirror looks very dusty."

Mrs Roper's forgotten to clean it. I can write on it with my finger." He wrote a message in the dust: "I'm coughing whenever I breathe because everything in this room is very dusty."

He came home at 7 o'clock that evening, and when he had eaten his supper, he went into his bedroom and looked at the mirror. "That silly woman still hasn't cleaned it!" he said to himself. "All it needs is a cloth!"

But then he bent down and saw a bottle in front of the mirror. "I didn't put that bottle there," he thought. "Mrs Roper must have left it." He picked the bottle up and looked at it carefully.

"She's written some words on it," he said to himself. He read the words. They were: "Cough medicine".

## Story 5



Mathew lived in a big city, and his hair was always cut by the same hairdresser. Mathew went to him once a month. He was allowed one hour for his lunch every day, and on the mornings when his hair was going to be cut, he made himself some sandwiches to eat in the hairdresser's.

The hairdresser had a very small shop near Mathew's office, and he worked alone, but he always cut Mathew's hair exactly as Mathew liked it, and while he was doing it, the two men talked about football or cricket.

But the hairdresser was an old man, and one day, when Mathew was sitting in his chair, and his hair was being cut as usual, the old man said to him, "Mathew, I'm going to be sixty-five years old next month, so I'm going to retire. I'm going to sell my shop to a young man who wants to be a hairdresser. The shop's being paid for by the young man's father."

Mathew was very sad to hear this, because he enjoyed talking to the old man, and he was also worried that his hair would not be cut as well by the new young man as it had been for so many years by his old friend.

He went to the shop again the next month, and the new man was there. He cut Mathew's hair, but he did it very badly.

The next month, Mathew went into the shop again. The young man asked him how he would like his hair cut, and Mathew answered, "Please cut it very short on the right side, but leave it as it is on the left. It must cover my ear. On top, cut all the hair away in the middle, but leave a piece at the front which can hang down to my chin."

The young man was very surprised when he heard this. "But sir," he said, "I can't cut your hair like that!"

"Why not?" Mathew asked. "That's how you cut it last time."

## 2. Picture Dictionary Page

### educate

educates educating educated  
*verb*

to teach someone so that they learn and understand things.

education *noun*

### eel

eels *noun*

a long, thin fish that lives in rivers and the sea. Eels eat tiny sea plants, animals called plankton and other fish.



ribbon eel

### effect

effects *noun*

the result of an action or event on another person or thing.

*Seeing the crash on the news had a bad effect on me.*

### effort

efforts *noun*

the energy you need to do something.



*It took a lot of effort to lift the suitcase.*

### egg

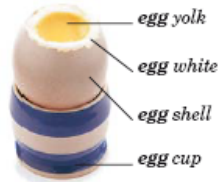
eggs *noun*

a rounded object that is produced by some female animals.

Eggs contain the animal's babies, which hatch when developed.



crow's egg



hen's egg

### elastic

*noun*

a stretchy fabric.



*Suspenders made of elastic.*

### elbow

elbows *noun*

the joint in the middle of your arm.



elbow

### elderly

*adjective*

rather old.

### elect

elects electing elected *verb*

to choose someone to do something by voting for them.

### election

elections *noun*

the time when people vote for someone to be in charge.

*Council elections.*

### electric

*adjective*

powered by electricity.



*electric razor*

### electricity

*noun*

a form of energy that is used for heating and lighting, and for making machines work. Electricity is produced at a power plant and carried along cables and wires.

electrical *adjective*

### elephant

elephants *noun*

a huge mammal that lives in southern Asia and Africa. Elephants eat tree bark, roots, leaves, grass, and other plants. They use their trunks like hands to pick up or hold their food.



African elephant

### elevator

elevators *noun*

a large box or cage that carries people and goods between the floors of a building.

### email

*noun*

messages sent electronically between computers.

### embarrass

embarrasses embarrassing

embarrassed *verb*

to make someone feel ashamed or shy.

*It embarrasses me to have to speak in public.*

embarrassment *noun*

### emergency

emergencies *noun*

a sudden, dangerous event.



*Helicopters are sometimes used in emergencies.*

■ say ee-mer-jen-see

### emigrate

emigrates emigrating emigrated

*verb*

to leave your own country to go to live in another.

*My best friend is emigrating from Ireland to New Zealand.*

emigration *noun*

### emotion

emotions *noun*

a strong feeling people have.

*Love and hate are emotions.*

### employ

employs employing employed

*verb*

to pay somebody to do a job.

*I employ six people in my office.*

### empty

*adjective*

having nothing inside.



an empty bottle