



Learn English Through Stories

**Adapted and modified by**

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## 6. The Lion and the Mouse



A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's nose. Roused from his nap, the Lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her.

"Spare me!" begged the poor Mouse. "Please let me go and some day I will surely repay you."

The Lion was much amused to think that a Mouse could ever help him. But he was generous and finally let the Mouse go.

Some days later, while stalking his prey in the forest, the Lion was caught in the toils of a hunter's net. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roaring. The Mouse knew the voice and quickly found the Lion struggling in the net. Running to one of the great ropes that bound him, she gnawed it until it parted, and soon the Lion was free.

"You laughed when I said I would repay you," said the Mouse. "Now you see that even a Mouse can help a Lion."

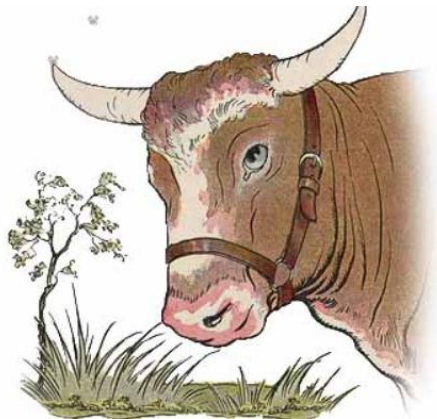
***A kindness is never wasted.***

## The Lion and the Mouse – Version 2

A LION, faint with heat, and weary with hunting was laid down to take his repose under the spreading boughs of a thick shady oak. It happened that, while he slept, a company of scrambling Mice ran over his back, and waked him. Upon which, starting up, he clapped his paw upon one of them, and was just going to put it to death, when the little suppliant implored his mercy in a very moving manner, begging him not to stain his noble character with the blood of so despicable and small a beast.

The Lion, considering the matter, thought proper to do as he was desired, and immediately released his little trembling prisoner. Not long after, traversing the forest in pursuit of his prey, he chanced to run into the toils of the hunters; from whence, not able to disengage himself, he set up a most hideous and loud roar, The Mouse, hearing the voice, and knowing it to be the Lion's, immediately repaired to the place, and bid him fear nothing, for that he was his friend. Then straight he fell to work, and, with his little sharp teeth, gnawing asunder the knots and fastenings of the toils, set the royal brute at liberty.

## 7. The Gnat and the Bull



A Gnat flew over the meadow with much buzzing for so small a creature and settled on the tip of one of the horns of a Bull. After he had rested a short time, he got ready to fly away. But before he left he begged the Bull's pardon for having used his horn for a resting place.

"You must be very glad to have me go now," he said.

"It's all the same to me," replied the Bull. "I did not even know you were there."

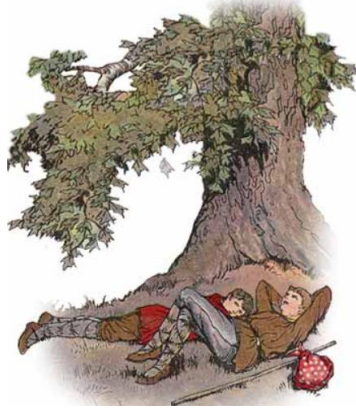
***We are often of greater importance in our own eyes than in the eyes of our neighbour. The smaller the mind the greater the conceit.***

## The Gnat and the Bull – Version 2

A sturdy Bull was driven by the heat of the weather to wade up to his knees in a cool and swift-running stream. He had not been long there when a Gnat, that had been disporting itself in the air, pitched upon one of his horns. “My dear fellow,” said the Gnat, with as great a buzz as he could manage, “pray excuse the liberty I take. If I am too heavy, only say so, and I will go at once and rest upon the poplar which grows hard by at the edge of the stream.”

“Stay or go, it makes no matter to me,” replied the Bull. “Had it not been for your buzz I should not even have known you were there.”

## 8. The Plane Tree



Two Travellers, walking in the noonday sun, sought the shade of a wide-spreading tree to rest. As they lay looking up among the pleasant leaves, they saw that it was a Plane Tree.

"How useless is the Plane!" said one of them. "It bears no fruit whatever, and only serves to litter the ground with leaves."

"Ungrateful creatures!" said a voice from the Plane Tree. "You lie here in my cooling shade, and yet you say I am useless! Thus ungratefully, O Jupiter, do men receive their blessings!"

***Our best blessings are often the least appreciated.***

## The Plane Tree – Version 2

Two travellers, worn out by the heat of the summer's sun, laid themselves down at noon under the wide-spreading branches of a Plane-Tree. As they rested under its shade, one of the Travelers said to the other, "What a singularly useless tree is the Plane! It bears no fruit, and is not of the least service to man."

The Plane-Tree, interrupting him, said, "You ungrateful fellows! Do you, while receiving benefits from me and resting under my shade, dare to describe me as useless, and unprofitable?"

## 9. The Owl and the Grasshopper



The Owl always takes her sleep during the day. Then after sundown, when the rosy light fades from the sky and the shadows rise slowly through the wood, out she comes ruffling and blinking from the old hollow tree. Now her weird "Hoo-hoo-hoo-oo-oo" echoes through the quiet wood, and she begins her hunt for the bugs and beetles, frogs and mice she likes so well to eat.

Now there was a certain old Owl who had become very cross and hard to please as she grew older, especially if anything disturbed her daily slumbers. One warm summer afternoon as she dozed away in her den in the old oak tree, a Grasshopper nearby began a joyous but very raspy song. Out popped the old Owl's head from the opening in the tree that served her both for a door and for a window.

"Get away from here, sir," she said to the Grasshopper. "Have you no manners? You should at least respect my age and leave me to sleep in quiet!"

But the Grasshopper answered saucily that he had as much right to his place in the sun as the Owl had to her place in the old oak. Then he struck up a louder and still more rasping tune.

The wise old Owl knew quite well that it would do no good to argue with the Grasshopper, nor with anybody else for that matter. Besides, her eyes were not sharp enough by day to permit her to punish the Grasshopper as he deserved. So she laid aside all hard words and spoke very kindly to him.



"Well sir," she said, "if I must stay awake, I am going to settle right down to enjoy your singing. Now that I think of it, I have a wonderful wine here, sent me from Olympus, of which I am told Apollo drinks before he sings to the high gods. Please come up and taste this delicious drink with me. I know it will make you sing like Apollo himself."



The foolish Grasshopper was taken in by the Owl's flattering words. Up he jumped to the Owl's den, but as soon as he was near enough so the old Owl could see him clearly, she pounced upon him and ate him up.

*Flattery is not a proof of true admiration. Do not let flattery throw you off your guard against an enemy.*

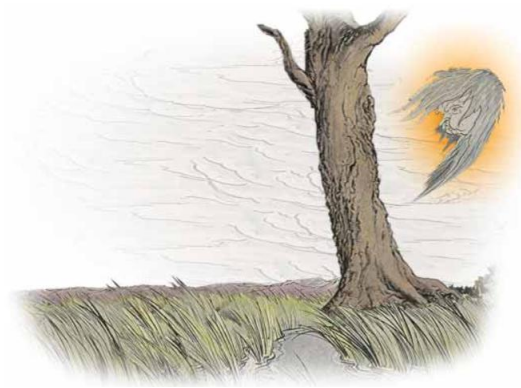
## The Owl and the Grasshopper – Version 2

AN Owl sat sleeping in a tree. But a Grasshopper, who was singing beneath, would not let her be quiet, abusing her with very indecent and uncivil language; telling her she was a scandalous person, who plied a-nights to get her living, and shut herself up all day in a hollow tree. The Owl desired her to hold her tongue and be quiet: notwithstanding which, she was the more impertinent.

She begged of her a second time to leave off; but all to no purpose. The Owl, vexed at the heart to find that all she said went for nothing, cast about to inveigle her by stratagem. Well, says she, since one must be kept awake, it is a pleasure, however, to be kept awake by so agreeable a voice; which, I must confess, is no ways inferior to the finest harp. And, now I think of it, I have a bottle of excellent nectar, which my mistress Pallas gave me; if you have a mind, I will give you a dram to wet your whistle.

The Grasshopper, ready to die with thirst, and, at the same time, pleased to be so complimented upon account of her voice, skipped up to the place very briskly; when the Owl, advancing to meet her, seized, and without much delay, made her a sacrifice to her revenge; securing to herself, by the death of her enemy, a possession of that quiet, which, during her life-time, she could not enjoy.

## 10. The Oak and the Reeds



A Giant Oak stood near a brook in which grew some slender Reeds. When the wind blew, the great Oak stood proudly upright with its hundred arms uplifted to the sky. But the Reeds bowed low in the wind and sang a sad and mournful song.

"You have reason to complain," said the Oak. "The slightest breeze that ruffles the surface of the water makes you bow your heads, while I, the mighty Oak, stand upright and firm before the howling tempest."

"Do not worry about us," replied the Reeds. "The winds do not harm us. We bow before them and so we do not break. You, in all your pride and strength, have so far resisted their blows. But the end is coming."

As the Reeds spoke a great hurricane rushed out of the north. The Oak stood proudly and fought against the storm, while the yielding Reeds bowed low. The wind redoubled in fury, and all at once the great tree fell, torn up by the roots, and lay among the pitying Reeds.

*Better to yield when it is folly to resist, than to resist stubbornly and be destroyed.*

## The Oak and the Reeds – Version 2

AN Oak, which hung over the bank of a river was blown down by a violent storm of wind; and as it was carried along by the stream, some of its boughs brushed against a Reed, which grew near the shore. This struck the Oak with a thought of admiration; and he could not forbear asking the Reed, how he came to stand so secure and unhurt in a tempest which had been furious enough to tear an Oak up by the roots?

Why, says the Reed, I secure myself by putting on a behaviour quite contrary to what you do, instead of being stubborn and stiff, and confiding in my strength, I yield and bend to the blast, and let it go over me; knowing how vain and fruitless it would be to resist.