



Learn English Through Stories

D Series

D50

Adapted and modified by

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1. Two Unforgettable Lessons

By Sudha Murty

Ananda and Kapla were landlords in neighbouring villages. Both were cunning and extremely sly. They had made a lot of money by cheating and ill-treating their labourers who worked in the fields.

One day, a young man named Maanik came to Ananda, asking for work. Ananda was pleasantly surprised. No one ever wanted to work for him because of his reputation, and here was someone walking right into his house! Maanik's next few words got him even more excited. Maanik said, 'I will work for you for free. You need not pay me a salary. Only give me a place to sleep, two sets of clothes and two meals a day.' Ananda was beside himself with joy when he heard this and was about to agree, when Maanik added, 'I have only one condition: I will tell you the truth always, but one day in the year, I will tell lies.'

Ananda, who lied happily every day of the year, agreed to this odd condition. So Maanik joined him. He was a wonderful worker — hard-working and trustworthy. He was very honest and soon became Ananda's right-hand man.

A year went by. Because of Maanik's hard work, Ananda had an excellent harvest. He and his wife, Mandakarni, decided to have a big feast to celebrate. They invited all their relatives and friends, who gathered from all over the village and outside too. Everyone was looking forward to the delicious feast being planned. On the morning of the feast, Ananda decided he would also give away some gifts to his relatives, just to show off. So he set off for the market in his cart. As soon as he was out of sight, Maanik went running to his mistress, Mandakarni. He wept loudly and beat his chest. Then he fell on the floor, sobbing, and announced, 'The master is dead! The cart overturned on the road. Our master has been flattened like a chapatti!' As soon as Ananda's wife and relatives heard this, they started wailing. Maanik rushed out, saying he would bring back the body, while everyone started preparing for the last rites.

Maanik now went running to his master and said, 'Master! Your wife is dead. My kind, loving mistress is dead. A cobra bit her and she fell to the ground, as blue as the spring sky.' Ananda was stunned. What! His beloved Mandakarni, his partner in all his schemes, was dead! He rushed back home shouting her name.

Mandakarni too was weeping loudly, sitting in the courtyard. When she saw her husband run in, she stopped mid-wail, and Ananda too stood open-mouthed. Then they fell into each other's arms, unable to believe their eyes.

As one, they turned to Maanik. 'What is the meaning of this, Maanik?' his master demanded to know, sternly.

Maanik smiled and said, 'Remember my condition that I would lie only one day in the year? Well, I chose today. You see what lies can do? They nearly destroyed your life. Now think what happens to the people to whom you lie every day of the year!'

Saying this, he walked out, leaving behind a stunned and ashamed landlord.

Maanik walked to the next village now, to Kapla's house. Kapla had heard all about him and was ready with his own conditions.

'You will not lie, ever,' he said, 'and you cannot leave the farm. If you do, you will have to pay me ten gold coins. If I want to get rid of you, I will give you five coins. In return you will be given clothes, shelter and one leaf-plate filled with food every day.'

Maanik thought for a while, then agreed. He began his work, and at the end of the day, stood waiting for his leaf full of food. The cook came and handed him a tiny leaf on which there were a few grains of rice. Quickly Maanik produced a large banana leaf. 'The master did not say what kind of leaf. I want this leaf to be piled up with food. That was the agreement.' The cook had no choice but to fill Maanik's banana leaf-plate with rice, dal and three types of vegetables. Maanik took it and had a hearty meal, which he did not forget to share with the other labourers, his new friends.

This went on for a few days. Maanik was not at all interested in working. All day he would sit around with the other workers, telling them also to while away time chatting, and at the end of the day he would tuck into a big meal. Word soon reached Kapla and he decided to teach Maanik a lesson.

'Maanik, I want you to change the direction of the river so that it passes through my garden,' he ordered. Then he left, happy that Maanik would never be able to do this and would have to leave, after paying him ten gold coins.

When he came home in the evening, he was horrified to see the front wall and the front door of his house lying in pieces. 'Maanik!' he shouted angrily. 'What is the meaning of this?'

Maanik appeared, wiping his brow. 'Why, I am making way for the river to enter the garden. Now I will go to the river and ask it to come this way.'

Kapla sat clutching his head. Maanik had got the better of him again!

The next day, he summoned Maanik and, just to keep him out of mischief, ordered, 'Bring me the wood from twenty trees.' That would keep him busy for the day, going to the forest and doing all the chopping, he thought.

Maanik picked up the axe, and whistling happily, proceeded to chop down the prized mango trees in Kapla's orchard! When he returned, Kapla had to admit that Maanik was too expensive to keep and happily paid him five gold coins so that he would leave, and never come back again!

That was how Maanik taught the two meanest landlords in the land lessons they would never forget.

2. United WE Stand

Maruti and Mahadeva lived in the same village.

While Mahadeva was a rich businessman and owned the largest shop in the village, Maruti was a poor farmer. Both had large families, with many sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

One day, Maruti, tired of not being able to make ends meet, decided to leave the village and move to the city with his family. There they were sure to earn enough to feed everyone. They said their goodbyes, packed their few clothes and set off.

When night fell, they stopped and rest under a large tree. There was a stream running nearby, where they could get a drink and refresh themselves. Maruti looked around and started giving instructions to everyone. He called his sons and told them to clean the area below the tree. He told his wife to fetch water. He instructed his daughters-in-law to make the fire and himself started cutting wood from the tree. Now, on the top of that tree sat a thief, resting with his booty. He watched as Maruti's family worked together to prepare dinner. He also noticed they had nothing to cook—no grains or vegetables.

Maruti's wife too must have thought the same thing, for she came to her husband as he sat resting under the tree and said, 'Everything is ready. Now what shall we cook?' Maruti raised his hands upwards and said, 'Don't worry. He is watching all this from above. He will help us.'

'But how will he help us?'

'We are many. We are united. He will come down for us.'

The thief got worried. He had seen that the family was a large one and they worked well together. They listened to each other and were obedient to the old man. Surely they did not know he was hiding in the branches? Were they waiting for him to come down? He decided to make a quick getaway. He climbed down swiftly when they were not looking and ran for his life.

Unfortunately, he forgot his bundle of stolen jewels and money, which dropped down into Maruti's lap. He opened it and jumped with joy when he saw what it contained. 'Come here, quick!' he called out. 'See, I was right. I knew God above would look after us, and He has thrown down this bundle for us. Now our days of want are over. Let us go back to the village.'

So the family gathered its belongings and returned to the village. There was great excitement when they told everyone the story of how they got rich.

Fat old Mahadeva got greedy. This was a nice quick way to earn some money! So he commanded his family to pack some clothes and they set off as if on a journey. They stopped under the same tree and Mahadeva started commanding everyone just like Maruti had done. But the difference was that no one in his family was willing to listen to anyone or obey orders. They were used to having a bunch of servants wait on them. So the one who went to the river to fetch water had a nice bath and came back. The person who went to gather wood for the fire went off to sleep beneath the tree. And Mahadeva only ordered everyone about, not bothering to do anything himself.

The thief had returned to his treetop. He sat there sadly, thinking of his lost bundle and watching the family underneath. He noticed the family members were greedy and selfish. They would never be able to put up a fight together, he was sure.

Then, Mahadeva and his wife started the conversation which they had rehearsed many times carefully.

Mahadeva's wife said, 'Everything is ready. Now what shall we cook?'

Mahadeva raised his hands upwards and said, 'Don't worry. He is watching all this from above. He will help us.'

'But how will he help us?'

'We are many. We are united. He will come down for us.'

At this the thief jumped down from the top of the tree, a knife in his hand. Seeing him, everyone was scared and started running in different directions to save themselves. They started screaming and no one would help the other.

The thief stole everything. Mahadeva's wife's necklace and earrings, the greedy old man's pouch full of money, hidden under his fat tummy.

Mahadeva and his family returned to the village empty-handed, having lost all that they had taken with them.

3. Grammar page

The simple past form of some verbs does *not* end in **-ed**. Such verbs are called **irregular verbs**.

The simple past tense of some irregular verbs does *not* change at all.



David **hurt** his foot when he jumped over the drain.



The worker **cut** down the tree this morning.



Her ring **cost** only 10 dollars.

He **hit** the ball over the net.

Dad **read** to us last night.

He **shut** the door.

I **put** some sugar in my coffee.

Spelling File

Base Form

beat
burst
cost
cut
hit
hurt
put
read
split
shut

Simple Past

beat
burst
cost
cut
hit
hurt
put
read
split
shut