



Learn English Through Stories

G Series

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Adapted and modified by

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1. A Village Idyll

By Mulk Raj Anand

Splashes of red and orange mingle into an aura of burning gold and, in a flash, the sun rises over the rim of the village pond, resplendent.

Gauri comes treading on the pearls of dew on the tufts of grass by the ditch to fetch water, with a pitcher under her arm.

‘Oh, the fair one.

Oh, ripe like the juice of a sugarcane...’

Govind sighs, as he sits rubbing his clothes with soap on a slab of stone, ‘the glow produced by the brisk movement on his face ripens into crimson and his breath almost fails.

Gauri shyly draws the end of her dupatta over her head and dips her pitcher in the water, but as she leans forward, the tips of her brave breasts are silhouetted against the sky line.

‘May I be your sacrifice!’ Govind whispers the familiar ejaculation of heart-squanderers in the streets of Verka. And, as though the words are potent like a magic spell, the blood rushes down from his head to his heart and loins, the centres of storm in his peasant soul, ‘Oh the fair one! he hisses. And the hisses splutter into an embarrassed cough.

At that Gauri laughs even as her pitcher gurgles with a series of hysterical reverberations.

And with that their love started. For, in the tickling of her throat and the saliva on his tongue was the meeting of long distances, of uneasy colloquies, of thumping hearts and reckless yearning.

She stood before him, her breasts heaving towards the morning, her senses sinuously touching the edge of demure restraint, her blood warming and melting and leaping like flames towards a ceiling in a conflagration.

He stared at the wonder of her, his body taut, his breath swelling and unswelling to the tune of his now frightened heart, his soul reaching out to some expression from the groin of endless silence. She seemed like some shimmering cloud image, veiled in sheaths of innocence, ‘Ha!’ ... the exclamation escaped from his throat involuntarily. And he leapt towards her

like a tiger towards a young doe.

With a shrill shriek she ran, leaving her pitcher where it stood at the edge of the pond. And, as she raced up the steep bank, her torso straining forward but her legs far behind, she knew she was defeated and burst into a smile.

Govind caught her and flung her on to a dune. She fought him back, digging her nails into him and kicking him with upraised knees. He swung her from side to side and pinned her arms to the earth and lay down on her.

‘Oh, Let me go,’ she said with tears in her eyes and laughter in her mouth. The colour on his face called to the radiance on cheeks. And, giddy-eyed, she relaxed, till his lips touched hers. And now she swayed as though her soul was in a delirium of giving.

‘Someone will see us,’ she whispered.

But, storm tossed, scampering, wriggling hard twitching with the concentration of nerves outstretched for months in desire for her, in a fierce felicity, he was intent on the dissolution of her energies, the melting of the snows of her virginity...

A little distance away, on the track leading to the rivulet, Lehna, the son of the Landlord, went twisting the tails of his bullocks, goading them to drag the manure cart quicker. Govind flapped his arms like a protective male bird covering his mate under his wings for Lehna was his rival. Gauri snuggled up to him like a cooing female bird. And thus they lay in the heat and the sweat, their voices rustling like the silks of Lahore and their faces glowing about the dune sands like two luminous wild flowers jutting out of the earth. The sun shone above their heads.

The sun shines, and the moon takes light from it, as also the stars. And on the earth, going round the sun, through the eternal movements, we possess in our spines all the planets, as well as a thirsty love and the desire to die in order to be reborn... And from the dying, and through the rebirth, there grow lotuses among the reeds, the flaming smiling pinks, pushed up in the quagmire by the vital spark that keeps things alive. In the fruits, flowers, foliages among the birds, beasts and humans, the same glorious urge prospers. And thee is creation.

Gauri smiles like the demure morning. Govind laughs like the temple drum. There is the voice of Siva in their curly throats. And in their bodies is the sinuous disunion of a broken moment between the lord of storms and his consort, Parvati. And in their touching is the burning of several planets, the extinction of worlds, the smothering of heavens, the dissolution of hells, and

the springing of a serene pleasure, muted like a prayer in which we rest, sometimes as before a new miracle and sometimes, as before the juxtaposition of legs intertwined in a ridiculous posture.

And thus begins a cycle.

Govind met Gauri in the lentil field on the first full moon night of autumn when everyone was awake and merry. He lay with her in a hay barn on the eighth day of the new moon before winter, when people were feasting at night after fasting the whole day. And he took her on every moon-lit night in the winter. For, after the first flush of raw passion had expended itself under the sun, they began more and more to lend themselves to the mellow light of the moon. Govind wore clean clothes and Gauri always had flowers in her hair.

As Gauri went to meet Govind in the fields by the river on one eclipse night, however, her mother saw her. 'Ah!' she shrieked at the boy, 'if you have spoiled my daughter, you must marry her... you wretch....' And she shrieked at Govind's mother for letting her son roam round like a bull. And Govind's mother shrieked at Govind's father for begetting a seducer. And Govind's father shouted at Govind. To which the boy returned the simple answer: 'Marry me to the girl.'

And then there was much toing and froing among the elders.

And at last, on an auspicious day, discovered in the scrolls of their fate, for a good commission by Pandit Badri Nath, the Brahmin priest, Govind and Gauri were married....

2. Countryside Love in India

By Grok

Love, in its many forms, finds a unique expression in the countryside of India—a land where simplicity intertwines with tradition, and nature becomes a silent witness to human emotions. The Indian countryside, with its sprawling fields, rustic villages, and timeless customs, offers a distinct flavour to romance that contrasts sharply with the fast-paced urban narrative. Here, love is not just an emotion but a way of life, deeply rooted in community, family, and the rhythms of the earth.

The Setting of Rural Romance

The countryside in India is a canvas painted with vivid hues—golden mustard fields swaying in the breeze, the gentle ripple of rivers, and the soft glow of lanterns lighting up mud houses at dusk. This serene backdrop sets the stage for love stories that are understated yet profound. Unlike the ostentatious displays of affection in cities, rural love often unfolds quietly—through stolen glances across a village well, a shared walk along a dirt path, or the exchange of a simple flower plucked from the wild. The simplicity of the environment mirrors the purity of emotions, where love is less about material gifts and more about presence and understanding.

Nature plays an active role in these romances. Monsoons, for instance, are not just a season but a catalyst—bringing lovers together under shared umbrellas or inspiring poetic exchanges as rain taps on tin roofs. Festivals like Holi, with its playful colours, or Teej, celebrating marital love, provide opportunities for young hearts to express feelings within the bounds of tradition. The countryside transforms these moments into collective celebrations, where love is both personal and communal.

Traditions and Constraints

Countryside love in India is inseparable from its cultural and social fabric. Arranged marriages remain a dominant tradition, where love often blossoms after the wedding, nurtured by mutual respect and shared responsibilities. Yet, even in this structured framework, there are tales of clandestine romance—of a farmer's daughter and a shepherd, or a girl from one village falling for a boy from another. These stories, whispered in folk songs or enacted in local theatre like Nautanki, reveal the tension between individual desire and societal norms.

The joint family system and village elders exert significant influence, ensuring that love adheres to caste, class, and community boundaries. Defying these can lead to elopements, a phenomenon not uncommon in rural India, where couples flee to towns or cities to escape disapproval. Such acts of rebellion highlight the intensity of rural love, where stakes are high, and emotions run deep. Bollywood has long romanticized this narrative, with films like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* capturing the clash between tradition and passion against a pastoral backdrop.

The Language of Love

In the Indian countryside, love speaks a language of its own—one that transcends words. It is in the act of a woman embroidering a shawl for her beloved, or a man toiling extra hours in the fields to secure a future for his family. Folk traditions amplify this silent devotion. Songs like the Punjabi *Tappe* or Rajasthani *Mand* are laden with romantic yearning, sung during harvest or festivities, echoing the joys and sorrows of love. The oral storytelling tradition, too, keeps alive tales of legendary lovers like Heer-Ranjha or Sohni-Mahiwal, whose passion defied all odds in rural settings.

Food becomes another medium of affection. A bride's first dish cooked for her in-laws, or a lover secretly sending a basket of fresh mangoes, carries unspoken tenderness. These small gestures, woven into daily life, reflect a love that is practical yet poetic, grounded in the realities of rural existence.

Modern Influences and Evolution

While the essence of countryside love remains tied to tradition, modernity has begun to seep in. Mobile phones and social media have bridged distances, allowing young lovers to connect beyond the watchful eyes of the village. Cinema and television have introduced urban ideas of romance—dates, gifts, and overt declarations—slowly blending with rural sensibilities. Yet, the core of countryside love retains its charm: a slow, steady flame that values commitment over fleeting passion.

The migration of youth to cities for work has also reshaped rural romance. Long-distance relationships, once unimaginable, now thrive through late-night calls and letters, echoing the longing of folk tales in a digital age. Despite these shifts, the countryside clings to its identity—love here is still a promise of togetherness, forged amidst the simplicity of mud walls and starry skies.

Conclusion

Countryside love in India is a tapestry of tradition, nature, and resilience. It thrives in the quiet spaces between daily chores and communal life, blossoming under the weight of custom and the freedom of the fields. While it may lack the glamour of urban romance, it carries a depth that is timeless—rooted in the soil, nurtured by the seasons, and celebrated in the songs of the heart. In the Indian countryside, love is not just a feeling; it is a legacy, passed down through generations, as enduring as the land itself.

3. Grammar Page

Unit
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Verb + -ing or to ... 2 (try, need, help)

A try to ... and try -ing

try to do = attempt to do, make an effort to do:

- ☐ I was very tired. I **tried to keep** my eyes open, but I couldn't.
- ☐ Please **try to be** quiet when you come home. Everyone will be asleep.

try something or **try doing something** = do it as an experiment or test:

- ☐ These cakes are delicious. You should **try one**. (= have one to see if you like it)
- ☐ We couldn't find anywhere to stay. We **tried every hotel** in the town, but they were all full.
(= we went to every hotel to see if they had a room)
- ☐ A: The photocopier doesn't seem to be working.
B: **Try pressing** the green button.
(= press the green button – perhaps this will help to solve the problem)

Compare:

- ☐ I **tried to move** the table, but it was too heavy. (so I couldn't move it)
- ☐ I didn't like the way the furniture was arranged, so I **tried moving** the table to the other side of the room. But it didn't look right, so I moved it back again.
(I **tried moving** it = I moved it to see if it looked better)

B need to ... and need -ing

I need to do something = it is necessary for me to do it:

- ☐ He **needs to work** harder if he wants to make progress.
- ☐ I don't **need to come** to the meeting, do I?

You can say that something **needs -ing**:

- ☐ My phone **needs charging**. (= it **needs to be charged**)
- ☐ Does your suit **need cleaning**? (= ... **need to be cleaned**)
- ☐ It's a difficult problem. It **needs thinking about** carefully.
(= it **needs to be thought about** carefully)

Compare:

- ☐ I **need to charge** my phone.
- but **My phone needs charging.**



C help and can't help

You can say **help to do** or **help do** (with or without **to**):

- ☐ Everybody **helped to clean** up after the party. or
Everybody **helped clean** up ...
- ☐ Can you **help me move** this table? or
Can you **help me to move** ...

I can't help doing something = I can't stop myself doing it:

- ☐ I don't like him, but he has a lot of problems.
I **can't help feeling** sorry for him.
- ☐ She tried to be serious, but she **couldn't help laughing**.
(= she couldn't stop herself laughing)
- ☐ I'm sorry I'm so nervous. I **can't help it**.
(= I can't help **being** nervous)



She **couldn't help laughing**.