



Learn English Through Stories

**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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## The Guy Who Wanted to Learn How to Shiver

Once upon a time, a dad had two sons. The older one was sharp, responsible, and could handle anything thrown his way. The younger one? Not so much. He was clueless, couldn't pick up even the basics, and people would look at him and say, "That kid's gonna be a headache for his old man!" Whenever there was work to do, it always fell on the older brother. But if the dad asked the younger one to grab something late at night—especially if it meant walking through creepy spots like the cemetery—he'd just say, "No way, Dad, that place freaks me out!" because he was scared. Around the campfire, when people told spooky stories that gave everyone chills, they'd shiver and say, "Man, that creeps me out!" The younger brother, sitting off in the corner, would listen and think, "They keep saying it creeps them out, but I don't get it. I don't feel a thing. Guess I'm missing out on some skill here."

One day, the dad had enough and said, "Listen up, you slacker in the corner. You're getting big and strong—time to figure out how to make a living. Look at your brother busting his butt, while you're not even pulling your weight." The kid shrugged and said, "Fair enough, Dad. I'm down to learn something. Actually, I'd love to figure out how to shiver—you know, get that creepy feeling. I don't even know what it's like." The older brother smirked and thought, "Wow, this guy's hopeless. He'll never amount to anything. You've got to start early to make something of yourself."

The dad sighed and said, "You'll find out what shivering's all about soon enough, but that's not gonna pay the bills."

Not long after, the local church caretaker dropped by. The dad vented about his younger son, saying, "He's so useless—he doesn't know anything and won't learn. Get this: when I asked how he'd make a living, he said he wants to learn how to shiver!" The caretaker grinned and said, "If that's all he wants, I can teach him. Send him over—I'll straighten him out." The dad was relieved, thinking, "Maybe this'll toughen him up." So, the caretaker took the kid in and gave him a job ringing the church bell.

A couple of days later, the caretaker woke him up at midnight and said, "Get up, go to the tower, and ring the bell." Secretly, he thought, "This'll scare the pants off him," and snuck up there first. When the kid reached the top and turned to grab the rope, he spotted a white figure standing on the stairs across

from the bell. “Who’s there?” he shouted. No answer—the figure didn’t budge. “Say something,” he yelled, “or get lost—you don’t belong here at night!”

The caretaker stayed silent, playing the ghost. The kid shouted again, “What do you want? Speak if you’re legit, or I’m tossing you down the stairs!” The caretaker figured the kid was bluffing and didn’t move. After a third warning with no response, the kid charged, shoved the “ghost” down the stairs, and watched him tumble ten steps and collapse in a heap. Then he rang the bell, went home, climbed into bed without a word, and crashed.

The caretaker’s wife waited up for her husband, but he never showed. Worried, she shook the kid awake and asked, “Hey, where’s my husband? He went up the tower before you.” The kid said, “No clue. Some weirdo was standing by the bell, wouldn’t talk or leave, so I thought he was trouble and pushed him down the stairs. Go check—hope it wasn’t him.” She bolted out, found her husband groaning with a broken leg, and hauled him back. Furious, she stormed to the kid’s dad and screamed, “Your son’s a disaster! He threw my husband down the stairs and broke his leg. Get this loser out of our house!” The dad freaked out, ran over, and chewed the kid out. “What’s wrong with you? That was insane!” The kid said, “Dad, chill. I didn’t mean it. He was lurking there like a creep in the dark. I warned him three times to speak or leave—I didn’t know it was him!” The dad groaned, “You’re nothing but trouble. Get out of here—I don’t want to see you again.”

“Fine by me,” the kid said. “Just wait till morning. I’ll hit the road and learn how to shiver. At least I’ll have some kind of skill.” The dad snapped, “Learn whatever you want—I don’t care. Here’s fifty bucks. Take it, go, and don’t tell anyone where you’re from or who your dad is. You’re an embarrassment.” The kid nodded. “Cool, I can handle that.”

At dawn, he pocketed the cash and headed out, muttering to himself, “Man, if I could just shiver! If I could just shiver!” A guy walking by overheard him and, when they passed a gallows, said, “Check it out—seven guys got hitched to the hangman’s noose up there. They’re swinging in the breeze now. Sit under it tonight—you’ll learn to shiver quick.” The kid grinned. “If that’s all it takes, I’m in. If I figure it out by morning, you can have my fifty bucks. Just swing by tomorrow.” He plopped down under the gallows and waited till nightfall. It got cold, so he built a fire. At midnight, the wind picked up, and even with the flames, he couldn’t warm up. The bodies swayed and bumped into each other overhead. He thought, “I’m freezing down here—those guys up there must be

ice cubes!” Feeling bad for them, he grabbed a ladder, climbed up, cut them down one by one, and sat them around the fire to thaw out. They didn’t move, and when the flames caught their tattered clothes, he warned, “Watch it, or I’ll string you back up!” The corpses didn’t react—just sat there as their rags burned. Fed up, he said, “If you’re gonna be that dumb, I’m not burning with you,” and hung them back up. Then he sat by the fire and dozed off.

Next morning, the guy came back for his money. “So, you know how to shiver now?” he asked. “Nope,” the kid said. “How would I? Those guys didn’t say a word—just sat there letting their clothes catch fire. Total idiots.” The guy realized he wasn’t getting paid and left, muttering, “Never met anyone like this before.”

The kid kept walking, grumbling, “Ugh, if I could just shiver!” A truck driver overheard him and asked, “Who are you?” “No idea,” the kid said. “Where you from?” “Can’t say.” “Who’s your dad?” “Not telling.” “What’s with the muttering?” “Oh,” the kid said, “I really want to learn how to shiver, but no one can teach me.” The driver laughed. “Quit yapping nonsense. Come with me—I’ll hook you up with a gig.” The kid tagged along, and by evening, they rolled into a motel. As they walked in, he said out loud, “Man, if I could just shiver!” The owner overheard, chuckled, and said, “If that’s your thing, there’s a perfect spot nearby.” His wife shushed him. “Quiet! Too many nosy people have died poking around there. It’d be a shame if those pretty eyes never saw daylight again.”

But the kid said, “I don’t care how tough it is—I’m learning this. It’s why I’m out here.” He bugged the owner until he spilled the beans: a haunted castle nearby was the real deal. “Spend three nights there,” he said, “and you’ll know what shivering is. The mayor’s offering his daughter’s hand in marriage to anyone who pulls it off—she’s gorgeous, and the castle’s loaded with treasure guarded by ghosts. Plenty of guys have tried, but none have made it out.” The next morning, the kid went to the mayor and said, “Let me take a crack at it—three nights in the castle.” The mayor liked his vibe and said, “Pick three things to bring, but they can’t be alive.” The kid thought and said, “Cool—a lighter, a workbench, and a cutting board with a knife.”

The mayor had the stuff delivered to the castle that day. At dusk, the kid went in, lit a fire in one of the rooms, set up his gear, and sat down. “Man, if I could just shiver,” he muttered. “Guess I won’t learn it here either.” Around midnight, as he stoked the fire, a voice yowled from the corner, “Meow! It’s

freezing!” He laughed. “What are you whining about? If you’re cold, come warm up!” Two huge black cats leaped over, sat on either side of him, and stared with glowing eyes. After they warmed up, they purred, “Hey, buddy, wanna play cards?” “Sure,” he said, “but let me see your paws first.” They showed their claws, and he whistled. “Whoa, those nails are wild. Hold up—I’ll trim them.” He grabbed them by the necks, pinned them to the cutting board, and clipped their claws. “Checked your hands,” he said. “Not feeling cards anymore.” Then he whacked them dead and tossed them out the window into a pond.

Just as he settled back by the fire, a swarm of black cats and dogs with glowing chains poured out of every nook and cranny. They screeched, trashed his fire, and tried to stomp it out. He watched for a bit, then snapped, “Enough, you pests!” He grabbed his knife and started swinging. Some bolted; the rest he sliced up and dumped in the pond. He rebuilt the fire and warmed up again. Soon, his eyes got heavy. Spotting a big bed in the corner, he said, “Perfect,” and climbed in. As he closed his eyes, the bed started rolling like it had a mind of its own, zooming through the castle. “Nice,” he said. “Faster!” It sped up, bouncing over steps and doorways, then—bam!—flipped over and pinned him like a ton of bricks. He shoved off the blankets, crawled out, and said, “Whoever wants to ride that thing can have it,” then crashed by the fire till morning.

The mayor showed up, saw him on the floor, and thought the ghosts had gotten him. “Such a shame—he was a good-looking guy,” he said. The kid popped up. “Not dead yet!” The mayor was shocked but thrilled and asked, “How’d it go?” “Pretty good,” the kid said. “One night down, two to go.” He swung by the motel, and the owner gaped. “Didn’t think I’d see you alive! Learn to shiver yet?” “Nah,” he said. “It’s hopeless. Someone just tell me already!”

The second night, he went back, sat by the fire, and started his usual, “If I could just shiver.” At midnight, a racket broke out—crashing and banging, soft at first, then louder. It stopped, and then—wham!—half a dude dropped down the chimney right in front of him. “Hey,” he said, “where’s the rest of you? This isn’t enough!” The noise kicked up again, and the other half crashed down. “Hold on,” he said, “let me stoke the fire for you.” When he turned back, the halves had fused into one ugly guy sitting on his bench. “Nope,” the kid said. “That’s my spot.” The guy tried to shove him, but the kid pushed back hard and

reclaimed his seat. Then more weirdos dropped in, dragging nine human leg bones and two skulls. They set them up like bowling pins. "Mind if I play?" he asked. "Sure, if you've got cash," they said. "Plenty," he replied, "but your balls are lumpy." He grabbed the skulls, smoothed them on the workbench, and said, "Now they'll roll right!" He bowled a few frames, lost a couple bucks, and then at midnight, poof—everything vanished. He crashed and slept like a rock.

The mayor checked in the next day. "How'd it go this time?" "Played some bowling," the kid said. "Lost a little cash." "No shivers?" "Nope," he said. "Just had fun. Wish I knew what shivering was!"

On the third night, he sat down again, moping, "If I could just shiver." Late that night, six tall guys hauled in a coffin. He perked up. "Oh, that's gotta be my cousin—he died last week!" He waved at it. "Hey, cuz, come here!" They set it down, and he popped the lid. A dead guy lay inside, ice-cold to the touch. "Hang on," he said, "I'll warm you up." He heated his hands by the fire and rubbed the corpse's face—still cold. He dragged it out, propped it by the fire, and massaged its arms to get the blood flowing. No dice. "You know," he thought, "people warm up in bed together." So he tucked the body in, climbed in beside it, and waited. Soon, the corpse twitched and sat up. "See?" the kid said. "I warmed you up!" The dead guy growled, "Now I'm gonna choke you!" "What?!" the kid snapped. "That's your thank-you? Back in the box!" He shoved it in, slammed the lid, and the six guys carted it off.

"I can't figure this out," he sighed. "I'll never learn here." Then a massive, creepy old man with a long white beard stormed in. "You little punk," he snarled, "you're about to learn what shivering is—'cause you're gonna die!" "Hold up," the kid said. "If I'm dying, I get a say in it." "I'll grab you right now," the old man hissed. "Easy, big guy," the kid shot back. "I'm as tough as you—maybe tougher." "Let's see," the old man said. He led him through dark halls to a blacksmith's forge, grabbed an axe, and smashed an anvil into the ground with one swing. "Beat that," the kid said. He stepped to another anvil, and as the old man leaned in to watch, his beard dangling, the kid swung the axe, split the anvil, and wedged the beard in the crack. "Gotcha," he said. "Now you're the one dying." He grabbed an iron bar and whacked the old man until he begged for mercy, promising riches. The kid pulled the axe free, and the old man showed him three chests of gold in the basement. "One's for the poor," he said, "one's for the mayor, and one's yours." At midnight, the old man

vanished, leaving the kid in the dark. "I'll find my way," he said, groping back to the fire to sleep.

The next morning, the mayor asked, "So, you must've learned to shiver now, right?" "Nope," the kid said. "What even is it? My cousin showed up, some bearded dude gave me gold, but no one explained shivering." The mayor said, "Well, you've cleared the castle—you'll marry my daughter." "Sweet," the kid said, "but I still don't get this shivering thing."

They hauled up the gold, threw a wedding, and the young guy—now a king—loved his wife and lived happily. But he kept saying, "Man, if I could just shiver!" It drove his wife nuts. Finally, her assistant said, "I've got this—he'll shiver soon." She grabbed a bucket of cold water from the creek, full of tiny fish, and that night, while he slept, his wife yanked off the covers and dumped it on him. He jolted awake, flailing as the fish flopped around, and yelled, "Whoa, what's making me shake like this?! Oh man, I'm shivering, babe! Now I get it!"