



Learn English Through Stories

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1. Up in Michigan

By Earnest Hemingway

Jim Gilmore came to Hortons Bay from Canada. He bought the blacksmith's forge from old man Horton. Jim was short and dark, with a grand moustache and large hands. He was a skilled farrier and didn't much resemble a blacksmith, even in his leather apron. He lived upstairs above the forge and took his meals at D. J. Smith's.

Liz Coates worked for the Smiths. Mrs Smith, a very large, tidy woman, said Liz was the neatest girl she'd ever known. Liz had fine legs and always wore crisp cotton aprons, and Jim noticed her hair was always neatly pinned at the back. He liked her face because it was so cheerful, but he never gave her much thought.

Liz, though, fancied Jim a great deal. She liked the way he strolled over from the forge and often lingered by the kitchen door to watch for him starting down the road. She liked his moustache. She liked how white his teeth were when he smiled. She liked very much that he didn't look like a blacksmith. She liked how fond D. J. Smith and Mrs Smith were of him. One day, she realised she liked the way the black hair stood out on his arms and how pale they were above the tanned line when he washed up in the basin outside. Liking that made her feel peculiar.

Hortons Bay, the village, was just five houses along the main road between Boyne City and Charlevoix. There was the general shop and post office with a high false front, perhaps a cart tethered outside, Smith's house, Stroud's house, Dillworth's house, Horton's house, and Van Hoosen's house. The houses sat in a grand cluster of elm trees, and the road was terribly sandy. There was farmland and woodland stretching out either way. Up the road a bit was the Methodist church, and down the other way was the local school. The forge was painted red and faced the school.

A steep, sandy lane ran down the hill to the bay through the trees. From the Smiths' back door, you could look out across the woods sloping down to the lake and over the bay. It was lovely in spring and summer, the bay blue and bright, with whitecaps usually dancing on the lake beyond the point, thanks to the breeze blowing from Charlevoix and Lake Michigan. From the back door, Liz could spot ore barges far out on the lake, heading towards Boyne City.

When she watched them, they seemed not to move at all, but if she went inside to dry a few more dishes and came back out, they'd be gone beyond the point.

Lately, Liz couldn't stop thinking about Jim Gilmore. He didn't seem to notice her much. He chatted about the forge with D. J. Smith, or about the Conservative Party and James G. Blaine. In the evenings, he read The Toledo Blade and the Grand Rapids paper by the lamp in the front room, or went out spearing fish in the bay with a torch alongside D. J. Smith. In autumn, he, Smith, and Charley Wyman took a cart and tent, provisions, axes, their rifles, and two dogs, and set off for a deer-hunting trip in the pine plains beyond Vanderbilt. Liz and Mrs Smith cooked for four days to prepare for their departure. Liz wanted to whip up something special for Jim to take, but she didn't in the end, too shy to ask Mrs Smith for eggs and flour, and worried she'd be caught cooking if she bought them herself. Mrs Smith wouldn't have minded, but Liz was nervous.

While Jim was away on the hunting trip, Liz thought about him constantly. It was dreadful while he was gone. She couldn't sleep properly from thinking about him, though she found it rather nice to dwell on him too. If she let herself daydream, it was better. The night before they were due back, she didn't sleep at all—or didn't think she did, as it was all muddled with a dream about not sleeping and truly not sleeping. When she saw the cart coming down the road, she felt weak and a bit queasy inside. She couldn't wait to see Jim, certain everything would be alright once he was back. The cart stopped outside under the big elm, and Mrs Smith and Liz went out. All the men had beards, and there were three deer in the back of the cart, their thin legs poking stiffly over the edge. Mrs Smith kissed D. J., and he gave her a hearty hug. Jim said, "Hullo, Liz," and grinned. Liz hadn't known what to expect when Jim returned, but she'd been sure something would happen. Nothing did. The men were just back, that was all. Jim pulled the hessian sacks off the deer, and Liz had a look. One was a fine stag. It was stiff and tricky to lift from the cart.

"Did you shoot it, Jim?" Liz asked.

"Aye. Isn't it a beauty?" Jim hoisted it onto his back to carry to the smokehouse.

That night, Charley Wyman stayed for supper at the Smiths'. It was too late to head back to Charlevoix. The men washed up and waited in the front room for the meal.

"Isn't there a drop left in that jug, Jimmy?" D. J. Smith asked, and Jim went out to the cart in the barn to fetch the whisky they'd taken hunting. It was a four-gallon jug, with a fair bit sloshing about in the bottom. Jim took a long swig on his way back to the house. It was a struggle to lift such a hefty jug to drink from. Some of the whisky dribbled down his shirt front. The two men grinned when Jim came in with it. D. J. Smith sent for glasses, and Liz fetched them. D. J. poured three generous measures.

"Well, cheers to you, D. J.," said Charley Wyman.

"That ruddy great stag, Jimmy," said D. J.

"Here's to all the ones we missed, D. J.," said Jim, and knocked back his drink.

"Tastes smashing to a chap."

"Nothing like it this time of year for what's bothering you."

"How about another, lads?"

"Here's to you, D. J."

"Down the hatch, boys."

"To next year."

Jim started to feel brilliant. He loved the taste and warmth of the whisky. He was chuffed to be back with a comfy bed, warm food, and the forge. He had another drink. The men came in to supper feeling jolly but behaving quite properly. Liz sat at the table after serving the food and ate with the family. It was a cracking meal. The men tucked in earnestly. After supper, they went back to the front room, and Liz cleared up with Mrs Smith. Then Mrs Smith went upstairs, and soon D. J. followed. Jim and Charley were still in the front room. Liz sat in the kitchen by the stove, pretending to read a book and thinking about Jim. She didn't want to go to bed yet, knowing Jim would come out soon, and she wanted to see him leave so she could carry the image of him up to bed with her.

She was thinking about him intently when Jim appeared. His eyes were bright, and his hair was a bit tousled. Liz looked down at her book. Jim came over

behind her chair and stood there; she could feel his breathing. Then he put his arms around her. Liz was terrified—no one had ever touched her—but she thought, “He’s come to me at last. He’s really come.”

She held herself rigid, too frightened to know what else to do, and then Jim pressed her tight against the chair and kissed her. It was such a sharp, aching, painful feeling that she thought she couldn’t bear it. She felt Jim through the back of the chair, and it was overwhelming, and then something shifted inside her, and the sensation grew warmer, softer. Jim held her firmly against the chair, and she wanted it now. Jim whispered, “Come for a walk.”

Liz grabbed her coat from the peg on the kitchen wall, and they stepped outside. Jim kept his arm around her, and every few steps they stopped, pressed against each other, and Jim kissed her. There was no moon, and they walked ankle-deep in the sandy road through the trees down to the jetty and the warehouse by the bay. The water lapped against the posts, and the point was dark across the bay. It was chilly, but Liz felt warm all over from being with Jim. They sat in the shelter of the warehouse, and Jim pulled her close. She was scared. ... She was very frightened and unsure what he’d do next, but she nestled closer. ...

“Don’t, Jim,” Liz said. ...

Jim was asleep. He wouldn’t budge. ...

Liz leaned over and kissed his cheek. He didn’t stir. She lifted his head a bit and shook it. He rolled his head and swallowed. Liz began to cry. She walked to the edge of the jetty and looked down at the water. A mist was rising from the bay. She was cold and miserable, and everything felt empty. She went back to where Jim lay and shook him once more to be sure. She was sobbing.

“Jim,” she said, “Jim. Please, Jim.”

Jim shifted and curled up tighter. Liz took off her coat, leaned over, and covered him with it. She tucked it around him carefully. Then she crossed the jetty and walked up the steep, sandy lane to bed. A cold mist was drifting up through the woods from the bay.

Up in Michigan: Version 2

Jim Gilmore came to Hortons Bay, Michigan, all the way from Canada. He was a blacksmith who bought the shop from old man Horton. Jim was short and dark, with a big moustache and strong hands. He was really good at shoeing horses, even though he didn't look like a typical blacksmith, especially when he wore his leather apron. He lived upstairs above the shop and ate his meals at D. J. Smith's house.

Liz Coates helped out at Smith's. She was a cheerful girl who worked hard, and Mrs. Smith, a tall and tidy woman, always said Liz was the neatest helper she'd ever had. Liz wore clean gingham aprons and kept her hair tied back neatly. Jim thought she had a friendly smile, but he didn't think about her too much beyond that.

Liz liked Jim a lot. She liked watching him walk over from the shop, his big steps kicking up little clouds of dust on the road. She thought his moustache was funny and cool, and she liked how his teeth flashed white when he grinned. She also noticed how strong his arms looked when he washed up outside after work. It made her smile to think about how much D. J. Smith and Mrs. Smith liked having Jim around.

Hortons Bay was a tiny town, just five houses along the sandy road between Boyne City and Charlevoix. There was a general store with a post office, Smith's house, Stroud's house, Dillworth's house, Horton's house, and Van Hoosen's house, all tucked under huge elm trees. The road was sandy, and beyond the houses stretched farmland and thick forests. Up the road was a little Methodist church, and down the road was the township school. The blacksmith shop, painted bright red, sat right across from the school.

A steep, sandy path wound down through the trees to the bay. From Smith's back door, Liz could see the woods sloping to the water and the blue bay sparkling in the sunlight. In spring and summer, it was so pretty, with whitecaps dancing on Lake Michigan beyond the point. Sometimes Liz watched ore barges creep across the lake toward Boyne City. They moved so slowly that if she went inside to dry dishes and came back out, they'd still be there—or sometimes gone past the point.

Liz started thinking about Jim more and more. He didn't seem to notice her much, though. He'd chat with D. J. Smith about the shop or the Republican Party, or read newspapers like *The Toledo Blade* in the evening. Sometimes he'd go fishing in the bay with D. J., using a bright jacklight to spear fish. In the fall, Jim, D. J., and their friend Charley Wyman planned a big deer-hunting trip. They packed a wagon with a tent, food, axes, rifles, and two dogs, ready to head to the pine plains beyond Vanderbilt.

Liz and Mrs. Smith cooked for days to get them ready. Liz wanted to make something special for Jim—like a batch of cookies—but she was too shy to ask Mrs. Smith for extra sugar or flour. She didn't want to get caught sneaking supplies, so she just helped with the regular food instead.

While Jim was away hunting, Liz missed him. She couldn't stop thinking about him, wondering what he was doing out in the woods. It made her restless, but it was kind of fun to imagine him out there too. The night before the men were due back, she could hardly sleep, tossing and turning with excitement. When she finally saw the wagon rolling down the road, her stomach did a little flip. She couldn't wait to see Jim and feel like everything was back to normal.

The wagon stopped under the big elm tree. Mrs. Smith and Liz ran outside to greet them. The men all had scruffy beards from the trip, and there were three deer in the back of the wagon, their legs sticking up stiffly. Mrs. Smith gave D. J. a big hug, and Jim looked at Liz with a grin. "Hi, Liz," he said, sounding happy to be home. Liz had hoped something exciting would happen when he got back, but it was just the men coming home, tired and cheerful. Jim pulled the burlap sacks off the deer, and Liz peeked at them. One was a huge buck.

"Did you get that one, Jim?" she asked.

"Yep! Isn't it a beauty?" Jim said proudly, hoisting it onto his shoulders to carry to the smokehouse.

That night, Charley stayed for supper at Smith's since it was too late to head back to Charlevoix. The men washed up and sat in the front room, chatting and laughing. They'd brought a big jug of apple cider from the trip, and D. J. poured some into glasses.

"Here's to a good hunt!" D. J. said, raising his glass.

"To that big buck!" Jim added, taking a sip.

The cider was sweet and fizzy, and Jim felt warm and happy to be back. Supper was delicious—roast potatoes, bread, and venison stew—and everyone ate quietly, enjoying the food. After, the men went back to the front room to talk, and Liz helped Mrs. Smith clean up. When Mrs. Smith and D. J. went upstairs, Jim and Charley stayed up, joking around.

Liz sat in the kitchen by the stove, holding a book but not really reading it. She was thinking about Jim—how nice it was to have him back. She didn't want to go to bed yet because she hoped to say goodnight to him. Soon, Jim came out of the front room, his eyes bright from laughing with Charley.

"Hey, Liz," he said. "Want to step outside for a minute? It's a nice night."

Liz grabbed her coat, and they walked out into the cool air. The sandy road crunched under their feet as they headed toward the bay. The water lapped gently against the dock, and the stars sparkled above the dark point across the water. It was chilly, but Liz felt happy walking beside Jim.

They sat on a bench near the warehouse by the bay, looking out at the water. "It's so quiet out here," Jim said. "I like it better than the noisy woods sometimes."

Liz nodded. "I'm glad you're back. It wasn't the same without you around."

Jim smiled. "Yeah, it's good to be home. That trip was fun, but I missed the shop—and the food here!"

Liz laughed. They sat there for a while, listening to the waves and talking about little things—the deer, the bay, the way the stars looked. After a bit, Liz started to shiver from the cold.

"We should head back," Jim said. He stood up and held out a hand to help her up. "Don't want you freezing out here."

They walked back up the sandy hill to Smith's house. At the door, Jim said, "Night, Liz. See you tomorrow."

"Night, Jim," Liz replied, smiling. She went inside, climbed the stairs to her room, and got ready for bed. As she lay down, she thought about their walk and the peaceful bay. Everything felt just right now that Jim was back. A soft mist was rising from the water outside, but Liz was warm and cosy, drifting off to sleep with a happy heart.

2. Grammar page

Can and Could

The verbs **can** and **could** are both **helping** or **auxiliary verbs**. Use **can** and **could** to talk about people's **ability** to do things.

Can and **could** are used with the pronouns **I, you, he, she, it, we** and **they**, and with **singular** or **plural nouns**.

Could is the past tense of **can**.



Jack ran as far as he **could**.



Some birds **cannot fly**.

He **can run** faster than Arthur.

She **cannot afford** such an expensive ring.

I'm full. I **can't eat** any more.

Can you help me?

Can I come with you?

I knew you **could do** it if you tried.

She **could not come** because she was ill.

Miss Lee said we **could go** home early.

All the King's men **could not put** Humpty Dumpty together again.



People often use **can** when they are asking for permission to do something. For example:

Can I use your pen? Yes, here it is.

When you put **not** after **can**, you write it as one word: **cannot**

Learn these contractions: cannot = can't

could not = couldn't