



Learn English Through Stories

C Series

C46

**Adopted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

Content

- 1. Games at Twilight**
- 2. Comprehension**
- 3. Picture Dictionary Page**

2. Games at Twilight

Adapted from Anita Desai

It was very hot outside, too hot to play. The children had finished their tea and washed up. Their hair was brushed, and they were tired of staying inside the house all day. The house was not cool, but it kept them safe from the burning sun. The children wanted to go out. Their faces were red, and they felt trapped. The curtains and shutters were closed, making the air heavy. The children felt like they couldn't breathe, like their lungs were full of cotton and their noses full of dust. If they didn't go outside soon, they thought they would choke.

"Please, Ma, please," they begged. "We'll play on the veranda and porch. We won't go anywhere else."

"You will," their mother said. "I know you'll run off."

"No, we won't! We promise!" they cried loudly. Their voices were so desperate that their mother finally opened the front door. The children ran out like seeds bursting from a ripe fruit, shouting with excitement. Their mother sighed, closed the door, and went to take a bath. She put on talcum powder and a fresh sari to feel ready for the hot evening.

The afternoon was bright and hot. The white walls of the veranda shone in the sunlight. Bright purple and pink flowers hung around the veranda. The garden outside looked like a tray of shiny metal—red gravel and hard soil in shades of silver, copper, and brass. Nothing moved in the heat. The birds sat quietly in the trees, looking like dead fruit. Some squirrels lay still on the wet ground near the garden tap. The family dog lay on the veranda mat, looking weak. His paws, ears, and tail stretched out as if he were dying of thirst. He looked at the children with sad eyes, trying to wag his tail, but it only moved a little before falling still.

Suddenly, a group of parrots flew out of a tree. They tumbled in the hot air, then formed a line and flew away across the white sky. The children felt free, too. They started running, pushing, and shouting, ready to play.

"Let's play hide-and-seek!" one child said.

"Who will be It?" another asked.

"You be It!"

“No, you be It!”

“Why me? You’re the oldest!”

The pushing got rougher. Some children kicked. Mira, who acted like a big sister, stepped in. She pulled the boys apart. There was a ripping sound as a shirt tore, but no one noticed. They were too busy arguing.

“Make a circle!” Mira shouted. She pushed and pulled until the children stood in a rough circle. “Now clap!” she said, and they clapped while chanting, “Dip, dip, dip, my blue ship...” They watched their hands carefully. When their hands landed the right way—palm on palm or back of hand on palm—they were safe and jumped out of the circle, shouting with joy.

Raghu was It. He didn’t want to be. “You cheated!” he yelled. “Mira cheated! Anu cheated!” But it was too late. The other children ran away, laughing. Raghu called after them, “Only on the veranda and porch! Ma said to stay there!” But no one listened. Their legs flashed through the bushes, climbing walls and jumping over hedges. Soon, the porch and garden were empty again. Even the squirrels had disappeared, leaving the hot, shiny ground bare.

Little Manu appeared suddenly, standing in the middle of the yellow lawn. He chewed his finger, almost crying. He heard Raghu counting loudly, “Eighty-three, eighty-five, eighty-nine, ninety...” Manu panicked and ran, not sure which way to go. Raghu turned just in time to see Manu’s white shorts and red sandals. With a loud yell, Raghu chased him. Manu tripped over the hosepipe, fell, and cried, “I won’t be It! You have to find everyone!”

“I know, idiot,” Raghu said, kicking Manu lightly. “You’re out.” He licked the sweat from his lip and walked off, whistling loudly to scare the other hiders.

Ravi, hiding behind the garage, heard the whistling. He was scared and picked his nose to calm himself. He sat on an upside-down flowerpot, feeling too open and unsafe. Where could he hide? He thought about running around the garage if Raghu came, but Raghu had long, strong legs, and Ravi’s were short. He saw Raghu’s legs through the hedge, stepping on plants as he searched. Ravi swallowed hard, feeling afraid.

The garage was locked with a big key that the driver kept in his room. Ravi had seen the driver sleeping inside, snoring loudly. The key was too high for Ravi to reach. He felt small and hopeless, sitting on the flowerpot.

Next to the garage was a shed with a green door. It was also locked, and no one knew where the key was. The shed was only opened once a year when their mother cleaned out old furniture, broken buckets, and dusty mats. It was a dark, dirty place full of spider webs and rats. The door was old, with rusty hinges that left a small gap—just big enough for a small boy like Ravi to slip through.

Raghu's whistling got louder, and his footsteps crashed through the bushes. Ravi didn't think twice. He slid off the flowerpot, squeezed through the gap in the shed door, and disappeared inside. He laughed quietly, amazed at his bravery. Raghu heard something and shouted, "I heard you! I'm coming!" He ran to the shed but found only the flowerpot and some ants crawling on the ground. Angry, he picked up a stick and hit the shed walls, trying to scare out anyone hiding.

Inside, Ravi shook with excitement and fear. The shed was dark and smelled bad, like dirt and old things. He remembered being locked in the linen cupboard once, crying until someone found him. That cupboard had smelled nice, like his mother's clean clothes. But the shed smelled of rats and dust. It was scary. The only light came through the cracks in the door. The roof was low, and Ravi felt like he could touch it. He curled into a ball, afraid to touch anything. What if something slimy, like a snake, was in there? He jumped when Raghu hit the wall with his stick, but then he felt safer knowing Raghu was outside.

Soon, Raghu's footsteps faded. The shed was silent. Ravi shivered. Something tickled his neck. He was too scared to move at first, but then he touched it. It was an insect, maybe a spider. He squashed it and wondered what else was watching him in the dark.

Ravi stood still for a long time, his legs shaking. Slowly, his eyes got used to the dark. He saw big shapes—old wardrobes, broken buckets, and a rusty bathtub. He sat carefully on the edge of the bathtub, feeling a bit safer.

He thought about leaving the shed and joining the others. It would be nice to be in the sun with his brothers, sisters, and cousins. Soon, it would be evening, and their parents would sit outside on chairs, watching them play. The gardener would water the grass, and the air would smell fresh and cool. Ravi wanted to smell that smell. He stood up but heard a girl scream as Raghu

found her. There was shouting and arguing—"I touched the den!" "No, you didn't!"—then silence again.

Ravi sat back down. What if he stayed hidden and won? What if he was the only one Raghu didn't find? That would be amazing. He had never won anything big before. Once, an uncle bought him a whole chocolate bar, and another time, a driver let him ride in a cart. But beating Raghu, the strong, loud football player, would be the best thing ever. Ravi hugged his knees and smiled, dreaming of victory.

He stayed in the shed, listening for sounds of the game. Sometimes, he went to the door and pressed his ear to the crack. Then he sat back down, determined to be the winner.

It got darker. The light at the door turned soft and yellow, like dust. Evening came. Ravi heard water running outside and smelled the fresh scent of wet earth. Through the crack, he saw long shadows from the shed and garage. The flowers looked dark now, and birds were flying home to sleep. He thought he heard the other children's voices—singing, laughing. Was the game over? How could it be? Raghu hadn't found him.

Then Ravi remembered something important. To win, he had to touch the "den" on the veranda and shout "Den!" He had been so focused on hiding that he forgot. He had to run out now and claim his win.

With a small cry, he pushed through the crack and ran across the yard. His legs felt stiff, and tears filled his eyes. He reached the veranda, threw himself at a white pillar, and shouted, "Den! Den! Den!" His voice was full of anger and sadness.

The other children stopped playing. They turned and stared at Ravi, surprised. Their faces looked pale in the dim light. The trees and bushes cast dark shadows. Their mother stood up from her chair, worried. "Stop it, Ravi," she said. "Don't cry. Are you hurt?" The children went back to their new game, holding hands and chanting, "The grass is green, the rose is red..."

But Ravi didn't stop. He ran into the group, shouting, "I won! I won! Raghu didn't find me!" Tears flew from his eyes as he shook his head.

The children looked confused. It took them a moment to understand. They had forgotten about Ravi. Raghu had found everyone else long ago. There had been a big fight about who would be it next, and their mother made them play

a different game. They ate mulberries from the tree, helped wash the car, and watered the garden until the gardener got angry. Their parents came outside, and the children played new games, singing and laughing. No one thought about Ravi. He had disappeared from their minds.

“Stop being silly,” Raghu said, pushing Ravi away. Even Mira said, “Stop crying, Ravi. If you want to play, stand at the end of the line.” She moved him to the back.

The game continued. The children held hands in a circle, singing sadly:

“The grass is green,

The rose is red;

Remember me

When I am dead, dead, dead...”

Their voices were slow and heavy, and their heads were bowed. Ravi couldn't stand it. He didn't want to play this sad game. He had wanted to win, to feel proud, not to feel like this. But they had forgotten him. How could he face that? His heart felt heavy, and he hurt inside. He lay down on the damp grass, pressing his face into it. He stopped crying, but he felt small and unimportant, like he didn't matter at all.

2. Comprehension Questions and Answers

1. Question: Why did the children want to go outside to play?
2. Question: What did the children promise their mother to convince her to let them out?
3. Question: What game did the children decide to play in the garden?
4. Question: Who became "It" in the game of hide-and-seek?
5. Question: Where did Ravi hide during the game?
6. Question: Why was Ravi scared while hiding in the shed?
7. Question: What did Ravi forget to do to win the game?
8. Question: How did Ravi feel when he thought about winning the game?
9. Question: Why were the other children surprised when Ravi shouted "Den!"?
10. Answer: Ravi felt sad and unimportant because the other children had forgotten him and didn't care about his victory.

Answers

1. Answer: The children wanted to go outside because they were tired of staying in the hot, stuffy house all day.
2. Answer: They promised to play only on the veranda and porch and not go anywhere else.
3. Answer: The children decided to play hide-and-seek.
4. Answer: Raghu became "It" after the children chanted and clapped in a circle.
5. Answer: Ravi hid inside a shed with a green door next to the garage.
6. Answer: Ravi was scared because the shed was dark, smelly, and he thought there might be snakes or spiders.
7. Answer: Ravi forgot to run to the veranda and touch the "den" while shouting "Den!"
8. Answer: Ravi felt excited and happy, imagining beating Raghu and being the winner.
9. Answer: They were surprised because they had forgotten about Ravi and thought the game was already over.
10. Question: How did Ravi feel at the end of the story?

3. Picture Dictionary Page

fill

fill

fills filling filled verb
to put as much of something into a container as it can hold.



film

films filming filmed verb
to use a movie or video camera to take moving pictures of something.



film

films noun
1 a series of moving pictures shown on a screen.
We went to see a film at the movie theater.
2 a long, thin piece of special plastic that is used in cameras for taking photographs.



3 a thin layer of something.
A film of oil.

filter

filters noun
a device that only allows some things, such as water or air, to pass through it.



filter verb

fin

fins noun
1 the part of a fish that sticks out from its body and helps it to swim and keep its balance (see **fish** on page 79).
2 a device that helps vehicles keep steady while going fast (see **universe** on page 229).



Bluebird racing car

final

adjective
last in a series.
This is the final call for the flight to Paris.
finally adverb

find

finds finding found verb
to discover something.



He found the key under the mat.

fine

finances noun
money you have to pay as a punishment.
A parking fine.

fine

adjective
1 all right.
I feel fine.
2 dry and sunny.
Fine weather.
3 very thin or delicate.
The pen has a fine tip.

4 having many small parts.
Fine sand.
5 very good.
Fine food.

■ comparisons **finer finest**

finger

fingers noun
one of the separate parts at the end of your hand.



fingerprint

fingerprints noun
the mark that your finger or thumb makes when it touches something.



finish

finishes finishing finished verb
to come to the end of something.



She finished the race ahead of him.

fire

fires noun
the heat, light, and flames of something burning.



fire alarm

fire alarms noun
a bell that rings to warn people of a fire.

fire engine

fire engines noun
the vehicle that firefighters travel in to get to a fire.

fire extinguisher

fire extinguishers noun
a device filled with water, powder, or chemicals that is used for putting out fires.



firefighter

firefighters noun
someone whose job is to put out fires and rescue people in danger.



firework

fireworks noun
a device that burns or explodes when lit, creating a colorful display.

firm

adjective
1 solid.
A firm mattress.
2 fixed so it cannot move.
3 determined and definite.
A firm decision.
firmly adverb