



**Learn English Through Stories**

**A Series**

**A55**

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# 1. Why Does the Child Cry?

Adapted from Mulk Raj Anand

Abdul Latif was eleven years old. He lived in a small village called Nadi Nagar. His father was a potter. He made clay pots. His mother helped his father. Everyone called Abdul "Late Latif" because he was slow. He walked slowly to school. He walked slowly home. He was not strong like other boys, but he was clever. He loved to think and dream.

Abdul loved birds. He wanted to catch them and keep them as pets. On the way to school, he stopped to watch birds. He tried to catch them, but he was too slow. This made him late. Abdul also loved fishing. His best friend was Ali, a fisherman's son. They went to the river to catch fish. Fishing took a long time, so Abdul was often late home. His father was angry when Abdul was late. He called Abdul silly. His mother worried, but she was kind. She said, "It's okay, Abdul. Come home safe."

One day, something special happened at school. The teacher, Master Ilias, taught a song about their country. It was called "My Beautiful Country." Abdul loved the song. It was about fields, rivers, and fishermen. Abdul felt happy when he sang it. He wanted to learn the words. After school, he stayed to write the song in his notebook. He thought, "I will sing this for my mother. She will be happy." He said goodbye to Master Ilias and started walking home. Home was one mile away.

Abdul liked his school in the big village, Rangpur. Master Ilias told stories and poems. Abdul loved poems. In Nadi Nagar, there were no poems. There were only fishermen's songs. They sang "Hia, Hia" when they pulled boats. Abdul thought the word "beautiful" in the song made his village special. It made the small houses look nice in his mind. He smiled as he walked.

On the way home, Abdul decided to go to the river. He wanted to catch fish for dinner. He saw Ali walking to a small stream. Ali was in Abdul's class, but he was not good at school. Other boys laughed at Ali, but Abdul liked him. Ali was his friend.

"Ali!" Abdul shouted. Ali did not stop. "Ali!" Abdul shouted again, louder. Ali started to run. He hid behind trees. Abdul was confused. Why was Ali running? Abdul ran after him, but he was slow. He was out of breath. He stopped and shouted, "Ali! Why are you running?" Ali did not answer. Abdul felt sad. Ali always waited for Abdul to go fishing. They shared food. Abdul gave Ali gram seeds, and Ali gave Abdul fish. Why was Ali hiding now? Maybe Ali took sweets from his mother and wanted to eat them alone. Abdul wanted to cry.

Abdul sat on a tree stump. He looked around. The trees near the stream were cut down. Why were they gone? He saw Ali jumping from one tree to another, hiding. Abdul was angry. He thought, "I will catch Ali." But he was tired. He felt empty, like one of his father's clay pots. His father once said, "Abdul, you are like an unbaked pot. We can fill you with words, but if we put water in you, you will break." Abdul did not understand, but he felt sad.

Then Abdul remembered something. His father told him to come home after school. He had to take the donkey with pots to a shop in Rangpur. Abdul was upset. He could not fish because Ali ran away. Now he had to do work. He thought about his mother's stories. She told him fairy tales. At the end of every story, she said:

"Why does a child cry?

Oh, why, child, do you cry?

Why, ant, do you bite me?

Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!"

Abdul smiled. His mother was funny. She could not read, but she knew many stories. She told more stories than Master Ilias told poems. She said, "It's good to trust God. Don't ask why or how." She was upset with Abdul's father. He never gave her a mat to pray. He never taught her holy words. Abdul's father said, "I make pots. I am like God. Why pray?" Abdul's mother did not like this.

Abdul sat on the stump, thinking. He looked up and saw something strange. There was a big army tank in a hole. Two dead soldiers were near it. Abdul was scared. He stood up and ran. "Mother!" he shouted. His heart was beating fast. He felt like a spinning top. He ran toward Nadi Nagar.

On the way, he saw piles of dirt. Farmers used them for crops. A peacock flew up from a hole. It scared Abdul. The evening light made the fields look strange. The bushes looked like ghosts. Abdul looked for lights in Nadi Nagar. Fishermen always lit lamps before dark. Today, there were no lights. Abdul felt afraid. Was it too early? Or was something wrong?

The road to Nadi Nagar was broken. There were big holes. Abdul saw another tank. Its gun pointed to the sky. Dead bodies were around it. "Mother!" Abdul cried. He ran into a potato field to hide. He was scared of ghosts. He felt like a ball of fire. He thought, "I will burn and die."

Abdul reached his father's potter's yard. It was near a mosque and a holy man's grave. "Mother!" he shouted. He was scared of the grave. He called for the donkey, "Begum! Are you ready with the pots?" He hoped the donkey was there.

Then Abdul saw something terrible. All the pots were broken. Under the broken pots was Begum, the donkey. She was dead. Her mouth was open. Her teeth showed. "Mother! Oh, God!" Abdul cried. His voice was hoarse. He fell on the broken pots. He could not move. His knees hurt. His mouth was open, but no sound came. His throat was dry. Sweat covered his body. Tears mixed with sweat. He lay still, trying to be quiet.

Abdul looked at his house. It was a straw hut. The roof had fallen. "Mother? Where are you?" he cried. He tried to lift the straw wall. It was too heavy. He was scared. What if he touched his mother's body? What if her ghost caught him? He crawled into the hut. He called, "Mother!" He felt the floor with his hands. He was afraid, but he wanted to find his parents. There was nothing inside. No mother. No father. Abdul cried, "Why does a child cry?"

He shouted, "Mother!" He hoped his father would come. "Father?" he called. No one answered. The air was warm and smelled of earth and sweat. Abdul crawled out. His face and hands hurt from the straw. He lay on the ground, sweating. He felt broken, like a pot. "Where are they? Where do I go?" he thought. He cried without words.

Abdul listened for sounds. He heard nothing. No gunfire. No tanks. No voices. He looked at Nadi Nagar. All the houses were broken. The silence was loud. It felt like ghosts were screaming. Master Ilias once said soldiers were destroying villages. Abdul cried, "Mother!" His cry fell into the dark. Everything was empty.

Far away, a beetle made a noise. It sounded like a gun. The sound came from the river. Abdul thought, "Ali! He might be fishing!" Abdul felt hope. His parents were gone. The village was empty. Ali was the only person left. Abdul saw Ali running to the river. He was alive. Abdul decided to find him. He thought, "Maybe Ali is alone too. Maybe he is scared like me."

Abdul tried to stand. "Mother!" he cried for help. His legs felt heavy. He thought he was dead. But he heard his breathing. "I am alive," he said quietly. His mother's words came back:

"Why does a child cry?"

Oh, why, child, do you cry?"

Why, ant, do you bite me?"

Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!"

Abdul stood up slowly. His knees were weak. He looked at the sky. A bright star was shining. It was Venus. The star gave him courage. He felt in his pocket.

He found some gram seeds. "I will give these to Ali," he thought. "He will be my friend."

Abdul started walking. He was scared of ghosts, but he ran a little. He remembered when Ali saved him from drowning in the river. "Ali will help me," he thought. He reached the trees by the river. "Ali!" he shouted. "Wait for me, my friend!" He wanted to hug Ali, like they did when they came home late together. They were always friends, even when their parents were angry. "Ali!" Abdul called into the dark. He hoped Ali would hear him. He hoped Ali would be there.

## **2. Comprehension Questions and Answers**

Question 1: What is Abdul's nickname?

Question 2: Where does Abdul live?

Question 3: What does Abdul's father do?

Question 4: Why is Abdul often late?

Question 5: What song does Abdul learn at school?

Question 6: Who is Abdul's best friend?

Question 7: Why does Abdul feel sad when he sees Ali?

Question 8: What does Abdul see near the river?

Question 9: What happens to Abdul's house?

Question 10: Where does Abdul go at the end of the story?

## Answers

Answer 1: Abdul's nickname is "Late Latif."

Answer 3: Abdul lives in Nadi Nagar.

Answer 3: Abdul's father is a potter. He makes clay pots.

Answer 4: Abdul is late because he watches birds and goes fishing.

Answer 5: Abdul learns the song "My Beautiful Country."

Answer 6: Abdul's best friend is Ali.

Answer 7: Abdul feels sad because Ali runs away and hides.

Answer 8: Abdul sees a tank and two dead soldiers.

Answer 9: Abdul's house is broken. The roof has fallen.

Answer 10: Abdul goes to the river to find Ali.

## 3. Grammar

Question 1: Verb Tense (Simple Past)

Choose the correct verb form to complete the sentence:

Abdul \_\_\_\_\_ (want) to catch birds, but he was too slow.

A) wants

B) wanted

C) wanting

Question 2: Articles (A/An)

Fill in the blank with the correct article (a or an):

Abdul saw \_\_\_\_\_ army tank in a hole.

A) a

B) an

Question 3: Plural Nouns

Choose the correct plural form:

Abdul saw two dead \_\_\_\_\_ (soldier) near the tank.

A) soldier

B) soldiers

C) solders

#### Question 4: Pronouns

Choose the correct pronoun to replace "Abdul" in the sentence:

Abdul was scared of the grave.

- A) He
- B) She
- C) They

#### Question 5: Prepositions

Fill in the blank with the correct preposition:

Abdul ran \_\_\_\_\_ the river to find Ali.

- A) to
- B) on
- C) in

#### Answers

Answer 1: B) wanted

Explanation: The story uses the simple past tense to describe events that happened in the past. "Wanted" is the correct past tense form of "want."

Answer 2: B) an

Explanation: "An" is used before a singular noun starting with a vowel sound. Since "army" starts with a vowel sound, "an" is correct.

Answer 3: B) soldiers

Explanation: The plural of "soldier" is "soldiers." Since the sentence mentions "two," the plural form is needed.

Answer 4: A) He

Explanation: Abdul is a male character, so the pronoun "he" is used to replace his name.

Answer 5:

A) to

Explanation: The preposition "to" is used to indicate direction or movement toward a place, like "the river."

## 4. Picture Dictionary



**penguin** (पन्निवन्) A bird which lives in the Antarctic. A penguin can swim but it cannot fly. बर्फीले प्रदेश की समुद्री चिड़िया; पन्निवन्.



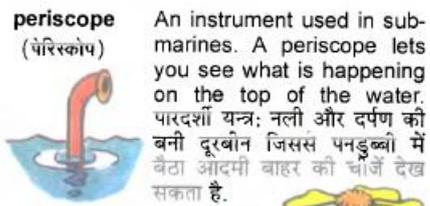
**pennant** (पेनन्ट) A long thin flag which is pointed at one end. लम्बा पतली नुकीली पताका.



**perch** (पर्च) A wooden bar in a cage for a bird to sit on. पिंजरे में पक्षियों के बैठने का डंडा.



**perfume** (परफ्यूम) A sweet smelling liquid made from the petals of flowers. इत्र; फुल्लेल; सुगन्ध.



**periscope** (पेरिस्कोप) An instrument used in submarines. A periscope lets you see what is happening on the top of the water. पारदर्शी यन्त्र; नली और दर्पण की बनी दूरबीन जिससे पनडुब्बी में बैठा आदमी बाहर की चीज देख सकता है.

**petal** (पेटल) Part of a flower. फूल की पंखुड़ी.



**petrol** (पेट्रोल) The liquid used in cars to make the engine go. पेट्रोल खनिज तेल जो मोटर-गाड़ी; इंजन इत्यादि में डालकर इंजन या मोटर गाड़ी को चलाया जाता है.



**petticoat** (पेटिकोट) Something which can be worn under a dress. घाघरा; लहंगा.



**pheasant** (फेज़ंट) A bird which lives in woods. Some people shoot pheasants and eat them. पालतू मुर्गी जैसी लम्बी दुमवाली एक चिड़िया; तीतर.



**photograph** (फोटोग्रफ) A picture made by a camera. फोटो; प्रकाश चित्र; छाया चित्र.



**photographer** (फोटोग्राफर) A person who takes pictures with a camera. छाया चित्रकार.