



Learn English Through Stories

A Series

A65

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1. Simon Says

Adapted from Children's Book Trust

My name is Reeta. I live with my mother, Ma, and my little brother, Jay. I love Christmas. Every December, our house smells sweet. Ma makes cakes and candies. The smell of sugar and cookies is everywhere. We put lights on the Christmas tree. We fix the star on top. We make a small stable for the nativity scene. It has baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Every day, we do something fun. We sing Christmas songs. We visit friends. We meet new people. Christmas is happy.

This year, on December 1st, something bad happens. Early in the morning, the phone rings. Ma wakes me up. "Reeta," she says, "Grandpa is in the hospital. He had an accident." I open my eyes fast. I feel scared. Grandpa is my favourite person. I love him so much. He is kind. He listens to me. I tell him everything. I tell him when I am happy. I tell him when I am sad. I tell him when Ma is not fair. Grandpa is blind. He cannot see, but he hears me. He understands me.

Grandpa has a dog. His name is Simon. Simon is a big German shepherd. Simon is a guide dog. He helps Grandpa walk. Grandpa cannot see, so Simon is his eyes. Grandpa loves Simon. He says, "Simon tells me what to do. It's like a game. Simon says, 'Walk here.' Simon says, 'Stop.'" Grandpa laughs when he says this. He tells me he played "Simon Says" when he was a boy. Simon helps Grandpa live alone. Simon takes Grandpa for walks. Simon helps Grandpa buy gifts for us.

I want to go to the hospital with Ma. I say, "I want to see Grandpa!" Ma says, "No, Reeta. Stay home. Help Jay eat breakfast. Take him to the bus stop. You have a biology test at school." I say, "The test is not important!" But Ma leaves. I feel sad. I want to know if Grandpa is okay.

At school, I cannot think. The biology test is hard. I look at the questions, but I think about Grandpa. Is he okay? Is he hurt? I do not do well on the test. After school, Jay and I run home. Ma is there. She tries to smile, but her face is sad. She says, "Grandpa is hurt. Simon took him into a car's path. Grandpa was awake, but now he sleeps. The doctors give him medicine. He said only one word: 'Simon.'"

We bring Simon to our house. Simon is not happy. He does not eat. He walks around the house. His claws make a click-click sound on the floor. I take care of Simon. I take him for walks. I talk to him. I say, "Simon, I pray for Grandpa.

He will be okay.” But Simon does not listen. He looks sad. His eyes are big and dark. He misses Grandpa.

One day, I come home from school. Simon sits by the door. He looks at Ma in the kitchen. I call, “Simon! Simon!” He does not move. I call louder, “SIMON!” Then he turns. He wags his tail. He comes to me. He smiles like a dog. I say to Ma, “Simon is deaf. He cannot hear well.” Ma nods. She says, “Simon is ten years old. Old dogs lose hearing.” I understand now. Simon did not hear the car. That is why Grandpa had the accident.

Simon knows we talk about him. He puts his head down. He goes to a corner. He does not eat his food. I feel bad for Simon. He loves Grandpa. He feels sad. The next morning, I take Simon for a walk. He stops. His legs do not work. He sits on the grass. I try to help him stand. He is too heavy. I shout, “Ma! Ma! Simon cannot walk!” Ma and Jay come. We carry Simon to the car. It is hard. Simon is big. We take him to the vet.

At the vet, Simon is very sick. He has a fever. He needs water. The vet puts a tube in Simon’s leg. It gives him water and medicine. I stay with Simon. I talk to him. I say, “Simon, you are strong. You can get better.” I stay all day. I go every day after school. I want Simon to live. He is Grandpa’s friend. He is my friend, too.

A week later, I visit Grandpa in the hospital. I am scared. Grandpa looks small. He has a tube in his nose. He has bandages on his arms and legs. He does not move. I think he is dead. Then I see his eyes. They are open. He hears my voice. He tries to smile. He whispers, “Reeta, we are pals, right?” I hold his hand. I say, “Yes, Grandpa. We are pals.” He says, “Get me out of here. I don’t like the hospital.”

Grandpa asks about Simon. I do not want to say Simon is sick. I say, “Simon is okay.” But Grandpa knows. He says, “Simon needs me. He thinks I left him. I want to go home. I want to be with Simon.” I feel sad. Grandpa looks weak. Simon looks weak. I am afraid they will not get better.

Ma talks to the doctors. Two weeks later, Grandpa comes home. An ambulance brings him. Simon hears Grandpa. He stands up. His legs shake, but he is happy. He barks. He moves near Grandpa. The ambulance man says, “Keep the dog away! He will hurt Grandpa!” But Grandpa says, “No. Simon is smart. He will not hurt me.” Simon lies next to Grandpa. He wags his tail. I smile. Grandpa and Simon are together again.

Christmas is close. Only a few days left. I am busy. I help Ma with Grandpa. I give him water. I bring him food. I help with Simon, too. I give him food. I take him for short walks. He is still weak. I am scared. I check Grandpa every

morning. I look to see if he is breathing. I check Simon, too. I do not want them to die.

On Christmas Eve, I am worried. Grandpa knows Simon is very sick. He called the vet on his phone. He whispers to me, "Reeta, why didn't you tell me about Simon?" I cannot speak. I feel bad. I did not want Grandpa to worry. His face looks sad. I think, "Will Grandpa be okay if Simon dies?"

On Christmas morning, I wake up early. I go to Grandpa's room. His bed is empty! Simon is gone, too! I am scared. Where are they? I run to find Ma. Then I see Grandpa. He walks in from the verandah. Simon is with him. Simon walks slowly. He helps Grandpa. Grandpa holds Simon's leash. I run to them. I hug Grandpa. I say, "Grandpa! You can walk! Merry Christmas!" Grandpa smiles. He says, "Merry Christmas, Reeta."

I ask, "Grandpa, how did you do it?" He says, "I want to be strong for Simon. Simon needs me. He is not ready to go." He laughs. He says, "Simon says, 'Get up, Grandpa!' So I did." He gives Simon a chewy treat. Simon wags his tail. I laugh. I say, "You play Simon Says again!" I am so happy. Grandpa is better. Simon is better. They are together.

We sit by the Christmas tree. It has bright lights. Ma brings cookies. Jay sings a Christmas song. I give Grandpa a gift. It is a soft scarf. He likes it. He gives me a gift. It is a book about dogs. I love it. We eat together. We talk. We laugh. Simon lies next to Grandpa. He looks happy. I look at them. I think, "This is the best Christmas."

Every day after Christmas, Grandpa gets stronger. He walks more with Simon. Simon eats his food again. His legs are better. I help them every day. I take Simon for walks. I read to Grandpa. I tell him about school. He listens. He smiles. He says, "Reeta, you are my best pal." I say, "You and Simon are my best pals, too."

One day, I ask Grandpa, "Will Simon be okay?" Grandpa says, "Yes. Simon is strong. He has me. I have him. We help each other." I nod. I understand. Simon and Grandpa are a team. They play Simon Says every day. Simon says, "Walk." Grandpa walks. Simon says, "Stop." Grandpa stops. I laugh. It is a good game.

Now, when I smell cookies, I think of Christmas. I think of Grandpa and Simon. I think of love. I think of family. I am not scared anymore. Grandpa is home. Simon is home. We are all together. Christmas is happy again.

Comprehension Questions

Question 1: Who lives with Reeta in the house?

Question 2: What does Ma make for Christmas?

Question 3: What is Simon's job for Grandpa?

Question 4: What does Ma tell Reeta about Grandpa's accident?

Question 5: Why does Simon not eat at Reeta's house?

Question 6: What does Reeta learn about Simon when he sits by the door?

Question 7: Where does Reeta take Simon when he cannot walk?

Question 8: What does Grandpa say about Simon in the hospital?

Question 9: What does the ambulance man say about Simon?

Question 10: What gift does Reeta give Grandpa on Christmas?

Answers

Answer 1: Ma and Jay live with Reeta in the house.

Answer 2: Ma makes cakes and candies for Christmas.

Answer 3: Simon is a guide dog for Grandpa.

Answer 4: Ma says Grandpa is hurt and in the hospital.

Answer 5: Simon does not eat because he is sad and misses Grandpa.

Answer 6: Reeta learns Simon is deaf.

Answer 7: Reeta takes Simon to the vet.

Answer 8: Grandpa says Simon needs him and thinks he left him.

Answer 9: The ambulance man says to keep Simon away from Grandpa.

Answer 10: Reeta gives Grandpa a soft scarf.

3. Picture Dictionary



pump
(पम्प)
A machine which pushes air or liquid into a container. You use a pump to put air into your bicycle tyre. गुब्बारे या साइकिल में हवा भरने का यन्त्र.



pyjamas
(पाईजामास)
A jacket and trousers people wear in bed. ढाला-ढाला कमर से बाँधने वाला पायजामा; एक भारतीय पोशाक.



pupil
(प्यूपिल)
The black part of your eye. आँख का काला भाग.



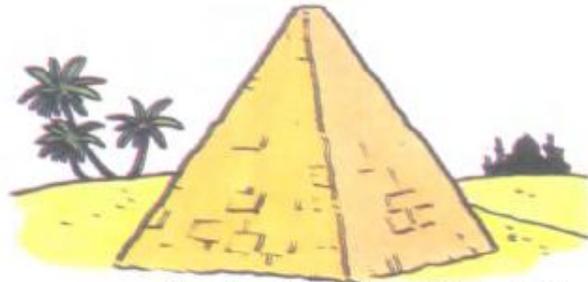
pylon
(पाईलोन)
A big metal tower which holds up electric cables. विद्युत धारा को साधने वाला मॉनार जैसा धातु का ढाँचा.



puppet
(पपिट)
A doll moved by string or by your hand. कठपुतली.



puppy
(पपी)
A young dog. कुत्ते का बच्चा; पिल्ला.



pyramid
(पिरामिड)
A solid building which looks like four triangles meeting at a point on the top. शुण्डाकार स्तम्भ; वह इमारत जिसकी चार त्रिभुज जैसी दीवारें होती हैं तथा ऊपरो भाग नुकोला होता है.



purple
(पर्पल)
A colour made with red and blue. बैंगनी रंग; लाल तथा नीले रंग का मिश्रण.



purse
(पर्स)
A small bag to put your money in. बटुआ; रूपया-पैसा आदि रखने की थैली.



python (पाईथोन) A very big snake. अजगर.