



Learn English Through Stories

E Series

E63

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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1. Adem's Baba Embarrassed Him

Somewhere below the clouds lies an island called the United Kingdom. In the south of this island is a city called London. In the south of this city lies a small village. And in this village lives an eleven-year-old boy called Adem.

No, no. His name is not Adam. It is "Adem." That's right, there's an "e" instead of an "a" just before the last letter "m." Adem is a Turkish name. Both Adam and Adem mean "the first man in the world."

Adem is a curious boy who loves reading. He reads all kinds of storybooks. He also reads The Guinness Book of World Records. This is his favourite.

The young boy loves to talk about the things he reads in the book of records. If Adem were here now, he would already be talking about Sultan Kosen of Turkey, who is eight foot one inch tall. Sultan Kosen is the tallest living man in The Guinness Book of World Records!

Look! Here comes Adem out of school with his two best friends, Ben and Jonathan. Adem is the one with dark hair, olive skin, and beautiful blue eyes. You cannot miss him because Ben and Jonathan are both blond boys with fair skin.

Adem's father is Turkish, and his mother is English. He got his looks from his father, but his eyes are the same colour as his mother's.

Adem hears someone say, "Merhaba." He turns around and waves at his Turkish friend, Metin. Then Adem replies, "Merhaba!" This word means hello in Turkish. The first Turkish word Adem ever learned to say was "Baba." It means Dad.

One day, when Adem was younger, he asked his Baba, "Am I English or Turkish, or am I half of each?"

His Baba thought about this question for a moment, then answered, "You are not half of anything, my son. You are both fully Turkish and fully English."

Adem liked this answer very much.

Sometime later, Adem gets his face painted with an English flag while he is at a carnival. When his Baba sees Adem's face, he is quite shocked, but Adem says,

“It’s okay, Baba. Don’t you remember? I am fully English as well as fully Turkish.”

Adem gives a high five to Ben and Jonathan, then approaches us and walks beside us along the pavement. He smiles up at us. “Did you know that in June 2003, a Turkish man called Muhammed Rashid entered The Guinness Book of World Records with his moustache that was over five feet long? That’s a very long moustache,” says Adem, his smile growing wider. “My Baba has a big moustache too, and bushy eyebrows. But his moustache isn’t as big as five feet, thank Allah!”

Adem says “Allah” instead of God because he is a Muslim boy.

Adem notices a man walking in the street with a dark blue velvet kippah. “A kippah is a Jewish hat,” says Adem, just so we know.

Then the young boy notices a Sikh man wearing a traditional turban. Adem loves this variety of different cultures walking along the same street.

“My Baba owns a restaurant,” Adem tells us. He looks at us directly with his serious eyes, as if he is teaching us something very important. “It’s not a kebab restaurant. In my Baba’s restaurant, they make vegetarian stew and serve it with special bread called pide bread. It’s very tasty.”

Adem’s Baba has a favourite food. It is called okra. Okra is a vegetable that tastes a bit like a pickle. Adem’s Baba puts lemon on the okra because he says it makes the vegetable taste extra special!

“I really like kebab,” Adem tells us. “I know it’s not very healthy, but it tastes really good.”

Suddenly, the young boy looks a little uncomfortable, as if there is something he wants to tell us. He seems to concentrate, formulating the words in his head.

“Every Thursday,” he says after a moment’s silence, “my Baba comes to pick me up. I don’t like Thursdays anymore. There’s something about my Baba that embarrasses me. I want to talk to him about it, but I love him and don’t want to hurt his feelings. It’s not always easy to talk to parents, you know.

For example, last Saturday, after we went swimming, I bought a really nice chocolate cake, and my friend Ben and my Baba were with me in a café. I was eating my cake when my Baba whispered in my ear that I had to give some of

my cake to my friend Ben. Baba said that this is a custom in Turkish culture. It took me ages to whisper back and explain to my Baba that in English culture, it's rude to offer my friend half-eaten cake, as I know he has some money in his pocket, and if he wanted cake, he would buy some for himself."

Adem explains that his Baba has lived in England for a very long time but still doesn't have many English friends. The young boy says it's as if his father still lives as he did in Turkey. "That's okay," Adem tells us, "but it's sometimes difficult for me to understand some of the Turkish traditions, and there are so many to remember."

Adem has almost arrived at the meeting point where his Baba told him to wait to be picked up after school.

Today is Thursday.

He looks a bit nervous as he scans the street. "I've tried to do something about this embarrassment," he tells us, "but it hasn't worked yet. I don't know how to talk to my Baba about the way he acts when we're with my friends."

Adem stops on the corner. He still looks nervous. "This is where my Baba picks me up," he says.

Many children from Adem's school stand about on the corner: some waiting to be picked up by their parents, some heading for the bus or walking home in pairs. Adem pretends to read his book. He doesn't want any of his friends near him when his Baba picks him up.

This is when Adem notices Emily. Emily is beautiful. She has blonde hair and blue eyes, and Adem has fancied her ever since they were both in year five.

One day, Adem's history teacher placed all the children in pairs for a school project. Adem was paired with Emily. They had to make a motte and bailey castle. The best castle would win a prize.

So Adem and Emily spent a lot of time together and worked hard on their castle. When the judging day came, they won! That's when the fancying began, because Emily hugged Adem. From that moment on, whenever Adem sees Emily, he feels a warm feeling inside.

Emily is approaching the corner where Adem waits for his Baba. Adem looks very uncomfortable all of a sudden.

“Oh no! My Baba’s jeep is coming around the corner! Baba is coming! Emily is coming!” Adem exclaims.

Adem quickly sits on the floor and pretends to tie his shoelaces, attempting to hide from both his Baba and Emily. But it’s no use; he can tell his Baba has spotted him. The jeep pulls up to the curb, and Adem’s Baba steps out. Meanwhile, Emily is getting closer, and now she can see Adem and his Baba together next to the jeep.

Adem’s Baba smiles, “Are you okay, my big boy?”

Adem stands up, and his Baba grabs him, giving him a big cuddle and a kiss.

“Come on, Adem,” says his Baba in a cheerful voice, “Won’t you give me a kiss?”

Adem looks around, then quickly kisses his father on the cheek and jumps inside the jeep before Emily gets closer and laughs at him for kissing and hugging his father when he’s a big boy now and wants to seem more grown-up.

Father and son don’t talk for a couple of minutes as they drive through the busy streets heading home.

Baba looks at Adem and asks again, “Are you okay, my son?”

“Yes,” says Adem, but his voice isn’t very convincing.

Adem’s Baba knows his son isn’t happy because he knows him well, and they are very close. “Come on,” he says, “why don’t you tell me what’s wrong?”

Adem thinks for a while. He knows what to say but doesn’t want to hurt his Baba’s feelings. Eventually, he summons the courage to speak.

“Baba, there’s something I need to tell you, something that upsets me. There’s a person who upsets me. That person is...”

“Someone has upset you! Tell me who it is,” Baba says, concerned.

“Well, it’s...”

“Yes... Come on!”

“Well...”

“Is it someone at school, a teacher, a friend, a bully?” asks Baba, clearly worried for his son.

“No, Baba.”

“Who, then?”

There’s a long silence as Baba steers the jeep through the village toward home.

Adem takes a deep breath, then says, “It’s you, Baba. You upset me.”

“Me?” asks his Baba. “What have I done, my son?”

Adem doesn’t say anything, so Baba pulls the jeep to the curb and switches off the engine to talk properly with his son. “Tell me, what did I do, Adem?”

Adem looks at his Baba, at his big bushy eyebrows and the lines that crease his forehead, making him look angry. Adem knows his father isn’t angry but upset. He feels bad for making his Baba sad, but he gathers all his courage and explains.

“You know I’m eleven now,” he tells his Baba, “and I’m very grown-up.”

“Yes, definitely,” says his Baba with a touch of pride in his voice.

“You know it was okay to cuddle and kiss me in front of my friends when I was at primary school, but I don’t want you to do that in front of my friends anymore.”

“So... you don’t want me to kiss and cuddle you anymore, is that it?”

“No, no, Baba. I like it when you cuddle me, but I don’t want you to kiss and cuddle me in front of my friends because I’m too old for that now, and they might laugh at me.”

“It’s a very Turkish thing to do, I suppose,” admits Baba as he starts the jeep and steers through the evening traffic. He looks a little sad, and Adem wants to cheer him up.

“Baba?”

“Yes, my son?”

“Shall I make a cup of tea for you and Mummy when we get home?”

Baba smiles at his precious son. "That would be lovely, Adem. But please don't put any milk in my tea. You know I like it black. That's the Turkish way, and the Turkish way is best for me." Baba winks at Adem as he says these words.

Adem smiles because he knows his Baba understands why he was embarrassed, and he also knows his Baba loves him very much.

"Can we play a game tonight?" asks Adem as the jeep rounds the final bend toward home.

Baba doesn't look upset anymore. He reaches over, ruffles Adem's hair, and waves a finger at his son. "We can play a game tonight as long as you don't cheat like you did last night."

"I didn't cheat," Adem laughs. "You cheated!"

Baba and Adem both laugh and continue talking about Adem's day at school and all the facts he's memorized from his Guinness Book of World Records.

From then on, that was the last time Baba embarrassed Adem in front of his friends. But whenever they are playing together at home, Baba often grabs his son, wraps his big arms around him, and teases him that he'll never be too big for a cuddle.

2. Comprehension

Question 1: What is the name of the boy in the story, and how is it different from a similar name?

Question 2: Where does Adem live, and what is the name of the city closest to his village?

Question 3: What is Adem's favourite book, and what does he like to talk about from it?

Question 4: What are the nationalities of Adem's parents, and how does Adem describe his identity?

Question 5: What does the Turkish word "Merhaba" mean, and who does Adem say it to?

Question 6: What does Adem's Baba do for a living, and what kind of food does his restaurant serve?

Question 7: Why does Adem feel embarrassed on Thursdays?

Question 8: Who is Emily, and why does Adem feel nervous when she approaches while he waits for his Baba?

Question 9: What does Adem tell his Baba about his behaviour, and how does Baba react?

Question 10: How does the story show that Adem and his Baba remain close after their conversation?

Answers

Answer 1: The boy's name is Adem, and it is different from Adam because it has an "e" instead of an "a" before the last letter "m."

Answer 2: Adem lives in a small village south of London, and the closest city is London.

Answer 3: Adem's favourite book is The Guinness Book of World Records, and he likes to talk about records like the tallest man, Sultan Kosen, and the longest moustache.

Answer 4: Adem's father is Turkish, and his mother is English. Adem describes himself as fully Turkish and fully English, not half of each.

Answer 5: "Merhaba" means hello in Turkish, and Adem says it to his Turkish friend, Metin.

Answer 6: Adem's Baba owns a restaurant that serves vegetarian stew with pide bread, not kebabs.

Answer 7: Adem feels embarrassed on Thursdays because his Baba picks him up from school and hugs and kisses him in front of his friends.

Answer 8: Emily is a girl Adem likes since they worked together on a school project. He feels nervous because he doesn't want her to see his Baba hugging and kissing him, as he thinks it makes him look less grown-up.

Answer 9: Adem tells his Baba that he is too old to be hugged and kissed in front of his friends because it embarrasses him. Baba looks sad but understands, agreeing to stop doing it in public.

Answer 10: The story shows they remain close because they laugh together, plan to play a

3. Grammar Page

Other Words Used for *but*

There are other words for **but** that also join sentences.

Grandpa is old **but** very fit.

Although Grandpa is old, he's very fit.

The weather was sunny **but** cold.

Even though the weather was sunny, it was cold.

The bus is slower than the train **but** it's cheaper.

While the bus is slower than the train, it's cheaper.

This computer is very old **but** reliable.

Though this computer is very old, it is very reliable.

Other Words for *or*

There are other words for **or** that name choices or join two sentences.

The movie wasn't funny. It wasn't interesting.

The movie was **neither** funny **nor** interesting.

You can do your homework now. You can do your homework after dinner.

You can do your homework **either** now **or** after dinner.

We could walk. We could take a taxi.

We could walk, **or else** take a taxi.