



Learn English Through Stories

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The Knockometre

Old Man Rashid was a man who relished victory, yet he never resorted to belligerent tactics. He preferred subtle triumphs, the kind that left others chuckling at their own expense. When his beloved daughter, Ayla, married Kadir—a sharp-witted computer engineer from the city—Rashid saw an opportunity to assert his paternal prowess in a harmless way.

To cement the new family bonds, Rashid announced a weekend road trip into the rugged Turkish highlands. The Anatolian plateau, with its labyrinthine winding roads, vast plateaus dotted with ancient ruins, and breathtaking vistas of snow-capped mountains, was the perfect backdrop for his plan. "We'll breathe the fresh air and see real Turkey," he declared enthusiastically. The family of four—Rashid, his wife Fatma, Ayla, and Kadir—piled into the sturdy old sedan.

Kadir, eager to impress, took the wheel, while Rashid claimed the front passenger seat like a captain overseeing his domain. In the back, Ayla and Fatma exchanged knowing glances, stifling smiles. They sensed Rashid's mischievous intent brewing.

The drive began smoothly, ascending into the highlands where the landscape turned dramatic: rolling green meadows gave way to rocky escarpments, and distant villages clung to hillsides like forgotten relics. After a couple of hours, they pulled over at a remote roadside restroom—a simple concrete outpost amid the wilderness. While the others stretched their legs, Rashid lingered near the car, ostensibly admiring the view.

As they set off again, a pronounced rattling noise emerged from the rear—a persistent clatter that grew louder with every bump. The women in the back bit their lips to suppress giggles. "Must be the engine," Rashid grumbled, feigning concern. "But Dad, the noise is definitely coming from the back," Kadir insisted, glancing in the rear-view mirror. "Pull over at once!" Rashid commanded, his tone brooking no argument. Kadir obeyed, and the two men stepped out to pop open the bonnet. They peered into the engine compartment, Rashid harrumphing dramatically for effect.

"Okay, I see the problem," he announced with gravitas. "I need my knockometre." Kadir scratched his head, perplexed. "What's the issue exactly? And... what on earth is a knockometre?" "You're the computer expert; I'm the

car expert," Rashid replied dismissively. "This is my domain. Stay quiet and observe. "He strode to the boot, rummaging through his eclectic tool kit with deliberate clamour. Moments later, he returned brandishing a large hammer. "That's just a hammer, Dad," Kadir said, biting back a laugh. "For knocking, you see. The knockometre measures and corrects engine knocks." Rashid delivered a few resounding taps to the crankcase, as if performing a sacred ritual. "There. Fixed. Now we go."

They bundled back into the car and drove on. After barely a kilometre, the rattling vanished completely. "See? No noise now," Rashid proclaimed triumphantly, puffing out his chest. "What do you say to that?" Kadir, turning the tables with good-natured humility, grinned. "You must teach me everything about cars, Dad. I've been barking up the wrong tree relying on modern diagnostics. "Yes, yes, I will teach you," Rashid agreed, his eyes twinkling. He caught Fatma's reflection in the wing mirror; she was stifling a chuckle, her shoulders shaking.

Unbeknownst to Kadir, during the restroom stop, Rashid had surreptitiously tied several tin cans—with strings attached—to the rear bumper, a classic prank to rattle the newlywed. When he "fetched" the knockometre, he had quietly untied them, letting them scatter along the roadside.

As the car climbed higher into the highlands, the family erupted in laughter when Ayla finally spilled the beans. Rashid's innocuous jest had broken the ice perfectly, turning potential tension into lasting camaraderie. From that day on, Kadir never let his father-in-law live it down, but he respected the old man's ingenuity. After all, a little white lie and some clever sleight of hand had saved the day—and earned Rashid another quiet victory.

Comprehension Questions:

Question 1: What kind of personality does Old Man Rashid have regarding winning?

Question 2: Why did Old Man Rashid plan the road trip into the Turkish highlands?

Question 3: Who drove the car, and where did Old Man Rashid sit?

Question 4: What did the women in the back seat do when the rattling noise started?

Question 5: What did Old Man Rashid claim was causing the noise at first?

Question 6: What tool did Old Man Rashid say he needed to fix the problem?

Question 7: What was the "knockometre" actually?

Question 8: What had Old Man Rashid secretly done during the restroom stop?

Question 9: How did the family react when they learned the truth about the prank?

Question 10: What idiom does Kadir use when admitting he was wrong about car diagnostics?

Answers:

Answer 1: Old Man Rashid liked to win but was not aggressive; he preferred subtle, harmless triumphs.

Answer 2: He planned it to impress his new son-in-law, Kadir, and to cement the new family bonds in a fun way.

Answer 3: Kadir drove the car, and Old Man Rashid sat in the front passenger seat.

Answer 4: They stifled giggles/smiles and exchanged knowing glances because they suspected Rashid's prank.

Answer 5: He claimed it must be the engine.

Answer 6: He claimed he needed his "knockometre."

Answer 7: It was actually just a regular hammer.

Answer 8: He had surreptitiously tied several tin cans with strings to the rear bumper.

Answer 9: The family erupted in laughter when Ayla spilled the beans, and it turned potential tension into lasting camaraderie.

Answer 10: He says, "I've been barking up the wrong tree relying on modern diagnostics."

Additional Advanced Comprehension Questions:

Question 11: How does the author use the setting of the Turkish highlands to enhance the story's atmosphere and Rashid's prank?

Question 12: Analyse the power dynamic between Old Man Rashid and Kadir during the "engine trouble" scene. How does Rashid maintain control while keeping the interaction light-hearted?

Question 13: What does the women's behaviour (exchanging knowing glances and stifling giggles) reveal about their understanding of Rashid's character and the family relationships?

Question 14: Explain the significance of the idiom "barking up the wrong tree" in Kadir's response, and how it reflects his character development in the story.

Question 15: Discuss how Rashid's prank serves as a metaphor for his approach to winning and family integration. Why is it described as an "innocuous jest"?

Answers:

Answer 11: The dramatic, remote highlands setting—with winding roads, vast plateaus, and isolation—amplifies the rattling noise, making the prank more effective and believable. The rugged, traditional backdrop contrasts with Kadir's modern expertise, subtly reinforcing Rashid's "old-school" authority in a timeless landscape.

Answer 12: Rashid asserts control through authoritative commands ("Pull over at once!", "Stay quiet and observe") and by claiming expertise ("This is my domain"). He keeps it light-hearted by feigning seriousness without aggression, allowing Kadir to save face through humorous humility, thus maintaining harmony.

Answer 13: Their knowing glances and suppressed laughter show they are fully aware of Rashid's mischievous, non-aggressive nature and anticipate his prank. It highlights a close, affectionate family dynamic where the women are complicit insiders, contrasting with Kadir's outsider status as the new son-in-law.

Answer 14: Kadir uses the idiom to admit he mistakenly relied on modern, technological solutions (wrong approach) instead of trusting Rashid's practical wisdom. It shows his growth: from confident city expert to respectful, adaptable family member who graciously concedes, turning potential rivalry into bonding.

Answer 15: The prank symbolizes Rashid's preference for subtle, harmless victories over direct confrontation. Tying cans (a classic, old-fashioned jest) cleverly "rattles" the newcomer without causing real harm, breaking the ice and integrating Kadir through shared laughter, ultimately strengthening family ties rather than creating division.