



Learn English Through Stories

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Grandpa Banta and His Thrifty Adventures

Grandpa Banta was renowned for his frugal habits. He believed in saving every single penny and despised wasteful spending. His home was filled with reused empty tins and boxes, which he cleverly repurposed for storage or as makeshift rubbish bins. Eating out was a rare indulgence for him because restaurants were expensive. However, on the occasional visit, he would meticulously ask the staff to pack any leftovers, no matter how minuscule. "Please pack this for me," he would say politely. Even if only bones remained, he insisted on a bag, claiming it was "for my dog." With a mischievous smile, he repeated this excuse every time. In reality, Grandpa Banta had no pet—pets were an unnecessary extravagance, involving costly food and veterinary visits.

At eighty-eight years old, Grandpa Banta had never sought professional medical help. When ill, he relied on home remedies and self-medication to recuperate. But one fateful day, severe illness forced him to the hospital. There, his penny-pinching instincts kicked in immediately. Nurses administered pills and medicines, but Grandpa slyly hid many under his tongue or in his palm. Later, he would feign ignorance: "I didn't receive my pills," he claimed with a straight face. The next day, he requested extras—cough syrup, vitamins, plasters, and bandages. The compassionate nurses provided what was safe, and by week's end, his bedside drawers brimmed with supplies, enough to stock his home cabinet for years.

Discharge day arrived, and his grandson Jake came to collect him. Secretly, Grandpa handed Jake a bulging bundle of pilfered items. Jake frowned in concern. "Grandpa, these will appear on the bill—you'll have to pay!" At the billing counter, the long invoice listed everything, but a surprising "Discount" line reduced the extras to zero cost. Puzzled, Jake glanced at the clerk, who smiled warmly. "Your grandfather kept us in stitches all week. The nurses spotted his antics early and informed the matron. Everyone burst out laughing—hospital work is stressful, and his mischief was a breath of fresh air. So, we let him keep the lot for free."

Grandpa beamed triumphantly; he had saved money and spread joy unintentionally. Jake shook his head, chuckling. "Grandpa, you're one in a million! Come on, let's celebrate properly—my treat." He drove to a vibrant Indian restaurant offering an all-you-can-eat buffet. A prominent sign warned: "No doggy bags allowed."

Grandpa's eyes sparkled with delight. "Unlimited food? No leftovers to pack? Heaven!" The buffet was a feast for the senses: aromatic butter chicken, flavourful biryani, fresh naan, succulent paneer tikka, and a central pot of fiery Madras curry, glowing red with potent chillies.

Grandpa attacked the spread like a bull in a china shop, piling plate after plate. He devoured seconds, thirds, and fourths, declaring the scorching Madras curry "absolutely divine!" Sweat poured down his face as he ladled more. "Value for money, beta—I'll eat enough for days!" Jake warned him to slow down, but Grandpa brushed it off.

By departure, Grandpa waddled out, patting his bloated stomach proudly. "A wise investment!" Yet halfway home, disaster struck. A thunderous burp signalled trouble, followed by intense burning. Clutching his abdomen, he groaned, "Something's on fire inside!" Soon, excruciating pain doubled him over. "Jake! Hospital—fast! A different one!"

Rushed to emergency, doctors diagnosed acute spicy food overload. As they administered relief, Grandpa grinned weakly. "Next time... just two plates, promise." Jake laughed despite the worry. Grandpa Banta's legendary thriftiness had finally bitten off more than he could chew—that pot of Madras curry proved too hot to handle.

Comprehension Questions

Question 1: What does the word "frugal" mean in the context of Grandpa Banta's habits?

Question 2: Why did Grandpa Banta always ask for leftovers to be packed, even when only bones were left?

Question 3: How did Grandpa Banta behave when he was in the hospital regarding medicines and supplies?

Question 4: What does the idiom "kept us in stitches" mean in the story?

Question 5: Why did the hospital staff decide not to charge Grandpa Banta for the extra supplies?

Question 6: What kind of restaurant did Jake take Grandpa Banta to for celebration?

Question 7: Describe how Grandpa Banta ate at the all-you-can-eat buffet.

Question 8: What does the idiom "like a bull in a china shop" suggest about Grandpa Banta's eating style?

Question 9: What health problem did Grandpa Banta face after leaving the restaurant?

Question 10: What does the idiom "bitten off more than he could chew" refer to at the end of the story?

Answers

Answer 1: "Frugal" means being careful with money and avoiding waste.

Answer 2: He asked for leftovers to take home and eat later as snacks, but when only bones were left, he pretended it was for his dog (even though he had no dog) to avoid embarrassment.

Answer 3: He hid some pills, pretended he had not received them, and repeatedly asked for extra medicines, vitamins, plasters, and bandages to stock up for home.

Answer 4: It means "made us laugh a lot."

Answer 5: They found his penny-pinching antics funny, which brought laughter and relief to the stressful hospital environment, so the matron allowed him to keep the supplies for free.

Answer 6: Jake took him to a vibrant Indian restaurant with an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet.

Answer 7: He ate enthusiastically, taking plate after plate, many servings of rice, gravy, and especially the spicy Madras curry, going back for seconds, thirds, and fourths.

Answer 8: It suggests that he ate in a rough, careless, and overly aggressive way, without caution or restraint.

Answer 9: He suffered from acute spicy food overload, with intense burning pain in his stomach caused by eating too much fiery Madras curry.

Answer 10: It refers to Grandpa Banta eating far more spicy food than his body could handle, leading to severe stomach pain and another hospital visit.