

Pleasant Books
in Easy English

Stage **1**

Life is Like This



Longman

PLEASANT BOOKS IN
EASY ENGLISH
STAGE I

LIFE
IS LIKE THIS
EASY PLAYS AND STORIES

by

G. C. THORNLEY, M.A., Ph.D.

Illustrated by Peter Kesteven

LONGMAN

LONGMAN GROUP LIMITED
London

*Associated companies, branches and representatives
throughout the world*

© G.C. Thornley 1962

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

First published 1962

*New impressions *1963; *1965; *1966 (twice);*

**1967; *1968; *1969; *1970 (twice)*

**1972; *1974 (twice)*

ISBN 0 582 53153 5

*Printed in Hong Kong by
Peninsula Press Ltd*

FOREWORD

THE books of this series are intended for those who have left the age of fairy tales behind them, but require some reading material in easy English.

The vocabulary of Stage 1 is limited to about 480 of the commonest words in English. The tenses used in the Active Voice exclude the Past Perfect and the Future Perfect; the more complicated continuous tenses; and all the more difficult constructions expressing uncertainty. In the Passive Voice, the tenses are, for the most part, limited to the Present and the Past.

The subordinate clauses introduced into the text include only simple relative and adverbial clauses. Noun clauses, if used at all, are very rare.

A PLAY

Act: Part of a play.

Scene: Part of an act. The things which we see when we look at the play.

CONTENTS

Plays

Waiting for the Train	I
Bad News	9
Lost and Found	14
Poor Dog!	23
Say the Right Thing	29
By the Blue Sea	37

Stories

Which Way?	47
Something for Nothing	54
PZ-403	58



WAITING FOR THE TRAIN

RICHARD MILLER, a young man.

ROSEMARY CARLTON, a beautiful girl.

CLIFFORD CARLTON, her father.

The waiting-room at Hanton station. Night. MILLER is walking about with his head down, looking for something on the floor. CARLTON opens the door, comes in, and sits down by the fire.

CARLTON: It's cold to-night! I've just come all the way from Manchester. Have you seen a girl here?

MILLER: No.

CARLTON: What's the matter? Have you lost something?

MILLER: I've lost a letter. I had it when I came to the station, but it isn't here. (*He sits down.*) The end of a bad day! How tired I am!

CARLTON: What's the trouble?

MILLER: Oh, it's about some money in India.

I came here to see my brother Walter about it. He lives here. But I didn't see him. He was out.

CARLTON: India! I lived in India once. A great country!

MILLER: We all lived there when we were children. My brother Herbert still lives there. And now I've lost his letter! What a day I've had! I can't work so well now; I'm always thinking about this money. I write for the newspapers, and I tried to write something to-day. But it was bad: very, very bad! I didn't send it. Then I wanted to see Walter, but I couldn't because he wasn't at home. And there was the fish in the train too!

CARLTON: What fish?

MILLER (*laughing quietly*): Oh, it was just a small thing. When I was coming here, a fat woman with some fish sat next to me in the train. It wasn't very nice fish. I don't like fish, even on a dinner table. But think of fish in a train with all the windows shut!

CARLTON: Why didn't you open a window?

MILLER: Oh, I did! But the woman was cold, and I had to shut it again. She sat next to me all the way. What kind of people sit next to you in trains?

CARLTON (*laughing*): Oh, all kinds of people!

MILLER: Does a pretty girl ever sit next to you?

CARLTON: Oh, yes, sometimes. Why not?

MILLER: No pretty girls ever sit next to me.

There was one in the train when I was coming here to-day. She had a little dog with her. But did she sit next to me? No, sir. She saw the fish, and went to another part of the train. I always get large men next to me, or noisy children . . . or fish! No pretty girls for me! And she was the most beautiful girl that I have ever seen in my life. And blue eyes! I sat by the fish and thought about her a lot. But I'll never see her again. When people get out of trains, they never meet again, do they? (*He puts his head in his hands.*)

CARLTON: Now I understand about your bad day!

MILLER: Nothing's right to-day . . . But why am I telling you all this? I don't even know your name.

CARLTON: My name's Carlton. When you're in trouble, it's a good thing to talk about it. A lot of people tell me their troubles. I'm that kind of man! What was in the letter? Does it matter much?

MILLER: It mattered before. But to-day I saw that girl in the train. So the letter doesn't matter much now.

CARLTON: I don't understand. Tell me about it.

MILLER: Oh, it's about India. My father's dead now; but he had a friend in India who was a

doctor. Last month my brother Herbert sent us some news from India. The doctor was dying, but he remembered us. We lived there once, as I told you. And the doctor was going to leave us a lot of money if . . .

CARLTON: Oh! There's an "if", is there?

MILLER: Yes. The doctor knew a girl in India in the old days. She lives in England now, and we three brothers will get the money if one of us marries her. But my two brothers are married. So I am the one who has to marry her. If I don't, we don't get the money. It all goes to a home for lost dogs.

CARLTON: Why don't you marry her?

MILLER: I can't.

CARLTON: Why not?

MILLER: I don't know her name. In his first letter from India, Herbert didn't give her name. He didn't know it. The doctor wasn't dead then. He was very ill, and Herbert went to see him, and the doctor told him something about a girl. But the doctor must be dead now, and the girl's name must be in the letter that I've lost.

CARLTON: Didn't you read the letter?

MILLER: No. My brother Walter and his wife were out when I went to their house to-day. Only Mrs. Parks was there: she works for them in the house, and she showed me the letter. It had my name on it. It was sent to Walter's house because I have to move about

from one town to another. So I took it, and I was going to read it in the train to-night. But the girl's name doesn't matter now. I don't want to marry this unknown girl. I've seen the girl that I want to marry.

CARLTON: Who is she?

MILLER: The girl that I saw in the train when I was coming here.

CARLTON: The girl from India may be very beautiful too. You don't know her.

MILLER: She can't be as beautiful as the one that I saw in the train. She may be older than I am. She may be the woman with the fish! That woman got into the train at Sanford, and the unknown girl lives at Sanford.

CARLTON: How do you know that?

MILLER: Herbert said so in his first letter last month. "A girl who lives at Sanford," the doctor told him. So I left London and came to stay in Sanford, to be ready to look for her. I wanted to find her then. But I don't want to find her now. I don't want to know her name. (*Angrily.*) I'm not going to marry her! Money isn't everything! There are better things in life.

CARLTON: But what about your brothers? Don't they want the money?

MILLER: Oh, yes, they do! They want me to find the girl and marry her. Very nice for *them*! *They* don't have to do anything at all; but *I* do. I must marry someone that I don't

love, and then they'll have a lot of money.
But I'm not going to do it.

(The door of the waiting-room opens, and ROSEMARY CARLTON comes in with a little dog. The dog has a letter in its mouth.)

ROSEMARY *(to CARLTON)*: Oh, there you are! Did you have a good journey from Manchester? *(To the dog.)* Come along, Spot.

CARLTON: Yes, thank you, but it was a little cold. *(He and MILLER stand up. MILLER looks at the girl with his mouth partly open. Then he looks at the dog.)* Come and sit by the fire. This is Mr. . . . I don't know your name.

MILLER: What's that in the dog's mouth? My letter!

(ROSEMARY sits down, and MILLER looks at her again.)

CARLTON *(to the dog)*: Come here, Spot! *(He takes the letter from the dog's mouth and looks at it.)*
This is for Mr. Miller.

MILLER: That's my name. It's my lost letter.
Thank you. *(He takes it, but he is still looking at the girl.)*

CARLTON: Thank the dog. He found it. Don't you want to read it?

MILLER: No, not much. *(But he opens it and reads it.)* Oh! *(He looks at CARLTON.)* It's the same as yours!

CARLTON: What is?

MILLER: The name of the girl that I have to



*What's that in the dog's mouth?
My letter!*

marry. Her name is like yours. Do you know anyone called Rosemary?

CARLTON (*standing up*): My dear Rosemary, this is Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller, this is Rosemary Carlton. You two haven't met before, have you?

ROSEMARY: No, I don't think so, Father.

MILLER: You . . . she . . . Are you her father?

CARLTON (*laughing*): Yes, yes! You've seen Rosemary before, haven't you? In the train to-day!

MILLER (*very pleased*): Yes, I have! (*He looks from her to the letter.*) I can't believe it! It's too good to be true!

ROSEMARY: What is too good to be true?

(*They all hear a noise outside.*)

CARLTON: Here's our train! We're all going to Sanford. Come along! You must sit next to Rosemary, my dear Miller, and tell her your story.

(ROSEMARY and MILLER go out first. Then
CARLTON goes out with the dog.)



BAD NEWS

ALASTAIR BAXTER, a writer.
A POLICEMAN.

By a big river. BAXTER is standing on the bank of the river, and is taking his coat off. On the ground near his feet there are six or seven newspapers. The POLICEMAN sees him from the road.

POLICEMAN (*calling from the road*): What are you doing there?

BAXTER: Oh, nothing! Nothing at all! (*He starts to put his coat on.*)

POLICEMAN (*coming to the river bank*): Why were you taking your coat off?

BAXTER: Oh, I was too hot.

POLICEMAN: Hot? But it's very cold here. I don't believe you. What were you going to do? Answer me!

BAXTER (*quietly*): I was just going to jump into the river.

POLICEMAN: I thought so. You mustn't do that. Look at the water! You'll lose your life if you jump in there.

BAXTER: Yes, I know that.

POLICEMAN: Do you want to lose your life?

BAXTER: Yes, I do. (*He sits down on a newspaper.*) Life's too sad for me. I don't want any more of it. I've lived too long.

POLICEMAN: But, my dear sir, you're still a young man. You mustn't kill yourself. And if you try to kill yourself, you're breaking the law. Don't you know that? I'll have to take you to the police-station. What's your name?

BAXTER: Alastair Baxter. I'm a writer.

POLICEMAN: Why do you want to jump into the river?

BAXTER: I've told you. I'm an unhappy man.

POLICEMAN: Why are you unhappy? What's the matter?

BAXTER: Do you read the newspapers?

POLICEMAN: The newspapers? I read them sometimes, but I haven't much time for reading.

BAXTER: Do you ever see any good news? I don't. Everyone's always unhappy, and the news is always bad. So when I read it, it makes me unhappy. Then I write sad books, and no one buys them, and so I'm a poor man. Have you seen the news to-day?

POLICEMAN: I looked at one of the papers, but there wasn't any news. There never is any news.

BAXTER: No news? Let me read you some of to-day's news. (*He takes one of the newspapers from the ground and reads to the POLICEMAN.*)

WAR COMING SOON. MORE RAIN TO-MORROW. HUNDREDS MORE MEN OUT OF WORK. TAXI RUNS INTO SHOP. NO SLEEP FOR FIVE DAYS. HOUSE BURNT DOWN AT BRIGHTON. (*The POLICEMAN sits down on a newspaper.*) TREE FALLS AND BREAKS WINDOWS. THIEVES NOT CAUGHT: WHERE ARE THE POLICE? (*The POLICEMAN turns his head away.*) MAN FOUND DEAD IN BED: HAD NO MONEY. CHILD RUNS FROM FOREST FIRE.

POLICEMAN: Put that paper down!

BAXTER (*putting it down and reading from another*):

BOY FALLS FROM HORSE. NOISIER STREETS. GIRL TRIES TO SHOOT FRIEND. BAD FOOD GIVEN TO DOG. BROTHERS WILL NEVER MEET AGAIN. (*The POLICEMAN tries to take the paper from BAXTER but he cannot.*) YOU'LL PAY MORE FOR EVERYTHING. CHAIR BREAKS UNDER FAT MAN. DOCTOR'S FACE CUT BY BROKEN GLASS. BIG SHIP AT BOTTOM OF SEA.

POLICEMAN: Give me that paper!

BAXTER (*giving it to him and taking another*):

TRAIN ON FIRE NEAR LONDON. MEN WITH GUNS IN BANK. SEA FULL OF DEAD FISH. WE WANT MORE HOUSES. CAR KILLS DONKEY. MAN'S ARM BROKEN IN FIGHT.

POLICEMAN (*angrily*): Stop that! Give me that paper!

BAXTER: Why do you want it? Do you like the news? (*He reads from another paper.*) BOY LOSES EYE. WOMAN FALLS FROM HOTEL WINDOW. (*The POLICEMAN again tries to take the paper, but cannot.*) MAN DIES AFTER EATING DINNER. (*The POLICEMAN covers his face with his hands.*)

600 POUND NOTES BURNT. RIVER IN CHINA BREAKS ITS BANKS. WOMAN'S BAG STOLEN. TRAIN RUNS OFF LINE. HORSE AND CART IN SEA.

POLICEMAN (*taking the paper from him*): Stop it!

BAXTER: You don't look very happy! Do you understand me now? How can anyone want to live when all these things are happening every day? We get the same kind of news every morning. You're sitting on some more of it. Take me to the police-station if you must, but as soon as I come out . . .

POLICEMAN (*very sadly*): I'm not going to take you to the police-station. (*He stands up.*)

BAXTER: That's a good thing! Oh, thank you. I couldn't read that newspaper when you were sitting on it. (*He takes it and opens it.*) Where are you going?

POLICEMAN: I'm going to jump into the river with you.

BAXTER: Good! Good! I'm glad to hear it. Wait for me. (*He reads.*) DEAD DOG IN WOMAN'S BAG. (*The POLICEMAN jumps into the river with his hands over his ears.* BAXTER does not see