

## 1. A Mushroom Omelet

In a small town in France, there was a local restaurant named “Good Appetite”. The restaurant was famous for its mushroom omelette. They were proud that the mushrooms they used were from Brazil and were very fresh and really tasty.

One day, an American named Nick visited this town. He had heard about this restaurant and its famous dish. He decided that he had to go and give it a try. When he arrived the town, the first thing he did was to ask the local people where the restaurant was. Shortly afterwards, he found the place. It was no surprise that the restaurant was packed with people. However, one thing that also got his attention was that none of the waiters spoke English. Nick was a bit since he didn't speak any French. However, because he still wanted to taste this great dish, he decided he had to try anyway.

He went into the restaurant and found a table to sit at. A

waiter came and said, “Good morning, sir. What would you like?” in French. Nick was lost for words when he heard the waiter. He took a deep breath, calmed himself down and said, “I'd like a mushroom omelet, please.” The waiter looked confused and asked, “What would you like?” again, but still in French. Nick got nervous and wondered, “How do people say ‘mushroom omelet’ in French? Oh, No! What should I do?” Suddenly, he got an idea. Nick took out a pen and a piece of paper. He drew a mushroom on the paper and showed it to the waiter. The waiter looked at the paper, smiled and said, “Very Well, sir.” in French. A few minutes later, the waiter came back and handed Nick an umbrella. Nick didn't know what to do. He went home hungry and disappointed.

<取自 100 Great Short Stories

<https://americanliterature.com/100-great-short-stories>>

## 2. A Very Special Guitar

Once upon a time, there was a little frog who loved music more than anything else. He loved croaking together with his brothers, but he also loved listening to the birds' singing or the crickets' chirping. He just could not get enough of all those beautiful melodies surrounding his pond each day.

One day, however, he noticed a young man who sat down in the meadow near the pond and took a strange thing out of a large case. This wooden thing had two bumps on either side and a long, thin neck on which six strings were fixed. The young man laid the thing on his legs, pressed down the strings with his left hand, pulled them with the right hand, and all of a sudden, the most wonderful music filled the air that he had ever heard.

Enchanted, the little frog listened to him, while the young man played all new melodies. How he would have loved to sing such wonderful songs on his own... But all at once, croaking seemed boring to the little frog, and even the birds' singing or the crickets' chirping appeared much more

humdrum to him now than these melodies.

When the young man put the musical instrument back into the case and went away, the little frog directly headed for the wise, old owl. He described the instrument for her and then waited for her answer in excitement.

"Hmmm, let me think", the owl said and rubbed her beak's tip thoughtfully with her right wing. "This must have been a guitar ... " "Then I will learn to play the guitar!" the frog explained and hopped back to his pond. "Frogs cannot play the guitar!" the owl called after him. But the little frog did not hear her anymore. As soon as he reached his pond, he told all of his friends that he wanted to play the guitar.

The young frog became very sad. He had no fun at all any more croaking together with the other frogs. The whole evening long, he could only think about the wonderful melodies which the young man had elicited from the guitar.

### 3. Birbal Finds a Thief

One fine morning, a minister hurriedly rushed to Emperor Akbar's court to tell the Emperor some bad news. "The gold coins were all gone! They must have been stolen the night before!" the minister cried.

Emperor Akbar [akbar] was shocked to hear this. The place where the minister lived was the safest in the kingdom. Surely no one could have broken into the house to steal the coins! It must have been one of the other ministers who lived there, too, took the coins. But who?

The Emperor then had Birbal to the palace and asked him how to solve the case.

Birbal called for a donkey to be tied to a pole at the place where the minister lived. He ordered all the ministers to lift the donkey's tail and say, "I did not steal the coins." Then each of them must come to the palace later that day.

When each of the ministers was at the palace, Birbal said, "Now each of you must turn your hand up, so I can see

the palm of your hand." This was odd and the ministers did not know what to think of it. But they did as they were bid.

When Birbal looked at the hand of each minister, he saw that each one of them, except Alim Khan, had a black patch of paint on their palm. A-ha! Got the thief.

You see, Birbal had painted the donkey's tail with a black coat of paint! He knew that the one minister who was guilty, in fear, would not touch the donkey's tail. And that's how the thief be caught and the case be solved.

So once again Birbal proved how clever he was, and he was rewarded by the Emperor with 1000 gold coins.

\* Akbar ['akbar]

\* Birbal ['bɪrbəl]

#### 4. Jewels and Toads: A French Folktale

Once upon a time, a woman had two daughters. Mila, the older one, was mean and selfish, like her mother. The younger girl, Emma, was gentle and kind. The mother loved her older daughter more, so she treated Mila well. She made Emma work hard and walk a mile to the well to get fresh water.

One day, Emma saw a poor, ragged woman at the well. The woman begged the child for a drink. Emma gave the woman some water to drink. The ragged woman was weak so Emma carefully held the pitcher for her.

"You are so kind," said the woman. "I will give you a gift. From now on, every time you speak, a jewel will fall from your mouth."

When Emma returned home, her mother scolded her for being gone for so long. "I am so sorry, mother," said Emma. When Emma spoke, a diamond came out of her mouth.

Her mother was surprised, but she quickly caught the jewel. "How does this happen, my dear, sweet, favorite

child?" she asked.

Emma told her mother about the woman at the well. The next morning, the mother sent Mila to get water. She was sure the old woman would give Mila the same gift.

The poor, ragged woman was at the well. She asked Mila for a drink. "No. You're just an ugly, old beggar woman. Just give me the same gift you gave my sister," Mila demanded.

"I'll give you a gift," the woman muttered.

When Mila spoke, a toad tumbled out of her mouth. Her mother was very surprised, and she didn't catch the toad. "You have caused this," the mother screamed at Emma. "You must leave this house at once and never come back."

Emma left the house and went into the woods. There, she saw the king's son. "Why are you all alone in these woods?" the prince asked.

When Emma told him what happened, jewels fell from her mouth. The prince took her home to meet his family. They were soon married and lived happily ever after.

## 5. The Bogey-Beast

There was once a woman who was very, very cheerful, though she had little to make her so; for she was old, and poor, and lonely. She lived in a little bit of a cottage and earned a scant living by running errands for her neighbors, getting a bite here and there, as reward for her services. So she made a shift to get on, and always looked as spry and cheery as if she had not a want in the world.

One summer evening, as she was trotting, full of smiles as ever, along the high road to her hovel, what should she see but a big black pot lying in the ditch!

"Goodness me!" she cried, "that would be just the very thing for me if I only had something to put in it! But I haven't! Now who could have left it in the ditch?"

And she looked about her expecting the owner would not be far off; but she could see nobody.

"Maybe there is a hole in it," she went on, "and that's why it has been cast away. But it would do fine to put a flower in for my window; so I'll just take it home with me."

And with that she lifted the lid and looked inside. "Mercy

me!" she cried, fair amazed. "If it isn't full of gold pieces. Here's luck!"

And so it was, brimful of great gold coins. Well, at first she simply stood stock-still, wondering if she was standing on her head or her heels. Then she began saying: "Lawks! But I do feel rich. I feel awfully rich!"

After she had said this many times, she began to wonder how she was to get her treasure home. It was too heavy for her to carry, and she could see no better way than to tie the end of her shawl to it and drag it behind her like a go-cart.

"It will soon be dark," she said to herself as she trotted along. "So much the better! The neighbors will not see what I'm bringing home, and I shall have all the night to myself, and be able to think what I'll do! Maybe I'll buy a grand house and just sit by the fire with a cup o' tea and do no work at all like a queen. Or maybe I'll bury it at the garden foot and just keep a bit in the old china teapot on the chimney-piece. Or maybe—Goody! Goody! I feel so grand I don't know myself."

## 6. Wait for The Brick

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and drove the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown. The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car, shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing?"

That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?"

The young boy was apologetic. "Please mister ... please, I'm sorry... I didn't know what else to do," he pleaded. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop..."

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up."

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair?"

He's hurt and he's too heavy for me." Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out his fancy handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you and may God bless you," the grateful child told the stranger. Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the little boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home. It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!

God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us.

It's our choice: Listen to the whisper ... or wait for the brick!

取自 Short Stories for Children for Spoken English Program. From Youth for Seva organization.

<https://bit.ly/3966Xub>

## 7. The Scientist and The Man

Have you heard of the great scientist, Albert Einstein? He is considered to be one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived. He is known for his Theory of Relativity.

One day, when Albert Einstein was a small boy, his father brought him a compass. It was a small toy to entertain him. Albert trembled with excitement as he looked at the 'magic' needle turning towards the north. He was too young to understand the principle of magnetism, yet he felt that he was in an enchanted world. For him, the compass was not a toy but a miracle.

He felt the same way when he played the violin. His eyes lit up and his hands shook. He was overcome with emotions. It was the music that moved him. Very often, he would stand spellbound while his mother played the piano.

He was a curious child and would often daydream. His father was pained about the reports from his teacher. They told him that the boy was not interested in his studies and making friends. He was lost and adrift forever in his foolish dreams. But Albert was unaware of the worry of his elders.

He was full of joy and regarded the world as a wonderful place. He played in his garden or walked in the streets singing songs aloud, and was extremely happy.

His father wanted him to study electrical engineering, but he disliked the very thought of becoming an engineer. He entered the Zurich Polytechnic Academy to prepare himself for a teaching position in mathematics and physics. Though he finished his studies and received his teacher's certificate, he was unable to get a job.

Finally, he got a job as a clerk. In his spare time, he filled his notebooks with difficult mathematical formulas. Some of these later led to great scientific discoveries. When they were published, the humble clerk became one of the most famous scientists in the world. He could not take his daily walk without being surrounded by photographers, reporters and autograph-hunters. He would only smile at them, and went on with his work in his quiet humble way.

In 1921, Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics for his contribution to physics and especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect.

## 8. Why Ants Are Found Everywhere

One day, Lion, the king of the beasts, ordered all the other animals to honor him. One by one, Tiger, Elephant, Snake, and many other animals came to bow before Lion.

Even Ant set out on the journey. It was a long and tough trip for a tiny creature like Ant. As a result, Ant was the last to arrive. When the animals saw Ant coming, they made fun of him. Lion roared with laughter and said, "It's about time you got here!"

Ant crawled away in shame. He told the Queen of the ants how badly Lion had treated him. The Ant Queen was angry. She asked her friend Worm to crawl in Lion's ear and make him uncomfortable.

Worm crept into Lion's ear. He twisted and turned. He wiggled and jiggled. Lion roared. He shook his head back and forth trying to get Worm out. The other animals offered help, but nobody was small enough. Lion knew he would go crazy if he didn't find a way to get rid of Worm.

At last he realized there was only one animal that could help him. Lion asked Ant Queen for help. The Ant Queen thought Lion had been punished enough, so she sent Ant to help.

When Ant finally arrived, Lion was rolling on the ground in pain. Ant crawled into his ear and called out, "Thank you, Worm. You can come out now."

Lion was so relieved that he rewarded Ant. He said, "Well done, Ant. I have decided that from now on you and your all the other ants may live anywhere you'd like."

And that is why, to this day, even though some animals can live only in the jungle, some only in the desert, and others only in the rainforest, ants live everywhere.