

# READING FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS



## 60 STORIES ABOUT LIFE

## 60 GESCHICHTEN ÜBER DAS LEBEN

Compiled and edited by: Jacek Gordon



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60 Geschichten über das Leben

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The books in the series "Reading for English Learners" are intended for people who already have a good knowledge of English but want to improve its practical use and also learn new words through texts that are interesting to read but written in relatively simple and commonly used English.

"60 Stories About Life" are 60 interesting stories based on real facts, told in the first person by both women and men; that is; seen from their point of view.

The author hopes that these stories will appeal to readers and improve their knowledge of English.



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## **1. TOGETHER FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE**

When I think about our life with Stephen, I always see us as a close-knit team [ein gutes Team]. We have been building our financial stability for years, which is the foundation of our marriage. We live in a nice, cozy apartment, and every Saturday we enjoy going out for dinner to our favourite restaurants. It seems like a simple life, but it is perfect for us.

However, I was worried that something had started to change recently. Several times, quite a large amount of money used to disappear from the bank account, but Stephen reassured me that these were only temporary problems. Although I tried to trust, but my inner anxiety [Angst] did not give me composure [Gelassenheit]. I felt that something was wrong.

The kitchen was our favourite place to talk. It was always full of the smell of freshly brewed [frisch gebrühter] coffee, with warm light coming in through the window. I was sitting at the table, nervously tapping [klopfend] my fingers on the counter, when Stephen entered the room with a cup in his hand.

'Maddie, is something wrong?' he asked, noticing my tense posture [angespannte Haltung]. 'You know what,' I replied, trying to control the trembling [Zittern] in my voice. 'What's happening with our money? It's disappearing from our bank account, and I don't even know why.'

'It's nothing serious, really. Just a temporary [vorübergehend] problem,' he began to explain, stirring his coffee [während er den Kaffee umrührte].

'Temporary?!' I interrupted, feeling my frustration growing. 'How many times have I heard that? What's really going on?' I could see a hint of concern [ein Hauch von Besorgnis] in his eyes, but his face remained calm.

'I promise everything will be okay. It's just ... things have gotten a little complicated,' he tried to reassure me [um mich zu beruhigen], but his words rang hollow [klangen hohl].

He was hiding [versteckte] something. I could feel that he wasn't telling me something, that he was hiding the truth from me that could change everything. And although I tried to believe him, my inner voice told me otherwise. Could I really trust his assurances [vertraue seinen Zusicherungen]?

Two days later, a letter arrived from the bank. My heart was beating fast, and my eyes were scanning the lines of text that made me increasingly worried. Arrears [Verzug] ? Credit? We didn't take out any credit! I could feel the anger starting to fill me.

'Stephen!' I shouted, not hiding the growing irritation in my voice. My husband entered the room and I waved the letter at him. 'What's that supposed to mean? Why are we in arrears and have a credit that I don't know anything about?' He looked at me for a moment, his face a mixture of surprise and concern.

'It's not what you think. I can explain everything,' he tried to explain, but his words brought me no comfort.

'Explain it to me now!' I shouted, feeling that I could no longer bear [nicht länger ertragen] this uncertainty. 'You're hiding something from me, and I want to know what's going on.' He didn't answer immediately, and that only increased my

frustration and distrust [**Misstrauen**]. I felt like I was standing on the edge of a cliff [**der Rand einer Klippe**], not knowing what I would find at the bottom if I jumped.

When Stephen left for work, I decided to act. I had to find out the truth. I searched through his files with growing anxiety [**mit wachsender Angst**], hoping in my heart that I wouldn't find anything that would confirm my fears.

Finally, I came across a stack of contracts and notes. My heart sank in my chest [**erstarrte in meiner Brust**] when I saw that it was about a business loan. With shaking hands, I closed the file, my mind racing with thoughts. Was Stephen really risking our lives together so much? When he got home, I was waiting for him in the kitchen.

'We need to talk,' I said quietly but firmly.

He looked at me with concern, knowing I had discovered something.

'Is something wrong?' he asked, although there was already a note of resignation in his voice.

'I found some documents. A loan for a business that didn't work out, right? Why didn't you tell me?' My questions were like bullets that wouldn't let him escape.

Stephen sighed, his shoulders slumping [**seine Schultern hängen**] as if he'd lost all his strength.

'I wanted everything to be okay before I told you,' he admitted.

'But nothing is okay!' I exploded. 'You betrayed my trust, you've put us on the edge. How could you do this without consulting me?'

The conversation between us was full of pain and misunderstanding, the emotional chasm seemed unbridgeable [emotionale Kluft schien unüberbrückbar]. I felt cheated, as if everything we had built together had suddenly collapsed [zusammengebrochen].

For the next few days, my thoughts revolved around one question: What next? I tried to understand what was driving my husband, what fears and desires had pushed him to such risky actions. Sitting on the balcony, I stared into space, feeling that my life stretched out before me, like an uncertain road.

His voice echoed in my head, explanations full of regret and hope for a better future that he promised to build. But could I really trust him again? Every day I struggled with this dilemma, weighing my heart on the scales of reason and emotion [auf der Waage der Vernunft und der Emotion].

'Please, let's talk again,' I heard Stephen, who stood in the balcony door. His face was full of remorse [Gewissensbisse]. I looked at him, trying to control the wave of conflicting emotions.

'I don't know what to tell you. Sometimes I think it's over,

and sometimes that we can still fix everything.'

'I just want you to know that I will do everything to earn back your trust,' [um Ihr Vertrauen zurückzugewinnen] he said, looking into my eyes.

Even though his words were sincere, a battle was raging [die Schlacht tobte] inside me. I was fighting with myself, trying to decide what would be best for both of us.

I decided that I had to face the problem practically. I went to the bank, wanting to understand the situation and find a way to resolve [eine Möglichkeit zur Lösung] it. The visit was stressful, but I knew I had to do it.

At the bank's office, I was greeted by a bank representative whose face was polite but professional. Her measured gaze reminded me of how much my every word weighs [jedes meiner Worte jetzt wiegt]

For the next half hour, we discussed various debt restructuring options. I felt that there was hope, after all, that we could find a way out of this, even if it meant hard work and sacrifice [Opfer].

After the meeting, I left the bank with mixed feelings. I knew that I still had to think about our future with Stephen. I had to have a conversation with him and take up decisions that could affect [das könnte sich auswirken] the rest of our lives.

Time passed, and I was still unsure about what our future

komme wieder zurecht]. It's time to start a new chapter, in which I will be the one choosing flowers for my garden.

Eva, 37



## 7. DANGEROUS LOVE

My name is Penelope. I am an ambitious woman; ambition and determination had guided me on my career path for many years, until I became a manager. Working in a corporation is like an intricate game of chess [kompliziertes Schachspiel]; every move requires consideration [erfordert Rücksichtnahme] and every decision has its consequences. My position gave me power, but also put before me new challenges.

I always tried to separate my professional life from my personal life. My relationships with my colleagues were good, but emotionless. But everything changed when I met Robert. He was younger than me, fresh out of university, full of energy and new ideas. Our meetings after working hours became more than just work. Shared moments in the office, laughter that bounced off the empty walls, glances [Blicke] full of promise. A secret that connected us in a strange but

exciting way.

However, every secret has its price. I began to notice how our hidden feelings affected [betroffen] my concentration at work. I wasn't the only one who noticed it. Gareth, one of my colleagues, was looking at me suspiciously. It seemed to me that his jealousy extended beyond our professional rivalry. The fear of Robert and me being exposed [bloßgestellt] was becoming increasingly palpable [immer greifbarer]. I knew that soon it would be time to face the consequences. But for now, I was still living in this bubble of unspoken words and hidden glances.

'What are we doing?' I once asked, leaning on the desk.

The office was empty now, only the soft glow of the desk lamp casting a warm, dim light over our faces. Robert looked at me anxiously.

'I don't know. Sometimes I think it's just a dream, and other times I feel like nothing else matters.'

'But how long can we keep this a secret? Gareth must be suspecting something [muss etwas ahnen] ...'

'Gareth?' Robert raised his eyebrows. 'I thought he just liked to gossip [er tratscht gern]. Did he say anything specific?'

I shook my head, but I couldn't shake the feeling that Gareth was looking for an excuse [Ausrede] to prove something.

'No, nothing specific. But the way he looked at me ... I feel like he's just waiting for me to make a mistake.'

There was a moment of silence, the only sound being the ticking [das Ticken] of the clock on the wall. Every time Robert looked at me, every time he made a gesture, I lost focus [ich habe den Fokus verloren]. An internal battle was going on in my head; career or feelings?

'Don't worry,' Robert interrupted my thoughts, taking my hand. 'We'll get through this. You're a great manager, and I ... I just don't want to lose you.'

'But what if our feelings lead to disaster [Katastrophe]?' I wondered aloud. 'If something goes wrong, I could lose everything I've worked so hard for.'

We stared at each other in silence, both lost in our own thoughts. Maybe this was the moment to stop and ask ourselves: What next? But my heart had a clear opinion on the matter and we were still stuck in this dangerous game. Gareth appeared in my office unexpectedly. He brought with him a stack of documents and a wide smile, which in his case never boded anything good [nie etwas Gutes versprach].

'I need your help with this project,' he said, sitting down in the chair opposite me. 'You know, I've always admired your professionalism. By the way, I saw you with Robert recently. You have a great relationship, right?'

I hesitated for a split second, trying to keep a calm face.

'Yes, Robert is a good employee.'

'You know, sometimes I wonder what it's like with all these

romances at work. You never know who's with whom, right?' I tried not to reveal anything about myself, but I felt my heart speed up.

'Gareth, everyone here is a professional. Let's not talk about gossip.'

He smiled to himself, and I saw a hint of triumph in his eyes. When he left my office, I felt a weight, like an invisible noose [unsichtbare Schlinge] tightening around me. I knew I had to be careful. Gareth suspected something, and I couldn't afford to make mistakes.

Thoughts about my relationship with Robert kept coming back to me throughout the day like an annoying echo. Was it really worth putting myself through all this? On the one hand, there was Robert, whose presence made me feel alive, but on the other hand, there was Gareth, who could become my worst enemy.

When I entered the office that morning, the atmosphere seemed strangely tense [schien seltsam angespannt]. The staff spoke in hushed tones, and their gazes seemed to linger on me for a fraction of a second longer than usual. I felt uneasy, although I didn't yet know why. The phone on my desk rang suddenly, interrupting my reverie [unterbrach meine Träumerei].

'Penelope, the board wants you for a meeting,' the secretary's voice sounded serious. She also used the name "Penelope," not the usual "Penny". My heart began to pound.

candidate. And now it was up to me whether she would have enough money to feed her children.

When my old school-mate left the room, I wondered if I would be able to look at her only through the prism of her qualifications. I knew that adulthood sometimes requires more maturity from us than what emotions impose.

Mary, 39



## 54. THE BEST REVENGE

Kyle and I had been together for over two years. Everything seemed to be going perfectly. Then one day, without any warning, he decided to leave. He said he needed space, that he wasn't ready for a serious relationship. I had no idea that two months later I would see him on social media looking like the happiest man alive with Claudia.

I felt like someone had popped [hier: durchbohrte] the balloon of my hopes. For three years I had tried to move on, but deep down I had a grudge [tief im Inneren hegte ich einen Groll] against Kyle. Now, when I had the chance to get back at him on the Singles Day, I couldn't pass it up. I planned to make his

perfect night a total disaster [Katastrophe].

One day I found out that Kyle and Claudia were going to an exclusive party at one of the hottest clubs in town. I knew this was the perfect opportunity to put my plan into action. I carefully chose my outfit; elegant but not over the top, so as to attract attention but not to arouse suspicion [Verdacht erregen]. And it didn't take me long to convince Benny; my friend, to accompany me. He might think my plan was stupid, but he knew me well enough to know he wouldn't stop me. The atmosphere was electric as we entered the club. The lights flashed [blinkten] in time with the music and the crowd moved as if every move was part of a larger plan. I spotted them quickly; Kyle and Claudia were sitting at a table, looking like a couple on the cover of a magazine. But something was off. Kyle looked my way and ... smiled. It wasn't a random smile; it was like he knew I was coming. 'Did he just smile at you?' Benny asked, leaning in close to my ear.

'I think so,' I replied, but my heart was beating faster. Maybe it was part of his game, but I wasn't going to back down. I decided I had to act fast before I lose the advantage [ich musste schnell handeln, bevor ich den Vorteil verliere], that I would never have again. As I approached their table, I tried to look surprised, like this was an accidental encounter [zufällige

Begegnung].

'Ivonne? What a surprise!' Kyle exclaimed, as if he hadn't really been expecting me. He was too polite, which immediately aroused my suspicions.

'I didn't expect to see you here,' I replied, forcing a smile. 'I see you're having a great time.'

Claudia was looking at me with a clear smile. I wondered if she knew about my past with Kyle. But it didn't matter. I began to put my plan into action, gently getting into their conversation.

'You know, Kyle and I used to spend so much time at places like this ... I wonder if he still remembers our favourite drinks?' I threw out casually, watching their reactions. Claudia grimaced a little, but before I could react, Kyle leaned in to me and whispered: 'You think you're the only one with a plan?' His voice was full of challenge.

I knew he was also up to something. But what could it be? I felt the ground slip from under my feet. If Kyle had actually planned something, I had to find out quickly what it was. I noticed that instead of being jealous [anstatt eifersüchtig zu sein] or nervous, Claudia seemed actually amused by the whole situation. Something was wrong here. Suddenly, Kyle stood up and motioned for me to follow him to another part of the club. Concerned but determined, I followed him. We stopped in front of a small group of people I suddenly recognised. My

heart sank; they were my old boyfriends. Each one had their own story about me, some true, some exaggerated, but all of them put me in a bad light.

'Let me remind you of your exes [lass mich dich an deine Ex-Partner erinnern],' Kyle said, looking me straight in the eye. His smile held no kindness. 'Everyone wanted to see you again, Yvonne.'

In that moment I knew that Kyle not only knew I was coming, but he had been playing this game from the start. He had set up a situation where he wanted to humiliate me. I felt my cheeks begin to burn with emotion.

Was I be able to get out of this?

Whose move would be the last?

I stood there, surrounded by people from my past, who were looking at me with a mixture of curiosity and amusement.

Benny stepped closer, seeing my confusion.

'Maybe we should get out of here,' he suggested, but I knew I couldn't let Kyle win.

I took a deep breath and decided on a completely new tactic.

I smiled broadly, with a fake confidence [ich lächelte breit, mit einem falschen Selbstvertrauen] I didn't really feel.

'It's amazing that Kyle put so much effort into getting you all here,' I said, deliberately raising my voice so everyone could hear. 'You clearly can't forget me, Kyle.'

Claudia began to look at Kyle with uncertainty and I felt like I