

Can You Believe It?

Stories and Idioms from Real Life

Book 2

Jann Huizenga



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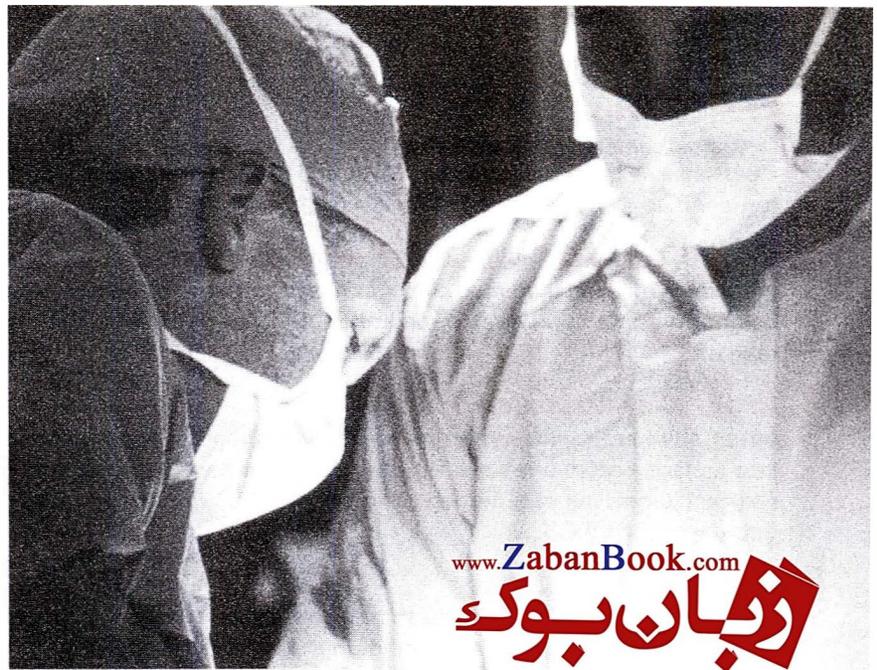
Stories and Idioms from Real Life

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It's No Wonder!



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1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 3.
What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.

SARATOV, RUSSIA ¹One day, Olga Petrovic isn't feeling well. ²She goes to see the doctor in her small town in southern Russia. "What's the matter?" he asks. ³"I have a stomachache. ⁴And I'm running a fever," she tells him. ⁵The doctor takes an x-ray. He's shocked when he looks at it. There's a 12-inch piece of metal in Olga's stomach. "That takes the cake!" he thinks. "No wonder she has a stomachache!" ⁶Olga remembers an operation she had 25 years ago. Apparently, the surgeon made a big mistake and left a medical instrument inside her. ⁷"We need to get rid of it," says the doctor. "You need an operation." Olga has cold feet and wants to put it off. But her doctor wants her to have the operation right away. ⁸Now the medical instrument is gone and Olga is recovering.

New idioms and expressions

(it's) no wonder

it's not surprising

What's the matter?

What's wrong?

have a stomachache

feel pain in one's stomach

run a fever

have a high body temperature

That takes the cake!

That's really strange!; That's the worst!

make a mistake

do something incorrectly

get rid of something*

remove something

have cold feet

be afraid to do something

put something off*

delay or postpone something

right away

immediately

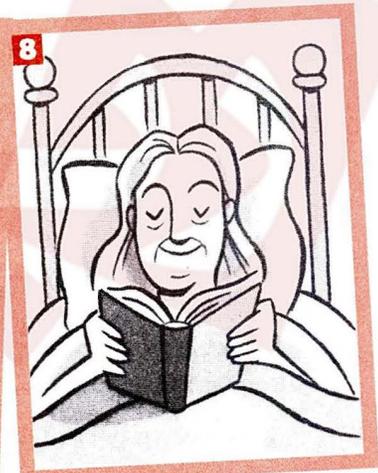
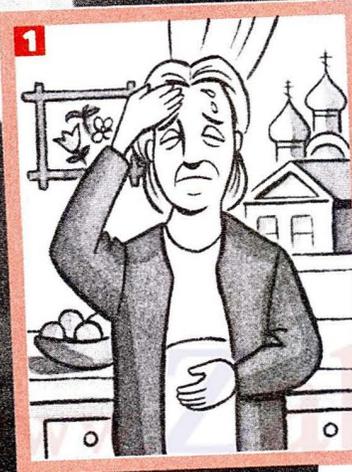
Words in parentheses () can occur with the idiom, but don't have to.

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon, pp. 116–150 and Appendix D, pp. 112–115)

2. Listen

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story two or three times.

Note: As the tape or your teacher says a number, look at the corresponding picture.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

4. Listen and Complete

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- a. First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- b. Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

6. Answer the Questions

About the story

- a. What's the matter with Olga when she goes to the doctor?
- b. What does the doctor say when he sees the x-ray?
- c. What happened to her 25 years ago?
- d. Why does Olga need another operation?
- e. Why does she want to put it off?

About you

- f. Have you ever had an operation?
- g. How do you feel today? Do you have a stomachache, a headache, or a cold?
- h. How often do you think doctors make serious mistakes? Tell about a time when *you* made a big mistake.
- i. Are you putting off something that you should be doing? If so, what?
- j. Is there something you won't do because you have cold feet?
- k. Do you have any bad habits that you'd like to get rid of?

7. Write About Yourself

Complete the sentences, writing something true about yourself.

- a. When I'm running a fever, I _____.
- b. I often put off _____ because _____
- c. I need to _____ right away.
- d. I want to get rid of some of my possessions, including _____

8. Write a Dialogue

Work with a partner. Write a dialogue using at least three idioms from the unit. Act it out for a small group or the class.

9. Take a Dictation

10. Complete the Story

a. Read this true story and fill in the blanks with idioms from the box.

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- it's no wonder
- made the mistake
- get rid of
- is running a fever
- has a stomachache
- right away

Doctors Make a BIG Mistake

San Francisco, CA, USA One day, Richard Kearney, 47, has an operation on his bladder. When he returns home from the hospital, he (1) has a stomachache. Several days later, he has a lot of pain and (2) _____.

An X ray shows that there is something large in his stomach. Doctors operate (3) _____ because they know they need to (4) _____ it. When they cut Kearney open, they pull a 2-foot-long towel out of his stomach! Apparently, doctors left it inside him during the first operation.

(5) _____ that Kearney was in pain. He is taking the doctors who (6) _____ to court.

b. Read or tell the story to a partner.

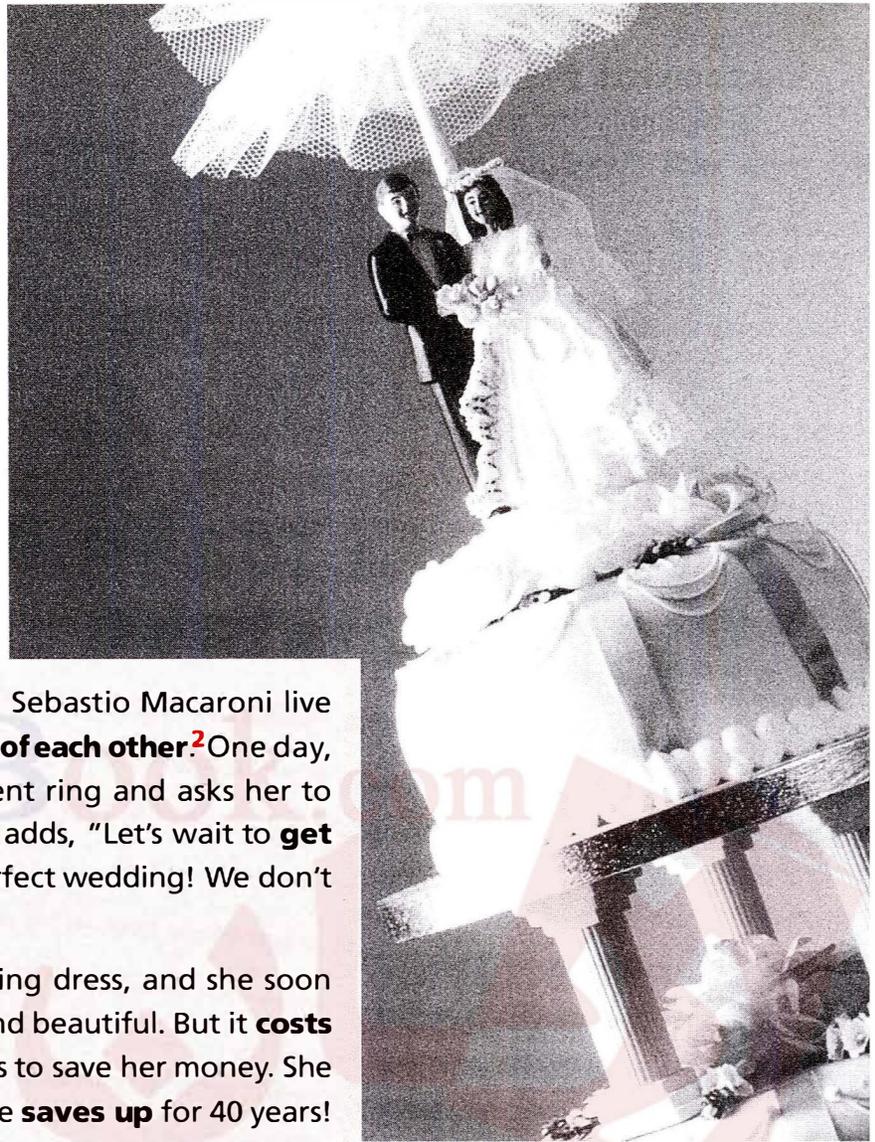
It's About Time!

1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 7.

What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.



ANTILLO, ITALY ¹Vittoria Celemi and Sebastio Macaroni live in a small village in Sicily. They **are fond of each other**.² One day, Sebastio gives Vittoria an engagement ring and asks her to marry him. ³Vittoria accepts, but she adds, "Let's wait to **get married** until we **can afford** the perfect wedding! We don't have enough money now."

⁴Vittoria begins to shop for a wedding dress, and she soon finds the perfect one. It's long, lacy, and beautiful. But it **costs an arm and a leg!** ⁵So Vittoria starts to save her money. She makes a small payment every year. She **saves up** for 40 years!

⁶**At long last**, after a 40-year engagement, Vittoria can buy the wedding dress. She and Sebastio decide to **tie the knot**.

⁷At the wedding, Vittoria looks beautiful in her dress. The newlyweds **are in seventh heaven**.

They celebrate their wedding and then they ride off in a horse-drawn carriage. Their friends watch them and think, "It's about time!"

New idioms and expressions

It's about time!

be fond of (someone)

get married (to someone)

can afford something

cost an arm and a leg

save up*

at long last

tie the knot

be in seventh heaven

It's later than expected!

like (someone) strongly

marry (someone)

have enough money to buy something

be very expensive

keep money so one can use it later

after a very long time; finally

marry

be very happy

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon and Appendix D)

 **2. Listen**

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story two or three times.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

 **4. Listen and Complete**

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

6. Answer the Questions

About the story.....

- What does Vittoria say to Sebastio when he asks her to marry him?
- What do you think of Vittoria's decision?
- How long does it take for the couple to tie the knot?
- How do the newlyweds feel?

About you.....

- Are you patient? Can you imagine waiting 40 years for anything? If so, what?
- Take a survey of your classmates. How many are single? How many want to get married? Find out their reasons.
- Is it important to be fond of each other when you get married? Explain your ideas.
- In your country, when a man wants to marry a woman, does he need to get permission from her parents? Does he give something to the woman or her family? Does the woman give something to the man or his family?
- Vittoria's wedding dress cost an arm and a leg. Have you ever bought something that cost an arm and a leg? If so, what?

7. Write About Yourself

Complete the sentences, writing something true about yourself.

- I'm in seventh heaven when _____

- Recently, I bought _____, and it/they cost an arm and a leg.
- I'm saving up to buy _____ because I can't afford it/them now.

8. Write a Dialogue

Work with a partner. Write a dialogue using at least three idioms from the unit. Act it out for a small group or the class.

9. Take a Dictation

10. Complete the Dialogue

- a. Two friends, Eva and Stephanie, are talking.
Fill in the blanks with idioms from the box.

- I'm in seventh heaven
- can afford
- cost an arm and a leg
- get married
- tie the knot
- it's about time



Eva, hi! What's new?

Oh, hi, Stephanie. **Guess what!*** Mario and I are going to (1) get married in June!



Congratulations, (2) _____! You've been engaged for five years! I wasn't sure you were ever going to (3) _____.

Yeah. I had cold feet.



But now you're ready?

Yeah, I know Mario's the one for me. (4) _____!



Are you going to have a big wedding?

We don't know yet. I hope so. If we (5) _____ it, I'd like about 300 guests, a music band, food ...



Cool.** I know a great band—the Hot Peppers. And they don't (6) _____.

Oh, really? I want to get the details, but I should go now. I'll call you soon.



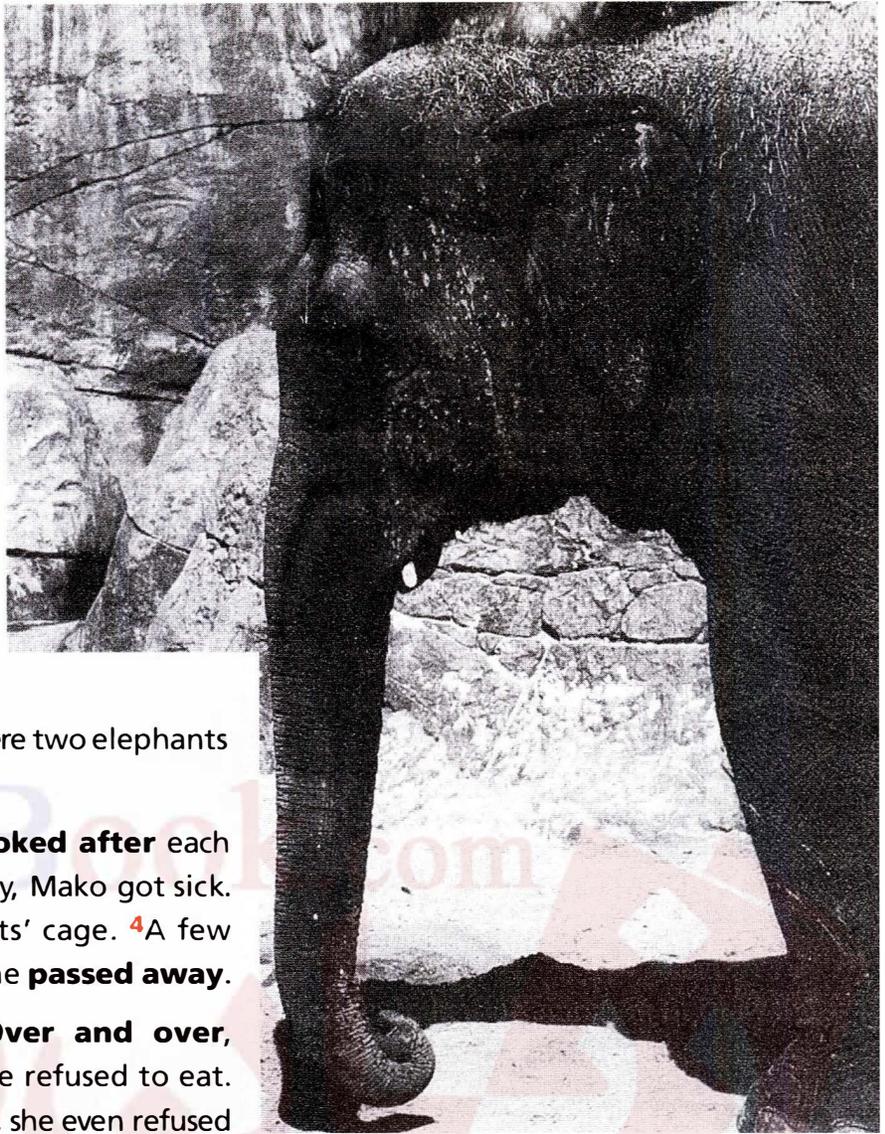
*Guess what!: a way of starting a conversation (informal)

**cool: great (informal)

recycled idiom: have cold feet

- b. Work with a partner. Role-play the dialogue together.

Broken Heart



1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 55.
What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.

LYON, FRANCE ¹Pankov and Mako were two elephants in the Lyon zoo.

²For 34 years, the two elephants **looked after** each other and were happy. ³Then one day, Mako got sick. He fell into a ditch by the elephants' cage. ⁴A few months later, on a cold January day, he **passed away**.

⁵Pankov **was brokenhearted**. ⁶**Over and over**, zookeepers tried to feed her, but she refused to eat. Although Pankov **had a sweet tooth**, she even refused her favorite treat, sweet spiced jar. Nothing could **cheer her up**. ⁷Pankov didn't eat for four weeks, and she **went from bad to worse**. ⁸On Valentine's Day, a month after Mako's death, zookeepers found Pankov in the same ditch. That night, she **died of a broken heart**.

New idioms and expressions

look after someone or something*

pass away*

be brokenhearted

over and over

have a sweet tooth

cheer someone up*

go from bad to worse

die of a broken heart

take care of; watch over someone or something

die

be very sad

repeatedly; many times

love to eat sweet foods

make someone happier

go from a bad situation to a very bad situation

die from sadness

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon and Appendix D)

 **2. Listen**

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story two or three times.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

 **4. Listen and Complete**

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

Idioms grouped according to form

GET

back
rid of
sick
lost
ready
the picture
a dose of one's own medicine
married to
one's hands on
in touch with
cold feet
angry about

GIVE

(someone) a hand
(someone) a lift
(someone) the green light
away
back
in

PUT

on
off
two and two together

MAKE

an A (a B, a C, etc.)
an impression on
money
sure
off with
sense of
a mistake
friends

TURN

over a new leaf
in
into
the tables on

TAKE

the cake
ages
care of
it easy
a look at
a trip

LOOK

after
high and low for
like a million dollars
for

GO

crazy
bananas
from bad to worse
shopping
by
back

HAVE

a heart of gold
a stomachache
cold feet
something in common with
a great time
the time of one's life

Idioms grouped according to meaning

Feelings



Happy

be in seventh heaven =
be on cloud nine =
be on top of the world

feel like a million dollars
be in a good mood
be proud of
have a great time
have the time of one's life



Unhappy

feel blue
be in a bad mood

be in hot water
be brokenhearted

Physically comfortable

(as) fit as a fiddle
in shape
all right
be healthy
safe and sound



Physically uncomfortable

be frozen stiff
be/get sick
out of shape
be hungry
run a fever
have a stomachache



Confused/Surprised/Angry

be wide-eyed
be dumbfounded
be/get lost
be/get angry about



Calm

(as) cool as a cucumber
take it easy
keep one's head



Enthusiastic

be dying to
be crazy about
be interested in



let loose
go bananas
go crazy

Afraid

be scared out of one's wits
be scared to death



| Idiom and Definition | Usage | Example | Language notes | Similar expressions | Opposite expressions |
|---|----------|---|---|---|--|
| turn into something (8) become something different | | The storm turned into a hurricane. | Phrasal verb (trans, insep) | | |
| turn over a new leaf (16) decide to improve your behavior | | On his thirtieth birthday, Danny decided to turn over a new leaf. He stopped smoking, and started working out and eating right. | | start over start with a clean slate | |
| turn the tables on someone (9) change a situation completely so that the unexpected happens | | We were losing at the beginning, but then we turned the tables on the other team and won the match. | | | |
| vanish into thin air (10) disappear quickly and completely | | My keys were on the desk this morning, but they've vanished into thin air! | | | show up appear out of nowhere (=appear suddenly, without warning) |
| What in the world? (10, 14) What?; How strange! (an expression of shock or surprise) | informal | What in the world? Why are people screaming and running down the street? | The phrase <i>in the world</i> is used to show strong feelings and surprise. It's also used in the expressions <i>How in the world?</i> , <i>Where in the world?</i> , and <i>Why in the world?</i> | What on earth? (informal) What in the wide world? (informal) | |
| What's going on? (10) What's happening? | informal | What's going on? Why don't you return my phone calls? | A negative answer to this question is <i>Nothing (is going on)</i> . | What's up? (informal) What's doing? (informal) What's cooking? (informal) | |

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Can You Believe It? is a three-level series that integrates true and memorable readings with idioms and vocabulary development. *Can You Believe It?* combines a holistic approach to reading with a thorough treatment of high-frequency idioms, phrasal verbs, and fixed expressions.

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