



Lara's Stories

Lara is a curious girl who reads all the time. Will Lara be able to find a new way to continue to learn?



Lara's Stories
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Let's Read



The Asia Foundation



Lara lives in a small village that is far from any large city. Everyone lives just as they have for hundreds of years. Nothing ever changes, and most people are happy to keep things the way they are. But Lara is a curious girl. She wants to know everything and dreams of learning about the world outside her village.



Lara reads all the books in her home. When she finishes those, she reads all the books at school, then she reads all the books in the public library. And still, she wants to know more! In her entire village there aren't enough books to quench Lara's curiosity.



Then, one day Lara travels with her father to sell produce at the market, and there something very curious happens.



A strange-looking man approaches Lara. His face and hair are white as flour and his nose and cheeks are red like tomatoes. His eyes are as blue as the sky. The man looks at the tomatoes and says, "How much is the tomato?" in a foreign language.



Lara shrugs her shoulders to show the man she does not understand. But then, he pulls a strange device out of his pocket. He taps on it with his finger, then says to her in a way she can understand, "How much are the tomatoes?"



Lara is amazed that the man could learn to speak to her with just a glance at this device! He explains that the device is a mobile phone which connects him to all the information he could ever want to know. He shows her a dictionary, pictures, and stories on the screen.



For the rest of the day, all Lara can think about is the device and how amazing it would be to have something that could answer all her questions! As she prepares to go home with her father at the end of the day, she sees an advertisement in one of the empty produce crates.



It is a picture of a mobile phone. the same one the man had! "Limited Offer!" she reads. "You can buy this phone for only 10 0p ounds. But this price is only good until the end of the month!"



On their way home, Lara shows her father the advertisement. She enthusiastically asks him, "Can we buy it?"



"No, Lara. We must use all our savings to fix the ceiling of our home."
But Lara is determined to find a way.



The next morning, Lara asks her neighbor Martin for a job. "Would you hire me to keep an eye on your sheep?" Martin hates being a shepherd, so he says yes straight away.



Lara takes the sheep to the pasture, and sits down to watch over them. Then she starts to read a book. She dives into the story and soon forgets about the sheep. She doesn't notice when they all scatter away.



When Martin comes back at sunset, he is upset to find only two sheep left. Lara and Martin spend the rest of the night collecting lost sheep. "I will not pay you for losing my sheep," Martin says to Lara once the sheep are all safely returned. "I am sorry," Lara says. "I will find another job."



The next day, Lara decides to start a garden. She will grow vegetables to sell, just like her father! But would they grow quickly enough to sell before the offer ends?



A couple of weeks later, Lara harvests her vegetables. Her father takes her to the market to sell them.



At the end of the day, only two radishes that were stuck together remain in Lara's boxes. A man stops by and asks her why they are stuck.



Lara thinks for a moment, then says, "The radishes' mother left to visit her aunt and never returned. Their father got married to a beautiful new radish and did not spend time with them anymore. Since that day, the two radishes decided to stick together forever." The man laughs and gives her half a pound for the radishes. Then he gives her five pounds for the interesting story!



But when she gets home and counts her money, Lara realizes that she has earned only 50 pounds. Her father tries to cheer her up. "I blame those radishes," he says with a smile. "You know what they say, there is nothing cheaper than radishes!"



There is only one week left for Lara to earn enough money to buy the mobile phone. She thinks hard about what she could do to earn more money. There is not enough time to grow more vegetables, and she knows she is not good at watching sheep. Then she remembers the man who gave her money for the story about the radishes!



The next day after school, she puts a chair in the middle of the yard and makes an announcement. "I am going to stand here and tell stories every day after school. If you want to attend, the cost is one pound."



On the first day, only three of her friends come. The second day is also quiet, and the third day as well. But on the fourth day . . .



. . . it seems her entire village has come to hear Lara's stories! By the end of the week, Lara has earned enough money to buy the mobile phone.



Lara has never been so excited as the day her father takes her to the market to buy the phone.



Would it change her life? Would she come to know everything? Maybe, or maybe not. But now that Lara knows how to work hard to get what she dreams of, anything is possible.



The end

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