

Intermediate English Short Story—The Possessive Wife, with Detailed Possessive Adjectives and Possessive Pronouns

Level A2-B1

I'd like to tell you the story of my neighbour. Well, she used to be my neighbour but she moved to another city two years ago. I want to tell you this story because I want it to serve as a lesson.

When I was growing up in Benin, my grandmother used to say that we do not own the people we love.

“Your husband is your husband but he's also his mother's son! He's yours but he's also hers. I'm your mother but I'm also my husband's wife. I'm yours but I'm also his!”

When my grandmother said this, I used to laugh of course. However, I listened to her advice and made sure to treat my husband with respect and care.

I didn't check his phone when he was away. Whenever I washed his clothes, I never searched for any hidden notes or anything that would jeopardise our marriage.

My husband also respected my boundaries and never enquired about my whereabouts. Ours was a free marriage based on trust.

I had my own friends and he had his. We shared some hobbies and interests but also made sure to have our own universes.

It goes without saying that his wallet was his and my wallet was mine. These were two separate worlds, never to be crossed, never to be violated.

When I first moved to this new neighbourhood, I immediately noticed how my neighbour was always with her husband. Day and night, I saw them: talking, holding hands, gardening together or simply having a glass of wine on their terrace.

They went to work together and returned hand in hand. When her husband was not with her, then she was with her little daughter. She was never alone and I secretly envied this woman who seemed to be surrounded by the people she loved.

Her family's love seemed to be sufficient. She fiercely guarded her family, never letting anyone in, including friends and family.

"That woman never shares her family with anyone!" I said to myself one day and my tone was so judgemental I would have become the Chief Justice herself.

To say the truth, I didn't know her very well and neither did my husband. We actually never went past the usual "Hello! How are you?" My neighbours had their own life and we had ours. Everybody just minded their own business.

Life went on.

One day, as I was leaving for work, I saw her husband leaving too. However, he was alone. To say that this was a huge surprise is an understatement.

The following day, the wife was also missing and I started wondering where she had gone.

"Maybe she has gone to visit her family," my husband suggested and I said nothing.

"Maybe she's sick," he forwarded another theory and I still remained mum.

To be honest, I didn't want to meddle in my neighbour's affairs. This was a matter of conjecture and I didn't want to deal with maybes. I wanted facts.

Two weeks passed and the wife and daughter were nowhere to be seen.

"Perhaps we should call the police," my husband told me one night when he started getting worried about the disappearance of our neighbour.

I laughed and said that he was going too far. True, it was unusual to see her husband alone but this did not imply that we should start suspecting her husband of some foul play.

One month passed and the wife had not returned. Well, maybe it was time to go a step further.

I was saved from additional distress when one of my other neighbours asked me about her.

"Do you know where Janet is?"

"Who's Janet?" I asked back.

This is how I learnt that my missing neighbour's first name was Janet and that she had moved to our neighbourhood five years before.

It is also during this time that I discovered the name of my other neighbour: Clara.

I therefore replied to Clara that I didn't know. "Maybe she's gone to visit her parents." I said timidly.

"Her parents and siblings died three years ago in a car accident. She is very alone. She's got no paternal or maternal grandparents either. They also died a few years ago."

My heart sank and I thought about how I had treated Janet. I thought that she was a possessive woman who just wanted to keep her husband and her daughter to herself. I had no idea what she had gone through and I felt very ashamed of my behaviour.

In the evening, I told my husband about Janet's story. He also felt ashamed because he had equally thought the same about Janet and her husband.

Two weeks later, Janet reappeared with her daughter. I don't know where she had been and I never asked her.

However, I made sure to greet her with a little more warmth the next time we crossed paths. She returned a radiant smile and we both went our separate ways.

Two years ago she moved to another city and their house is now occupied by an elderly couple.

This time round, I don't venture any opinions about what and who these people are. Sometimes what people show is not what we see.



1. VOCABULARY (PART 1): Match the following words to their definitions

- a. A neighbour
- b. Benin
- c. A husband
- d. A wife
- e. Advice
- f. Trust
- g. Whereabouts
- h. A wallet
- i. Boundaries
- j. A daughter
- k. Conjecture
- l. Neighbourhood
- m. Chief Justice
- n. Disappearance
- o. Distress
- p. Understatement
- q. Foul play
- r. Behaviour
- s. Theory
- t. Siblings

- a=f
- b=h
- c=c
- d=m
- e=i
- f=p
- g=a
- h=o
- i=r
- j-b
- k=d
- l=s
- m=j
- n=e
- o=l
- p=n
- q=g
- r=t
- s=k
- t=q

- a. The place where someone or something is.
- b. A female child.
- c. A man that a woman is married to.
- d. An opinion based on incomplete information.
- e. The act of going missing.
- f. A person living next door to your house.
- g. Criminal or violent behaviour.
- h. A country located in West Africa.
- i. An opinion that guides your actions.
- j. The presiding judge in a Supreme Court.
- k. An idea justifying a course of action.
- l. Extreme anxiety or great suffering.
- m. A woman that a man is married to.
- n. Saying that something is less important.
- o. A small folding case where you keep money.
- p. A belief or confidence in someone.
- q. Brothers and sisters.
- r. Lines marking the edge or limit of an area.
- s. The area where your house is located.
- t. Way of acting towards others.

Did you know?



Word	Part of Speech	Meaning
Possession	Noun	Something that is owned.
Possessor	Noun	A person who owns or has something.
Possessive	Adjective	Showing ownership or desire to control.
Possessed	Adjective	Controlled as if by a spirit or an emotion.
Possessively	Adverb	In a way that shows ownership or control.
Possessiveness	Noun	The quality of being possessive or controlling.





2. **VOCABULARY (PART 2):** Match the following expressions to their definitions.

- a. To serve as a lesson
- b. To own someone
- c. Jeopardise our marriage
- d. To enquire about...
- e. Envied this woman
- f. Surrounded by the people she loved.
- g. Fiercely guarded her family.
- h. Never went past the usual "Hello!"
- i. Minded their own business
- j. I remained mum.
- k. To meddle in
- l. To go too far
- m. To go a step further
- n. My heart sank
- o. To keep someone to oneself
- p. He felt ashamed.
- q. To greet someone with warmth
- r. We both went our separate ways.
- s. The house is occupied by an elderly couple
- t. To venture an opinion

- a=g
- b=r
- c=j
- d=a
- e=q
- f=m
- g=i
- h=b
- i=c
- j-o
- k=p
- l=d
- m=e
- n=f
- o=l
- p=h
- q=s
- r=t
- s=n
- t=k

- a. To ask for information
- b. Did not go beyond the expected 'Hello!'"
- c. Did not meddle in other people's affairs.
- d. Not to be reasonable or go beyond limits
- e. To add something more to an existing action
- f. I felt suddenly disappointed.
- g. To provide a warning or learning opportunity
- h. He felt embarrassed.
- i. Protected her family powerfully.
- j. To endanger our marriage
- k. To give an idea in an uncertain way.
- l. To spend exclusive company with someone.
- m. Her loved ones were around her.
- n. An old man and his wife live in the house.
- o. I kept quiet.
- p. To interfere with
- q. Wanted or desired what the other woman had.
- r. To possess absolute control over someone.
- s. To say "Hello!" to someone in a friendly way.
- t. We both went into two different directions.

3. **VOCABULARY (PART 3):** Find the opposites of the following Adjectives.

WORD BANK: TINY – FORCED – DULL – ACCOMPANIED – UNCONTROLLING – INSUFFICIENT – BRAZEN – HEALTHY – CONNECTED – UNCRITICAL

FREE	FORCED
SEPARATE	CONNECTED
SUFFICIENT	INSUFFICIENT
JUDGEMENTAL	UNCRITICAL
HUGE	TINY
ALONE	ACCOMPANIED
SICK	HEALTHY
POSSESSIVE	UNCONTROLLING
ASHAMED	BRAZEN
RADIANT	DULL



4. **GRAMMAR (PART 1):** Pick out examples of Possessive Adjectives and write the sentences where they are found.

MY

I'd like to tell you the story of my neighbour.

YOUR

Your husband is your husband but he's also his mother's son.

HIS

Your husband is your husband but he's also his mother's son.

HER

That woman never shares her family with anyone!

OUR

She returned a radiant smile and we both went our ways.

THEIR

Everybody just minded their own business.

b) Which Possessive Adjective is missing? **Yours** (Second Person Plural)

c) Can you make one or more sentences with this missing Possessive Adjective using your own words?

- Good afternoon students. Here are **your** English results.

5. **GRAMMAR (PART 2):** Pick out examples of Possessive Pronouns and write the sentences where they are found.

MINE

It goes without saying that his wallet was and my wallet was mine.

YOURS

He's yours but he's also hers.

HIS

I'm yours but I'm also his.

OURS

Ours was a free marriage based on trust.

b) Which Possessive Pronouns are missing? **Yours** (Second Person Plural) and **Theirs** (Third Person Plural)



c) Can you make one or more sentences with this missing Possessive Pronouns using your own words?

- Good morning students. Here are some textbooks. They are all **yours**.
- **Theirs** was a successful marriage.

6. GRAMMAR (PART 3): Underline Possessive Adjectives and highlight Possessive Pronouns.

- a) This is Peter's mother. His mother is a teacher.
- b) Mary's sister is a doctor. Her job is very demanding but rewarding.
- c) Let me introduce you to my pupils. They are very bright. Their homework is always done on time.
- d) Their marriage is on the rocks but **ours** is thriving.
- e) We own an African restaurant in the city centre. Our food is very tasty.
- f) This house is **ours**. We have owned this house for decades. Our neighbours have their own house. Our house is not theirs.
- g) You live in Italy but work in Switzerland. **Yours** is a complicated choice.
- h) My brother drives a sports car. His wife drives a Mercedes Benz. Their cars are very expensive. **Ours** are much cheaper.
- i) The dog is chewing its bone. It looks very delicious. It's his food.
- j) They want to work in our company. We will offer them the job and a good salary. Our company is very generous.
- k) My best friend will be my bridesmaid. **Ours** is a beautiful relationship.

7. GRAMMAR (PART 4): Find the grammatical terms that match the descriptions: Possessive Adjectives or Possessive Pronouns?

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They modify or describe a noun and shows ownership.• They are always placed before the noun they modify.
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They also show ownership.• They replace a noun to avoid repetition.• They are not placed before a noun. They can stand alone. They are independent.• They are also called determiners.

8. **GRAMMAR (PART 5)**: Fill in the table below with Personal Pronouns, Possessive Adjectives or Personal Pronouns



PERSONAL PRONOUNS	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES	EXAMPLES IN CONTEXT	POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS	EXAMPLES IN CONTEXT
I	MY	This is my car.	MINE	This car is mine.
YOU	YOUR	This is your car.	YOURS	This car is yours.
HE/SHE/IT	HIS/HER/ITS	This is his/her/its toy.	HIS/HER ITS	This toy is his/hers.
WE	OUR	This is our car.	OURS	This car is ours.
YOU	YOUR	This is your car.	YOURS	This car is yours.
They	THEIR	This is their car.	THEIRS	This car is theirs.

9. **GRAMMAR (PART 6)**: Fill in the text below with the right Possessive Adjectives and Possessive Pronouns

I'd like to tell you the story of **my** neighbour. Well, she used to be **my** neighbour but she moved to another city two years ago. I want to tell you this story because I want it to serve as a lesson.

When I was growing up in Benin, **my** grandmother used to say that we do not own the people we love.

"**Your** husband is **your** husband but he's also **his** mother's son! He's **yours** but he's also **hers**. I'm **your** mother but I'm also **my** husband's wife. I'm **yours** but I'm also **his**!"

When **my** grandmother said this, I used to laugh of course. However, I listened to **her** advice and made sure to treat **my** husband with respect and care.

10. **READING COMPREHENSION (PART 1):** Say if the following sentences are True or False. Justify your answer. 

GENERAL COMPREHENSION

- a. The title of the short story is “*The Possessive Husband*”: FALSE. The title of this short story is “*The Possessive Wife*”.
- b. The narrator’s name is Janet: FALSE. We don’t know the narrator’s name. Janet is the name of the neighbour.
- c. The story is about a cruel woman who does not like sharing anything with anyone: FALSE. The narrator is under the impression that her neighbour is a possessive woman who does not like sharing her family with anyone.
- d. This woman lives very far away from the narrator’s house: FALSE. The woman lives near the narrator. They are actually neighbours.
- e. One day, this woman goes missing: TRUE. One day, the narrator notices that the woman is not with her husband anymore.
- f. The woman’s husband is responsible for her disappearance: FALSE. We don’t know why the woman has disappeared.
- g. In the end, the woman moves to another city: TRUE. “Two years ago she moved to another city and their house is now occupied by an elderly couple.”

DETAILED COMPREHENSION

1) Choose the correct answer.

- a. The neighbour’s name is a) Clara **b) Janet** c) Princess.
- b. The neighbour has **a) one daughter** b) two daughters c) three daughters.
- c. The narrator is the neighbour’s friend a) Yes **b) No** c) We don’t know.
- d. When the neighbour disappears, the narrator’s husband a) doesn’t care **a) gets worried** b) laughs.
- e. The narrator’s husband decides to a) post a ‘Missing Poster’ **b) call the police** c) move to another neighbourhood.
- f. Clara is the narrator’s a) sister b) best friend **c) other neighbour.**
- g. The narrator’s husband thinks the neighbour a) ran away **b) went to visit her family** c) moved to another town.
- h. The neighbour lost all her immediate family members in a) plane accident b) minibus accident **c) car accident.**
- i. The narrator is **a) ashamed of her previous behaviour** b) doesn’t care about what she used to think of her neighbour d) is proud of her behaviour.



2) Choose the odd one out.

- a. a) Possess b) Own c) Throw away d) Have
- b. a) Nearby b) Far c) Near d) Next-door
- c. a) Friend b) Ally c) Enemy d) Acquaintance e) Companion
- d. a) Boyfriend b) Husband c) Spouse d) Partner e) Bridegroom
- e. a) Wife b) Girlfriend c) Partner d) Spouse e) Bride

3) Choose the correct meaning of the following expressions.

 However, I listened to her advice and made sure to treat my husband with respect and care.

- a. The narrator spied on her husband.
- b. The narrator controlled and mistreated her husband.
- c. The narrator loved her husband and did not restrict his freedom.

 She was never alone and I secretly envied this woman who seemed to be surrounded by the people she loved.

- a. The narrator did not care what the neighbour did with her family.
- b. The narrator wanted to have the same type of family life as her neighbour's though she did not show this openly.
- c. The narrator wished she could have her neighbour's lifestyle.

 Sometimes what people show is not what we see.

- a. We don't always know the real versions of people from what they present to us.
- b. We should always judge people from what they show us.
- c. People's judgement should always be based on external appearance.

4) Put the sentences in the correct order.

- a. The narrator and her husband talk about her neighbour's disappearance.
- b. The neighbour moves to another city.
- c. The narrator greets her neighbour with a little more warmth.
- d. The narrator talk's about her grandmother and her previous life in Benin.
- e. The narrator notices that her neighbour is always with her family.
- f. The narrator and her husband are ashamed of their former behaviour.
- g. The narrator's husband thinks of calling the police.
- h. Clara asks the narrator about Janet's whereabouts.

d—e—g—h—f—c—b



5) Fill in the blanks.

WORD BANK: SURPRISED – WEST AFRICAN – CONTROLLING – REAPPEARS – FORTUNATELY – POSSESS
STORY – UNCONTROLLING – FAMILY – POLICE – POSSESSIVE – BOUNDARIES – JUDGE – BENIN – CHECK –
MOVED – NEIGHBOUR – GRANDMOTHER – WALLET – DISAPPEARS – WORRIED – EMPATHETIC – COUPLE –
FRIENDLIER – JANET

This is an intermediate short story about **a) Janet** who is always with her **b) family**. Her **c) neighbour** thinks that this woman is very **d) possessive** with her family.

As a matter of fact, the narrator grew up in a **e) West African** country named **f) Benin**. The narrator had a **g) grandmother** who often told her that we do not **h) possess** our loved ones. This is why the narrator decided to treat her husband in an **i) uncontrolling** way.



For example, she doesn't **j) check** her husband's phone or touch his **k) wallet**. She actually respects his **l) boundaries**.

This is why she is **m) surprised** to see that her neighbour is always with her family, day and night. The narrator thinks that this is **n) controlling** behaviour.

One day, her neighbour **o) disappears**. The narrator's husband gets **p) worried** and he wants to call the **q) police**.

r) Fortunately, another neighbour called Clara tells her Janet's **s) story**. This makes the narrator understand more about her neighbour and become more **t) empathetic**.

Afterwards, the neighbour **u) reappears** and the narrator decides to become **v) friendlier**.

In the end, the neighbour **w) moves** to another city and an elderly **x) couple** move into their house.

The narrator learns a precious lesson and now makes sure not to **y) Judge** people from what they show.



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