

READING FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

158 SHORT STORIES ON ENGLISH GRAMMAR

By Jacek Gordon



KRÓTKIE HISTORIE OPowiedziane

Z SERCEM I HUMOREM



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Książki z serii "Reading for English Learners" przeznaczone są dla osób, które już dobrze znają język angielski, ale chcą doskonalić jego praktyczne zastosowanie oraz uczyć się nowych słówek poprzez interesujące teksty napisane prostym i powszechnie używanym językiem angielskim.

„158 Short Stories on English Grammar”, to książka wyjaśniająca poprzez zabawne opowiadania problemy gramatyczne i lingwistyczne, na jakie mogą się natknąć osoby uczące się języka angielskiego; przy okazji ucząc się nowych słów i zwrotów.

Książka jest dla osób uczących się języka na poziomie **B2-C1** i przeznaczona jest do odczytu na komputerach i tabletach.



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1. A LOT OF, PLENTY, GREAT DEAL, LARGE NUMBER

In a small, yet linguistically correct town called Grammaton, lived a Mr. Adjectiver who suffered from a rare condition: horror vacui (fear of emptiness [strach przed pustką]). Mr. Adjectiver couldn't stand small amounts. For him, life began where "a little" ended.

One morning, Mr. Adjectiver decided to throw a party. But not just any party [ale nie bylo jakie party].

"I need a lot of guests!" he called to his wife, who was just counting coffee beans [ziarenka kawy] at that moment.

"A lot of?" she asked with a smile. "Just colloquially? Over tea with our neighbors?"

"You're right, darling. Since we're also inviting the Earl of Passive Voice [Hrabia Strony Biernej], we need a large number of guests. It sounds proud, countable [policzalnie] and classy."

Mr. Adjectiver ran out into the garden, where he was horrified to find the lawn almost empty.

"We need flowers! Plenty of flowers!" he yelled [wrzasnął].

"Plenty?"; the wife asked, surprised. "You mean there have to be too many? That the guests are supposed to trip over [potknąć się] them?"

"Exactly! There have to be enough so no one notices we forgot to repaint the fence. Plenty is a promise that we won't lack anything [Obfitość to obietnica, że niczego nam nie zabraknie], neither tulips nor wine!"

Unfortunately, the preparations had depleted [wyczerpały] the household budget. Mr. Adjectiver glanced at the bills and sighed [westchnął]:

"It cost us a great deal of money."

"A great deal?" the wife asked, raising an eyebrow. "That sounds very serious. Almost like a financial report."

"Because this is a serious matter, my dear. Money can't be counted as easily as guests, when they fly out of your wallet [wylatują z twojego portfela] at such speed. With uncountable sorrows [smutki] and expenses, a great deal adds drama and elegance."

In the evening, the party was in full swing. There were a large number of people in the living room (all elegantly countable), plenty of food in the kitchen (no one left hungry), and a lot of laughter hung in the air (because that's appropriate [to jest odpowiednie] for any occasion).

Only the Earl of Passive Voice stood in the corner, muttering under his breath [mrucząc pod nosem]: "A great deal of fun was had by me [Świetnie się bawiłem]."

Mr. Adjectiver was happy. He understood that in English; as

in life, it's not just about how much you have, but how proudly you talk about it.

Examples of use:

She has got a lot of reliable friends.

Ona ma naprawdę wielu oddanych przyjaciół.

There was a lot of commotion about that.

Było wiele zamieszania w tej sprawie.

There's a lot of traffic on the road today.

Dziś na szosie jest duży ruch.

He lost a lot of money betting on horses.

Stracił mnóstwo pieniędzy na zakładach końskich.

There was a lot of noise in the street.

Na ulicy był duży hałas.

Don't bring any food for the party; we've got plenty.

Nie przynosź żadnego jedzenia na party; mamy go bardzo dużo.

There is plenty of evidence to support her claims.

Jest bardzo dużo dowodów na poparcie jej żądań.

There is a large number of cars to choose now.

Obecnie mamy wielki wybór samochodów.

She's thrown out a large number of old clothes.

Wyrzuciła wielką ilość starych ubrań.

He showed a great deal of courage in adversity.

Pokazał prawdziwą odwagę wobec przeciwności losu.

He caused us a great deal of trouble.

Sprawił nam mnóstwo kłopotów.



2. ABLE

In the same town of Grammaton, not far from Mr. Adjectiver's residence, lived an ambitious young man named Adam Able. Adam was an exceptionally... well, talented person, but he had one irritating habit [**nawyk**]: he never said that "he could" but he "was able to".

One afternoon, Adam decided to hit on Miss Modal, who was known for her love [znana z uwielbiania] of strong, purposeful men.

"Miss Modal!" Adam called, flexing his muscles [napinając mięśnie] under her window. "Will you be able to go out with me tonight?"

Miss Modal peered out [spojrzała z] the window, chewing gum.

"Adam, can't you just ask: "Can you go out?""

"Oh, Miss Modal," Adam sighed condescendingly [protekcjonalnie]. "The word "can" is so... common. It has no future! Literally [Dostłownie]. Try saying: "I will can". It's impossible! And I, thanks to the "be able to" construction, am a man of the future. I will be able to do anything for you!

Miss Modaln wasn't convinced [przekonana], but Adam wouldn't let up. He wanted to impress her with his past achievements [osiągnięcia].

"Did you know that as a child, I was able to eat five doughnuts [pączków] in one minute during a competition?" he boasted [pochwalił się].

"My cousin 'could' eat six", she replied with a yawn [ziewnięciem].

"But, Miss Modal! 'Could' is a general skill, a routine. But 'was able to' emphasizes [podkreśla] that particular moment,

and that one spectacular effort, I achieved the impossible, and ate those doughnuts [dokoⁿałem niemożliwego i zjadłem te pączki]! It was a situational success!"

Unfortunately, the date wasn't going well. When they went to the restaurant: "Under Irregular Verb", the waiter asked if Adam wanted to order lobster [homara].

"I'm afraid I haven't been able to save [zaoszczędzić] enough money lately", Adam admitted, looking sadly into his wallet.

"See?" Miss Modal laughed. "Your 'can' won't work here, because there's no Present Perfect tense for 'can'. Your 'able' is actually saving your skin here [tak naprawdę ratuje ci skórę]!"

At the end of the evening, Adam was desperately trying to regain his composure.

"I may not have money, but I'm an able sailor!" he exclaimed, using 'able' as a regular adjective before a noun.

"Adam", Miss Modal interrupted. "You're very able, that's true. But are you able to stop talking about it?"

Adam fell silent. He realized that while 'be able to' is a powerful tool that goes where 'can' doesn't (into the future, past perfect, and after infinitives), sometimes a simple 'I can' just sounds... less tiring.

Examples of use:

Are you able to swim across this river?

Czy jesteś w stanie przepłynąć tę rzekę?

Even the most able students found the test difficult.

Nawet najzdolniejsi studenci, mieli problemy z tym testem.

I regret very much but I won't be able to come to the meeting tomorrow.

Bardzo żałuję, ale nie będę mógł przyjść jutro na spotkanie.

In spite of difficulties he was able to complete his studies.

Pomimo trudności zdołał skończyć studia.

Some people are able to walk on their hands.

Niektórzy ludzie potrafią chodzić na rękach.

Will you be able to do it on time?

Czy będziesz w stanie zrobić to na czas?

He was so weak that he was unable to walk.

Był tak słaby, że nie był w stanie chodzić.



3. ACCORDING TO

In the town of Grammaton, right next to Adam Able's house, lived a certain Arthur Wise who had a reputation as the most irritating witness [świadka] in the world because he never took responsibility for what he said.

One morning, Arthur burst into a local café, waving a newspaper.

"According to the weather forecast, frogs [żaby] will fall this afternoon!" he announced excitedly.

"Frogs?" the barmaid; Miss Preposition, asked in surprise.

"Where have you gotten that from, Arthur?"

"I'm just quoting sources! According to the Daily Grammar, frogs are in the forecast. I'm not responsible for that; I'm just relaying information [tylko przekazuję informacje] from experts."

Also sitting in the café was an old Professor Synonym. He looked over his glasses and muttered: "Arthur, what do you think?"

Arthur straightened proudly and began:

"According to me..."

"Stop!" the professor interrupted, coffee spilling from his cup [*wylewająca się z jego filiżanki*]. "Never, ever say 'according to me!'" It sounds like you're a third person in your own life, or some Holy Scripture [*Pismo Święte*]. If you want to express your opinion, just say: "In my opinion" or "I think". We reserve "according to" for other people, books, systems, and newspapers!

Arthur blushed [*zarumienił się*]. A moment later, a breathless Adam Able ran into the cafe.

"Listen! According to the GPS, the treasure [*skarb*] is buried under the fountain in the market square!"

"See?" the professor whispered to Arthur. "Adam is using it correctly. He's referring to an external source [*źródło zewnętrzne*] of information; or at least he naively thinks so."

Suddenly, Miss Preposition asked:

"So how was your date, Arthur? I heard you met Miss Modal."

"Well," Arthur sighed. "According to her, I'm 'too distant'." But according to the plan I had in mind, this was supposed to be the love of my life."

"Well," the barmaid laughed. You use "according to" perfectly to shift the blame onto someone else or a plan that didn't work out.

In the evening, when, according to the forecast, instead of frogs, it was just rain, Arthur sat at the window and wrote in his diary: "Today was a good day. In my opinion, I learned something important. And according to the dictionary, tomorrow is another day."

Examples of use:

According to John, Tom was at home all the time.

Według (relacji) Johna, Tom był cały czas w domu.

According to the timetable the train gets in at 10,20.

Według rozkładu jazdy, pociąg przyjeżdża o 10,30.



4. ACTUAL, ACTUALLY

There was a huge scandal in the town of Grammaton when a cousin from Poland burst into a local café, convinced his knowledge of the language was "actual", when it was merely... well, "current" [aktualna].

Let's meet two characters who are spoiling the mood [psują nastrój] for many English learners:

1. Mr. Actual – Actual (Not "Current"!)

Mr. Actual is a guy who deals in truth, facts, and what is real. He's an adjective [przymiotnik].

If you said: "The actual price of this coffee is 5 dollars," Mr. Actual would nod [mógłby potaknąć]. He means the price in question is real, not something someone made up.

The Trap [Pułapka]: Mr. Actual hates it when you confuse him with [mylisz go z] time!

If you want to say that something is "current" (happening now), Mr. Actual will refer you to his friend; Mr. Current.

"Actual facts" = Fakty faktyczne (prawdziwe)

"Current facts" = Bieżące fakty (aktualne)

2. Mr. Actually – "Actually" (The Master of the Riposte)

Actually is an adverb [przysłówek] and the king of irritating corrections. It's every smart-ass's watchword [To hasło każdego mądrali].

Imagine Adam Able saying: "I think whales are fish."

Then Mr. Actually walks in, adjusts his glasses, and says:

"Actually, they are mammals" [W rzeczywistości to są ssaki]

Mr. Actually loves:

- Correcting mistakes.
- Adding surprising information.
- Starting sentences when he wants to sound smarter than the other person.

A huge argument at a coffee shop:

A Polish cousin asked the barmaid: "Is this your actual boyfriend?" (It sounds like he suspects [Brzmi, jakby podejrzewał] that the boyfriend is a hologram).

The barmaid; Miss Preposition, was outraged [oburzona]:
"Actually, he is my husband!" She exclaimed.

Remember:

Actual = real / actual (not: current!).

Actually = in reality / in reality (use when you want to correct someone with class).

Examples of use:

She looks as she is 25, but her actual age is 40.

Ona wygląda na 25 lat, ale jej prawdziwy wiek to 40 lat.

They offered me a post in their company. Actually the post of sales manager.

Zaoferowali mi pracę w ich firmie, a konkretnie stanowisko dyrektora do spraw sprzedaży.

Hallo John! ~ Well, actually my name is Joe.

Cześć John! ~ Hm, właściwie moje imię to Joe.





15. AROUND, ROUND

In the town of Grammaton, the words: "Around" and "Round" are like two brothers trying to describe the same circle, but one is a dapper American and the other a practical British man in a bowler hat [w meloniku].

Here's how to tell apart [odróżnić] these two "round" gentlemen:

1. Mr. Around – "The Ubiquitous [wszędobylski] American"

Around is a guy who loves space and imprecision. He's a favourite in the US, but they tolerate him in the UK too.

Personality: He's a bit "around", a bit "everywhere".

In action: Adam Able ran around the park (all over the park, here and there). If you say: "meet me around 5 o'clock", Mr. Around will wink at you [mrugnie do Ciebie] – meaning 5:05 would be fine too.

Rule: Use it when talking about approximation or movement in various directions without a specific plan [przybliżeniu lub ruchu w różnych kierunkach bez konkretnego planu].

2. Mr. Round – "The British Compass" [Cyrkiel]

Round is a brother who prefers precise, circular motion. In the UK, he's at home, but Americans consider him a bit old-

fashioned [**staromodnego**] (unless they're talking about the shape of a pizza).

Personality: He's more geometric. He loves circles.

In action: Miss Modal turned around (on her axis [**wokół własnej osi**]) to avoid looking at Adam. The earth rotates around the sun (in an orbit, properly, in a circle).

Rule: In British English, Mr. Round and Mr. Around are often interchangeable, but Mr. Round suggests a more specific movement "around" something.

A quick cheat sheet (How can you avoid going crazy):

Around: "Around" (time), "Everywhere / Somewhere" (movement). King of America.

Round: "Around" (circular movement). King of British biscuits [**herbatników**].

Tip: In most cases, if you say "Around," no one in London will arrest you. But if you say "Round 5 o'clock" in New York, they'll think you have a very round watch.

Short story:

Big Argument at the Fountain:

Adam Able and Arthur According To, stood in front of a round fountain in the market square.

Adam (US style): "Let's walk around the fountain!" (Let's

walk around it, and then maybe we'll grab some ice cream).

Artur (UK style): "I prefer to go around the fountain." (I want to walk around it, on the edge, like a gentleman).

Suddenly, Miss Preposition shouted: "Guys, stop spinning!" [się kręcić]. Around suggests you're wandering aimlessly [kręcicie się bez celu], and Round suggests you're about to get dizzy [zaraz dostaniecie zawrotów głowy] from all that walking around in circles!

Examples of use:

They were running (a)round the tree.

Biegali dookoła drzewa.

The Moon moves (a)round the Earth.

Księżyc porusza się dookoła Ziemi.

The show starts around seven pm.

Przedstawienie zaczyna się około siódmej wieczorem.

His mother is around eighty.

Jego matka ma około osiemdziesięciu lat.

He is going around here doing nothing.

On się tutaj tylko szwenda i nic nie robi.



16. AS, WHEN, WHILE

Imagine grammar as a party where these three words represent different types of guests. Here's how to distinguish "As", "When", and "While" so you don't make a social (and linguistic) mistake:

1. When (Nosey Neighbour [Wścibski Sąsiad]): This is a guest who suddenly bursts in and interrupts the fun [wpada nagle i przerywa zabawę].

Rule: We use it for short, sudden actions that often interrupt something longer.

Example: I was singing in the shower when the water turned ice cold. (You were singing your heart out [z całego serca], and then suddenly; an icy shower and the end of the aria).

2. While (Master of Multitasking [robienia wszystkiego]): This type can do two things at once, and both last forever.

Rule: We reserve it for long activities that happen simultaneously [jednocześnie] (often ending in -ing).

Example: I was pretending to work while my boss was watching me. (Two long-term activities: pretending and surveillance, both go hand in hand.)

3. As (the Chameleon): This is a guy who tries to be a little bit everywhere [*próbuję być wszędzie po trochu*], but he especially likes it when things happen at exactly the same second.

Rule: As Often replaces While, but sounds more "cinematic" and emphasizes that changes are happening simultaneously.

Example: Tom grew angrier as she continued to talk. (With every second she talked, Tom's blood pressure rose [*Toma ciśnienie rosło*] at exactly the same pace.)

A quick shortcut [*ściąga*] to avoid drama:

When = "BOOM! Something happened" (usually followed by the Past Simple).

While = "Relax, it lasts..." (usually followed by the Past Continuous).

As = "At the same moment" (often used when one thing changes because of another).

Examples of use:

As I was walking down the street I saw them quarelling.

Kiedy szłam ulicą, widziałam jak się kłócili.



84. PRESENT PERFECT

The Present Perfect is a kind of a "bridge" over the river of time. You have one foot in the past and the other in the present, which makes you look a bit like a man doing the splits [szpagat] on two moving trucks.

This is a tense for people who like results, not necessarily dates. Here's how to master it:

1. Construction: "I've Got It Done"

In the Present Perfect, you don't just say you've done something. You "have it done".

Construction: Person + HAVE / HAS + the third form of the verb (the one from the table that no one likes).

Example: "I have eaten your pizza."

Message: I don't care when I did it (5 minutes ago or this morning). What matters is the tragic result now: the box is empty, and I'm full.

2. When do we use this "monster"?

Imagine the Present Perfect is your CV or police record.

Life experience: "I have been to Paris." When? It doesn't matter. The important thing is that you have it checked off your resume [masz to „odhaczone” w życiorysie].

Changes: "You have grown!" You say this to your nephew, whom you haven't seen in a year. The process started in the past, but you can see the effect now (you have to look up).

3. Key Words (Your Best Buddies)

This time has its own group of friends, without whom you can't go out:

JUST: Just a moment ago (e.g.: you just spilled coffee on your keyboard).

ALREADY: Already (when you want to boast [*pochwalić się*] that you did something faster than expected).

YET: Not yet (only in questions and negatives – like your perpetually unfinished project), or in a dialogue: Do you love me? ~ Not yet.

NEVER: Never (when you pretend to be a saint) such in an example: I have never loved her.

4. The Biggest War: Present Perfect vs. Past Simple

This is the moment when many foreigners often throw their textbooks against the wall.

The Past Simple is a closed tomb [*zamknięty grobowiec*]: "I broke my leg in 1995." (The leg is broken, healed, forgotten).

The Present Perfect is a fresh drama: "I have broken my leg!" (The leg is in a cast, it hurts, and right now I need

you to bring me tea).

5. The "Been" vs. "Gone" Trap

This is a test of your observation skills:

She has been to London. (She was, she saw, she came back, she's sitting with you now drinking tea).

She has gone to London. (She went and she's gone. She disappeared. You can eat her supplies from the fridge).

Short story:

The Terribly Perfect Date

Tom is sitting in a restaurant, looking panicked. His date, Kate, **has just arrived**.

'I'm so sorry I'm late!' Kate says.

'It's okay,' Tom replies, 'but a lot **has happened** since I arrived.'

'What do you mean [Co masz na myśli] ?' she asks.

'Well, **I have** already **ordered** three appetizers because I was nervous. **I have** also **drunk** five glasses of water, so **I have been** to the bathroom four times in ten minutes. Oh, and **I have** accidentally **dropped** [przypadkowo upuściłem] my phone into the soup.'

Kate looks at the green liquid on his screen. 'Wow, **you have had** a busy afternoon. **Have you seen** the waiter

lately?’

‘No,’ Tom sighs. ‘I think **he has forgotten** we exist. Or maybe **he has escaped** through the back door when he saw me eating soup with my hands.’

Examples of use:

Oh my God! I have failed the exam!

O Boże! Obląłam egzamin!

I’ve met him before, but I don’t know when.

Kiedyś go spotkałem, ale nie wiem kiedy.

Where have you been? It’s midnight!

Gdzie byłeś? Jest już północ!

During his whole life he has shown that

Całym swoim dotychczasowym życiem pokazał, że

I have worked here for six months now.

Pracuję tu już od sześciu miesięcy.

They’ve been married for two years.

Są małżeństwem od dwóch lat.

I haven't decided about it yet.

Nie podjąłem jeszcze w tej sprawie decyzji.

The Greens have just bought a new car.

Greenowie właśnie kupili nowy samochód.

Have you ever been to Africa?

Czy byłeś kiedyś w Afryce?

The train from Leeds has already arrived.

Pociąg z Leeds właśnie przybył na stację.

I haven't eaten anything since 7 am.

Nic nie jadłam od siódmej rano. *(aż do teraz)*

This is the first time I've seen such a marvellous view.

Po raz pierwszy patrzę na tak cudowny widok.

This is the fifth time you've asked me the same question.

Po raz piąty zadajesz mi to samo pytanie.



121. COMPARATIVE ADVERBS

If you thought comparing adjectives was easy, I have good news for you: an adverb is an adjective that has had too much coffee and started describing actions, not objects. It doesn't tell us that "the car is fast", but that "you drive fast" (usually too fast for the police).

Here's how to do it with class and humor:

1. The "-ly" Gang

Most adverbs end in -ly (e.g.: quickly, beautifully). These words consider themselves aristocratic and won't stoop to adding -er or -est. They hire help.

Equal: She sings beautifully. (the neighbors haven't called the police yet)

Comparative: She sings more beautifully. (the neighbors start applauding)

Superlative: She sings the most beautifully. (she wins Eurovision).

2. The Fast & Furious

There's a group of short adverbs that look identical to adjectives (e.g.: fast, hard, late). They don't have time for "more" and "most". They go straight to the point with their

endings:

Fast → Faster → The fastest.

Hard → Harder → The hardest. (You work hard, then harder, until you're the most overworked person in the office).

3. The Big Three Weirdos [dziwiłagi]

These are the same rebels as with adjectives, but disguised as adverbs. You need to know them to avoid making a fool of yourself:

Well: Well → Better → The best.

I speak English well.

I speak English better after a beer. (a classic)

Badly: Badly → Worse → The worst. (When things are going badly for you, and then they only get worse.)

Little: Little → Less → The least. (The less we say about it, the better.)

4. Tourist Trap: "Early"

The word "early" ends in -ly, so theoretically it should take "more". But no! "Early" pretends to be a short word and is commensurate with "earlier" and "the earliest." Why not make our lives harder?

Golden Rule:

If the adverb is long and elegant (ending in -ly), add "more

/ the most." If it's short and pithy [**treściwy**], add "er / est."
And if it's called "well" or "badly", just memorize it and pretend it was obvious.



122. COMPARISONS [**comparing**]

Here's a guide to surviving the world of English similarities [**podobieństw**]:

1. The "Strongman" Rule (Short Adjectives)

If your adjective has only one syllable (it's small but crazy), it needs the steroid ending in -er for comparison. If it wants to be the absolute boss (the best), it puts on a the cap and takes the ending -est:

Fast

Faster

The Fastest

Example: Your dog is faster than your turtle, but your cat is the fastest at escaping responsibility.

2. The "Lazy Star" Rule (Long Adjectives)

If an adjective is long and complicated (e.g.: beautiful, expensive), it's too elegant to tack on any "-ers" at the end. It doesn't want to sweat. So it hires an assistant; more or

the most:

Beautiful

More beautiful

The most beautiful.

Logic: You won't say "beautifuler" because it sounds like you're trying to swallow a biscuit without drinking it [*przełknąć herbatnika bez popijania*].

3. The Big Three Irregulars

There are those who don't care about rules and change their identities as if they were in the witness protection program. You just have to drill them [*wkuć na pamięć*]:

Good

Bad

Far

Better

Worse

Farther / Further

The Best

The Worst

The Farthest /Furthest

4. The "Identical" (as... as) Construction

If you want to say that something is as awful or brilliant as something else, you use the "as... as" construction. It's a linguistic equals sign.

My coffee is as hot as lava.

This is the only time when an adjective doesn't change anything; it sits comfortably between two "ases".

Examples of use:

154. A DATE IN LONDON

Vincent from Paris and Joanne from London tried to arrange a date via FaceTime, which, given their cultural connection, was doomed from the start [od początku było skazane na porażkę]. Vincent, a proud Parisian, thought London was just "a slightly uglier suburb [przedmieścia] of Paris," and Joanne claimed that in France even coffee tasted pretentious.

"Let's meet in Trafalgar Square", Joanne suggested. "It's the heart of London."

"D'accord," Vincent replied, adjusting his scarf. "But that's terribly clichéd [strasznie oklepane]. Can't we meet somewhere with some soul? Like Place de la Concorde?"

"Vincent, that's in another country."

"For someone who loves, there are no boundaries, Joanne. But fine, let's have your square with the pigeons."

On Saturday at 2 p.m., Joanne stood under Nelson's Column, fighting the wind that was trying to blow her umbrella inside out [próbował wywinąć jej parasol na drugą stronę]. Vincent wasn't there. She dialed his number.

"Where are you?" I'm standing under a lion!

"I'm standing under a lion too, Joanne! But I have to admit, your London has become incredibly... French. I can see the Eiffel Tower from here!"

Joanne froze [tu: zamarła].

"Vincent... Are you in Paris?"

"Of course! Trafalgar Square commemorates [przypomina] a battle we lost! I thought you wanted me to wait for you in Paris as a sign of peace [na znak pokoju], in a square that should be called that if history had been more just!"

"There's no such square in Paris, Vincent!"

"Exactly! That's why I'm standing in Place du Trocadéro and imagining it's London, only with better food."

Joanne sighed deeply.

"So you're sitting in a café in Paris, and I'm soaking [moknę] in London because you decided British geography was just a suggestion?"

"Mais oui! That's what I call romanticism, Joanne. Now describe to me that lion you're standing under, and I'll draw it on a napkin [to ja sobie narysuję go na serwetce] and we'll pretend we're drinking coffee together.



155. LOOKING FOR A SUBWAY STATION

Vincent, a native Parisian with impeccably styled bangs and a scarf tied so tightly he could barely breathe [z nienagannie

ułożoną grzywką i apaszką zawiązaną tak ciasno, że ledwo oddychał], stood in the middle of Piccadilly Circus and felt his French pride slowly evaporate [wyparowuje].

"Excusez-moi," he asked a passerby, giving him a look filled with existential pain. "Where can I find the nearest Subway? My legs are no longer cooperating."

The polite Londoner smiled broadly and pointed across the street. Vincent, already visualizing the elegant train car hurtling [pędzący] toward the hotel, set off briskly [ruszył dziarsko] in the indicated direction. Five minutes later, he stood in front of a door, from behind which came the intense aroma of... roast turkey [pieczonego indyka] and honey-mustard sauce.

"Mon Dieu..." he whispered, looking at the menu with its six- and one-foot sandwiches. "Is London so poor that they've turned the subway stations into eateries [jadłodajnie] for giants?" Desperate, he approached another person, this time practically shouting:

"I don't want to eat! I want to go underground! Where's the Subway entrance?!"

"Oh, dear", laughed the old lady with the dog. "If you're looking for a train, look for those big red circles with the word 'Underground' written on them. Or just say: "The Tube".

Vincent froze. "Underground"? "The Tube"? It sounded like the names of techno clubs, not a means of transportation. For the next fifteen minutes, he passed ten different subway entrances, completely ignoring them as he stubbornly searched for the sign he knew from American movies.

When he finally, after an hour of wandering [błądzenia], took the escalator to the proper station, he sighed with relief [westchnął z ulgą]. But seeing a map with a hundred colored lines that looked like a plate of overcooked spaghetti, he muttered under his breath:

"Pff... At least in Paris, you know that if it smells like cheese and hopelessness, you're on the Metro." In London you have to go through the sandwich bar first.



156. WHERE IS OUR EMBASSY?

Vincent, after his traumatic experience at a sandwich shop disguised as a "subway", decided to stick to tried-and-true national principles [trzymać się sprawdzonych, narodowych pryncypiów]. He had to get to the French Embassy.

"I won't be fooled this time", he muttered, adjusting his scarf. "The Embassy is a serious institution. It has to be where there's luxury, elegance, and people who know how