

A TRIP TO THE CITY

Estevan had always lived in the country (* 1) and always wanted to live there, too. He was a farmer. He grew corn and wheat. He had three cows, two pigs, one goat, and seventeen chickens – eighteen, if you counted the one that he had for dinner the night before his trip. And during dinner that night was when he told his wife that he would be going into the city the next day to do some business.

“But you hate (V1) the city, dear,” his wife said.

“That’s right, Sara, I do, but there’s business that needs taking care of. I’ve got to go.”

He didn’t have any problems getting a ticket for the train at the ticket window. “One ticket to the city,” was all he said to the man behind the window who within a moment slid a blue train ticket along the counter and under the window. “Thanks,” he said, and got on the train.

The rest of the day would not be that easy. Trains were not a problem for Estevan, but the subway was something that this man from the country knew nothing about.

Estevan found himself in the middle of the city at a subway station (* 2). He was looking at the ticket machine and wondering where the ticket man was. Was he behind all those buttons? Estevan stroked his beard and wondered what he would do. Everyone was

getting their tickets and hustling throughout the station so quickly. Estevan felt uncomfortable. He also felt a little embarrassed (V2) standing in front of the ticket machines, not knowing how to get a ticket out from them.

“Excuse me, would you like some help?”

A lady seemed to suddenly appear next to Estevan. She was smiling and seemed quite relaxed compared with all the other people who were rushing around to and from their trains.

Even though Estevan was a little bit shy, he didn't mind telling the stranger, whose name was Ella, that he needed help. And she did help him. She helped him with the patience (V3) and consideration of an expert teacher. Estevan was so pleased with Ella's help that he decided he didn't mind the city as much as he had previously thought (* 3). In fact, he was so grateful to Ella that he sent her a big bag of fresh corn two weeks after she had helped him.

TEXT NOTES

(*1) Estevan had always lived in the country ….

“had”は“have”の過去形です。“lived”は“had”の後に来ているので、この場合“live”の過去分詞形になります。「had + 過去分詞形」で、いわゆる『過去完了形』です。過去のある時期からある時期まで、何らかの状態が続いていたことを表します。

(*2) Estevan found himself in the middle of the city at a subway station.

“found”は“find”の過去形です。“find”は、自動詞と他動詞の2用法ありますが、自動詞の場合の意味は、裁判用語で「評決を下す」になります。ここでは、“find”の、いくつかある意味のうち、「気づく」がふさわしく、その意味になるときは他動詞ですから、後に目的語が必要です。主語について、その人が「気づいた」と言いたければ、主格に合う再帰代名詞を使って表現します。ここでは、主語は“Estevan”で、男性なので、“he - his - him - himself”と変化しますから、“himself”が“found”の後に現れているのです。

(*3) He didn't mind the city as much as he had previously thought.

“mind”は「気にする」で、その前に“didn't”があるので「気にならなかった」。“as ~ as”で「…と同じくらい」。“previously”は「以前に」という意味なので、“he had previously thought”は、「以前から思っていた」となり、全体では、「街が、以前ほどは気にならなくなった」という意味になります。

VOCABULARY

(V1) hate

「嫌う、嫌がる」の意味があります。憎悪感が表れる語で、“My mother hates dogs.”だと、「お母さんは犬が大嫌い。」となります。食べ物の好き嫌いも、口にしたくないほど嫌いである場合、“I hate spinach.”「私はほうれん草が大嫌い。」と表現できます。本文では、この“hate”が使っていることから、エスティバンが心から街を嫌いだったということが分かります。

言いにくいことをきりだすときには、“I hate to say it, but~”で始めると、「言いにくいことですが~、言っては悪いけれど」と前置きできます。

(V2) embarrassed

失敗して困ったり、他人の目が気になったりしたときの感情を表すことばで、「恥ずかしい、ばつの悪い、困った」の意味があります。

性格が「恥ずかしがりやだ」という時には“shy”を使いますが、例えば、人前で転んでしまって恥ずかしかったなど、何か意外な出来事で、「恥ずかしい思いをした」場合には、この“embarrassed”を使います。

日本語では同様に「恥ずかしい」と表現できても、英語では気持ちや状況によって、使う語彙が異なることが分かりますね。

(V3) patience

「我慢、忍耐、辛抱」を表す名詞です。様態を表す前置詞の“with”「~で、~を示して、」と一緒に使って、“with patience”で、「根気よく、辛抱して、我慢して」となります。例えば、“wait with patience”で「辛抱強く待つ」、「work with patience」で「根気よく働く」と言えます。

相手にちょっと我慢してがんばってほしいときには、“Have a little patience!”「ちょっと我慢して。」と言えばよいのです。この“patience”は名詞ですが、“patient”にすると形容詞「辛抱強い、我慢強い」となり、“Be patient!”で「我慢して！耐えるんだよ！」と言えます。