



# Episode 31: Hannah's Story Transcript

**Bree:** Today's story is about birthday parties. Nuestra protagonista, Hannah, va a cumplir pronto los 30 años, y en vez de hacer una super fiesta de cumpleaños, decide irse sola a la India...

**Hannah:** I love going to other peoples' birthday parties but the idea of hosting my own birthday party makes me feel sick. So that's why I decided to do the typical thing and take myself off to India for one month.

**Bree:** In today's story you'll hear Hannah talk about sightseeing in India and discovering the local culture. Along the way, she makes friends with other backpackers staying in hostels all over the country. Her plan is still to spend her birthday alone, but something unexpected is about to happen. Keep listening to find out what that is... Hey there listeners! We are so excited to bring you this first episode of Season 3 of Into the Story! Si quieres apoyarnos para seguir produciendo nuevos y mejores episodios, comparte este podcast con un amigo o amiga que necesite (un empujoncito) con su inglés. Y si utilizas apple podcasts, déjanos una valoración de 5 estrellas. Thank you so much! Ok antes de escuchar la historia de hoy, veamos 5 palabras y expresiones interesantes que utiliza HANNAH en este episodio:

1. Firstly, the expression 'to go south' or 'to head south'. You might hear English speakers use both these expressions to mean 'deteriorate', 'fall' or 'go down'. For example if someone says 'business is going south', they mean that business is not doing well or perhaps activity levels are falling. In today's podcast, Hannah describes her experience in Barcelona as 'going south' after she separates from her boyfriend and a few of her friends leave town. 'To go south'.
2. Next, 'to end up'. This phrasal verb, 'to end up' means to unexpectedly arrive at a place or to find yourself in an unexpected situation. For example, you could say, 'I ended up going to the party even though I was feeling sick' or 'After wanting sushi for dinner, I ended up ordering pizza.' 'To end up'.
3. A bunch of. The expression 'a bunch of' is used to mean a collection of things. Most commonly in English, we talk about 'a bunch of flowers' or 'a bunch of grapes'. But in more informal conversations, you might hear people using 'a bunch of' to mean 'a lot of something'. For instance 'a bunch of people' 'a lot of work' or 'a bunch of work' 'a lot of work'.
4. Next up is the expression 'to feed off'. 'To feed off' can have a few different meanings in English. If someone says 'the animals feed off the plants' it means that the animals eat the plants. But if 'football players feed off the crowd's excitement' this means that they get support or energy from the audience. Hannah, our storyteller, uses 'feed off' to mean 'get inspiration'. You'll hear her talk about planning her trip around India and 'feeding off the ideas' of other travellers. 'To feed off'.
5. And finally, to pull up. This last phrasal verb in this story is used to talk about vehicles coming to a stop. Instead of simply saying 'the car stopped in front of the house' you could say 'the car pulled up in front of the house'. 'To pull up'.

And just one thing. Os avisamos que la baja calidad del audio en esta historia hace que sea un poquito más difícil de entender. Pero es una buena práctica para cuando tienes que hablar o escuchar inglés por videollamada y la calidad no es óptima!

¿Quieres la transcripción, la ficha de vocabulario, y un test de comprensión de este episodio? Sigue el enlace en las notas del programa en tu mismo reproductor de podcasts. Ok let's get into the story...



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**Hannah:** I'm Hannah. I'm here in Barcelona. I've been living here now for almost 5 years. But originally I am from Liverpool which is in the north of England.

In the year before my 30th birthday I had been here in Barcelona for about 2 years. I made some really good friends. I had been dating one of my colleagues at work. Everything was going really well, I was happy with my job.

And then as people do in this city, a lot of my friends decided to leave which I was obviously really sad about. Things went south a little bit with the boyfriend and we decided to break up. And yeh I just felt a little bit lost... a little bit of who am I? What am I doing? Where am I going? So that's why I decided to do the typical thing and take myself off to India for 1 month on a little voyage of discovery.

So it was decided! Hannah's plan was to spend her 30th birthday travelling on her own around India. She had never really enjoyed organising birthday parties anyway...

I love going to other peoples' birthday parties but the idea of me hosting my own birthday party makes me feel sick like the... the pressure and the stress. Are people going to come? Are they going to have a nice time? Am I going to have to be the center of attention? No, not for me. Not for me.

So, by the time my birthday came around, I would have been there already for 3 weeks. And in my final week, the plan was to fly down to Goa, have some time at the beach, chill out, maybe do some hiking, get a massage, all the typical stuff. Just thinking, doing my own thing. Totally on my own.

As soon as I landed, I met a girl, Helen, who was from a town actually not far from me in the UK. We decided to take a taxi together from the airport to the hostel and that was sort of our first taste of what it would be like being in India where it was just doors open and people just come towards you, like a wall of people. You want a taxi? Get in mine. No, get in mine! Get in mine. Get in mine. Let me carry your bag. No, I'll carry your bag. And it's like woah, incredibly overwhelming. But it's all new, it's exciting. We actually ended up in this little tuk tuk going along the highway and holding on to our bags in this tiny little thing as cars are racing past. The tuk tuks are winding past. Even that was an adventure.

Delhi is insane. People and cars and tuk tuks and stuff everywhere! There is not a moment of silence! It's huge, absolutely huge! Everywhere you go there's the beep beep of the horns. There are cows in the middle of the highway. There are cows just walking along. I mean it's a beautiful city but it's just chaos. But chaos in the best possible way.

**Bree:** Hannah spent her first days in India exploring the city of Delhi, and in the evenings, she often came back to the hostel, where she met other fellow travellers, and shared her experiences with them.

**Hannah:** In the hostel I met a whole bunch of other people. And in the day we would tend to do our own things but at night we would sit in the hostel. We would eat, we would drink and talk about our plans.



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So it was nice to be in the hostel and sort of feed off other people's ideas and get some ideas of what to do and where to go because I had planned basically nothing apart from going to Goa at the end. Everything else was totally unplanned.

So after Delhi I went to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. I arrived really early in the morning at like 6am to see the sunrise. There was hardly anyone there. So it was really beautiful. It was really stunning because it's not just the main building that you see in all the pictures. There are lots of smaller buildings all around it. And there are these beautiful gardens. It was on a river. I was feeling so far away from my everyday life and just excited really for the rest of the trip.

After Agra, I headed down to Pushka which is like a very small, very religious town. There is a huge lake in the middle where people go and bathe themselves and they leave offerings to the gods. So I spent a few days there and when I was there I met a guy who is actually now a really good friend, José. He's from Honduras but he lives in Amsterdam and I also met 2 couples who were travelling from Malta. We would eat out together, we did a hike up the hill to watch the sunrise together. One night in the hostel, everyone was sharing their stories about what they were there for and I told them that oh you know, it was my birthday coming up and my plan was to fly down to Goa in a few weeks' time. They were all like, oh that's a really cool plan, what a great way to celebrate your 30th! You know because it's meant to be a big one, it's meant to be special. But no one else had any plans to head down south.

The most surprising thing about India up to this point, would probably be just how incredibly different it is from everything we know here. The lifestyle is totally different. Religion is really important and everywhere you go the streets are decorated with these beautiful murals to the gods and goddesses. There is so much colour. There's so much... and obviously there is so much poverty but even in the poverty there seems to be happiness.

**Bree:** Hannah continued travelling alone around India, exploring, learning about the local culture and making friends along the way.

**Hannah:** So yeah I stayed in a few more hostels after this one in Pushkar and met a lot of different people. One of the nice things about the trip is that everyone tends to do, if not the same route, the same cities. And also there are not a lot of hostels so you are meeting people and maybe you don't see them for a few days but then you bump into them again. Then you see someone who had met someone that you had met before and there are these very tenuous connections between everyone and so yeah that was very nice. It was never really... even though I was alone, I was never really, I was never really alone.

**Bree:** Before Hannah knew it, her birthday was around the corner. After a camping trip in the desert with some of her new friends, she said her goodbyes and prepared to make her way down to Goa, in the south of India, on her own.

**Hannah:** In the morning that I was flying down there, I arrived at the airport and this airport is tiny.



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It's basically like a shed. One single building with one door at the front and with one door at the back. And if you wanted to, you could walk around the side to the runway. There was nothing. Just me, in the middle of the desert outside this one building, backpack on.

**Bree:** Then, as Hannah waited in the middle of nowhere for the airport to open and her plane to arrive, the most unexpected thing happened.

**Hannah:** And then yeh as I am waiting, two taxis pull up. And I'm like ok, more people for the flight, cool. Then out of the taxi gets all these people that I had met while travelling. There was about 11 of us. And yes they had decided that they were going to surprise me. And they were all going to fly down to Goa with me. At first I didn't believe what I was seeing. I thought ok, this is a mirage. This isn't happening. And yeah as I came to realise wow they are actually here! They are actually coming with me, this is really happening. I was so happy that I cried. So I am standing there crying, tears of happiness and yeh just disbelief that these people her that I hadn't known 3 weeks ago had decided to make the effort to come with me to celebrate my birthday. It was amazing.

**Bree:** It wasn't quite the 30th birthday Hannah had planned, but it was a pleasant surprise to spend her special day accompanied by a group of friendly faces.

**Hannah:** So my birthday was the next day and we arrived in Goa. It was the middle of the monsoon season, which I had known. The plan that we had made the night before which was to go to the beach and hang out and have some sort of barbecue obviously could not happen because it was just monsoon rains. So we did some googling and we found out that there was a waterpark nearby. So we put on our bikinis and we put on our flip flops and we walked like 40 minutes to this waterpark in these insane monsoon rains. We arrived there and there was obviously no one else there. There was just this group of us on this crazy waterpark that obviously had no safety rules or regulations. These slides when you go down and we fly up in the air and you are banging back down again. Yeh it was just a really fun day. And then in the afternoon, we went back to the hostel, and the guys had told the guys at the hostel that it was my birthday so they brought a cake, everyone sang happy birthday and there were drinks, there was food and yeah we spent the night in the hostel with the staff having a little private party there. It was nothing like what I had expected but yeh it was amazing. I think it was probably my best birthday to date. Just because it was such a surprise, it was so different and I just felt surrounded by love by these people who were essentially strangers. And yeh it just showed me that there is a lot of love in the world and a lot of people coming together to make the best of the situation and yeh it was just lovely.

**Bree:** These days, Hannah can still be found enjoying life in Barcelona. Her last couple birthdays have been a bit more conventional, but now, she knows that the key to having an excellent day is to be surrounded by nature and good company. Hannah is still in contact with some of the friends who surprised her that day in India, and she hopes to be able to visit them very soon. Para escuchar los más de 30 episodios de Into the Story y no perderte los siguientes, suscríbete ahora en Spotify, Apple Podcasts, o en tu reproductor de podcasts favorito. Ok everyone, until next we hope you have a good time or at least a story to tell.