



## MOONSHADOW by Cat Stevens

Focus on: 1st Conditional – *If + Will / Won't*—FEG 3e Ch. 3

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### Notes for the Teacher

#### 1. Preparing the Song

Find the lyrics for “Moonshadow” by Cat Stevens on the Internet. In this lesson, students will arrange clause and phrase elements to match the lyrics they hear. The lyrics will be typed out and then cut into strips. To prepare the lyrics, enlarge the font and break the song into clause elements, and where necessary, phrase elements. For example, the following line can be separated on two strips:

*oh, if I ever lose my hands,*                      *I won't have to work no more*

The line below can be separated in this way:

*I'm being followed*                      *by a moon shadow, moon shadow, moon shadow*

Prepare enough sets of strips so that each pair of students can have a set. Mix up the order of the strips and put each set into a separate envelope.

Find an audio file of the song. After listening, the class can also see a video of the song in concert at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtgXus3eill>

#### 2. Song background

Cat Stevens was a very popular singer/songwriter in the folk music style, from the late 1960s through the late 1970s. He was born in London but was internationally known. He more or less ended his career when he made a religious conversion and changed his name in 1978, although he has made charitable appearances since then. He came out of retirement with a new CD in 2006. Cat Stevens once called the song “Moonshadow”, released in 1971, his “Optimist’s Anthem.”

#### 3. Grammar background

The grammar focus of this song is the 1st conditional, the use of **if-clause** with **will** to express a possible future condition.

**if + subject + base form of the verb , subject + will/won't + base form of the verb**

*If I (ever) lose (my legs) , I won't moan.*

*If I (ever) lose (my hands) , I won't have (to work)*

*If we finish (early) , we will have (time to review the answers)*

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- The clauses can also be reversed with no change in meaning.

*I won't have to work if I ever lose my hands.*

*We will have time to review the answers if we finish early.*

**4. Vocabulary**

This is a list of words students at this level may need help with. The definition given deals only with the word as it is used in the song.

- **plough/plow** (verb): to dig up farmland, usually in straight rows, in preparation for planting
- **to leap** (verb): to jump gracefully, like a ballerina or a horse over a fence
- **faithful** (adjective): loyal to someone or something

**5. Student Worksheet Notes:****After you listen:**

#4 - The *if*-clause is combined with *won't* to indicate the future.

#5 - The error is the double negative in "I won't have to \_\_\_\_\_ no more."

#6 - "Are you going to stay the night?"

**Writing:**

In order not to influence the students' interpretation of the song, the writing topic has not been included on the students' page.

**Topic:** Have you ever heard the saying "Every cloud has a silver lining," or "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade?" Discuss what they might mean. Is there an expression with the same meaning in your language? Now, write an essay/paragraph on a time when either you or someone you know was able to rise above a negative situation and create something good from it.



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### Student Worksheet

#### While you listen

1. Before you open your envelope, **listen** to the song. What did you hear, understand? **Share** with the class.
2. Now **empty** your envelope and **place** all slips of paper right side up and spread out so you can see them. **Listen** again to the song, and **arrange** the slips in the correct order.

#### After you listen

**Discuss in small groups. Then share with the class:**

3. Think about the overall mood of this song. How does it make you feel? Why?
4. Cat Stevens sings about some unpleasant possibilities. Is there a contradiction between some of the things he sings about and the overall mood of the song?
5. What is your interpretation of “Moonshadow?”

**Work with your partner:**

6. Look again at your lyric strips. Find the parts of the song that begin with the word **if**. Are these parts about the past, present, or future? How do you know?
7. What is the grammar error repeated several times in this song? **Hint:** It isn't about **if**. It is not correct English and is not acceptable in academic environments or in formal speech, but it is sometimes used in colloquial speech according to ethnic and regional backgrounds.
8. Which line in the song is about the future but does not use **will/won't**?

**Writing:** Your teacher will give you a topic.