

Transcript

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[introduction music]

Welcome to Easy Stories in English, the podcast that will take your English from OK to Good, and from Good to Great.

I am Ariel Goodbody, your host for this show. Today's story is for pre-intermediate learners. The name of the story is *His Latest Experiment*. You can find a transcript of the episode at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Experiment](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Experiment). That's [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Experiment](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Experiment). There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

A while ago I went to visit a friend in Cambridge. Cambridge is a city about 40 minutes away from London by train, but of course you probably know it because of the university. The University of Cambridge is made of 31 colleges, which are kind of like smaller universities within the main university. I studied at King's College, Cambridge. I **graduated** in 2016, which means I finished studying there. This was the first time I came back to the city after graduating.

I was a bit worried, because I didn't have a great time studying at Cambridge. I thought the city might have lots of bad memories for me. But actually, I found the opposite. The city didn't have a strong effect on me. I had lots of memories which I told my friend about, but it felt like a very different part of my life. I had **moved on**—those feelings didn't have an effect on me anymore.

Part of the reason I visited Cambridge is because my friend invited me to go see a play with her. She does a lot of theatre in Cambridge, and she had some friends performing in a show called *Kinky Boots*. *Kinky Boots* is a musical, a play with singing in it. It is about a factory owner in the north of England. The north of England is an area that used to make a lot of money, but now doesn't—it has a weak **economy**. In *Kinky Boots*, the man owns a shoe factory, but they are not making money. So he decides to change the family business and make shoes for drag queens.

Drag is a kind of performance art where people play with **gender**—drag queens are usually men who dress up as women, and drag kings are usually women who dress up as men. Anyway, in *Kinky Boots*, the shoe factory starts making boots for drag queens, because most shoes are not made well for drag performers. It is a very funny show, but it is also **heartwarming**—it has lots of bits that make you cry as well. And the music is great.

I really enjoyed watching the show. It wasn't a professional performance, but it was still really good. Afterwards, we went to the **after-show party**—when actors finish doing a show, they usually have a big party at the end. It was very fun. We also went to a festival called Strawberry Fair during the day, so it was a very long day!

If you want to see some pictures from the day, go over to the transcript at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Experiment](https://www.instagram.com/Ce03aQ0NCCb/), or follow me on Instagram [@arielgoodbody](https://www.instagram.com/Ce03aQ0NCCb/).
[https://www.instagram.com/p/Ce03aQ0NCCb/](https://www.instagram.com/Ce03aQ0NCCb/)

Today's story is a piece of **flash fiction**. Flash fiction is when you write a story that is 1000 words or less. There are specific types of flash fiction. For example, a drabble is a story that is 100 words exactly. Flash fiction is very interesting to write, as you have to move through the story very quickly. I went to a flash fiction writing class a few months ago, and I really enjoyed it, so I have been writing some more flash fiction recently.

This story does contain some mathematics. I hope that's OK. If you find it confusing: don't worry, so do I! But you should still be able to understand and enjoy the story even if you're not great at maths.

OK, I'll just explain some words that are in today's story.

A **disaster** is when something really bad happens, something truly awful. For example, coronavirus could be called a disaster. An earthquake, tornado or tsunami is a natural disaster. If you fail an exam completely and get 0 marks, it is a disaster.

An **earthling** is someone who lives on our planet, planet Earth. 'Earthling' is a word that's often used in science fiction books and films. The aliens call us earthlings, because it makes us sound more strange.

A **calculation** is something you do in mathematics. For example, $2 + 2 = 4$ is a calculation, but it is a very simple calculation. Some calculations are more difficult, for example, $12 + 6 - 5i = 18 - 5i$.

Magnesium is an element, one of the basic things that make up the universe. The chemical symbol for magnesium is Mg. Magnesium is very important for our bodies. For example, some people take magnesium pills to help them sleep.

An **error** is a mistake, when you do something wrong. We use 'error' to talk more about machines and computers. For example, many people will remember using Windows computers growing up, and hearing this awful error noise: [Windows error sound]. That means something has gone wrong with the computer, and sometimes you have to fix the error.

Coding is programming, when you write programs for computers. Coding is quite a difficult skill. Some people say coding is like learning a new language. Actually, coders use separate programming languages to write code, such as Python, Java, C++ and so on.

Dogs don't shout like people, they **bark**. When a dog barks, it sounds like *woof woof*. Dogs usually bark because they are angry or scared.

When someone is going to have a baby, they are **pregnant**. They have a **pregnancy**. Pregnant people have big stomachs, because there is a baby growing inside them. Pregnancies usually last nine months before the pregnant person gives birth. If the pregnancy is much shorter or longer, it can cause problems.

Rounding is something you do in mathematics. When you have a complicated number, like 34,294, it can be easier to round it. If you round 34,294 to the nearest 100, then you get 34,300—you have rounded up to 34,300. If you round 34,294 to the nearest 1000, then you get 34,000—you have rounded down to 34,000.

Heaven is the place where good people go when they die. There is Heaven in most religions. Heaven is where God lives, and it is a very happy place.

Your **lifespan** is the span of your life—how long you live. The average lifespan in the UK is 81.2 years. If you are healthy, you will probably have a longer lifespan.

When we say something **times** something, it is the same as multiplying in mathematics. We use a cross, or an X, to show multiplying or 'timesing' something. For example, two times

two is four ($2 \times 2 = 4$), three times two is six ($3 \times 2 = 6$) and ten times two is twenty ($10 \times 2 = 20$). If someone is fifty times stronger than you, then they are very strong indeed.

Just a small announcement: the Patreon Q&A live streams are changing and becoming pre-recorded videos. That means you can send in your questions whenever and see me answer them in the videos once a month.

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A big thank-you to my new patron, Станислав Черноморский. And a special thank-you to my Teacher's Pet patrons: Vera Kaufmann and Rüdiger Richter.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

His Latest Experiment

God's latest experiment was a **disaster**. He had been very busy lately working on Kushiel 5, a planet far away from Earth. Somehow, he had lost his notes on the **earthlings**. That wasn't a problem. It happened sometimes. The creatures of Kushiel 5 weren't too different, so he copied over his **calculations** and changed them a bit. It was lazy, yes, but he was God. He had made a whole day, Sunday, just for resting, so he could copy some calculations if he wanted to.

But something had gone very wrong. At first, He couldn't understand what it was. Every new earthling was born like normal. They were small and cried a lot, and needed to be fed and given milk. There were no parents, because these earthlings were the first, so God used his million arms to hold them and his thousand breasts to feed them. But the babies didn't change. They stayed as babies, and God couldn't understand why.

Then, suddenly, fifty years later, the first group of earthlings changed very quickly. They grew beards and breasts, grew long hair and went from crying to shouting. Their hair was so long that they kept falling over. He knew he should have made their hair shorter.

The earthlings did not know how to look after themselves. They had gone from babies to adults in a few minutes. They couldn't speak properly, and they started fighting and having sex with each other.

'Stop it!' God said, pulling two humans apart. But there were too many for him to stop, even with a million arms.

Had He added too little **magnesium**? Or perhaps there was an **error** in the brain **coding**? He reread his calculations, but he couldn't find any errors. And the coding worked fine on the creatures of Kushiel 5.

He had also tried to make some animals to live with the earthlings. They were little things called dogs. They would accompany them through life and help them find food. The creatures of Kushiel 5 had a similar animal, called a *hflungchapfst*.

But the dogs were a disaster as well. They stayed all small and blind, and then after fifty years they grew, **barked** a few times and died, leaving grey-haired bodies all over the clouds. God had to stop the earthlings from killing each other *and* clean up all the dead dogs!

Annoyed, He let the earthlings have sex and waited to see how their **pregnancies** would go. He waited and waited. Finally, after 37.5 years, the earthlings gave birth and everything made sense.

How stupid he was! It was nothing more than a simple **rounding error**. Time did not flow in **Heaven**, and so God had to choose a time for each creature he made. The **lifespans** on Kushiel 5 were fifty **times** longer than on Earth. When He'd copied over the calculations, He'd made a rounding error which meant the earthlings and dogs only aged once every fifty years, but He hadn't changed their lifespans.

God laughed, destroyed the earthlings and started his calculations again. One day, He'd get it *just* right.

THE END

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