

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 *The North Wind and the Sun*. You can find a transcript of the episode at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/WindL2](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/WindL2). That's [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/WindL2](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/WindL2). There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

This is a levelled-up version of a beginner story. You can listen to the beginner-level version of *The North Wind and the Sun* at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Wind](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/Wind).

So, here we are with the second episode after my comeback. It still feels a bit strange, to be honest! I hope you're all doing well and enjoying these episodes. I am recording them in advance so that I don't have to stress about them, but of course that means that it will be a while before I hear your comments.

At the time of recording, it's still May, and I have just come back from a writing **retreat**. A retreat is when you go and spend a few days or a few weeks in a quiet place, away from your usual busy life, to rest and recover. Writing retreats usually take place in quiet country houses, often with poor WiFi. They give you a chance to relax, get creative and do lots of writing.

This retreat in particular took place in Shropshire, a beautiful part of the UK with lots of hills and forests. It was a tutored retreat, which means that every morning we had three hours of discussion and writing exercises with a published author and a writing coach. The author is called Andrew Taylor, and he has written lots of historical crime novels—books about crimes that took place in the past, mostly in London. Our writing coach, Janine Giovanni, worked for a long time in the publishing industry, helping people get their books into the world. She **coached** us, which means she gave us advice on how to make energy and time for writing, and how to deal with common problems.

When we weren't learning from Andrew and Janine, we cooked meals together, went for walks in the lovely countryside and, of course, did a lot of writing! The house we were staying in, The Hurst, was absolutely beautiful and a perfect place to get creative and write. I really felt at home there, and made some amazing friends with other authors. It was my first time going on a writing retreat, and when I go on another one, it will definitely be with the same organisation, Arvon.

If you want to see some pictures from the retreat, go to the transcript at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/WindL2](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/WindL2), or [follow me on Instagram @arielgoodbody](https://www.instagram.com/arielgoodbody).
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CeJRrTLobHF/>

The original version of today's story, the beginner-level one, was one of the first episodes of the podcast. I'm much better at podcasting now, I have to say, and when I listen back to that episode, I can hear how much my voice has changed. I'm happy to be doing this story again, because it is a simple folk tale that I like a lot. This story is actually one of the stories in my book *Easy Stories in English*, which I mentioned at the start of the episode. For more information on that, go to EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Book.

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

To **bathe** means to have a bath, to wash yourself. Most people in the UK bathe or shower once a day. In hotter countries, people often bathe twice a day. 'Bathe' can also mean to wash someone else, for example, to bathe a baby.

Harmony means peace, when everything is calm and works well together. Originally, harmony referred only to music, when several musical notes go together and sound beautiful, but we also use it now to talk about peace and calmness. When things are in harmony, they work well together.

Strength means being strong. Everyone has their strengths and their weaknesses, things that they are strong or weak at. Sometimes in job interviews, the interviewer asks what your biggest strength is. It's such a horrible question to answer!

'**Bam**' is the sound of something hitting something. If you say, 'I want Kim to buy me an ice cream, and if she doesn't, then BAM!' that means you are going to hit Kim if she doesn't buy you an ice cream, because the sound of you hitting her will be 'bam'. But if someone hits Kim, then BAM! She'll hit you back!

Kindness means being kind, being nice. We often tell children that kindness is important.

A **weakling** is a weak person. We use the word 'weakling' as an insult, for example, 'Of course you can't fight Kim! You're a weakling.'

If you stop someone from getting air into their body, you **suffocate** them. You can suffocate someone by putting your hands around their neck, but this is not very nice!

When something is **bitter cold**, it is very cold. For example, Siberia in the winter is bitter cold.

When you **hold on tight** to something, you hold onto it very strongly and don't want to let go. If it is very windy outside, you should hold on tight to your umbrella, or the wind might blow it away. When you go to a theme park like Disneyworld, and you ride a roller coaster, it's also important to hold on tight so that you don't fall off.

When it is very hot, or you do a lot of exercise, you **sweat**. When you sweat, water comes out of your body, and you start to smell bad. Some people sweat a lot, and others sweat less.

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A big thank-you to my new supporters on Patreon: Walter and Marie Barth. And a special thank-you to my Teacher's Pet patrons: Vera Kaufmann and Rüdiger Richter.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

The North Wind and the Sun

Nature is a wonderful thing. We have water, which we can drink from, as well as swim and bathe in. We have fire, which lets us cook food and keep warm. We have trees, which give us fruit and wood. All the parts of nature work in harmony, allowing us to live on Earth.

In particular, there are two very important parts of nature: the North Wind and the Sun. The North Wind lets us know when the weather is about to change, and the Sun keeps us warm and gives us light.

But the North Wind and the Sun work a bit differently to the other parts of nature. Instead of working in harmony, they always argue over which one is better than the other, and in particular they argue about one thing: what being strong actually means.

The North Wind thinks that strength comes from power. If you have power, you can do what you want, and everyone has to respect you. The North Wind sees how humankind goes to war and kills each other, and therefore she knows that power is what makes you strong.

'The humans understand,' she says to herself. 'The strongest person is always the leader, and if anyone annoys them, BAM! It's over for them. Strength is power.'

The Sun thinks differently. She thinks that strength comes from kindness. If you are kind, everyone will like you, and in your time of need there will always be a friend there to help you. She sees how humans fall in love with each other, form families and close groups of friends, and therefore she knows that kindness is what makes you strong.

'The humans understand,' the Sun says to herself. 'Even if you are not the leader of a country, the happiest humans are always the kindest. Because when you are kind to the world, the world is kind to you.'

One day, the North Wind and the Sun were having their usual argument.

'You're just a little weakling, really,' said the North Wind. 'You have all that sunshine and heat, but you couldn't hurt a fly.'

'I don't need to hurt anyone, thank you very much.'

'You're wrong! What if all the clouds in the sky came to suffocate you? Would you just sit there and die?'

'And why would the clouds attack me? They are my friends.'

'Just imagine! What if it happened? What would your kindness do for you then?'

'That's a stupid question, because it would never happen. I'm not like you, I don't try to make enemies.'

'Ugh, I can't stand you!' said the North Wind. 'Fine, since I'm such a good friend, I'll help you understand. See that man down there?'

The Sun looked down at the earth, where a man was walking along a country road. It was winter, and there was a bitter cold in the air, so the man was wrapped tightly in his coat.

'Here's how it will go,' said the North Wind. 'We'll both try to make that man take off his coat. The person who does it first wins. If you win, I'll admit that kindness is what makes you strong. But if I win, then you have to agree that power is what makes you strong. Got it?'

The Sun smiled. 'Fine. I will play your game.'

'Me first,' said the North Wind. 'This won't take long.'

The North Wind flew down to the man and blew as hard as she could. The trees started to shake, leaves flew through the air, and all the birds flew away. An icy cold came over the earth.

But instead of removing his coat, the man held it tighter. The more the North Wind blew, the colder it got, and **the tighter the man held his coat**. The North Wind blew and blew, but the man would not take off his coat.

‘Hmm!’ said the North Wind, flying away. ‘I tried my best. If I couldn’t get him to take it off, you certainly won’t be able to. You should give up now.’

The Sun smiled. ‘I think it’s worth a try.’

She moved out from behind the clouds and bathed the world in light. The trees stopped moving, the birds sat on their branches and sang, and the cold earth warmed up.

As the man walked, he started to **sweat**, and, seeing the Sun shining bright, he took off his coat and hung it over his arm. He walked happily along the road, and it was such lovely weather that he stopped and sat in the shade.

‘I don’t understand!’ cried the North Wind. The Sun had just stood there!

The Sun laughed. ‘I told you that strength comes from kindness. Who doesn’t love a warm summer’s day?’

The North Wind couldn’t believe it. ‘I still don’t agree with you. You were just lucky. This guy liked the sunshine, but that doesn’t mean all humans are stupid like that!’

The Sun smiled. ‘We don’t have to agree on everything, you know. I still love you.’

And the North Wind felt very warm and could say nothing more.

THE END

If you enjoyed the story and want to say thank you, you can buy me a coffee on [Ko-Fi](#). Just go to [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com](#) and click the orange button that says [Buy me a coffee!](#) Or you can write me a nice review on Apple Podcasts, or follow me on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), [@arielgoodbody](#). Thank you for listening, and see you in two weeks!