

# 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 beginners. The name of the story is *The Boy Who Knew No Fear*. You can find a transcript of the episode at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1). That's [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1). There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

This is a levelled-down version of a pre-intermediate story. You can listen to the pre-intermediate-level version of *The Boy Who Knew No Fear* at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Fear](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Fear).

Today's story is quite long for a beginner story. So I have decided to break the story into two parts. I'll introduce the vocabulary for part one, and then read it. And then I'll introduce the vocabulary for part two, and read that.

**Stupid** means not intelligent, not clever. It is not nice to call someone stupid. Sometimes, we call ourselves stupid, because we can't do something easy. But of course, nobody listening to this podcast is stupid! You are all very clever.

When you **shudder**, you shake. You move a bit because you are scared or cold. The hairs on your arms stand up. If you don't want to show that you are scared, you can try and stop yourself from shuddering. But sometimes you are so scared that you cannot stop yourself.

Something **scary** makes you feel scared, makes you feel frightened. It is something bad and dangerous. For example, lions are scary, because lions can kill you easily. Many people think clowns are scary. Some people like watching scary films.

A **priest** is a man who works at a church. Priests are very important in the church. Priests read to everyone from the Bible, and they talk to people who are having religious problems.

A **bell** is a metal thing that makes a sound when you shake it. It sounds like [bell sound]. When you go to someone's house, you **ring**, you make sound, their doorbell, so that they know you are in front of the door. By the way, the past tense of ring is **rang**, and the past participle is **rung**. Churches ring their bells on Sunday. People pull on big ropes to ring the church bells.

A **ghost** is a person who has died, but has not left the world. Most people think ghosts are not real, but some people do think ghosts are real. In cartoons like *Scooby Doo*, ghosts usually look like white sheets with eyes and a mouth in them, and they go *oooooh!* In horror

films, ghosts can be very scary. Usually, ghosts do not leave the world because something happened in their life, and they want to change that thing before they leave.

When we say 'if only', we know we can't do something, but we would really like to be able to do it. For example, if I say, 'If only I could speak Thai...', it means that I really want to be able to speak Thai, but I cannot speak Thai. I am thinking about all the things I could do if I could speak Thai. In the UK, we often say things like, 'If only it wasn't raining,' because it often rains, and it's hard to go outside and have fun when it's raining.

**Hanging**, and the past tense is **hanged**, is a way of killing people. You put a rope around their neck, and they are lifted up. Then you take away the floor, so that the rope goes tight around their neck and they cannot breathe. It is a very slow death, so it is used for bad criminals. These days, very few people are hanged, as people think it is not nice. But in the past in Europe, criminals were hanged in big cities, and people came and watched the hangings.

When you **burn** something, you put fire on it. If you put your hand on the cooker and the cooker is on, you will burn your hand and it will go red. If you burn wood, it goes black. If you leave food in the oven for too long, it will also go black.

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OK, so listen and enjoy!

## The Boy Who Knew No Fear

### Part 1

Once there was a father. He had two sons. The older son, Hugh, was clever and could do everything, but the younger son, Anders, was **stupid** and understood nothing. When the father needed help, the older son always helped him, and the younger son did nothing.

But sometimes, the father asked Hugh to go somewhere late at night, and the son was afraid and said, 'Oh no, Father, I'm afraid! I can't go out in the night. It makes me **shudder**.' And when their father told **scary** stories, Hugh said, 'Oh, it makes me shudder!'

Anders sat and listened, but he did not understand. 'He is always saying, "It makes me shudder, it makes me shudder!" It does not make *me* shudder. I do not understand what that means.'

One day, the father said to Anders, 'Listen to me. You are growing up. You are big and strong. You must learn something and get a job. Look at your brother. He works hard while you sit and do nothing.'

'Actually, Father,' he said, 'I do want to learn something. I want to learn how to shudder. I don't understand it.'

Hugh laughed and said, 'God, what a stupid brother I have! He will never do anything good.'

The father said, 'You can easily learn how to shudder, but you will not find a job like that.'

A few days later, a **priest** came to visit the house. The father told him about the problem with Anders. 'When I asked him what job he wanted to do, he said he wanted to learn to shudder!'

'He wants to learn how to shudder?' said the priest. 'Well, he can learn it from me. He can come and live with me, and I will teach him how to shudder.'

So Anders went to live in the priest's house. The priest taught him to **ring the bell** in the church, and every day he rang it. After a few days, the priest woke up in the night, and told Anders to go and ring the bell. *You will soon learn to shudder...* he thought, and went up to the bell before Anders.

The boy wanted to ring the bell, but then he saw a man wearing white. The man was standing at the top of the stairs.

'Who is there?' he said.

But the man in white did not say anything. Anders thought it was a **ghost**.

'Answer me,' said Anders, 'or leave. I have to ring the bell.'

The priest did not move. *I will not move, because then the boy will think I am a ghost,* thought the priest.

'What do you want here?' shouted Anders. 'Say something, or I will throw you down the stairs!'

The priest thought, *He doesn't really mean that.* He did not move.

Because the ghost did not move, Anders ran and pushed it down the stairs. The ghost fell down and shouted. Then Anders rang the bell and went to bed.

The priest's wife waited for her husband. She waited a long time. Finally, she woke Anders and asked, 'Do you know where my husband is? He went up to the bell before you.'

'No, I don't know,' said the boy, 'but someone was standing up there in white. He did not answer me or leave, so I thought he was a ghost and threw him down the stairs.'

The woman ran up to the bell and found her husband. He was crying on the floor, and had broken his leg.

The next day, the priest's wife went to Anders' father and shouted, 'Your boy has given us great problems! He threw my husband down the stairs and broke his leg. We don't want him anymore.'

The father went to Anders and said, 'What did you do, you stupid boy?!'

'Father,' said Anders, 'I did nothing wrong. That man stood there in a strange way. He wanted to do something bad. I asked him three times who he was, and he did not answer. So I threw him down the stairs.'

'I have nothing to say to you! Leave. I will not have you in this house anymore.'

'Of course, Father,' said Anders. 'I will go out and learn how to shudder.'

But the father did not hate his son, so he gave him some money, and said, 'Don't tell anyone who your father is.'

'Of course, Father.'

For a while, Anders walked around. He said many times, '**If only** I could shudder!'

A few hours later, he walked past a tree. Seven men **were hanged** on the tree. Another man saw Anders.

*That boy looks very stupid,* he thought. *I think I will have some fun with him.*

So he went and spoke to Anders.

'Hello there! Where are you going?'

'I'm going to learn how to shudder,' said Anders.

The man laughed. 'I can teach you how to shudder! Look at that tree. Seven men wanted to get married to a man's daughter, but the man did not like this. Now they are learning how to fly. Sit by the tree and wait for the night. By the morning, you will have learned how to shudder.'

'Wow, it's that easy? Well, if I do learn, I will give you all my money.'

'Perfect. Sweet dreams!'

So Anders went and sat by the tree and waited for the night. Because it was cold, he made a fire. There was a cold wind, and the hanged men moved in the wind.

'You are probably cold up there!' said Anders.

So he climbed up the tree and cut down the seven men. He put them by the fire, but they did not move. So he pushed them closer. The fire started **burning** their clothes, but still they did not move.

'Wow, you really are quite stupid!' said Anders. 'I should put you back up there.'

The dead men did not say anything, and their clothes burned more. This made Anders quite angry.

'It is dangerous! Your clothes are burning. Stupid men!'

So he put them back on the tree, and then went and slept by the fire.

The next day, the man came and asked him, 'Well, did you learn how to shudder?'

'No! Those men were so stupid. They said nothing, and their clothes burned on the fire! How could I learn to shudder from them?'

So Anders walked more, always saying, 'If only I could shudder!'

Another man heard him and asked, 'Who are you?'

'I don't know,' said Anders.

'Where are you from?'

'I forgot.'

'Who is your father?'

'I cannot tell you.'

'And what did you say before?'

'I said, "If only I could shudder!" You see, I want to learn to shudder.'

'I know who can teach you. But I want money.'

'OK!' said Anders, and he gave the man all his money.

'There is a castle near here. No man lives there. Only ghosts and strange animals live in it. If you stay in the castle for three nights, you will learn how to shudder. The King has said that if someone stays in the castle for three nights, they can get married to his daughter. She is the most beautiful woman in the world. There is also lots of gold in the castle. If you stay there three nights, you will become rich and have a beautiful wife. And of course, you will learn to shudder.'

'How wonderful!' said Anders.

'Many men have gone into the castle, but nobody has left.'

*Hmm, thought Anders. Maybe it is a very comfortable castle, and they did not want to leave.*

## END OF PART 1

OK, I'll just introduce the vocabulary for part two.

A **lathe** is a tool that turns something around. So when you make pottery—jugs, glasses, plates and so on—out of clay, you use a lathe to turn the clay around. Then, while the clay is turning, you use your hands to make the pottery. Most people these days will

never use a lathe, because most people don't make pottery, but in the past, lathes were a very important tool. It's quite hard to explain this word, so come over to the transcript at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/FearL1) to see a picture.

An **axe** is a big tool that you use to cut down trees. It has a long handle and a large blade. These days, we don't use axes so much because we have machines that cut trees. Axes can also be used as weapons. For example, Gimli in *Lord of the Rings* uses axes, and so does Jack Torrance in the film *The Shining*.

**Warm** means to make something warm. So if you are very cold, you might sit by a fire and warm your hands on the fire. You put your hands near the fire to warm them, to make them warm. Or you can rub your hands together to warm them.

A **claw** is a long, sharp nail that animals have. Animals have claws on their hands, and they use their claws to fight and kill. Instead of nails, bears, tigers and cats have claws. They can really hurt you!

**Bones** are hard, white things that we have inside our bodies. Bones are beneath our skin and muscles. If you hit yourself very hard, you might break a bone. It's important to have calcium in your diet, as calcium makes your bones healthy and strong.

The **skull** is a bone inside our head. The skull is a very important bone, because the brain sits inside the skull. Your skull also has your teeth, which are the only bones that you can see outside of the body. Pirates put a skull and two bones on their flags.

**Bowling** is a game that uses ten pins, which are like bottles, and a big heavy ball called a bowling ball. You put the ten pins in a triangle, and then you throw the ball along the floor and try to hit all the pins. If all the pins fall over, you have a strike, and you get more points. In the UK, children often go bowling for birthday parties.

A **coffin** is the box that you go in when you die. A dead person goes into a coffin, and the coffin goes underground. This happens at an event called a funeral. Often, people throw dirt on a coffin before it goes underground. Sometimes at a funeral, people leave the coffin open so that people can see the person in the coffin one last time.

A **stone** is a big grey thing that you find on the ground. Stones are used to build certain things, like houses or walls. You can throw stones at someone if you want to hurt them. There is a famous story called *Stone Soup* about using a stone to make soup.

A **bucket** is a round thing that you use to carry water. Buckets are about the size of rubbish bins. You fill the bucket up with water, or maybe sand, or milk or something like that, and then you pick up the handle of the bucket and carry it. In the past, people did not have running water in their homes, so they had to go to a river, fill up a bucket with water, and carry the bucket of water home. Now, we use buckets when we go to the beach to build a sandcastle.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

## Part 2

So Anders went and asked the King if he could go into the castle, and the King said, 'Yes, and you can bring three things with you.'

'I would like a fire, a **lathe**, and a knife.'

'A lathe? Are you sure?' said the King. 'Don't you want something more useful? Maybe an **axe**? What can a lathe do?'

'A lathe can do lots of things!' said Anders. 'You can make anything with a lathe and a knife. And I need the fire to keep warm, of course.'

So the King sent him to the castle with a fire, a lathe, and a knife. When night came, Anders made a fire and sat down on a chair.

'If only I could shudder!' he said. 'But I do not think I will learn it here.'

Then he heard a shout from a dark corner: 'Ow, meow! It is so cold!'

'How stupid!' he said. 'If you are cold, come and sit by the fire.'

So two great black cats came and sat beside him. They looked at him with red eyes. They warmed themselves, and then said, 'Shall we play a game of cards?'

Anders did not think the cats were good. Black cats knew magic. So he said, 'Yes, let's. But first, show me your hands.'

So the cats did so, and he saw that they had long claws.

'Oh, what long claws you have! I will cut them for you.'

'How kind!' said the cats.

But Anders did not cut their claws. He held the knife at them. 'I know what you want. You want to put those claws right in my eyes. No, thank you!'

He threw them out of the window, into some water below. But before he could sit down again, many black cats and black dogs came out of the dark. They all had red eyes, and they shouted and hurt him.

'Go away!' he shouted.

He took his knife and started cutting them. Some ran away, but some stayed. He threw those ones out into the water. But the animals came and came, and there were too many. But then it turned midnight, and all the animals went away.

When Anders sat down again, he felt very tired. He turned around and saw a bed in the corner.

'Perfect!' he said, and climbed into the bed.

But while he started to sleep, the bed moved. It walked around the castle like an insect.

'That's good,' he said. 'That will help me sleep. But go faster.'

So the bed ran and ran, and Anders laughed. Finally, the bed turned over and lay on top of him.

'That's no fun,' he said. He pushed the bed off him and slept by the fire.

In the morning, the King came and saw him on the floor. He thought the ghosts had killed him, but then the young man got up.

'What happened?' said the King.

'Good morning! Unfortunately, I did not learn to shudder last night, but lots of things happened.'

'You mean, you were not afraid?'

'Of course not! I slept very well.'

So the next night Anders went back into the castle and said again, 'If only I could shudder!'

A few hours later, there was a loud sound, and something fell from the ceiling. It was a man, but only half of him. There were no legs or feet.

'Hello!' cried Anders. 'The other half is not here! Where is the rest?'

So there was another sound, and the other half of the man fell down.

'I will make a fire for you,' he said.

When he turned around, the two halves were together, and a scary man was sitting there.

'Excuse me, that chair is mine.'

Anders pushed him off the chair.

'Well then,' said the man. 'Let us play a game!'

From the ceiling fell some leg bones. On the ends of the bones were feet.

'Ah, we are going to go bowling!' said Anders. 'I love bowling. But where is the ball?'

Some skulls fell down as well.

'These are terrible balls! They are not round.'

So Anders took the skulls and put them on the lathe. He worked the skulls until they were round.

'There, now they will move very easily!'

They played bowling, and Anders did quite badly, but he had a lot of fun. But then, when it turned midnight, everything went away: the man, the skulls and the leg bones.

'Oh no! I didn't say goodbye.'

He lay down and went to sleep.

The next morning, the King came and spoke to him again.

'How was it this time?'

'We went bowling.'

'But you did not learn how to shudder?'

'No! It was great fun.'

On the third night, Anders sat on his chair and said, 'If only I could shudder!'

A few hours later, six tall men came in with a coffin. They put the coffin in front of Anders.

'Ah, I think that's my cousin. He died only a few days ago.'

The men opened the coffin, but the man inside was too big to be Anders' cousin. But the stupid boy said, 'Cousin! You look so cold. Let me warm you.'

So Anders warmed his hand on the fire and held it to the man's face. But the body was still cold. So Anders carried him out of the coffin and put him by the fire. That also didn't help, so he carried him into the bed.

Finally, the body warmed up, and started to move.

'See, cousin? I have warmed you up!'

The dead man sat up and cried, 'Now I will eat you!'

'What?!' said Anders. 'That's how you thank me? Back to the coffin!'

So he threw his 'cousin' into the coffin and shut it. Then the six men came and carried the coffin away.

'I don't think I will ever learn to shudder!' said Anders.

'I can help you shudder...'

Anders turned around and saw an old man with a long white beard. He looked horrible.

'Soon you will shudder, because you will die!'

'I don't want to die!' said Anders, jumping out of the bed.

'Too bad! I'm going to kill you!'

'I don't think so,' said Anders. 'You don't look very strong.'

'Oh, I might not look strong, but I am,' said the old man. 'Let us have a competition. If you are stronger, I will let you go. Follow me...'

So they went through the castle. Finally, they arrived in a dark room, where there were some big stones and an axe.

The old man stood in front of the stone. He took the axe, and broke the stone in two with it.

'I can do better than that,' said Anders.

He went to another stone and took the axe. The old man stood and watched. Anders took the axe and broke the stone in two with it. Then he took the old man's beard, put it between the pieces of stone, and closed the stone on it.

'I can't move!' shouted the old man.

'Now I have you,' said Anders. 'Now *you* will die!'

He took a piece of stone and hit the old man with it until he cried, 'Please stop! I will show you where the gold is.'

So Anders let him go. The old man showed him through the castle, and they went to a room with three boxes of gold.

'One of these boxes is for the poor people, one is for the King, and the other is yours.'

But then, when it turned midnight, the old man went away, and the light went away as well. Anders stood in the dark. He carefully found his way back to the fire and slept there.

The next morning, the King came and said, 'Did you learn how to shudder?'

'No, I did not. My dead cousin visited, and then a man with a beard came and showed me lots of gold, but nobody taught me to shudder.'

'Then you have done it. You stayed three nights in the castle, and you can get married to my daughter!'

'That is very good, but I still don't know how to shudder!'

So they brought out the gold and got married. Anders loved his wife, and was very happy, but every day he still said, 'If only I could shudder!'

Finally, his wife got angry. 'I will show him how to shudder!'

She went out to the river and took a **bucket** of cold water. At night, when Anders was asleep, his wife threw the bucket of water on him.

Anders woke up and cried, 'Oh, what makes me shudder so much? What makes me shudder so, my wife? Ah! Now I know how to shudder!'

## THE END

Because today's episode was quite long, I'm not going to talk much now. However, I just want to **follow up on** the last episode—to let you know what happened since the last episode. I told you that I went to the doctor to get my heart tested. My heart seems to be OK, but they're going to do another test. This is a 24-hour test. So for a whole day, I will wear a device that checks my heart. Then they will look and see if there are any problems with my heart.

I think I will be OK, but I thought I would tell you because I don't want anyone worrying about me!

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!