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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 intermediate learners. The name of the story is *I Bet I Could Taste It*. You can find a transcript of the episode at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Taste](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/taste). That's [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Taste](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/taste). There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

Today's episode is something very different. I mentioned in the previous episode, [The Last King of the Britons](#), that I recently won second prize in a short story competition. Today's story is that story, but adapted for the intermediate level.

However, this presented a challenge for me. One, the story is very short. When a story is shorter, it's often harder to understand, as there is less context to what's going on. I could have added lots of details, but I don't think that would have made a better story.

That's because this story relies a lot on word play. Word play is, well, when you play with words! It can be using words with different meanings to their usual meanings, or playing around with the sounds of words. I did that a *lot* in the original story. Of course, this word play can often be hard to understand if you're not a native speaker.

The third reason this story was hard to adapt is because it had a lot of names of food in it. Food is something that's very culturally specific, and if you hear the name of a food you've never seen before, it can be difficult to imagine what it's like.

However, in a way I think this is a good thing. After so many episodes of the podcast, there are certain words that appear again and again. Aside from very common foods such as fruits and vegetables, I avoid mentioning very specific food items, because they tend to be **low-frequency words**. This means that they are words that don't appear very often, or maybe only in certain countries where they're popular, so I don't think they're so important to teach. But if you like learning all about different kinds of food, then this episode will be great for you!

Another issue with the adaptation is cultural context. A lot of the food references have certain **associations** in British culture. For example, one of the foods, rice pudding, makes me think of eating it at school. I have strong associations with that food. The original story also talked about cookbooks from the 1970s, which had very strange recipes in them, but I don't think this happened worldwide.

So in a sense, I had to do a bit of 'cultural translation' with this episode, and choose less-specific food items to avoid making the story too confusing. I also simplified the sentence structure a bit, and changed some of the more difficult word play.

Honestly, this isn't too different from the way I usually adapt stories for the podcast. But normally, the story is less **poetic**—less like a poem—and there is more space for context. Still, I wanted to present this story to you, because I'm really happy with the work I did, and hopefully you'll appreciate it.

This may be a story you have to read more than one time to understand, and if you'd like me to explain the meaning of any parts to you, you can leave a question in the comments at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Taste](https://www.easystoriesinenglish.com/Taste). If you go there, I'll also leave a link to the original story, [so if you're feeling very brave you can try it out!](#)

I'm also going to talk a bit about my personal life in today's episode, but I decided to put the conversation section after the story this time, as the story is very short. So keep listening afterwards if you want to hear about a recent diagnosis I had...

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

Gravy is a popular sauce made with meat from the United Kingdom. Gravy is usually made with the juices that come out of meat as it is being cooked. Often, the bones are cooked as well to make the gravy. Then, flour might be added to thicken it, as well as spices. Nowadays, gravy is often made using cubes or powders that you can buy at the supermarket.

Gooseberries are a type of fruit. Gooseberries are small, green berries that have little hairs on them. Gooseberries are *very* sour, so they are usually made into jams, or a popular dessert called gooseberry fool, which is a bit like an airy yoghurt.

Turkish Delight, also called **lokum**, is a type of dessert that is similar to jelly, but more firm. Turkish Delight is often flavoured with rosewater, orange and lemon, and covered with icing sugar, a type of powdery sugar. Sometimes, nuts are placed inside, or coconut on the outside. However, if you go to Greece, you will find the name 'Greek Delight' on boxes of this sweet. In both Turkish and Greek, the name comes from Arabic instead, although it's not clear where Turkish Delight originally came from. In the book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the White Witch offers Edmund Turkish Delight to make him abandon his friends.

A **howl** is a long, sad cry that a dog or a wolf makes. Actually, I am very good at making wolf howls. Listen! [does a wolf howl]. If you're really hungry, your stomach might also howl.

Rice pudding is a popular dessert in the United Kingdom. Or at least, it used to be very popular, and many people are nostalgic about it, but it isn't so common now. Rice pudding is made by cooking a specific type of rice, pudding rice, with milk and other ingredients such as vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg. Actually, I always thought rice pudding was a very British thing, but apparently there are similar recipes in lots of countries around the world. For example, in Turkey they make a baked version with eggs called *fırın sütlaç*, in Iran they make *sholezard* which has saffron and rosewater in it, and in Italy there's *budino di riso*, which contains raisins and orange peel.

A **magician** is a man who uses magic. Usually, magicians are young, and they are not so experienced. Someone in the modern age who does magic tricks on a stage is a stage magician. Sometimes, magicians **conjure** things, make things appear out of nowhere. A traditional magic trick is to pull rabbits out of a hat, which can be considered a form of conjuring. Or a magician claps their hands and conjures flowers out of the air, for example.

Beetroot is a purple vegetable that grows under the ground. There is a popular beetroot soup in Slavic countries called borscht. The thing with beetroots is, after you eat them, your pee, your urine, turns purple. If you're not expecting it, it can be quite a surprise!

When you **hum**, you sing with your mouth closed, like [hums]. Some people find humming very annoying. Some household appliances, such as fridges and lightbulbs, let out a quiet sound, and we call this a hum.

Mould is a type of fungus that grows on dirty things. If you leave food for a very long time and don't eat it, it will grow mould. Mould is usually green or white, and it is dangerous to eat mould or breathe it in. If you have a very damp, humid house, then you'll probably get black mould.

Whipped cream is a type of cream that is not a liquid. Traditionally, you whip cream, you hit it with a tool called a whisk, until it hardens and becomes whipped cream. Whipped cream is usually eaten with desserts such as pies. These days, people usually just buy whipped cream in an aerosol can, as it is much easier than making it.

Glitter is a colourful powder that you can buy to put on your face, or use as a decoration. Glitter shines in the light, and looks very pretty. People usually wear glitter at parties or festivals. If something is **glittery** then it shines like glitter, like lots of tiny stars all pressed together.

Radiation is a type of energy that is very dangerous. Radiation is all around us in the world, but there isn't very much of it. However, nuclear reactors, which produce nuclear energy, create radiation. If humans receive too much radiation, they get very sick and die. In the past, accidents at nuclear reactors such as Chernobyl and Fukushima left lots of radiation in the environment around them, which, of course, is very dangerous, and difficult to deal with.

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A big thank-you to my new patrons: gulu gulu, Magdalena Landsnes and Ani Sa.

And a special thank-you to my Teacher's Pet patrons: Vera Kaufmann and Rüdiger Richter.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

I Bet I Could Taste It

I want grey **gravy** on brown meat—I don't care which animal. I want fountains of milk on chocolate rabbits. I want peas and ice cream. I want chocolate cake with piles of cooked **gooseberries**. I want **Turkish delight** filled with nuts, and **Greek delight** tasting of Turkish coffee.

I want my mum. I want to sleep without hearing my ears ring or my stomach **howl**. I want my dad.

Yesterday, we had **rice pudding** from a tin, like snow **conjured** out of a **magician's** hat. The jam on top was red as blood.

Today, we had wet, dusty water.

This morning, I asked her when I could see my friends. It's strange to think of them that way now. She said they were sick, and avoided my eyes.

Now, I look through faded cookbooks, conjure dinner party dreams and frog leg fantasies. I taste the beef and beetroot with my fingers, and when I close my eyes I imagine the dirt stuck to the pages is bits of spices.

Later, we will sit in front of the old television and watch a video for 30 minutes, the length of time it takes for *Thomas the Tank Engine* to get in danger, and then get out of danger, and the length of time it takes for the power generator to run out.

Tomorrow, we will cough to fill in the silences, and when the hum of the lightbulb becomes unbearable, we'll talk about what dreams we had, removing the painful details like mould off a loaf of bread.

I want that glass bowl, full of jelly, with a hill of whipped cream on top—cream straight from the can, what a delight!

I want to take the glass and smash it against the concrete floor, just to have something glittery to look at.

I want that ten-thousand kilogram door to open, so I can finally breathe different air.

They say you can't feel radiation, but I bet I could taste it.

THE END

So recently I was **diagnosed** with **ADHD**. A **diagnosis** is when you tell a doctor about a problem you've been having, and the doctor tells you what the problem is. They diagnose you with a health problem.

ADHD stands for **attention deficit hyperactive disorder**. It also used to be known as ADD. ADHD is a **genetic disorder**, meaning that it is part of your genes, your DNA. A disorder is like a disease, but you don't catch it, and often you can't get rid of it. So ADHD is a disorder that develops in childhood. ADHD is similar to autism, which I discussed in some earlier episodes, and in fact, there is lots of research now that suggests that ADHD and autism are two parts of the same disorder.

Basically, ADHD means that you find it hard to focus, to concentrate on one thing, and you often get distracted. The **stereotype**, the typical idea we have, of someone with ADHD is a young boy with lots of energy, running all over the place. But actually, ADHD can look very different.

For me, I always looked like I was paying attention in school, but really I was always daydreaming, living in my own world inside my mind. I've always found it hard to stay still without **fidgeting**, without doing things like clicking my pen or biting my nails, and generally I find it hard to concentrate. For example, sometimes people speak to me and I know I should be listening, but my brain wants to think about something else and I have to ask them to repeat what they said. Sometimes my thoughts are so fast that I can't get to sleep for hours.

I thought I had ADHD for quite a while, but I didn't think I needed a diagnosis. Many people diagnosed with ADHD take **medication**, drugs, which help them calm down and focus better. I didn't think I needed these, because I'd learned skills and strategies over the years to do this myself.

And then one of my friends lent me some ADHD medication, so I could try it and see if it worked for me. I know, it's quite irresponsible, but often this is the only way to know without

going through a long process of diagnosis! I didn't expect the medication to do very much, because I've been having all these problems with energy over the past year. I thought that it would only help with focus, but I'd still be too tired to do much work.

But, in that one day when I took the medication, I did more than I'd done in about three weeks before it. I felt calm, focussed and just generally *good*. My girlfriend said it was weird, because she could actually finish her sentences without me interrupting for once!

After that, I decided I needed to look into getting diagnosed and getting on regular medication, because it gave me hope that I'd be able to work normally again. I really want to get a new job and move to London, but until I realised medication was an option, I didn't think I would be able to do it.

Unfortunately, assessments for ADHD and autism in the UK take a very long time on the National Health Service, because they do not spend enough money on these services. If I went that way, I could be waiting for years. So we decided to go private, which is very expensive. But I was able to get an online private ADHD assessment just a few days after trying the medication, and I have now been officially diagnosed. I won't be able to go on medication until I've done my 24-hour ECG—the heart test I mentioned in the previous episode [The Boy Who Knew No Fear](#)—but that's OK. It's given me hope that I can get over these awful fatigue problems I've been having the past year.

Basically, what I realised was: a lot of the burn-out I experienced was just *boredom*. I was terribly, terribly bored. One of the problems with ADHD is, if you find something boring, it's very hard to find motivation to do it. I thought I was just tired, but I think the problem was I didn't have enough stimulation—I wasn't finding the tasks exciting enough to want to do them.

That's strange, because I really do enjoy writing and making the podcast, but at the same time, my brain just works different. I was able to manage with skills and strategies in the past, but right now, I really feel like I need this medication to help get my brain working. And I don't feel ashamed of that fact. Some of us just need a little extra help.

In fact, I recently realised that for most of my life, I've been using sugar to get the same effect, although of course it's much less effective, and bad for your health. Over the past few weeks, I've been trying coffee instead, but it's annoying just how much I have to drink in order to feel 'normal'.

What about you? Do you use any stimulants, like coffee, chocolate or cigarettes, to get through the day? Come over to [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Taste](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Taste) and tell me all the unhealthy things you do to keep working!

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](https://www.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!