

Transcript

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 *Why Blood is Red*. You can find a transcript of the episode at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/BloodRed. That's EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/BloodRed. There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

Recently, I went away to Hamburg on holiday. Well, sort of on holiday. I had a family funeral to go to, and I decided to stay a few extra days. A **funeral** is when somebody dies and you have a celebration of their life. It was the first time I was going abroad since COVID, and I hadn't been to Germany for years, so I decided to make a little holiday out of it.

The family situation is a bit complicated. The deceased, the person who had died, was my German grandmother, although technically I wasn't related to her. My dad's first wife was German but died shortly after giving birth to my brother. My dad married my mum a few years later and had me and my sister. So officially, she was my half-brother's grandmother, but he's always just been my brother, and she always treated us like her grandchildren.

My oma – that's German for 'grandmother' – was an amazing woman, and so the funeral was very emotional for me. I cried a lot. She was a very practical person – she didn't like things to be complicated – so she decided to have a private cremation and burial. What this means is, her body was burned and buried, put in the ground, but none of us knew when or where exactly it happened. So we had a memorial service, a church service to remember her, but we didn't actually go to the place where she was buried.

It was lovely to see all my German relatives again, although we don't see them that often so it's hard to remember everyone's names! We had a few meals together, and then most of my family went home and I went to stay in a hotel in the centre of Hamburg for a few days.

To be honest, I didn't have a great time. I think I was exhausted from the funeral and seeing so much family, so I didn't have lots of energy for sightseeing. Also, the weather in Hamburg is very similar to where I live: cloudy, windy and wet – especially in January! In the end, I did have some lovely food and met some interesting people, but I also found the city quite stressful as it's very big and not super easy to walk around. I also went to see a Schiller play, *Die Räuber*, or *The Robbers* in English, but I found it hard to follow because the actors didn't speak clearly enough, and the director made a lot of strange choices about the show.

Still, I'm glad I went, as it was exciting to travel abroad again after so long. And on the day this episode comes out, I will be travelling again to Slovakia to stay with a friend. It feels really good to travel again. Even when I don't have the best time, I always learn something new about myself. And I did get to practise a lot of German! Also *jetzt weiß ich, wie Labskaus schmeckt und dass man die ganze Zeit in Hamburg 'moin' sagt*.

Today's story is my attempt to write a creation myth. Creation myths are stories about how the world was created, or why certain things are the way they are. Creation myths can be found in all cultures and religions, and they often tell you a lot about how that culture thinks and sees the world.

I find them really interesting, so I thought I'd try to write my own. It's not based on any particular culture or religion, but maybe you'll have your own interpretation of it... I'd love to

hear it! Go over to [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/BloodRed](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/BloodRed) and leave a comment at the bottom saying what you think the meaning of the story is, or what it says about me.

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

Passion is a strong feeling of love and energy. If you feel passion towards a person, you love them very deeply. People often also feel passionate about hobbies. For example, I could say that I am passionate about languages.

Reflection is deep thought. When you reflect on something, you spend a long time thinking about it, to really figure out what your feelings are. People who reflect a lot are reflective. Personally, I write in my diary every day and reflect on what happened that day and how I feel about it.

Debate means to argue about a specific topic. Debating is usually more structured than an argument: you are trying to find the 'right answer', or the solution to a problem. In universities, there are often debating societies, where people regularly hold debates on various topics related to politics and science.

Spit is the liquid that your mouth makes. Our mouths make spit to help us break down food to eat it. 'Spit' is also a verb, and it's when you throw this liquid out of your mouth [spits]. Although in many places, spitting is rude!

Urine is a yellow liquid that our body makes. When you drink enough water, you will need to go to the toilet to **urinate**, to get the urine out of your body. If you drink lots of water, your urine will be less yellow and more clear, or see-through.

Organs are specific parts of the body that have a specific purpose. The heart, the lungs and the liver are all organs. Most of our organs are inside our body. However, the skin is also sometimes considered an organ.

When something is **varied**, it means it has many different things in it. For example, the weather in the UK is varied: we have sun, clouds, rain, snow and wind. But in some other places, such as Medellín, Colombia, the weather is not varied. It is warm all year.

Confusion is when you don't understand and nothing is clear. If you have a bad teacher at school, you'll probably get **confused** and not understand what they're talking about. A lot of people experienced confusion at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, because life changed in ways we had never felt before.

Flames are the parts of a fire that move around. Flames are red or orange, and they move in the air. If a fire is left for a long time, it will get very small and the flames will disappear.

Dye means to change the colour of something, by using chemicals. In the past, dyeing fabrics to make clothes was a complicated process. People had to find certain insects and animals to produce certain dyes. Now, we can use artificial dyes to dye fabric any colour we want. More people dye their hair these days, although some people think that dyed hair looks unnatural and ugly. I disagree.

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A big thank-you to my new patrons, as well as patrons who have increased their pledge. I'm recording this episode in advance, and I haven't had time to mention the new patrons here, but I will in the next episode.

And a special thank-you to my Teacher's Pet patron: Vera Kaufmann.

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OK, so listen and enjoy!

Why Blood is Red

In the beginning, there were two brother gods, Kimesh and Musesh. Kimesh had skin as red as fire, and he created the planets with loud **passion**. Musesh had skin as blue as the ocean, and he created the plants and animals that lived on Earth with calm **reflection**. For many thousands of years, the brothers relaxed and watched their creation, but soon they began to get bored.

‘Brother,’ said Kimesh, ‘let us work together and create a new creature: an animal with my strong passion and your calm reflection.’

‘That is an excellent idea, Brother,’ said Musesh.

And so the two brothers worked together and made humans. They sent humans to every planet, but only on Earth, with the help of Musesh’s plants and animals, could the humans live.

The humans fought and loved each other with Kimesh’s passion, and they **debated** and made art with Musesh’s reflection. They were much like humans are today, but with a few important differences. One, there was no war. They had food and drink, and they loved each other, so they had no need for war. Two, there was no forgiveness. If two people debated and disagreed, then they disagreed, and they did not need to fight about it.

But the biggest difference was their bodies. At that time, all the liquid that humans made was the same colour. Just as **spit** was clear, so was **urine** and blood. Not only this, but their **organs** were all as white as milk. Humans carried colour on their skin and in their minds, but water ran through them like a river.

One day, Kimesh complained.

‘Our humans are a success, Brother.’

‘However?’

‘However, I am not satisfied with their colours. On the outside, some humans shine like the moon, while others have the beautiful darkness of a lake at night, and some have skin like a red mountain. They are so **varied**. The art they create is varied, too: they paint pictures with all the colours on Earth, and they sing and tell stories that draw such colours in the mind.

‘But on the inside, they are not varied at all. Their spit, urine and blood is all clear, and their organs are all white. Our creation should appear on the inside as it does on the outside.’

Musesh reflected on this for many years, and then replied.

‘Brother, what you say is true. However, our humans are complete. We have put them on the Earth, and now they have made it their home. It is too late to change them. Better to leave them as they are than to create **confusion**.’

Kimesh disagreed, but he said nothing. He could tell that his brother had made his decision.

So secretly, Kimesh began to make his own designs. He saw the beautiful drawings the humans made, and they gave him ideas. He drew pictures of the insides of humans: this organ would be red, that one blue, another green... And their spit, blood and urine would change colour, to show what each individual human was like.

Kimesh loved his design so much that he secretly chose some humans on Earth and changed them, giving them these new insides. For a while, nobody noticed, until one human saw another urinate, and the urine was an amazing green colour. At first, he thought the other human was sick, so he took her to the doctor, but the doctor could change nothing. They soon saw her strange blue spit as well, and when the doctor took some of her blood out, she was amazed – it was pink!

The people of the village debated what to do with this strange woman, who seemed so healthy but had such strange colours inside of her. In the end, they decided that she must be a gift from the gods, and that they must open her up. So one night, they took the woman in her sleep and cut her body apart. Inside, they found all her colourful organs, and they thanked the gods for their gift.

Kimesh was extremely angry. All over the Earth, where he had placed his new colours, similar things were happening. People were discovering these ‘magical’ humans, and the result was always confusion and death.

‘Brother,’ said Musesh, seeing what had happened. ‘You acted without reflection.’

‘I can’t believe it!’ cried Kimesh. ‘I gave them something so wonderful, and they *killed* it. I should kill them all!’

‘Stop!’ said Musesh.

But it was too late. Kimesh raised his arm and shot fire all over the Earth. The humans cried out in pain, and red-hot flames ate through them. The humans’ blood boiled, and was dyed red by the flames. Soon, their spit, their urine, their organs, their skin – all of it would turn red.

But then Musesh raised his arm, and he shot water all over the Earth. The fires died, and the humans were saved. However, their blood was already dyed red, and that would never change. The flames lived inside them now, and from Kimesh’s fire they learned the art of war. They opened their mouths, however, and drank Musesh’s water. Their spit remained clear, and from Musesh’s gentle reflection, they learned the art of forgiveness.

The flames and water fought each other, moving around the world, and they ate up all the humans’ beautiful artwork. The colours mixed together and passed through the humans’ bodies. Some of the brilliant colours were lost, but most of them dyed the humans’ organs. And so some organs are pink, others are green, and the heart is red, but none shine like Kimesh’s beautiful colours. And finally, their urine mixed with dirt and was dyed yellow, but if they drank enough of Musesh’s pure water, it would turn clear again.

And so it came to be that our blood is red. After that, Kimesh and Musesh moved away from the Earth, because they did not want to create more confusion. They are probably still there now, watching us, and we can only dream of the colours that once covered this world.

THE END

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