

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 beginners. The name of the story is *The Perfect Pet*. You can find a transcript of the episode at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Pet. That's EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Pet. There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

I want to start this episode with a warning. This story has violence towards animals in it. That means that animals are hurt and killed in this story. If you don't want to listen to a story like that, you probably won't want to listen to this episode!

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

Mean means not kind, not nice. Mean people like to **laugh at other people**, and they are bad friends. Children are often mean to other children at school.

When you have an **allergy**, it means that you cannot be near something, or you will get sick. For example, if you are **allergic** to peanuts – you have a peanut allergy – then you cannot eat peanuts. If you have a peanut allergy and you eat peanuts, you might die! My mum is allergic to horses, so she cannot go near horses.

Someone who is **social** likes to talk a lot, and likes being with other people. When an animal is social, it means they like being with other animals and people a lot. Some cats are quite social, but other cats like to be alone.

Bite, and the past tense is **bit**, and the past participle is **bitten**, is when you put your teeth in something and hurt it. When you eat food, you bite it first. Dogs might bite someone if they are dangerous. Insects also bite people.

Pee is the yellow water our body makes. When we go to the toilet, we pee, and the yellow water goes out of our body. If you get a pet, they might pee in your house. You will have to show the pet where to pee so that they do not pee inside.

When something is **covered in** something, there is lots of that thing on it. For example, I love cakes covered in chocolate. If you go to a hot country, lots of mosquitoes might bite you, and then you will be covered in mosquito bites.

Scratch is when you do this: [makes scratching sound]. Basically, you move your nails against something. You might scratch yourself because you are itchy. If a mosquito bites you – there are a lot of mosquitoes today! – then you will probably scratch the place where it bit you. Or maybe you don't like someone and so you scratch them. Cats like to scratch things a lot.

Guinea pigs are small rodents, a kind of animal similar to rats and mice. Guinea pigs are bigger and fatter than rats and mice, and they are very pretty. Guinea pigs make a noise like [squeaks], and in the UK they are a popular pet for young children, as they are easy to look after. In various countries in South America, people also eat guinea pigs.

When you **lock** a door, the door cannot be opened. To open a locked door, you need a key. If you have the key, you can put the key in the door and **unlock** it. If you leave your house without your key, then the door might lock and you won't be able to get back in. It's horrible when that happens!

Blood is the red water that we have inside our bodies. Our heart moves blood around the body. If you cut yourself, then blood will come out.

A **butcher** is a person who prepares and sells meat. If you want to buy meat, like chicken or beef, you can go to a butcher's. These days, people often buy meat from the supermarket instead, but if you want really good meat, you usually have to go to a butcher's.

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OK, so listen and enjoy!

The Perfect Pet

Rory had always been an animal lover. But he grew up with two very **mean** parents.

His mother said she had **allergies**, but every time he asked her what the allergies were, they changed. If he wanted a cat, she was **allergic** to cats. If he wanted a fish, she was allergic to fishes. If he wanted to go to the zoo, she was allergic to crowds.

Rory's dad didn't have any allergies, but he hated animals. However, he loved eating meat, so when Rory said he wanted a cat, his dad said, 'Mmm, cat! I haven't eaten cat before. We can get it nice and fat and then eat it.' Then Rory cried and stopped asking for a pet.

When Rory finished university, he moved to a small town, so he could have lots of space. The town had lots of dog parks, and it also had a cat park. Cat parks weren't normal, so he was very excited to go there.

Rory thought a lot about what pet to get. Every day, he went to the dog park and the cat park. He talked to people and played with their animals. People told him that cats and dogs were hard to look after, but he didn't want to get a small pet. So one day, he got a big dog called **Buck**.

Buck was an **Alaskan Malamute**, a big grey dog with lots of energy. Rory had always loved these dogs, because they were **social** and loved to play. Rory and Buck had a lot of fun. They went for walks twice a day, and they played lots of games. Buck never **bit** Rory, and he never **peed** on the floor.

However, Buck had a lot of hair. Soon, the house was **covered in** hair. When Rory tried to clean it up, he **sneezed** a lot. Rory went to the doctor, who told him he was allergic to dog hair. Rory couldn't believe it. He was allergic, just like his mum!

He thought maybe it would get better, but it just got worse. Soon, Rory was sneezing all day, and he couldn't play with Buck. So he decided to give Buck to a family on his street. They didn't have allergies, and they had lots of time to play with him. Rory cried all night after saying goodbye to Buck, but he didn't sneeze again after that.

Next, he tried a cat. He made sure to get an allergy test first, and he wasn't allergic to cats. But he wanted to be safe, so he chose a **Sphynx cat** – a type of cat that had no hair. He also knew that Sphynx cats were very social and were a bit like dogs. He called his cat **Aslan**. In the beginning, he had lots of fun with Aslan. They played together and went to the cat park, and he had no problems with allergies. Sometimes, Aslan peed on the floor, but Rory taught him where to go, and this wasn't a problem.

However, Aslan was a *very* social cat. When Rory was cooking, Aslan jumped up and tried to take the food. When Rory read, Aslan **scratched** the book, and sometimes he scratched the book so much that Rory couldn't read it. When Rory had a bath, Aslan jumped in the water and then got angry, because he didn't like water. If Rory didn't play with Aslan, then Aslan was mean to him. He scratched his legs and **hissed**.

One day, Rory woke up and the bed was covered in dead birds. There were probably thirty of them. Aslan had killed all the birds and put them on the bed, as a present to Rory. 'Enough,' said Rory.

He found a sad old woman who lived alone and gave Aslan to her. She loved the cat, and when Aslan scratched her, she just said, 'Oh, be careful, my dear!'

Finally, Rory decided he wasn't ready for a big pet. So he decided to get **guinea pigs**. Guinea pigs were very pretty, and they were easy to look after. Some of his friends at school had had guinea pigs, and he always wanted to play with them, but his mum said he couldn't because she was allergic.

He got two guinea pigs, because they were very social animals. One was black, so he called her **Black Beauty**, and the other was pink like a pig, so he called her **Babe**. Black Beauty and Babe were sisters, so he thought they would be friends.

But Babe was a very mean guinea pig. Babe was worse than both Buck and Aslan. When Rory gave the guinea pigs food, Babe ate all the food before Black Beauty could get to it. If he tried to give food to Black Beauty, Babe **squeaked** and bit him. If Rory played with Black Beauty, Babe started eating their little wooden house. And when Rory played with Babe, she *always* peed on him. It was like she waited until he was holding her to pee...

But they were easier to look after than Buck and Aslan. If he wore gloves when he was near them, then it didn't hurt when Babe scratched and bit him. And he did really love Black Beauty.

'One day Babe will die,' he said to Black Beauty, 'and then I'll get you a *real* sister.'

That day did not come. One morning, Rory put on his gloves to feed the guinea pigs. The gloves were wet – Babe had peed in them. He didn't know *how* she had done it, because they slept in their little wooden house, which was **locked**. But Rory had stopped trying to understand Babe. He washed the gloves and then went to see them.

The little wooden house was red. Rory couldn't understand. It looked like... paint? Then he saw it. Babe's mouth was red, covered in **blood**. Next to her was Black Beauty's body. But it wasn't all there. Babe had eaten most of it.

There was blood *everywhere*. The door of their house was covered in blood. Their food bowl was full of blood. Rory felt sick.

The door to their house was *open*. Babe had unlocked it. How could a guinea pig break a lock? But that wasn't the worst part. Babe could have run away. She could have run into the woods, but she chose to stay here. She wanted Rory to see this. She wanted him to see what she could do. She wanted him to be afraid of her.

Rory **took a deep breath** and went to get his phone. He called the police.

Five Years Later

Rory loved his job, and he knew he was good at it. His little shop won a prize almost every year. If you looked at the shop, you would think it was just a normal **butcher's**. *Rory the Butcher*, said the sign. Next to the sign was a happy picture of Rory holding a big knife. Under the knife there was a pig who did not look so happy.

But this was no normal small town butcher's. If you stayed in town long enough, you might hear the stories. Rory was *wonderful* with animals, they said.

If you visited once or twice, you might think that he was an animal lover. People brought their pets into the shop and talked to him about them. But it was always pets with problems. People brought in angry dogs and mean cats. Rory never went near the animals, and he always held his big knife.

When Rory knew a customer well, he waited until they were alone in the shop.

Then he said, 'I'm selling a new kind of meat, you know. Just come with me into the other room. Oh, and bring your pet...'

Strange things happened in that small town. Mr and Mrs Foster had a dog that peed in their beds. The children loved the dog, but the parents hated it. Then, one day, while the children were at school, the dog ran away. Nobody could find it. The children cried and cried.

'Don't worry, children,' said Mrs Foster, 'I'm sure we'll see Spot again soon. I went to the butcher's today and got some *lovely* steaks for us all. That will make you feel better.'

Sometimes, Rory's mother rang him and asked how the business was going.

'You've changed, you know,' she said.

'I haven't changed, Mum,' said Rory, and **laughed**. 'I still love animals. But I love them more when they're dead.'

THE END

I will just explain some cultural references from the story. The pets in this story are **named after** famous animals from books. This means that they got their names from these famous animals. If you're interested, you could search them and learn more about them.

Buck is named after the dog in Jack London's novel, *The Call of the Wild*. Buck is an Alaskan Malamute, a kind of very big dog that usually lives in cold places and has a lot of hair.

Aslan is named after the lion in C. S. Lewis's series *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The first book in the series is called *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Aslan is a Sphynx cat, a kind of cat that has no hair.

Black Beauty is named after a horse from a famous English novel called *Black Beauty* about a beautiful black horse. Babe is named after a pig from the American novel *The Sheep-Pig*, about a pig called Babe who learns to look after sheep.

For the last week-and-a-half, I have been visiting friends in Slovakia, a country in central Europe. Slovakia is next to the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and Poland. I have mentioned Slovakia a few times before on the podcast. In the past, I have been to many Esperanto events in Slovakia. Esperanto is a language that I speak. It is a constructed language, a made-up language, that can be used for neutral communication because it is nobody's first language.

Anyway, this time I did not go to Slovakia for an Esperanto event, but to visit my friend in Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia. Actually, I drove down with another friend from the UK. I say 'drove down', but really, he did all the driving! Another friend visited from Mallorca, and we have another friend who lives in Bratislava. These are all people I know through Esperanto events, so when we are together, we speak Esperanto all the time.

We had a great time together. We talked, played games, cooked and went out to a sauna in Vienna. Vienna is the capital city of Austria, and it is very close to Bratislava, so it is easy to visit for a day trip. Our friend from the UK and our friend from Mallorca both went home after a few days, so as I am writing this, I am just staying with my friend who lives in Bratislava.

It has been a fun holiday, but also I am very tired. I have been doing some work while I am here, but it's very hard to work while you're on holiday! You're doing so many new things and spending so much time with people, so you get tired very easily. So after some of our friends left, I took a lot more time to rest and do things slowly.

I have also been learning the Slovak language. I learned a bit in the past, but this time I have been working quite hard to learn it. There aren't a lot of resources for Slovak, but my friend has a YouTube channel called [Learn Slovak with Stories](#) where they tell easy stories in Slovak. It's kind of similar to my podcast. If you're interested in Slovakia, you should definitely go and watch!

I also started reading books in Slovak. It's very hard because I have to look up lots of words in the dictionary, but I'm slowly understanding more. Next, I'm going to try and read the first *Harry Potter* book in Slovak, because I have read it in lots of other languages and I know it very well. The book is a bit difficult in places, but if I don't understand a word, I don't *always* have to look it up, because I know what is happening in the story. By the way, the first *Harry Potter* book in Slovak is called *Harry Potter a Kameň Mudrcov*.

It's really fun to be learning a new language again, but it's hard! If you're listening to this episode and you're still a beginner in English: you can do it! I believe in you. Keep listening and keep reading. Remember, learning a language is a marathon, not a sprint!

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!