

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 intermediate learners. The name of the story is *The Elephant and the Hare*. You can find a transcript of the episode at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/ElephantL3. That's EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/ElephantL3. There, you can also download the episode as a PDF.

This is a levelled-up version of a beginner-level story. You can listen to the beginner-level version of *The Elephant and the Hare* at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Elephant.

I hope you've all been doing well recently. I have to say I've been pretty tired. Me and my girlfriend have done a lot of travelling over the past few months and I've done loads of travelling this year, but in particular we've been getting ready to move house. That's right, we're moving to London! Ah! If you've listened to the podcast for a while, you might know that I've wanted to move to London for a really long time.

Of course, London is very expensive. It's one of the most expensive cities in the world. So, um, yeah, moving together is going to make things a lot easier and I'm so excited that it's finally happening.

But of course there's also a lot of stress because where we live now, my girlfriend owns the house, she has a mortgage. So a mortgage is when you pay a certain amount monthly to pay for your house over a long period of time, so we need to sell the house and then we need to find a new place to live in London, move all our things, all of that stuff.

Anyway, things are moving because recently the estate agents came round. So the estate agents are the people who help sell your house or buy a new house and they took lots of pictures of our house so they could put it online and people can have a look at it.

And they use some pretty fancy technology, actually. They had this special camera that took lots of pictures of all the rooms and then it uses that to generate a floor plan, so basically just a picture that shows where all the rooms are, how big they are, and so on.

But not only that, it allows people to do a 360-degree virtual tour of the house. So you know when you go on Google Street View and you can just click to move along the street and you can look around in every direction? People will be able to do that for the inside of our house. Pretty crazy, right?

Uh, the less fun part was getting ready for the photos. We had to do a lot of decluttering. Decluttering is getting rid of clutter and clutter is basically just items, things that collect over time and take up space and maybe don't look so nice. So we got rid of furniture, books, lots of things we didn't need or want anymore. Of course, moving house is a great excuse to declutter, to clean, to get rid of things you completely forgot about that have been sitting in the back of a cupboard for months or even years.

And we gave a lot of our things away to charity shops. So charity shops are very popular in the UK. Basically, they're shops where people give second hand goods, so things that they've used that they don't want anymore. The charity shops sell them at a lower price and then the money goes to charity. So it's a really fantastic system.

We had brought so many of our things to the local charity shop that we were sure they were getting annoyed at us. Because, like, we were bringing them, like, five bags a week. But just the other day, we got a letter saying that the money they've made from all of the things that they've sold, that we gave them, was over 150 pounds!

So actually, I feel like we've done something really good for charity. So, that's nice. And now, of course, after all the stress of the decluttering and tidying, the house looks nicer than it ever has. I guess that's just the way of things. It's always just before you leave that you realise, oh, actually, if we move all of that clutter out of the living room, it looks really nice!

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

A **herd** is a group of animals: a herd of sheep, a herd of pigs, a herd of cows and so on.

A **savanna** is a type of land that you find in hot countries, mainly in Africa. Savannas are very big, flat areas of land with grass on them. They have very few trees. Animals such as zebras, elephants, rhinos, lions and gazelles live on savannas.

A **sack** is a large bag used to carry or store something. For example, you might buy a kilogram of potatoes in a thick sack. Or you might buy a sack of apples. Sacks usually have a drawstring – instead of using a zip or a buckle, you close a drawstring by pulling a string.

A **hare** is an animal like a rabbit, but hares are much bigger than rabbits. Hares also have longer ears than rabbits.

A **hop** is a small jump. So rabbits and frogs don't jump, they hop, because they are very small. If you hurt one of your feet, you might hop up and down on the other leg.

When you **crush** something, you squash it, make it completely flat. You usually crush things with your hand or your foot. For example, after you finish drinking a can of Coke, you might crush it for fun. Or if you are very cruel, you might enjoy crushing insects. When cooking, you often need to crush garlic with a knife.

A **wily** person is someone who is very clever, but they use it to trick people. We often think of foxes as wily, as they are very good at tricking other animals and stealing food. I'm not very wily, personally, because I don't like to trick people.

Elephants have long noses, and these are called **trunks**. Elephants can move their trunks in every direction, and they use them to pick things up and pat each other. They also can blow their trunks, which makes a **sound like [trumpeting]**.

Skin means to remove the skin from something. If you hunt an animal, like a rabbit, you need to skin it before you can eat it. If you skin it well, you can keep the skin and use it to make clothes or blankets. However, these days most people have no idea how to skin an animal. I certainly don't!

When you **spit**, you throw water or saliva out of your mouth. In the UK, it is very rude to spit outside, but in the past, people used to chew tobacco and spit it out. If you eat some very bad food, you might spit it out. If you talk very angrily, you spit out your words: *like this!*

OK, so listen and enjoy!

The Elephant and the Hare

Once upon a time, a **herd** of elephants lived out on the African **savanna**. They were a friendly bunch, and often travelled to visit their relatives, who liked rare gifts.

One fine day, the elephants managed to trick some bees into giving them honey, and they thought it was such a wonderful reward that they should bring it as a present to their family.

So off they went. One of the elephants was stronger than the others, and had never suffered from aches or illness, so they loaded the honey into **sacks** and hung them on his back for him to carry.

After a few hours of walking, they passed a **hare**, who sat in the shade by a river. When the hare saw them, she jumped up.

'Oh, kind elephants!' she said. 'I wish to cross this river, but the water is too deep for my poor little legs. You there, Mr. Elephant, you must be very strong if you're carrying those sacks. Surely a little hare wouldn't be too much extra weight for you to carry?'

The elephant gave a kind smile and said, 'Of course, little hare. **Hop** on my back and I'll take you across the river, and further, if you'd like.'

The hare climbed onto the elephant's back, and the great animals swam through the water. The hare was curious as to what the elephant had in the sacks, so she leant over and smelt them. When she realised that they contained honey, she was thrilled! And two whole bags as well!

The hare hadn't eaten all day, and suddenly her stomach felt quite empty. She looked around to see if any of the other elephants were watching, but they were all too focussed on swimming, so she dipped a paw into one of the sacks and took out a big piece of honey to eat.

'This must be the sweetest honey I've ever tasted!' thought the hare. 'But I should try some more, just to be sure.'

So the hare took another piece, and then another, until she was emptying out the last remains of the sack. Suddenly, she realised what she'd done, and she feared how the elephants would react when they found out. They could **crush** her under their feet like a piece of fruit! They were coming out of the water now, and one of them only needed to turn their head to see what had happened.

Fortunately, the hare was **wily**, and she thought of a perfect way to work herself out of this situation.

'Oh, Mr. Elephant!' said the hare. 'I am quite bored up here. Could you give me a stone to play with?'

The elephant nodded, picked up a stone with his **trunk** and threw it to the hare.

She dropped the stone into the empty bag of honey, and then said, 'Mr. Elephant, may I have another stone? You see, I dropped the first one, and I want to throw it at the birds.'

So the elephant threw her another stone, and she dropped it in the bag. She continued this way, filling up the whole sack with stones to replace the honey.

She should have stopped there and got off the elephant's back, and perhaps they would have forgiven her, but this hare was too wily. She never knew when to stop! So she ate up the second bag of honey, and then asked for more stones to replace it.

'Well, Mr. Elephant,' said the hare, rubbing her stomach. 'It looks like we've reached my stop. Thanks again for the ride. Goodbye!'

And the hare hopped off the elephant's back and ran away. The elephants waved goodbye with their trunks, unaware of the trick that had just been played on them.

However, when they reached their destination and found that the bags were full of stones, it did not take them long to realise what had happened.

'It was that damn hare!' said the elephant. 'She stole my honey! I'll get her for this!'

So the elephant chased after the hare. Although he was strong and muscular, he was surprisingly fast, and he caught up to the hare within minutes. She had stopped for a rest in the shade, and when she saw him coming, it was already too late.

'You nasty little hare!' cried the elephant.

He grabbed her tail with his trunk and pulled on it so hard that he ripped the skin off. The hare took the opportunity to run away, leaving her tail fur lying on the savanna.

'Not so fast!' cried the elephant. 'I'm going to get you!'

The hare dashed madly, desperate to escape from the angry elephant. As she ran, she passed by some farmers.

'Hey, you farmers!' she cried. 'Do you see that elephant over there? You better get going, because he's running after you.'

So, along with the hare, the farmers ran away. When the elephant saw them, he thought that they must be running after the hare, and ran after them.

'Hey, you farmers,' he **panted**. 'Have you seen a wily little hare with a **skinned** tail around here?'

Relieved, the farmers pointed and said, 'She went that way.'

So the elephant ran off in that direction.

Meanwhile, the hare passed by some women cooking outside their houses.

'Hey, you cooking women!' she cried. 'Do you see that elephant over there? You should get going, because he's running after you.'

So the women dropped their spoons and ran inside, hiding in the dark. The elephant saw them doing this, however, and thought they must have caught the hare.

'Hey, you lovely women,' he said. 'Have you seen a wily little hare with a skinned tail around here?'

Relieved, the women pointed and said, 'She went that way.'

So once again, the elephant chased the hare.

Meanwhile, the hare ran across a herd of antelopes, who were lazily eating grass in the afternoon sun.

'Hey, you antelopes,' she said. 'Do you see that elephant over there? You should get going, because he's running after you.'

The antelopes **spat out** their grass and ran, and it took the elephant a good while to catch up to them.

'Hey, you elegant antelopes,' he said. 'You run very fast! But have you seen a wily little hare with a skinned tail around here?'

Relieved, the antelopes nodded their heads in the direction of the hare.

Finally, the hare arrived at a group of hares.

'Hey, my fellow hares!' she said. 'Do you see that elephant over there? You should all skin your tails right away, because he's looking for a hare with skin on its tail, and if he finds one, he'll crush them like a piece of fruit!'

So the hares hopped around madly, skinning each other's tails until there was a great big pile of fur on the ground.

When the elephant arrived, he looked around and said, 'Hey, you clever little hares. I am looking for one of your kind, a wily little hare that likes to play tricks on people. She has a skinned tail, which should make her easy to find.'

But in response, the hares simply turned around and raised their tails in the air, revealing that they were all skinned.

Now the elephant didn't know what to do. He was sure that the honey thief was hiding among the hares, but he had no way of telling her apart from the others.

'Damn hares!' cried the elephant. 'I should crush you all for such a nasty trick. But luckily for you, I am not the violent type.'

And so the elephant headed home, his family visit ruined. And from that day on, he never helped a hare again.

THE END

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