

Hi everyone, it's Ariel. I'm trying something new today, so I'm going to do a post mortem of the episode that I just recorded. So, post mortem comes from the Latin for 'after death', and usually a post mortem is an autopsy. So basically, when someone has died, the doctors look at the body to try and figure out what the cause of death was, how this person died.

So, that's obviously the technical medical meaning of a post mortem, but we also use post mortem to mean a discussion about something after it has happened. Usually something happens in like a company and the people who run the company have a meeting to discuss what happened, what went wrong. Basically, they do a post mortem. They open up the body of the event and poke around inside. Sorry, that's a horrible metaphor.

Now, usually post mortem is used to talk about negative things, but in this case, I'm hopefully going to be talking about positive things. To be honest, I've always seen postmortem as a neutral word, not so negative, but the dictionary definitions seem to think it's usually for when something has failed.

So there you go. So the idea with this postmortem series, if I do it as a series, is I'll just record these short episodes after recording a main episode of the podcast, and these are going to be just for premium listeners. So if you're listening to this, you are very special because other people, many other listeners can't listen to it.

And basically it's just a way for me to talk about how I think the episode went and maybe give some background on it as well. So the episode I just recorded was *A Crooked Old House* and I loved it. I think it was one of the best recording sessions I've ever had on the podcast.

You know, normally I have up days and down days. I have days where I go to record and I'm like on it and I'm full of energy. I also have days where maybe I'm tired or I don't think it's my best writing and I don't have so much energy. I have to phone it in a bit.

Phone it in is a phrase when... it's usually used for celebrities who maybe appear for a short part of a film, and they're basically there just to get the film more attention, and so they don't have to act very seriously. They just kind of do the bare minimum and collect their paycheck, get their money. It's called phoning it in because in some films they'll literally have a celebrity like phone in, like call one of the characters and have a conversation. And then it's like, Oh my God, that celebrity has been in this film. This is also called a cameo, like a short celebrity appearance.

So I definitely have days when I phone it in on the podcast. I'm just putting in the minimum effort because I need to record the episode. Obviously I don't love doing that, but sometimes you have to, right? Sometimes we all have to phone it in, but today was a very rare day when I just knocked it out of the park, which means I did really, really, really well. I succeeded in my performance.

Um, knocking it out of the park comes from baseball because you want to hit the ball so hard you knock it out of the park, which is also called a home run. Now I've never played baseball. I think, I don't know. Baseball is a very American sport, but we use that phrase, knock it out of the park. And I really knocked it out of the park today. I recorded a brilliant episode, if I don't say so myself, it wasn't just that I was high energy. I feel like I gave a lot of subtle nuances to this performance.

So because it's about a crooked old house and a crooked old man and the house is warped and there are all of these weird, creepy animals and things happening, I really tried to embody that feeling. So while I was recording the podcast, I was kind of moving and bending and wriggling my body. And, um, I think that really helped me enter that character.

I also held myself to a slightly higher standard than normal. Normally when I do character voices. I kind of pick an accent and I record the voice and I say, good enough, but there was one of the character voices in this episode, the voice of the plumber, where I tried out, I think, three or four different accents, three or four different character voices, and I haven't actually edited it yet. As I'm saying this, I haven't edited the episode, so I don't know which character voice I'll go for, but, um, I think it's good to push myself and try new things. So yeah, so I'm really, really happy with the recording.

I also just think it's a really fun story, it's very weird, um, shock, horror, me, writing a weird story, who could have guessed?

And, it's interesting, I wasn't sure what genre to categorize it as at first, but I sent it to my friend Gale, who I have a lot of respect for – he's also a writer. We help each other with our writing quite often. And he was like, Oh, I love it. It's a horror story. And I was like, Oh, I didn't realize it was a horror story, but it is, because horror stories don't always have to be really scary, right? I think especially written horror often tends to be more kind of like creepy and uncomfortable rather than just scary. So yeah.

When writing about this house, I had a very specific kind of house in mind. So in the Tudor, T U D O R, in the Tudor period of British history, there was a type

of house that was built very often called a wood frame house. You've probably seen one before. So they have white walls. And then they have kind of, uh, black or brown squares made of wood that hold the walls together. So the house is connected by all of these squares and beams of wood. It's really hard to describe architecture. Just Google a wood frame house or a Tudor house. And I'll just Google Tudor house now to make sure it lines up with what I'm describing.

Yeah, if you Google Tudor house, you'll see what I mean. And there are lots of these kinds of houses in the UK, especially in historic towns. They're quite common in Germany as well, actually. And I was thinking of this kind of house when writing this story, because obviously these houses are largely made of wood and wood warps, as we see in the story, you know, it gets wet and it moves. And so it creates a really characteristic building that has uneven floorboards and all of this gorgeous wood with different textures and grains.

You know, I think the story was also inspired by, uh, the place I'm living right now. I moved to this place in London in December and it's a house that was built in the 1920s, I think, or the 1930s. And it has very high ceilings and these, uh, railings around the wall to hang pictures on, which is a very old fashioned thing. And, um, it's got really old single glazed windows, which is basically when you have windows with just one layer of glass instead of two layers of glass, which is more modern and also better for insulation.

When the wind blows, the windows kind of, they shake in the frame. You can hear them moving about. So it kind of feels like, even though I live in an apartment in this building, it really feels like a house, which is really nice. It reminds me of my grandparent's house. It's also got this hideously ugly green carpet, which again reminds me of old building styles, ugly carpets, my grandparents, nostalgia, and it really feels like the house is alive because the windows shake in the wind, you know?

I think a lot of modern buildings, because they're sealed, right? You have these thick windows, these thick concrete walls, everything is sealed and contained. It's almost like a cave, and the air gets very still, whereas this flat and old houses in general, they feel alive. They feel like a living building, especially if you have lots of wood, because obviously wood is literally alive, right? So I think there's something about that that I find really beautiful and inspiring.

Anyway, I'm going to try and post the transcript for this episode. Look in the description, there should be a link to a PDF of the transcript. Hopefully, I can keep doing these post mortems for future episodes. I might not do them for all

episodes. And if it turns out to be too much work, we'll see. I'm in this kind of difficult place right now where I'm feeling loads of enthusiasm for the podcast.

I'm doing a lot of new things. But of course, because I burned out in the past, there's always that little voice that says, What if you can't keep this up? But that's a voice of fear, and I don't want to give in to the fear. And I love making this kind of stuff for you. And I think it's hopefully really interesting to kind of get a peek behind the curtain, to go behind the scenes, and see how I make the stories.

So, yeah. Thanks for listening. I would love to know what you *think* about this post mortem. Or just generally, I'd love to chat, um, email me at Ariel@EasyStoriesInEnglish.com. And actually I would love, when I say I'd love to chat, I really mean it. Um, I'm trying to do like video calls with some of my listeners to get an idea of how you found the podcast, how you use the podcast, and just really to understand my audience.

Since you're supporting me by paying for Easy Stories in English premium, and you're listening to this, that means you are a dedicated supporter. That means you really love my work, which means a lot to me, so I would love to talk to you. So yeah, do email me. And let's set something up. Let's have a chat on Zoom.

Also, I paid for Zoom premium, so I want to use it as much as possible to get my money's worth. Okay, then. Thank you for listening. Have a good one. See you soon.