In today's episode, Tobias arrives at boarding school, and things are not what he expected. Can he plant the seeds of evil in the school? Or will he be infected by the 'God virus'? Listen on to find out!

Doing Evil Part 2 – Transcript

Welcome to 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. This is part two of the intermediate-level story *Doing Evil*. As always, the transcript and PDF are available at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com, and you can find the link in the description.

I'll just start by recapping last week's episode. **Recap** means to go over what happened before, to summarise what happened before.

In part one, a young boy called Tobias told his parents that he wanted to do evil. His parents, being devoted Christians, did everything they could to try and make him good. They had him help the elderly, volunteer at the school chapel and pray with them every night. But Tobias fought against all their attempts: he poisoned the old people's drinks, kept rats in the chapel and only pretended to pray to God, when actually he was praying to Satan.

He even stole the host from the priest at school and then framed someone else for it. When you **frame someone** for something, you really did the thing but you make it seem like the other person did it. For example, if someone has murdered someone with a gun, they might leave the gun in the house of a person who hated the murder victim. That way, the criminal can frame them for the murder and make the police think that they did it.

In this case, Tobias frames Georgie for stealing the host – the body of Christ – so his parents lock him in his room and threaten to send him to boarding school. Most kids would be terribly lonely, but Tobias has a friend: the voice inside his head, who he believes is Satan.

So Tobias refuses to give in, and one day a van pulls up to the house to take him to St Gummarus' School for Nasty Children. Tobias fails to escape and is thrown in the van, and in today's episode, we'll discover what kind of place this school is...

But first, I'll just explain some words and cultural references.

Many schools in the UK have mottos. Mottos are short sentences that show what the beliefs and attitudes of an organisation are. Traditionally, school mottos are in Latin, and St Gummarus' is no exception. Their motto is 'memento creatoris tui', which means 'remember your creator'. Of course, it had to be a religious reference, didn't it? The school I went to had the motto 'in christo floremus', which means 'in Christ we flourish'.

Theology, T H E O L O G Y, is the study of religion. Theology is quite close to philosophy in many ways, but there is more of a historical lens to it, as theologians often look at the history of religion.

A **ripple**, R I P P L E, is a small wave on the surface of water. If you have very still water and then you drop something in it, it will create ripples, lots of small circular waves. We also talk about ripples of emotion passing through a room, ripples of laughter – light laughter that gradually spreads through a room; and so on.

Detention, D E T E N T I O N, is a punishment in school, where children are forced to sit in silence in a room. Usually, detentions happen at lunchtime or after school, and the idea is that children don't get to spend time with their friends. A common detention in the UK used to be making children write the same thing a hundred times, such as 'I will not talk in class,' but this is not so common anymore.

A **do-gooder** is someone who tries to do good deeds all the time, but is quite annoying about it and is probably doing it for the wrong reasons. You know the kind: people who insist on opening doors for everyone, talking about giving money to charity, always offering help. You might remember the character Georgie from part one of the story, the girl who Tobias framed for stealing the host. She's the perfect example of a do-gooder.

Oxbridge is a combination of Oxford and Cambridge, the two most respected universities in the UK. You've probably heard of them. We use the word 'Oxbridge' because the two institutions are very similar. For example, if a child does well in school, their parents will encourage them to apply to Oxbridge. I actually studied at Oxford, dropped out – quit; and then went to Cambridge. So I'm one of the few people who can *really* say they went to Oxbridge! And look at me now. I'm a podcaster! So it just goes to show that education has nothing to do with your career.

Indoctrination, I N D O C T R I N A T I O N, is making someone believe an idea so strongly that they stop questioning it. We usually talk about people being indoctrinated into a radical political belief, XXX a religion or a cult.

PE is short for 'physical education', a subject at school. In PE classes, students might play football, do gymnastics, or pretend to play sports but really do nothing. That's what I did. I hated PE!

When you fall over or get knocked down, you stand up and **brush yourself off**. You literally brush the dirt off your shoulders and body and check yourself for injuries.

A-levels are a qualification that you do in the UK between the ages of 16 and 18. Unlike other European countries where it's common to study around 10 subjects at this age, in the UK most pupils do between three and five A-levels. A-levels are graded with letter grades: A*, A, B, C and so on. A-levels are important as they determine which universities you can get into. The most popular A-level subjects are maths, psychology, biology, chemistry and sociology – didn't expect that one! For my A-levels I did French, German, Japanese, Psychology and English Language.

'Even if I die trying' is an expression that means you are going to try really, really hard at something. For example, 'I'm going to get an A* in chemistry even if I die trying!' Fortunately, I did not have to suffer in that way

When we say someone is '**practically vibrating** with excitement' or 'practically vibrating with anticipation', we don't literally mean that they are vibrating or shaking. Rather, they are filled with *so* much emotion that they are almost vibrating. In the case of this story, it's someone 'practically vibrating with goodness'. I wonder who it is?

OK, so listen and enjoy!

Doing Evil

PART TWO

The first thing Tobias saw when the doors opened was the sign outside the school. ST GUMMARUS' SCHOOL FOR NASTY CHILDREN. A SCHOOL THAT SPECIALISES IN LANGUAGES, MUSIC, HISTORY, THEOLOGY, NEEDLEWORK, BUT MOST OF ALL, DISCIPLINE. HERE WE LIVE FOR AND UNDER GOD. MEMENTO CREATORIS TUI.

He didn't have long to read it, though, as the drivers dragged him towards the entrance. It was evening now – they had been driving all day – but even in the darkness the school's tall stone towers and red-brick buildings filled him with a sense of awe and fear.

'Welcome to Gummy's,' said the receptionist through a pair of thick glasses. Her head was topped with even thicker grey hair, and her cardigan was made of wool so fat it might've come from the biggest sheep in the world. 'Scared, are we? Not to worry. You'll soon learn to love it here.'

That night, Tobias was pushed into a bedroom with eleven other boys, each one's uniform cleaner and face meaner than the last. Tobias knew that the next two minutes would determine how the next several years of his life went. So calmly, he went to his bed, jumped on it and lay down, as if he were on holiday and wanted a nap.

'What did they send you for?' spat one of the boys. 'Wet the bed too much?'

'No,' said Tobias. 'I stole the host at mass, framed someone else for it, put a rat in the priest's robes, and poisoned some old people, and prayed to Satan.'

A ripple of awe passed through the room. The boy who'd spoken, however, continued his attack.

'I don't believe you. We don't like new boys around here. Do we?'

He looked around the room for support, and a few boys mumbled agreement.

'Try and hurt me then,' said Tobias casually, waving a hand.

He rolled over, closed his eyes and pretended to sleep. But secretly, he kept his senses wide open. He heard the boy laugh, then move quietly towards him. Just when he was about to jump on Tobias, Tobias turned over and kicked the boy between the legs.

'Christ!' cried the boy.

'Jesus won't help you if you try and get me again,' said Tobias. 'I have Satan on my side. Now if you don't mind, I'd like some sleep.'

The next day, rather than being taken straight to class, a history teacher with a nose like a bulb of garlic took Tobias aside and 'introduced' him to the school.

'My name is Mr Jacobs – no, I don't care to know your name. That brings me to the rules: if you interrupt the teacher, that's detention. If you don't finish your lunch, that's a week's detention. If you try to run away, that's a month's detention. I'm sure this is all much more complicated than anything you had to learn in your previous school, but I trust you understand?'

'Yes, sir,' said Tobias, smiling sweetly.

At the beginning of every class, they said the Our Father, and Tobias reopened his inner dialogue with Satan.

I've missed you, Master, he thought. Now, 'Praise Satan above all others, Lord of the fire and darkness...'

The other pupils at St Gummarus' were all nasty, loud, annoying children, and the constant detentions did nothing to stop them going wild in class.

At first, Tobias saw a light of hope. Had his parents sent him to the perfect place, somewhere he could escape the do-gooders and liars? But soon he came to realise that they were all hypocrites too.

Yes, the teachers shouted at pupils, hit them, gave them detention for coughing or looking out the window, but they did this because they genuinely cared about them. Tobias overheard conversations from the staff room, of how *wonderfully* Billy's behaviour was improving, of how *colourful* Frederick's latest painting was. The teachers wanted them to be strong and brave, to leave the school ready to take over the world.

And the pupils bullied the new kids until they cried – Tobias joined in, of course – but they did it not out of a love of doing evil, but to keep harmony in the school. Most of them had been sent to Gummy's for horrendous behaviour, and if the new kids weren't put in their place they'd all end up murdering each other.

Worst of all were the kids who put their heads down and worked hard, studying for hours like dumb sheep. Some of the other pupils laughed at them, but deep down they all knew that St Gummarus' was their last chance at making something of their lives. This wasn't a school for idiots, just monsters. Many of the pupils claimed they were working hard to avoid punishment, but secretly held dreams of getting into Oxbridge and making their parents proud again.

These were not children of Satan. The God virus was even stronger here, as if the daily prayers filled the air with germs.

Master, what must I do? said Tobias one night in his prayers.

But the voice did not come. Tobias was on his own. He had been thrown into the sea, to see if he could walk on water.

So Tobias decided that, if evil had failed here, he would use goodness as a weapon. He took the daily prayers very seriously, saying them in a loud, clear voice, and he prayed at every meal as well. And this time he did not pretend – he actually prayed to God.

'Thanks be to the Lord. And thanks be to our wonderful maths teacher, Mr Philip! Without him, how could we understand the beauty of quadratic equations, or even a simple circle? Truly, he is an example for us all to follow. Amen.'

Mr Philip was shocked. Tobias did it with such confidence that nobody could tell him off, and he began to add these thanks to students and staff members to every prayer, until people whispered on the playground, wondering when their turn was.

Only at night, alone in his bed, did Tobias speak to his true master.

Once his prayers had brought attention to him, Tobias tried being nice to the new kids. He would take them aside when they arrived, defend them from the bullies, let them know which kids to trust and how to make the teachers like them. He even gave them food at lunch when the bullies stole theirs.

Now this was really strange behaviour, but again, Tobias was an excellent actor. He had spent months pretending to pray, after all. Some of the older bullies tried to teach him a lesson, but he was quick in a fight, and when he wasn't, something always saved him.

'You're damn lucky,' said Grub, one of the widest bullies in school. He had been about to break Tobias's nose, but a teacher had turned the corner just in time.

Not luck, thought Tobias. I have Satan on my side.

Finally, Tobias started helping the *teachers*. One day, in history class, all the pupils were going crazy, jumping around the tables like monkeys. This happened about once a month at Gummy's – monkey fever, they called it. Usually, the teacher sat back, smoked a cigarette, enjoyed a break from work and then eventually sent the whole class to detention, which wasn't so bad when you were all together.

'I'm warning you,' said Mr Jacobs, looking through a magazine. 'I'm really warning you. In a minute I'm going to get really angry.'

Then Tobias climbed up onto his desk. One of the boys let out a shriek and tried grabbing him, but he kicked the foot away. Everyone turned to look at him, excited to see what new madness he would add to their play. But Tobias put his hands in the air, opened his mouth and screamed.

'BE QUIET!'

Everyone went silent. That was *not* what they had expected.

'Can't you see our dear teacher wants to teach?'

For a minute, nobody moved. Then the pupils all turned to look at Mr Jacobs, who stood up so fast his glasses fell off his garlic nose.

'Uh, yes. Thank you, Tobias. Let's get back to, uh, history...'

As if by magic, the pupils pulled their hands out of each other's noses, buttoned their shirts back up, picked up their books off the floor and returned to their seats, ready to learn.

And so the chaotic harmony that held the school together started to break down. Other kids joined in with Tobias's prayers, until the lunch hall looked like some strange religious ceremony, and some of the parents sent in angry letters about 'indoctrination'. The new kids acted like they owned the place, since none of the bullies dared to touch them. And without the regular interruptions, *all* the pupils started paying attention in class and asking questions, which led the teachers to realise they had forgotten most of their subject matter after barely having to teach it for years.

That year was one of the best of Tobias's life. Never had he felt such power, such importance. When the summer holidays came, most of the children went home to their parents, especially now that Tobias had improved their behaviour. But when Tobias thought about his father and mother he was filled with rage, so he spent the summer holidays at school.

Oh Toby, love, please come home. We've heard that you're doing so well, and we want to see you.

Tobias replied to his mother's long letter with a few words: *Mother, we both know it's best if we don't see each other for now.*

So Tobias spent the summer with the few other unfortunates who didn't get to leave, reading books and going for walks in the forest. But most of all, he spent it planning, preparing for the next year.

Then, a few days before all the other pupils returned, the head teacher called Tobias into his office.

About time, thought Tobias. He wasn't sure what was going to happen. Maybe they would punish him. He had been indoctrinating the other children, in a way, but the real indoctrination hadn't even started yet. Or perhaps they wanted to reward him for his good works? But he'd seen the way the head teacher stared at him across the playground. The old man might've complained about the 'awful boys' at the school, but secretly he approved of the way things were.

'Well, Tobias,' said the head teacher, stroking his moustache. 'You certainly are an... energetic boy.'

'I hope I haven't been too loud, sir.'

'No, no, not at all. Apart from the prayers, I suppose.'

'Does it bother the teachers, sir? I would hate to be a bother.'

The head teacher sighed. 'It's not so much that you bother them...'

'Have I been rude to them, sir?'

'Goodness, no. If it weren't for you, they wouldn't be able to teach.'

'Then... what is it, sir?'

The head teacher looked at Tobias as if he were a piece of old jewellery. 'You are one of the finest students we've ever had. That's more or less the problem. We're worried that the other boys are... jealous of you.'

Was that all?

'Well, we must all pray more, then, I think,' said Tobias, smiling.

The man pulled on his moustache a bit too hard, bringing several hairs out. 'Listen, Tobias. There is a cottage near the school. You know the woodlands near here? Lovely place. Used to go hunting there. Well, usually one of the teachers lives there, but right now it's empty. I—we think it would be good for a bright boy like you to go live there. Think of it as a reward for your good behaviour.'

'Sir?' said Tobias. 'I don't guite understand.'

'We'll bring you your work every day – and meals, too – and you'll be free to visit the forest nearby for some exercise. You're clearly very, very smart, and smart boys need space to think.'

'Sir, I'm not sure—'

'Wonderful,' said the head teacher, clapping his hands together. 'I knew you'd understand. You're a smart boy. This is a golden opportunity. Not everyone gets this.'

And before Tobias could say another word, he was being pushed out of the door. Two of the PE teachers were waiting outside, and they practically dragged Tobias to the woods. He'd walked there many times, but the cottage was hidden in an area with an iron fence around it. There was a locked gate with a big rusty key.

'Sorry Tobias,' said one of the PE teachers, turning the key in the lock and pushing him through.

'We really sorry, Tobias,' said the other one.

'Yeah, I was watching the football.'

The cottage was beautiful. Most boys of Tobias's age would've been thrilled to have all that space to themselves – and a computer, too! But Tobias saw it for what it was. Another prison. The PE teachers showed him around, taught him how to use the cooker and the heating, gave him a lecture about making sure to clean regularly. But all Tobias could think about was the lock on the gate.

The first night he tried to escape. He made it look as if he was just going for a wander around the house, but really he was looking for a hole in the fence. It was tall and sharp at the top, and the lock on the gate was strong. There was no way out.

They had told him he could go for walks in the woods, though, hadn't they? The next day, Mr Jacobs came round in the morning with a packet of work, a pint of milk and some bread.

'Hope you've got everything you need?' he said, smiling. 'Because if not, I really don't want to help you.'

'Oh yes, sir,' said Tobias. 'I'm just fine.'

He watched him leave through the window. He noted that his teacher did *not* lock the gate.

But he didn't run out straight away. He made his breakfast, had a bath, did some work, listened to the radio. Then he wandered out, making it look as casual as possible.

As soon as he was a few metres beyond the gate, he ran. He ran as fast as he could, passing the trees so quickly he almost lost an eye on a branch. [panting]. Every minute he expected one of his teachers to jump out of nowhere and grab him. But he ran for what felt like hours and nobody came.

Suddenly, he tripped on a root and fell hard on his head. [cries out]. Slowly he sat up. It felt like he'd been hit with a hammer. He stared up at the cloudy sky and felt his thoughts dance around.

So you're running away, said the voice.

Of course I am!

There is still work to do here, Tobias.

But I... I can't be locked up like that!

You can run away if you wish. But true freedom comes from within.

Tobias was afraid to respond. He had been so focussed on his freedom that he hadn't even thought about his mission.

Well, 'God works in mysterious ways'. There had to be a solution, some reason he had been placed here. The school probably *wanted* him to escape. Maybe these woods were dangerous. He wasn't even sure where in the country St Gummarus' was. His parents might be happy to hear that he had disappeared.

And he refused to give them what they wanted.

So he got up, brushed himself off, and walked back to the cottage. He washed himself, cleaned and mended his clothes, and said a prayer.

I will stay here for as long as it takes. I will find the answer.

Tobias soon found that in this isolation, he was free. He could get up when he wanted, go to bed when he wanted, and as long as he did his schoolwork, nobody bothered him.

At first, Tobias found it awful. He had grown up in a big, loud church community and spent a year in a bigger, louder boarding school. The silence was almost too much for him. So he spent more and more time praying to Satan.

I solved that maths problem today. It felt amazing. But I still don't understand what the point of all this is, Master.

You will figure it out, Tobias.

The only thing Tobias was sure of was that he needed to work hard. He did all his homework, and given he was alone, that didn't take long. So he started reading, and quickly became interested in deeper, more challenging topics – politics, history, psychology. He studied night and day, and invited his teachers in for tea when they dropped off his work. These short chats turned into lively discussions. The teachers weren't used to having someone actually interesting to talk to, and before they knew it, a strange kind of debate society had formed in Tobias's cottage.

As the years passed, Tobias's plan began to form. It was ambitious. Ridiculous, really. It would require him to continue playing the part of a good Christian schoolboy for many more years. But if he did it well... Oh, the thought of his future victory kept him awake at night.

Tobias's parents continued to invite him home every summer, and Tobias continued to refuse.

Mother, Father, I won't come home until I'm ready to see you. The Lord knows that I have sinned for most of my life, and I must make up for those sins. I have realised that God has given me a talent. He wants me to be a man of learning. So you will not see me again until I truly understand the Word.

Tobias worked harder than any student at Gummy's had worked before. His reading widened, based on the eager suggestions of his teachers, to include classic works of literature, philosophy, and yes, even theology. Austen, Shakespeare, Hegel, Proust, St Augustine... He read the Bible in Hebrew and Ancient Greek, and prayed for hours every morning. He even wrote letters to members of parliament, suggesting how they could serve the country in a more Christian way. He couldn't help but laugh as he wrote those letters, whose arguments were the complete opposite of his true feelings. But he could do it so *convincingly*.

Tobias's teachers came to adore him. They brought him presents and said things like, 'You know, you're allowed to sin a bit, sometimes. I'm sure God won't mind if you go out to the village pub on a Friday evening. None of us will say anything.'

But Tobias simply smiled and said, 'That would not be a Christian thing to do. I do not judge others for drinking, but it is not for me. And besides, I am underage.'

At times, doubt slipped in. Tobias wondered if he truly *did* want to be evil. He began to write, filled diaries with his thoughts. All this reading had opened his mind, and though he

hated to admit it, there was a real depth to Christian theology. He could picture himself as a disciple of Christ, following him, truly believing that this man was the son of God.

Then he remembered how his parents had treated him, and pushed his doubts aside. He was doing this for his younger self, but more importantly, he was doing this for Satan.

Tobias took seven A-levels: English, Mathematics, Physics, History, Philosophy, French and Latin; and achieved near-perfect marks in all of them. He easily got into his first choice of university: Trinity College, Cambridge. He was going to study theology. Nobody was surprised by the choice of university, but when his parents heard of his subject choice, they sent daily letters asking if he was serious. Of course, they didn't see the nasty smile on his face as he wrote, Yes, Mother. Yes, Father. I still want to study theology.

'Well, Master,' prayed Tobias, on his final night at St Gummarus'. 'I did it. Thanks to your help, I am on my path to do great evil in your name. You know my plan – you have seen it in my mind – but allow me to say it out loud. I am going to study theology, and I am going to be the best theology student there ever was. Obviously.' He smiled. 'I will make them think I'm such a *good Christian boy*. I'll be so much like Jesus that they all hate me. They'll invite me to give a speech during graduation. And when that happens...

'I will stand on that stage, I will take my degree, and I will tear it in two. "Your God is nothing!" I will cry. "I did this all in the name of Satan! I did this all for evil! I don't believe a single word of *this*" – and I will take a Bible out, throw it on the ground and step on it. "I don't believe a single word of this nonsense, and you're all idiots for believing me." Oh yes, I'll achieve my childhood dream even if I die trying.'

The next day, bright and early in the morning, a taxi arrived to take Tobias to Cambridge. They had arranged that he would meet his parents there, a few days before term started, and it was sure to be an *emotional* reunion...

Tobias was ready and waiting, his suitcase packed with his few belongings, the light of God shining through his eyes.

'Morning, taxi driver!' he said cheerfully.

'Too early for all that,' said the man. 'Just throw your suitcase in the back, sit down and please don't talk.'

'Understood!'

Tobias got into the passenger seat, practically vibrating with goodness. As much as his head was full of evil thoughts, these past few years Tobias had done nothing but good deeds. He had worked hard, been the best son and student he could be. Nobody but his master knew what dark thoughts swam through his mind.

Unfortunately, the taxi driver was not such a good man. He did not pray or study or go to bed early. Or avoid alcohol, for that matter. And so it happened that, as they drove down the motorway, a lorry turned right in front of them, and the driver reacted far too slowly.

They slammed into the back of the lorry. Tobias was thrown forward. The seat belt should have stopped him, but it had been broken for years. The taxi man had been *planning* to replace it...

Everything went black, at least to Tobias. To everyone else, there was a lot of red.

Later – as much as there can be a 'later' after death – Tobias woke up to light. He was in a bright, beautiful place, but there was nothing that he recognised. It sort of looked like he was walking on rocks or clouds. Or crystal sand? The shape of things was like nothing on earth, and the colours were indescribably beautiful.

Hello, Tobias.

Tobias recognised that voice, and it made him shiver. He turned around and saw a... creature. Not a man or a woman. And although it had a head, two arms and legs, nobody would ever call it 'human'.

'Who are you?' said Tobias.

You know very well who I am.

And now Tobias knew where he'd heard that voice. Inside his own head.

'But it can't be. This can't be... Can it? Why would I be here?'

The creature smiled, and its smile was so bright that Tobias wanted to close his eyes.

You were a sinner, but so are we all.

'I wasn't just a sinner!' cried Tobias. 'I was *the* sinner. And I didn't pray to you! I prayed to S—to S—'

Tobias could not speak the word. Such evil was not allowed here. No evil was allowed here. This was a place free of sin.

Suddenly, Tobias realised the problem with his plan. He had *planned* to do evil, planned it in great detail, but at the moment he died, he was nothing but good.

'I hate you. I hate you.'

God laughed. Oh, Tobias. Then why are you smiling?

THE END

Thank you for listening to this episode! I'd love to hear what you think about this story – it's a bit of a personal one to me. Leave a comment on YouTube, or go to the transcript at <u>EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Evil2</u> and write something at the bottom. Now go out there and do some evil. Just kidding! Bye.

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