

The Pumpkin Jug – Transcript

Hello, my lovely learners! In today's story, a king asks a woman to do something very difficult. He asks her to put a pumpkin in a small jug. If the woman can do it, the king will marry her. The woman laughs and says, 'Ha! Easy! I can do that.' Is she crazy? Keep listening to find out!

[intro]

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. Today's beginner-level story is called *The Pumpkin Jug*. As always, the transcript and PDF are available at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com, and you can find the link in the description.

OK, I'll just explain some words, and then we'll get into the story!

A **pumpkin** is a large, orange vegetable. Pumpkins are popular around autumn. Pumpkins can be used in sweet and savoury cooking. For example, in America people eat pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. You can also make pumpkin soup. Pumpkins are also used as decorations. For example, during Halloween, people cut faces into pumpkins and put candles inside them.

A **jug** is a container for liquids, such as water, milk, juice and so on. Jugs have a handle and a big hole on the top. We use jugs to pour drinks at meals and at parties. Jugs can be ceramic or made of glass.

When you pull a flower out of the ground, you **pick** it. You can pick lots of flowers to make a bouquet, for example. These days, people don't usually pick flowers. Instead, they buy flowers from a florist.

Poppies are flowers with large, red petals. Poppies have black seeds in the middle, which can be used in cooking. There are also some poppies whose seeds can be used to make drugs. In the UK, we associate poppies with Remembrance Day, 11th November, when we remember those who died in World War I. This is because poppies grew in many of the fields where battles happened during World War I. On Remembrance Day, many people buy small artificial poppies to wear on their clothes. The money made from selling the poppies goes to charity, and people can show that they remember those who died in the war.



When you are **thirsty**, you need to drink water. If you eat food, you won't be hungry, but you might still be thirsty. We can survive hunger for a long time, but thirst kills very quickly. And actually, right now, I'm a bit thirsty, so let me drink some water. [drinks water] I am no longer thirsty.

Bow is when you lower half of your body. People bow to be polite, like this. If you're listening, you can't see me bowing, but on the video, I am bowing. In some East Asian countries such as Japan, bowing is a common way of greeting or saying thank you or sorry.

A **hole** is an empty space in something. If you have some very old clothes, they will probably have holes in them. You can put your finger in the hole. Some people get very angry and hit their wall, and then they have a hole in their wall. Not a good idea.

When something **fits**, it is the right size or shape. For example, when you buy clothes, you try the clothes on to see if they fit. If they fit well, then they sit close to your body, but if they fit badly, then they are too big or too small.

A **rule** is a way you have to do something. For example, in school the rules are, 'do not talk when the teacher is talking', 'do not hit other pupils', 'do not eat during class' and so on. Rules are very important for playing games. If you break the rules of a game, then you have to stop playing.

When something is **impossible**, it is not possible, you cannot do it. For example, it is impossible for humans to fly. It is impossible to meet every person in the world. It is impossible to read with your eyes closed.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

The Pumpkin Jug

Once, there was a king who was on holiday. The king went to **pick** flowers with his friends. The king found a field of **poppies**, which were his favourite flower. He picked hundreds of poppies and forgot about his friends.

Many hours later, the king couldn't find his friends. He was lost. The king was far away from his home, and all he had were the poppies he had picked. The king knew he could find the way home, but it would take a long time and he was **thirsty**. He needed water. The king thought, *Hmm, maybe there is a river somewhere.* He looked for a river, but then he saw a house on a hill. *Ah!* thought the king. *I will ask for water at that house.*

The king walked up the hill to the house. Outside the house, a young woman was working in the garden.

'Hey there, young girl!' said the king. 'Could I ask you for some water? I have been picking poppies, and now I am very thirsty, and I must drink some water before finding my way back.'

'Of course,' said the woman. 'But can I ask what a young man like you is doing picking poppies? Surely you have other work to do? Most men do not pick poppies for work.'

'Ah!' said the king. 'I suppose I should say: I am a king.'

'Oh!' The woman **bowed** to the king. 'I don't know what country you come from, but it is wonderful to have you here. Would you like some pumpkin juice to drink?'

'Pumpkin? What's that?' There were no pumpkins in the king's country.

The woman showed the king some of her vegetables. 'I grow pumpkins here, you see,' she said. 'That is my job.'

'What a strange plant,' said the king. 'I have never seen anything like it. No, I would just like some water.'

'You must eat some pumpkin before you leave this country,' said the woman. 'It is a very special vegetable. Ah, I will go get you some water.'

She bowed and went inside, and then came out looking very sad.

'I'm sorry, but we only have one jug, and it is old and dirty.' She showed him the jug, which was old and simple. 'I do not think it is good enough for a king. You should have a gold jug with water from the highest mountain.'

'No, no,' said the king. 'That jug is fine. The important thing is I am thirsty and I want to drink. I will be happy with that jug and your water.'

So the woman filled the jug with water and gave it to the king. But when the king finished drinking, she took the jug from his hands and threw it on the ground. SMASH! The jug broke into many pieces.

'Well, that was strange,' said the king. 'Is this normal in your country? Should I break the jugs of my friends here?'

'Well, well! You are a king, and so I wanted to give you a gold jug, but I could not. I could only give you an old and dirty jug. But now a king has used it, and so the jug is special. I do not want other people using that jug now – it is a king's jug, and only a king can use it.'

The king did not say what he was thinking: the woman had broken the jug, so now *nobody* could use it. Not a king or a normal person. But he thought it was a lovely idea. He had been picking poppies, and when you pick a flower, it dies. Was it not the same with the jug? The jug was dead now, but he would remember drinking from it always.

'Well, well,' said the king. 'This has been an interesting afternoon. I must go now, but I hope your pumpkins grow very big.'

'Make sure to eat one before you leave!' **called** the woman as he left.

The king stayed in that country for a month more, and he could not stop thinking about the woman. One night, his friend gave him pumpkin for supper, and the king liked the pumpkin very much. That night, he dreamed about the dirty old jug. There was something small inside the jug, and he could not see what it was. But the dream gave him an idea.

So before he went home, he sent a man to visit the woman. The man took a pumpkin and a jug with a small **hole** in the top. The hole was very small. If you tried to put your hand in the jug, only one finger would **fit** through the hole.

'The king has a game for you,' said the man. 'You must put this pumpkin inside this jug. But you cannot break the jug or the pumpkin. Those are the **rules**.'

'Oh no!' said the woman. 'How can I do such an **impossible** thing? The king will kill me!'

'Ha!' said the man. 'He will not kill you. He is not a bad man. But he wants to see if you can do it. I've heard that you like breaking jugs. But there is no way this pumpkin will fit if you don't break the jug!'

Of course, the man was right. It was an impossible game. The hole at the top of the jug was too small, and the pumpkin would not fit. If the woman broke the jug or the pumpkin, then she would break the rules.

But she thought for a while and said, 'What do I get if I can fit the pumpkin in there?'

'Just wait and see.'

The king returned to his country and months passed. He thought often of the pumpkin grower. In his home country, if a king wanted to marry a woman who was not the daughter of a king, he could normally not do it. But there was an old rule: if the king gave the woman an impossible job and she did it, then they could get married.

The king hoped very much that the woman could win his impossible game.

Later that year, the king went back to that country and visited the woman again.

'Young girl! I'm here to see if you have a pumpkin jug for me.'

The woman heard the king's voice and ran to him, holding the jug. She bowed quickly.
'Look inside.'

The king looked inside, and yes! The pumpkin was inside the jug, and it was not broken.

'You did it! And you did not break the rules. But how?'

'Mm, first: what do I get?'

The king **laughed**. 'Well, how would you like to grow pumpkins in my garden?'

'That would be nice,' said the woman. 'But I can grow pumpkins here.'

'Ah, but if we get married and you live here, it will be impossible!'

The pumpkin grower's face went red. 'Are you serious? You are really asking me to marry you?'

'I would break a thousand jugs to show how serious I am.'

'Then yes. A thousand times yes.'

So the king took her home and they prepared for the wedding. Every day, he asked her how she had done the impossible, but she wouldn't tell him. Finally, a few days after they got married, she told him.

'I took the seeds from your pumpkin and grew the plant. When the pumpkins were still small, I put one of them inside the jug and let it grow there. I had to make sure it got enough water and light, but it was quite easy, really.'

The king **laughed**. 'So that was what I saw in my dream!'

'Your dream?'

'I dreamed that I saw something small inside a jug,' said the king. 'It must have been a seed.' He kissed her. 'I would like to learn to grow things, too, you know. I've never grown anything before.'

'Well,' said the queen. 'Why don't we grow some children?'

And they didn't need a jug to do that!

THE END

So, if you were listening carefully, you might have heard that I said 'lovely learners' at the beginning of the episode. And two weeks ago, in the episode [My Sister's Wedding](#), I gave you three options for names, fan names.

You are all my fans. Hopefully! Maybe some of you are not fans. Maybe some of you are future fans. You are not fans now, but you soon will be fans. Some of you might be haters. You might not be fans. You might not like the podcast. If you are a hater, please be nice.

But anyway, two weeks ago, I said I wanted to choose a fan name, a name for my fans, and I gave you three choices. Well, based on the beginning of this episode, you can probably guess which option won, but just so you know, because this is a democracy, I will tell you what the votes were. Because in a democracy, we vote to decide what will win.

So, Goodbody Buddies, that was option one, got 15 votes. Fictional Friends, option two, also got 15 votes. And option three, Lovely Learners, got 34 votes. So, hmm, we can probably call this a landslide victory.

A landslide victory is when, in a competition, one person wins by a lot more. Normally, a landslide is when it rains a lot and there is a hill and the ground on the hill becomes very wet, very muddy, and suddenly all the land, all the ground slides down. Landslides can be very dangerous, because if you are standing at the bottom of the hill and there is a landslide, suddenly all this mud and ground is going to hit you.

So a landslide victory is when one group wins the competition by much more. Recently, we had an election in the UK, recently we voted to choose which political party will rule the

country, and the Labour Party had a landslide victory. Luckily, in this case, it's a lot less dramatic, but lovely learners did indeed win by a landslide victory.

So, once again, I will say hello to all my lovely learners. You're all lovely, and by listening to this podcast, you're all learning English.

Now, my personal favourite, the name that I wanted to win was Goodbody Buddies, because I think it's very fun to say. Goodbody Buddies, Goodbody Buddies, Goodbody Buddies. But, I also acknowledge, I also recognise, that it's a bit egotistical. Egotistical means it's all about you. And of course, Goodbody is my surname, so Goodbody Buddies has my name in it. So it's a bit egotistical to call my fans Goodbody Buddies.

Also, you know, 'good body' can mean many things, and maybe if people heard 'Goodbody Buddies' and they didn't know the context, they didn't know who I was, they didn't know what the podcast was about, they might think it meant something else. But lovely learners is a lot clearer. So, thank you, my lovely learners, for all of your votes.

So, going back to the story, I wonder, I ask myself: if the woman couldn't get the pumpkin inside the jug, what would have happened? What would the king have done? Because he has this rule that if she can complete, if she can win this impossible game, then he can marry her, but he was probably hoping that she won. So if she didn't win, what would he do? Interesting.

You know, it really makes me think: in fairy tales, why do they always make marriage so complicated? In real life... Well, marriage in real life also isn't so simple, but at least you can just say, 'Will you marry me?' to someone. You don't have to make them put a pumpkin in a jug.

Actually, I'm asking all these questions, but I'm the one who wrote the story. In the version that I read, there wasn't this rule about impossible games. I added it myself, but I think without the rule, you know, it's even stranger. Like, why does the king make her do this?

But then I thought, Mmm, actually that means they're a very good match. When we say two people are a good match, it means they go really well together, and I think the king and the pumpkin grower are a very good match because they're both very dramatic people. They love drama, right? She broke the jug that he drank from. That was strange. Why did she have to do that? And he created this game, this challenge, with the pumpkin jug. So actually, they're a very good match because they're both dramatic and very strange.

Once again, I have to wonder, I have to ask myself: if a king drank from my jug, would I smash the jug? Would I break the jug? To be honest, I guess if a king drank from my jug, it would probably be King Charles, the King of England. But I can't think of a situation where King Charles would be in my house and would drink water from my jug.

Actually, I don't think I have a jug. I have a measuring jug which is a jug you use to measure liquid when you are baking, for example. So maybe you need, hmm, 500 millilitres of



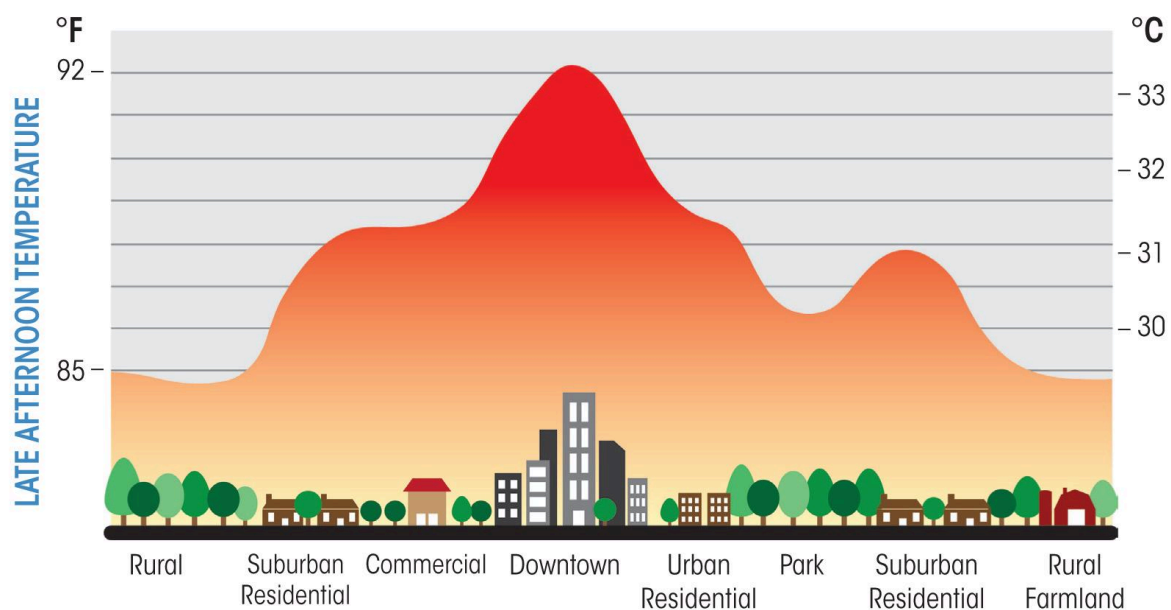
water, one litre of water, then you use a measuring jug. But measuring jugs are made of plastic, usually. My measuring jug is made of plastic. So if I tried to smash the measuring jug, it wouldn't work.

So actually, I think in this very strange situation where King Charles comes to my house and drinks water from my jug, the first thing I would do would not be to smash the jug, to break the jug, but to wash the jug, because I'm sure King Charles has a lot of germs. I'm sure he has a lot of bacteria. I know they're royal germs, royal bacteria, but I don't want them.

So as I record this podcast episode, summer is coming to a close. Summer is ending and normally I would be quite sad. I like summer. I like warm weather and I like it when the days are long. But now I live in London and London summers are very hot.

There's two reasons for this. First of all, London is in Southeast England, which tends to be, which usually is, a bit hotter than the rest of the country. It tends to be about four or five degrees warmer than other places in the country. So, first of all, London is just warmer than the other places I've lived in the UK.

But the second reason is London is a big, big city. London is very built up. It has lots of buildings, and this creates something called the urban heat island effect.



So, urban means in a city, and island is usually a bit of land in water. But a heat island is when heat gets trapped, gets kept in a place. And because there is lots of concrete buildings in London, all of the heat comes in, and it can't easily get out. On very hot days, the concrete absorbs all of the heat, and then it takes a long time for the heat to go away.

The urban heat island effect, of course, happens in many big cities, but in London it's pretty bad because the city was not built while thinking of these things. When they built the city, they didn't plan the heat management. They didn't plan how the heat would work and they didn't think about this urban heat island effect. So now it gets very hot in the summer.

So I am really enjoying the fact that summer is coming to a close. I'm happy that summer is ending because it means that it is cooler. It's colder. And, yeah, uh, it's just nice to have some change. I will say, though, I have been a lot sleepier. When you're sleepy, you... Well, you want to sleep. And recently, I've been a lot sleepier. In the summer, I have so much

energy. I can stay awake for a long time. But at this time of year, I start to get sleepier. Maybe I should take a nap after recording this episode.

Of course, another thing that will happen as we move into autumn is that pumpkins will come into season.

So, most food has a season. The seasons are spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and most food has a time of the year when it is best to eat that food. That is the season of the food. So, of course, in the past, we always ate seasonally. We always ate foods when they came into season, and when the foods were not seasonal anymore, we could not eat them, but now we can import food from different countries, so we can eat pretty much any food any time of the year. We can eat strawberries in winter. and oranges in summer.

However, I believe that it's better to eat seasonally. First of all, because the food usually tastes better when it's in season, and secondly, because it's just better for the environment. The food doesn't have to travel so far, and when I'm in the supermarket buying my fruit and vegetables, I always look to see where the food has come from, where the food was imported from, and I try to buy the things that were grown in the UK.

So, in the story, the pumpkin grower offered pumpkin juice to the king. Actually, I'm not sure if pumpkin juice is a real drink. If you've read the Harry Potter books, you'll know that in Harry Potter, they drink a lot of pumpkin juice. And actually, I heard some people say that they read these books as children and they thought, oh, it's a British thing. British people drink pumpkin juice, but that's not true. I have never drunk pumpkin juice, and I've never seen pumpkin juice in the supermarket.

I think the reason they drink pumpkin juice in Harry Potter is because pumpkins make us think of Halloween. And on Halloween, we carve, we cut faces into pumpkins to use as decorations. So there is an association between Halloween, pumpkin carving, and then I guess Halloween also makes us think of witches and wizards and magic.

Poppy seeds also came up in the story and I said they could be used as food. In the UK, we don't cook with poppy seeds very much, but I know that in Central and Eastern Europe, poppy seeds are very popular to use in desserts, in sweet food.

For example, there is poppy seed roll, a kind of sweet bread made with poppy seeds that is very nice. I have tried it, and I really liked it.

So that's all about the story, but last week I also talked about Story Builders.

If you're just listening to the podcast, I have just put on my hard hat. A hard hat is a big, yellow, plastic hat that builders wear to keep their heads safe. Because hard hats are hard, if you hit your head, it doesn't hurt. Um, actually, I thought I would just buy this hard hat to take some pictures and video for Story Builders because I think it's a fun idea.

Obviously, I am not a builder. I mean, look at these arms. Do these look like the arms of a builder? I don't think so.





But it turns out hard hats are more complicated than I thought. Look inside. Obviously, if you're not watching the video, you can't see, but there's a kind of plastic thing inside the hat. It's a bit like a spider, um, and basically this creates space between the hard yellow bit of the hat and the plastic. So it protects your head, and you can adjust this, you can move this based on the size of your head. I didn't know that hard hats were so complicated.

Anyway, if you didn't hear last week, I will remind you. Story Builders is a new course I have coming up. It will be an online Zoom class once a week with between 12 and 15 students in the class. In the Story Builders course, over eight weeks, we will build a story together using your interests and the kind of ideas that you like. I will help kind of put all of everyone's ideas together to make a great story, which will then appear on the podcast.

But of course, we won't just be building a story, we'll also be building your English level. We'll be adding new bricks of vocabulary and grammar, and also improving your confidence to speak and write.

So if you would like to find out as soon as Story Builders opens and you can sign up for the course, do join my email newsletter at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Email.

And if you think, oh, I can't wait for that. I want to do classes with you, Ariel, right now! Well, you can! Go to EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Classes to find out all the information about booking a private class with me.

I also understand that it can be a bit scary starting classes, especially with someone as amazing as me. So you can book a free chat with me. We will just talk for about 15 minutes. You can ask any questions you have about doing classes with me, and then I will explain how it all works, and you can decide if you want to do classes. So, to book that free 15 minute consultation, do go to EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Classes. Also, I'll put all these links in the description, so just look in the description as well.

Okay, that's enough of this hard hat. If I wear this hard hat for too long, I will have hat hair all day. My hair will be all flat and horrible because of the hat. And nobody likes hat hair.

So, thank you for listening to this episode of *Easy Stories in English*. If you're watching on YouTube, subscribe and click the bell icon so you will find out every time there's a new

episode. And if you're listening on a podcast app, please do subscribe and leave a review if you would like. I would really appreciate that.

Thank you and see you soon.