

Three Kisses – 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 pre-intermediate story is called *Three Kisses*. As always, the transcript and PDF are available at [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com), and you can find the link in the description.

I just want to start by reminding you that I have a survey, a questionnaire, that I would love you to answer. I want to find out all about the new listeners who have joined in the past few years, what you like, what you want more of, and basically, how I can help you learn English. So, to answer my survey, go to [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Ask](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Ask), and after you've answered that, you'll get the free beginner story, *The City Mouse*, and the *Country Mouse*. That's [EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Ask](https://www.EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Ask) to answer my survey. Thank you very much.

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

A **ruby** is a red gemstone, a red jewel. Rubies shine a beautiful red colour. If you see something that is a deep, beautiful red, you can say it is ruby-red.

Grief is a deep sadness that you feel after someone you love has died. Many people express their grief by crying. It can take many years to overcome grief, to get over the death of a loved one.

A **servant** is a person who lives in your house and helps you do things. For example, servants do cleaning, cooking and washing. Servants were very common in the past. The British TV show *Downton Abbey* is about servants.

A **dragon** is a mythical creature that is found in most cultures around the world. Dragons are big monsters with horns and claws that can breathe fire and eat people. Dragons like to collect treasure and hide it in their lair, such as rubies, and knights come to try and kill the dragon, although most of them just get eaten. In the TV series *Game of Thrones*, Daenerys had several dragons.

A **witch** is an evil woman, a very bad woman, who does magic. Witches go [cackle]. They have black cats as pets, they wear big black hats and they fly on broomsticks. The Shakespeare play *Macbeth* opens with three witches meeting in a cave. They say, 'Double, double, toil and trouble/ Fire burn, and cauldron bubble,' which is now a famous expression related to witches. For example, in one of the *Harry Potter* films, the choir at the school Hogwarts sings this as a song.

A **seagull** is a horrible, nasty, fat white bird with a big mouth. Sorry, you can probably tell that I don't like them. Seagulls usually live by the sea, but in the UK, you can find them in any big town with a lot of tourists. Seagulls are everywhere in my hometown, Bath, because they eat food that tourists drop or feed to them. This is how a seagull sounds: [seagull sound]. Horrible.

Although, I will say, since I originally talked about seagulls on the podcast, uh, I don't hate them as much! Since I moved to London, I see far fewer seagulls, so I don't mind them now. They're just a nice sea bird. But if they steal my pizza again, I will kill them.

Courage means being brave, being able to control your fear in a scary situation. Traditionally, people show courage by fighting in wars. People say that doing stand-up comedy takes courage, but I think it's much easier than going to war or doing brain surgery, for instance...

A **slave** is a person who is owned by someone else and has to work for them. Slaves usually live in a separate part of the house. They get food and shelter, but they are not paid,

and they usually have no rights. In the past, the Roman Empire and the British Empire kept and sold slaves, and slavery continued in the United States of America until 1865.

Smash means to break something into lots of small pieces, usually glass. There is a Marvel superhero called The Hulk. He always says, 'Hulk smash!' If you smash your phone, it's going to get lots of glass everywhere, and it definitely won't work anymore.

A **bath tub** is the thing you put water in to make a bath. Bathtubs are usually long enough to lie down in, so you can lie down in hot water and have a nice bath. However, in America they have shorter bathtubs than in the UK, and it is difficult to lie down in them. I don't know why this is the case.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

Three Kisses

Once upon a time, there was a king and queen. They had a son called Godwin and a daughter called Leah. Godwin was handsome and strong, and Leah was beautiful and kind. She had long, **ruby**-red hair, and she was friends with everyone.

But one day, when the children were still young, the queen got ill and died. The **grief** was too much for the family. The king's grief made him angry, and he often shouted at the **servants**. Leah's grief made her quiet, and she stopped talking to people. Godwin's grief made him want to leave. Seeing the castle and his family every day made him think of his mother, and he couldn't bear it.

So one day, Godwin left. He sailed away to find adventure. He left a note which explained this, but this did not make his father or his sister any less sad.

The king did not want to lose Leah, as well. He noticed that every day she stood on her balcony and watched the sea, so he planted a rose garden there. Slowly, hundreds of white roses grew on the balcony, and with them, Leah began to talk again. She talked only to the roses at first, but then she started talking to people, too. Still, she seemed to love her roses more than anything else.

One day, Leah said, 'Oh, I wish I could send a rose to my brother!'

She thought often about Godwin. As she watched the waves, she imagined him in far away places, fighting **dragons** and killing **witches**. She had no idea if this was true. She didn't even know if he was alive.

Just then, a **seagull** flew near the balcony, and Leah had an idea.

'Ho there, seagull! Will you bring this rose to my brother?'

The seagull flew down and Leah put the rose in its mouth. Then she kissed the bird three times: twice on the cheek and once on the head.

'One for fear, one for **courage**, one for love,' said Leah.

Then the seagull flew away across the sea.

For many years, Leah continued to send flowers to her brother, each time giving three kisses to the seagull. No reply ever came, and the servants in the castle began to talk. Some said that Godwin had been eaten by a dragon, and others said that he had been killed by a witch. The king told his servants to stop saying such horrible things, but when words fly like seagulls, nothing can bring them down.

Leah became quiet again, and the king did not want to see her that way. He thought that she needed a mother's love. So he sent a message to another country. He knew that there was a princess there who had never married. He sent her some of Leah's beautiful roses and asked her to marry him.

To his surprise, the princess accepted. She came immediately, and although she was very beautiful, she was also very strange. She talked a lot, but she never talked much about herself. It seemed like she had many secrets. She was quite old for a princess, of course, so the king thought she was probably just very happy to finally have a chance at marriage.

They had no reason to wait, so the wedding took place a few days later. Leah watched silently as her father kissed this strange woman. But when she saw that her father was happy, she became happy as well.

Still, one thing Leah found very strange. The new queen had brought no servants with her. In fact, she'd brought very few things with her at all. One day, while the king and the queen were riding horses, Leah went into her room. She expected to find beautiful jewellery and clothes – the new queen wore different clothes every day – but all there was was the bed and a large glass bottle on a table. Inside the bottle was a liquid that changed colours – sometimes it was yellow, sometimes red, sometimes green and sometimes blue.

Leah wanted very much to open the bottle and see what it was, but she was a good girl, and she thought the servants would be coming soon. It was a shame she did not open the bottle, because then she would have discovered the new queen's secret.

In the bottle lived four ghost-witches: a yellow witch, a red witch, a green witch and a blue witch. She had caught these four ghost-witches in a bottle, and now they were her **slaves**. Every day, she opened the bottle and the four ghost-witches flew out. They made her new clothes, they covered her with jewellery and they made her look beautiful.

But this was not enough for the queen. While they worked, they had to tell her how beautiful she was.

'Your skin is as golden as the sun!' said the yellow witch.

'Your hair is as red as a ruby!' said the red witch.

'Your clothes are as green as the deepest forest!' said the green witch.

'And your eyes are lovelier than a clear blue sky!' said the blue witch.

'Correct,' said the queen, and her slaves kept working.

Leah never discovered this, and for several years the king and queen lived happily together while the queen's slaves made her beautiful. Leah was not as sad and quiet as before, but she was not very happy, either.

Then, one day, a travelling musician came to the castle. He sang songs about faraway places, and in particular, he sang about a brave man called Godwin. Leah and the king were amazed – Godwin was alive! The musician told them that none was more courageous than Godwin, that he had killed fifty dragons and a hundred witches, that he was loved by men and women, young and old.

The only one who was not happy to hear this was the queen. 'Enough!' she said. 'You are a cruel man. Godwin left this castle ten years ago, and if he was alive, he would have returned. He can only be dead. Leave now, or I will make sure you end up dead as well!'

The musician left, but the queen continued to worry. What if Godwin *did* come back? He would surely find out about her secret, and probably try to kill her.

As the queen worried about this, the ghost-witches helped prepare her for bed.

'Her skin is as golden as the sun!' said the yellow witch.

'Her hair is as red as a ruby!' said the red witch.

'Her clothes are as green as the deepest forest!' said the green witch.

'And her eyes are lovelier than a clear blue sky!' said the blue witch.

'“Her”?' said the queen. '“Her”?! Who are you talking about?'

'We speak of the princess Leah,' said the yellow witch.

'She is an adult now, and so beautiful,' said the red witch.

'We thought you should know,' said the green witch.

'Now everyone thinks she is more beautiful than you,' said the blue witch.

This made the queen *very* angry. She screamed at the ghost-witches, who flew around the room and cried, 'Sorry!' They were hoping that she would **smash** their bottle. If the queen smashed their bottle, they would be free. The queen picked up the bottle, and it looked like she was just about to smash it, but then she had an idea.

'Go. Find the princess. Go and turn her into the *ugliest* creature that has ever lived!'

'Yes, Queen!' said the ghost-witches.

They flew away, and it did not take them long to find Leah. She was standing on her balcony as usual.

'Your breath will be hotter than the sun!' said the yellow witch.

'Your skin will be as red as rubies!' said the red witch.

'Your eyes will be as green as the deepest forest!' said the green witch.

'And your tongue will be as blue as the sea!' said the blue witch.

They used their magic, and Leah began to turn into a dragon! Her skin became hard and ruby-red, her eyes turned green, and her tongue turned blue. When she breathed, fire came out, hot as the sun.

Deep in Leah's stomach, there was still the grief for her mother. But in the dragon's stomach, the grief turned to hunger.

The dragon flew away. With its huge teeth it ate everything it found, and when people came near, it breathed fire on them.

The dragon ate a field of vegetables and it ate a dozen sheep. When it was full, it flew back to the castle and ate the garden of roses.

The people ran to the king and asked for help. The king didn't know what to do – they had never seen a dragon before. So the queen stepped in.

'The dragon must be killed,' she said. 'Find the strongest men in the land, and—'

'No!' said the king. 'I am sure only Godwin could kill that dragon.'

He saw the dragon fly through the sky, and that ruby-red skin was familiar... The king had an idea.

'Bring fifty **bathtubs** to the beach, and fill the bathtubs with a hundred litres of milk.'

The people thought that this was strange, but the king had always had good ideas in the past, so they did as he said. They waited for the dragon to fall asleep, then they carried a hundred bathtubs to the beach below the balcony and filled them with a hundred litres of milk each.

When the dragon woke up, it was hungry, and it smelled the cow's milk immediately. It flew down and drank all the milk, and then it fell asleep again. It had worked!

For several days, the people continued to bring the dragon milk, and it stopped eating their other food. But far away on the sea, not all was well...

Godwin stood on his ship. He had had the ship built a few years ago, and now he travelled everywhere on it. Usually, a seagull came every day and brought him a white rose, and he liked to imagine it came from his sister. But the past few days, the seagull hadn't come. He began to think about home. All this time, he hadn't returned, because of his grief. Maybe it was time to go back.

Just then, he heard a sound from the sky – it was the seagull! But it was not calmly carrying a rose as usual – it **shrieked** horribly.

Godwin knew something was wrong, and he immediately turned the ship to go home. For several days he travelled, and when he came near, he saw a dragon on the shore.

For over a week now, the people had been bringing milk to the dragon, and the cows of the kingdom were getting drier and drier. It seemed the dragon could drink twenty thousand litres of milk and still want more. Day after day, the queen told the king that they must kill the dragon, but he did not listen to her. So she got angry and hid in her room, trying to think of ways to get what she wanted.

When she saw Godwin's ship approaching, she knew she had to do something.

'Quick, quick!' she said.

She picked up the bottle so quickly that when she opened it, it dropped to the floor and smashed. The queen hardly noticed, though, and the ghost-witches said nothing. They only had to do one last thing for the queen, and then they would be free!

'Go and attack that ship!' cried the queen. 'Break it apart so it falls into the sea!'

'Yes, Queen!'

The four ghost-witches flew like lightning. They were going to fly into the ship and smash it into a thousand pieces. But when they hit the ship, it was as hard as rock, and they fell away.

'What?!' cried the queen. 'How can it be?'

This was not the first witch that Godwin had fought, and he knew their many tricks. When he had his ship built, he specifically asked that they use rowan wood. Rowan wood was more expensive than other wood, but it had the power to stop magic.

'Fine!' said the queen. 'Go and kill Godwin! The others can live, but Godwin must die!'

But the ghost-witches did not respond. The queen looked for them, but they were nowhere to be seen. They had disappeared into the sea...

Soon, Godwin's ship pulled onto the shore, and the dragon woke up. Godwin was ready to fight and kill the monster, but the seagull cried something.

'What?' said Godwin.

The dragon was looking at him now, and it looked hungry.

'Three kisses! Three kisses!' said the seagull.

Godwin didn't understand, but then he looked at the dragon more closely. That ruby-red skin looked familiar, and those green eyes...

'I will not hurt you,' said Godwin, and he put his hands in the air. 'If you do not hurt me.'

For a while, the dragon looked at him. Then it lowered its head.

Godwin kissed the dragon three times: twice on the cheek and once on the head.

'One for fear, one for courage, one for love.'

Suddenly, the dragon started to change. The ugly skin turned into golden sunshine, ruby-red hair grew from its head, it put on clothes as green as the deepest forest and its eyes became more beautiful than a clear blue sky.

It was the princess Leah!

'Oh, brother!'

'Sister!'

Godwin and Leah hugged and cried for a long time. The king saw what had happened and came running, and for hours the family sat on the beach, talking and laughing.

Finally, the king asked who could have turned Leah into a dragon, and Leah explained what she had seen in the queen's bedroom. The three of them ran there, but inside all they found was some broken pieces of glass and a black rose. Nobody knew where the rose had come from.

'Oh, what a beautiful rose,' said Leah.

She went to take it, but just then, the seagull flew through the window and ate the rose. Leah was so surprised that all she could say was, 'Oh!'

After that day, the queen never came back, and the ghost-witches were never seen again. Godwin lived many long, happy years with his sister and his father, and he never ran out of stories to tell them.

THE END