

Have you ever punched someone? Bam! Hopefully not! But in today's story, that's what happens: a man punches someone, and not just anyone, but an old woman! What?! Why would he punch an old woman? You'll just have to keep listening to find out!

[intro music]

Hello my Lovely Learners, and 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 *Think Fast*. 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 that are in today's story.

A **nerd** is a person who loves technical things too much. Nerds usually wear big glasses, are very weak and *talk like this*. Nerds usually love things like computers, cartoons and video games. Nerds might also love studying. For example, Hermione Granger from *Harry Potter* is a nerd.

A **formula** is something you do in mathematics. Sums are simple maths, things like $2 + 2 = 4$, but formulas are more complicated and usually use letters. For example, Einstein discovered the famous formula $E=mc^2$. Another example of a formula is a chemical formula. For example, H_2O is the chemical formula for water. When you **solve a formula**, you go through a formula and complete it. In school, children often have to solve formulas in maths class.

A **strategy** is detailed plan that you use to win a fight, run a business or win a game. For example, football managers, people who run football teams, think of different strategies to help their team win games. Or you might be playing cards with your family and you have a strategy that always helps you win.

When you **attack** someone, you try to hurt them. For example, someone might attack you with a knife or a gun so that they can steal your things. In war, one country attacks another country. You might also attack someone with your words. For example, you might attack someone by telling them they're stupid and lazy.

When you **avoid** something, there is something you don't want to do and you find a way to not do it. For example, if you don't like your boss at work, you might avoid speaking to them by asking questions to other people instead. Or maybe you avoid your boss and leave the room when they're there. You might also avoid a particular street at night because it's dangerous. Many people avoid thinking about things that make them sad or anxious.

When the electricity in a building suddenly stops, there is a **power cut** – the power has been cut, it has been stopped. You know when there is a power cut because all the lights suddenly go off and the fridge stops making a noise. Power cuts are not very common in the UK, but where my parents live, the electricity sometimes stops for a few seconds – this is a power cut. There was a storm a few months ago which caused a three-day power cut in their village. I've also heard that in South Africa there are power cuts every day to save electricity.

When you **swing** something, and the past tense is **swung**, you move something quickly in a U-shape, in an arc. For example, when you play baseball or cricket, you swing the bat to hit the ball. Children often swing their arms up and down when they are happy. In bowling, you swing the ball and then let go at the end.

When you **punch** someone, you hit them with your fist, a closed hand. So you fold your fingers down and hit them really hard with your hand. People usually use punches when they are seriously fighting and want to hurt someone. Boxing is a sport that is all about punching. When you box, you never kick, you only punch. If you're very weak and you punch someone, it might hurt you more than it hurts them.

When you **dodge** something, you avoid it, you move so that it can't hit you. For example, if someone throws a knife at you, you will probably jump to the side so that you can dodge the knife. If you don't dodge it, it will hit you, and that will hurt!

A **lamppost** is a tall, thin black or grey light that you find on roads. At night, lampposts turn on and shine light on the street. In cities there are many lampposts so that people can walk around safely at night, but in the countryside there are often no lampposts.

OK, so listen and enjoy!

Think Fast

Once, there was a **nerd** called Eugene. Eugene was no normal nerd. Eugene was the **nerdiest** nerd in the world. Every day Eugene woke up thinking about maths **formulas** and video games. As he ate his breakfast, he **solved** formulas, and as he had his shower, he thought about **strategies** that he would use in his video games. He played very slow and serious video games, where you had to think of strategies and make plans.

Because Eugene was such a nerd, he was afraid of everything. Eugene usually never left the house, and when he did leave the house, he was always afraid. He was afraid of getting ill – the people on the bus were so dirty! He was afraid of falling – it was so easy to fall on the road! He was afraid of people's dogs – he always thought they were going to **attack** him!

Eugene had lots of strategies to **avoid** going outside. He worked from home, and if his boss asked him to come in for a meeting, he said he was sick. He did his shopping online, and if he couldn't buy something online, then he didn't buy it. All his friends were online, and when one of them said, 'Shall we meet in real life?' he stopped talking to them.

One day, there was a **power cut**. Eugene was so afraid. He had thought of strategies for everything, but he didn't know what to do in a power cut. All his usual strategies needed electricity!

This time, Eugene couldn't avoid going outside. He needed food. So, his **heart beating** a hundred miles a minute, he left the house. The supermarket wasn't far away, he told himself. He would be fine. He was afraid, but he could do it. As he walked, he solved maths formulas in his head, because solving formulas helped when he was worried.

'Oi, you! Nerd boy!'

Eugene stopped. A big man was standing in front of him in the street and *talking* to him.

'Uh, me?'

Eugene looked around. There was no-one else there.

'Of course you! Do you see anyone else here? I'm surprised you can see anything with those glasses!'

'What do you want?' said Eugene. He thought about running away, but then he might fall and hurt himself.

'Ha!' said the man. 'I hate nerds. You're always solving formulas and playing video games and *thinking*. You're probably thinking right now, aren't you?'

Oh no! thought Eugene. *He's got me!*

'And you know what I do to nerds? I teach them a lesson.'

And the man attacked him! But as the man's hand **swung** towards Eugene's face, something happened.

It was like time had slowed down. Eugene's thoughts went very quickly. He could see the man's hand moving, and his brain could think of a hundred strategies to avoid it.

Eugene moved. The man tried to **punch** him, but Eugene **dodged** it.

'Oi, how did you do that?'

The man swung at him again, and again, Eugene moved. This time, he moved the other way – that was the better strategy. Eugene dodged his punch again.

The man **grunted** and swung again, and again Eugene dodged.

'That's not fair!' said the man, jumping up and down. 'Nerds can't dodge attacks! Your brains are too heavy with maths and facts and stuff!'

'Oh yeah?' said Eugene. 'Actually, it's *because* of my heavy brain that I can dodge your attacks. I can think faster than you can move!'

The man swung his arm one last time, but Eugene jumped over him and ran away.

He'd done it! He'd actually done it! He couldn't believe it.

He arrived at the supermarket and did his shopping, but he couldn't stop thinking about what had happened, and he bought all the wrong things. Instead of bananas, he bought expensive chocolate. Instead of milk, he bought champagne. Instead of crisps, he bought chocolate cake. When he got home, he realised what he'd done, but he was so happy with himself that he had a meal of chocolate, champagne and cake. The power cut continued until late into the night, but Eugene was happy eating his food and drinking champagne.

The next day, Eugene woke up a different man. Yes, he was a nerd, but now he wasn't afraid of the outside world. All his life, he'd been afraid of people (and dogs), but now he didn't need to be afraid.

So Eugene went out again, and when a kind old lady said, 'Good morning, young man!' he punched her.

'Oh!' cried the old lady, and fell to the ground.

Her dog tried to attack him, but Eugene easily dodged the dog's teeth, and then punched the little animal as well.

'No more nice Eugene!' he said. 'I'm the strongest nerd in the world!'

He **laughed**, and walked down the street to continue his attacks. Yes, he would show the world the power of nerds! Now they would all learn their lesson!

THWANG!

Eugene fell to the ground. His head hurt. It felt like a building had fallen on him. He opened his eyes.

'Oh dear,' said a man, running up to Eugene. 'Are you alright?'

'W-what happened?' said Eugene, sitting up.

'You walked into that **lamppost**.'

Eugene looked up. Yes, there was a lamppost there. He had been thinking so hard that he didn't see the lamppost, and he walked right into it.

'Should I call an ambulance?' said the man.

'No, I'm fine,' said Eugene.

But as he got up, he felt something was wrong. He went to solve a maths formula in his head, and...

It was empty. Nothing there. No maths, no strategies. Nothing.

'Oi, you!'

Eugene turned around. There was a man running towards him. He thought he knew this man, but he couldn't remember where he knew him from. Eugene knew that he should probably be afraid, but his head was just so *empty*.

'You're that guy I met yesterday! You ran away from me, and that's not nice. Yes, I tried to punch you, but you didn't say goodbye and you just ran away. Didn't your mother tell you to always say hello and goodbye? And now I see you're punching old ladies and dogs. Well, that's fine, but again, you punched her and ran away, and you didn't say goodbye!'

'Sorry, who are you again?' said Eugene. His head really hurt, and he couldn't remember anything.

'You don't know me, huh?' said the man. 'Well, this will help you remember!' And the man swung his arm. This time, Eugene did not dodge.

THE END

Well, I hope you enjoyed today's story, and I hope you had a lovely Christmas, if you celebrate Christmas, and a fantastic new year. Welcome to 2025! I have a feeling this is going to be a great year.

Thanks again for listening to *Easy Stories in English*. And remember, you can book an online class with me at EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Classes. You can also book a 15-minute consultation with me for free to find out if classes are for you. Just go to EasyStoriesInEnglish.com/Classes. See you soon!