

The Bad Room 🦋 (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

1



The Bad Room 🦋 (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

PDF Contents

1. Introduction Notes
2. Story Text
3. Vocabulary List
4. Detailed Vocabulary List (with definitions, examples etc)
5. The Ending, Explained
6. Full Episode Transcript

1. Introduction Notes

Welcome to LEP and this episode of Learn English with a Short Story in which I will be telling you a story, and using it to teach you some English.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

2

In this episode of “Learn English with a Short Story” I am going to tell you a very odd story, which I first heard from [Dave Allen](#) on his TV show.

Dave Allen was an Irish comedian and storyteller who had a great programme on UK TV in the 70s, 80s and 90s. What was great about it was that he simply sat on a stool and told stories to a live audience. He was a fantastic storyteller - funny, but also very compelling. This is one of his stories.

Listen very carefully.

English test: What is the meaning of the last line?

I'll explain everything afterwards, and will go through the story line by line, explaining bits of vocabulary so you can genuinely learn a lot of English from this.

2. Story Text

The Bad Room

If I may, I'd like to tell you a true story.

A story about a house that had what people in Ireland call “a bad room.”

This room

had an atmosphere

— an unwelcoming, heavy presence.

People were reluctant to go into it.

They avoided it,

spoke about it in lowered voices,

and refused to have anything to do with it.

If visitors heard about the room and asked to see it, the people who lived there would always warn them:

“Please don’t go near the room. And if you must go near it, go with someone else. Never alone.”

Because that room had... an attraction.

A strange, fatal attraction, to draw people in.

Something that drew people inward, like a magnet.

Those brave or foolish enough to open the door would be allowed to look inside

— but never to step across the threshold.

And always, their companion would stand behind them, ready to hold them back.

Because once the door opened, the pull deepened.

People wanted to go in.

They had to be stopped.

One foolish young man, stubborn and determined to prove everyone wrong, ignored all the warnings.

People pleaded with him, scolded him, shouted at him, fought with him,

And he said “No. I will spend the night in that room and rid us all of this superstitious nonsense.”

He stepped inside that room.

And the door

— without a single human touch

— closed slowly behind him.

(creak)

And they all waited.

They waited until about 6 o'clock in the morning.

And from that room came a scream

— a horrendous, soul-destroying, blood-freezing scream.

They all rushed up to the room, and burst through the door...

and there was nothing there at all.

No young man.

No sign of him at all.

Except a pungent smell — of animal and brimstone mixed together.

And lying on the floor, was a single shoe. Nothing more.

The story reached the newspapers, and from there it travelled far and wide until it reached the ears of a renowned Jesuit priest

— an experienced exorcist.

He decided he would go to that room and attempt to expel whatever evil lurked there.

Again the people pleaded.

Again the warnings were ignored.

Before entering, the priest gave only one instruction:

“If, by chance, something happens to me in this room, if the pattern is the same, one of my shoes will remain.

And whatever happens, whatever is the secret of the evil of that room, I will write that on my shoe. If I am gone, look at the shoe, because the answer to this puzzle will be there.”

He stepped inside.

The door closed behind him.

(creak)

Downstairs, the family sat by the fire, listening to the steady tick of the grandfather clock.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

From above, they heard the priest praying.

They smelled the faint waft of incense drifting down the stairs.

At around half past four, they looked at the dog who was sleeping by the fire.

And in his sleep he had begun to growl.

And as they watched him, the hair on the dog's back slowly rose, bristling.

Finally, he let out a long, mournful, blood-curdling howl.

OwwwwwwWWWWWWW!

And then — from the room upstairs — they heard the scream.

AaaaaaAAAAAAAH

They ran upstairs, clutching lanterns, crosses, crucifixes, holy water.

They threw open the door.

And the same pungent smell hit them.

And on the floor lay one single shoe.

Trembling, they picked it up, and they turned it over...

And burned into the sole were two words:

“SIZE 9”



3. Vocabulary list (details below)

1. To be reluctant to do something
2. To avoid something
3. Lowered voices / to lower your voice
4. To refuse to do something
5. To have nothing/anything/something do do with something
6. Fatal
7. To draw in
8. Inward / outward
9. A magnet / magnetic
10. A threshold
11. To hold someone back

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

8

12. Once something happened, another thing happened (once, when, as soon as)
13. To deepen
14. Stubborn
15. To prove someone wrong
16. To plead with someone
17. To scold someone
18. To rid someone of something / To get rid of something
19. Horrendous (vs horrible, terrible, terrific, horrific)
20. To burst in/through
21. No sign of something
22. A pungent smell
23. Brimstone
24. Travel far and wide
25. Renowned
26. An exorcist
27. To expel something
28. To lurk somewhere
29. Faint
30. A waft
31. To growl
32. To bristle
33. Mournful
34. Blood curdling
35. To clutch something
36. To tremble

4. Detailed Vocabulary List (including story text and notes)

The Bad Room (Dave Allen)

If I may, I'd like to tell you a true story.

A story about a house. A house that had what people in Ireland call "a bad room."

This room had an atmosphere — an unwelcoming, heavy presence.

*People **were reluctant to go into it.***

To be reluctant to do something

Definition: To be unwilling or hesitant to do something.

Example: He was reluctant to open the door after hearing the strange noise.

Collocations: reluctant to admit / reluctant to speak / deeply reluctant to do something

*They **avoided it**, spoke about it in **lowered voices**,*

To avoid something

Definition: To try not to do or experience something.

Example: She avoided looking at the mirror.

Collocations: avoid eye contact / avoid trouble / avoid doing something

Comment: Often followed by a gerund (avoid doing, not ~~to do~~).

Lowered voices / to lower your voice

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

10

Definition: To speak more quietly.

Example: They lowered their voices when they heard footsteps nearby.

Collocations: lower your voice / speak in a lowered voice

and refused to have anything to do with it.

To refuse to do something

Definition: To say no; to not agree to do something.

Example: He refused to leave the room.

Collocations: flatly refuse / refuse outright / refuse to cooperate

Comment: Stronger than “not want to”. Refuse is followed by an infinitive - refuse to do.

To have nothing/anything/something to do with something

Definition: To be connected (or not connected) to something.

Example: I want nothing to do with that strange business.

Collocations: have nothing to do with / be something to do with

Comment: Used with negative forms - I don't want anything to do with it / I want nothing to do with it.

If visitors heard about the room and asked to see it, the people who lived there would always warn them:

“Please do not go near the room. And if you must go near it, go with someone else. Never alone.”

*Because that room had an attraction. A strange, **fatal** attraction.*

Fatal

Definition: Causing death or leading to disaster.

Example: The mistake proved fatal.

Collocations: fatal error / fatal injury / fatal consequences

*Something that **drew people inward**, like a **magnet**.*

To draw someone in

Definition: To pull or attract something inward.

Example: The dark doorway seemed to draw him in.

Collocations: draw someone in / be drawn in

Comment: Useful for describing mysterious attraction.

Inward

Definition: Towards the inside.

Example: The door opened inward with a creak.

Collocations: inward movement / inward feeling

Comment: Often used in descriptive writing.

A magnet / magnetic

Definition: Something that attracts; having a strong attraction.

Example: The place had a magnetic pull on him.

Collocations: magnetic personality / like a magnet

Comment: Very useful metaphor.

*Those brave or foolish enough to open the door would be allowed to look inside — but never to step across **the threshold**.*

A threshold

Definition: The entrance or starting point of something.

Example: He stood on the threshold of the room.

Collocations: cross the threshold / threshold of a new phase

Comment: Both literal and metaphorical.

*And always, their companion would stand behind them, ready **to hold them back**.*

To hold someone back

Definition: To stop someone from moving forward or progressing.

Example: Fear held him back.

Collocations: hold someone back physically/emotionally

Comment: Common in both literal and figurative use.

*Because **once** the door opened, the pull **deepened**.*

Once / when / as soon as (sequencing) + past simple, + past simple

Definition: Used to show that one action follows another.

Example: As soon as she entered, the noise stopped.

Collocations: once + past perfect / as soon as possible

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

13

Comment: Great for narrative sequencing. Once & as soon as mean *immediately when*. Not exactly C1 grammar, but worth pointing out and using because it is essential.

To deepen

Definition: To become stronger, more intense, or more serious.

Example: The silence deepened.

Collocations: deepen a relationship / deepen the mystery

People wanted to go in. They had to be stopped.

*One foolish young man, **stubborn** and determined **to prove everyone wrong**, ignored all the warnings.*

Stubborn

Definition: Not willing to change your mind.

Example: He was too stubborn to turn back.

Collocations: stubborn refusal / stubborn attitude

Comment: Generally negative.

To prove someone wrong

Definition: To show that someone's opinion is incorrect.

Example: She was determined to prove him wrong.

Collocations: to prove critics wrong

People **pleaded with** him, **scolded** him, **shouted at** him, **fought with** him,

To plead with someone

Definition: To beg someone emotionally.

Example: He pleaded with her to stay.

Collocations: plead desperately / plead for mercy

Comment: Strong emotional tone.

To scold someone

Definition: To speak angrily to someone for doing something wrong.

Example: The teacher scolded him for shouting.

Collocations: scold harshly / scold a child

Comment: Slightly old-fashioned but still common.

A more common and neutral synonym: to tell someone off (He got told off by the teacher for talking in class / He got scolded by the teacher)

And he said

*“No. I will spend the night in that room
and **rid us all of** this superstitious nonsense.”*

To rid someone of something

Definition: To remove something unwanted.

Example: They tried to rid him of the curse.

The Bad Room 🦶 (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

15

Collocations: rid someone of a habit/problem

Comment: Formal tone. A more common, similar expression, is this



To get rid of something

Definition: To remove or throw something away.

Example: I need to get rid of these old clothes.

Collocations: get rid of rubbish / get rid of a problem

Comment: Everyday, commonly used phrase with the word “rid”.

More common today than the previous expression.

He stepped inside that room and the door, without a single human touch, closed slowly behind him.

*And they all waited. They waited until about 6 o'clock in the morning. And from that room came a scream a **horrendous**, soul-destroying, blood-freezing scream.*

Horrendous

Definition: Extremely bad or shocking.

Example: The smell was horrendous.

Collocations: horrendous noise / horrendous mistake

Comment: Stronger than horrible. Not the same as terrific, which is positive!

*They all rushed up to the room, and **burst through** the door...*

To burst in / through

Definition: To enter suddenly and dramatically.

Example: He burst through the door.

Collocations: burst into a room / burst through barriers

*and there was nothing there at all. No young man. **No sign of him...***

No sign of something

Definition: No evidence or indication.

Examples: When we arrived in the town, everything was quiet.

There was no sign of life at all.

Collocations: no sign of improvement / no sign of him

Comment: We use this to say that something is not there, or is missing.

*except a **pungent** smell — of animal and **brimstone** mixed together.*

A pungent smell

Definition: A strong, sharp smell.

Example: A pungent smell filled the air.

Collocations: pungent odour / pungent smoke

Comment: Usually negative.

Brimstone

Definition: Sulphur; often associated with hell.

Example: The air smelled of brimstone.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

17

Collocations: fire and brimstone

Comment: Strong literary/religious connotation. Not commonly used except in dramatic, biblical descriptions (in the bible - or something similar)

And lying on the floor, was a single shoe. Nothing more.

*The story reached the newspapers, and from there it **travelled far and wide** until it reached the ears of a **renowned** Jesuit priest*

Travel far and wide

Definition: To travel to many places.

Example: He travelled far and wide in search of answers.

Collocations: search far and wide

Renowned

Definition: Famous for something good.

Example: She is renowned for her work.

Collocations: world-renowned / renowned expert

Comment: Formal synonym of “famous”.

*an experienced **exorcist**.*

An exorcist

Definition: Someone who removes evil spirits.

Example: They called an exorcist to remove the evil spirit.

Collocations: perform an exorcism

Comment: Specific cultural/religious term.

*He decided he would go to this room, and attempt **to expel** whatever evil **lurked** there.*

To expel something

Definition: To force something out.

Example: The ritual was meant to expel the spirit.

Collocations: expel gas / expel a student

Comment: Formal verb. I think the most common use of it is when talking about a child who is forced to leave a school because of bad behaviour. "The boy was expelled from school for fighting."

To lurk somewhere

Definition: To hide and wait secretly.

Example: Something seemed to lurk in the shadows.

Collocations: lurk in the dark / lurk nearby

Comment: Great for suspense and for describing something creepy and dangerous. Also used to describe people online who stay in chat rooms or comment sections without writing anything, a bit like LEP ninjas who visit my website and never comment, but I know they are there - lurking in the shadows!

Again the people pleaded. Again the warnings were ignored.

Before entering, the priest gave only one instruction:

“If, by chance, something happens to me in this room, if the pattern is the same, one of my shoes will remain. And whatever happens, whatever is the secret of the evil of that room, I will write that on my shoe. If I am gone, look at the shoe, because the answer to this puzzle will be there.”

He stepped inside.

The door closed behind him.

*Downstairs, the family sat by the fire, listening to the steady tick of the grandfather clock. Tick. Tick. Tick. From above, they heard the priest praying. They smelled the **faint waft** of incense drifting down the stairs.*

Faint

Definition: Weak, slight, or barely noticeable.

Example: There was a faint sound in the distance.

Collocations: faint noise / faint light

Comment: Also a verb (to faint = lose consciousness).

A waft

Definition: A light movement of air or smell.

Example: A waft of smoke drifted past.

Collocations: waft of perfume / waft of air

At around half past four, they looked at the dog who was sleeping by the fire.

*And in his sleep he had begun to **growl**.*

To growl

Definition: To make a low, threatening sound. Dogs and other animals growl. Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr.

Example: The dog growled at him.

Collocations: growl angrily / low growl

*And as they watched him, the hair on the dog's back slowly rose, **bristling**.*


To bristle (literal and figurative meanings)

1. Literal meaning (hair / fur):

To stand up stiffly, often because of fear, anger, or excitement.

Example: The dog's fur bristled when it saw the stranger.

Collocations: hair bristled / fur bristled / hair bristles along the neck/back

 This is very common with animals, but it can also be used for humans (often in a dramatic or literary way):

Example: The hairs on the back of his neck bristled.

2. Figurative meaning:

To react angrily or defensively.

Example: He bristled at the accusation that he had cheated .

Collocations: to bristle with anger / to bristle at criticism

Finally, he let out a long, **mournful, blood-curdling** howl.

Mournful

Definition: Very sad, especially in a quiet way.

Example: A mournful cry echoed.

Collocations: mournful expression / mournful sound

Comment: Literary tone. In everyday English we'd probably just say *sad*.

Blood-curdling

Definition: Extremely frightening. So frightening that it "curdles" your blood. (definition of curdle below)

Example: A blood-curdling scream rang out.

Collocations: blood-curdling scream

Comment: Strong dramatic adjective.

To curdle

Definition (literal):

When a liquid (especially milk or cream) separates into lumps and liquid, often because it has gone bad or because of heat or acid.

Example: The milk curdled when she added lemon juice.

Collocations: curdled milk / make milk curdle / curdle in the heat

When milk curdles → it becomes unpleasant

When blood "curdles" → you feel sudden fear or horror.

And then from the room upstairs, they heard the scream.

They ran upstairs, clutching lanterns, crosses, crucifixes, holy water.

To clutch something

Definition: To hold something tightly.

Example: She clutched his arm.

Collocations: clutch tightly / clutch at something

Comment: Often emotional or desperate.

They threw open the door, and the same pungent smell hit them.

*And on the floor **lay** one single shoe.*

Lie lay lay

***Trembling**, they picked it up, and they turned it over...*

To tremble

Definition: To shake slightly, usually from fear or cold.

Example: His hands trembled.

Collocations: tremble with fear / tremble slightly

*And burned into the **sole** of that shoe were two words:*

“SIZE 9”

The sole of a shoe is the underside of the shoe - the part which touches the ground.

5. The Ending, Explained

The ending of this story is just a joke. The priest said he would write the answer to the mystery on the shoe, because if something happened to him, his shoe would be left behind in the room. So, he said he would write the answer on the shoe.

When the people entered the room, they picked up the shoe to read the message, but all that was written on the sole, was the shoe size - “Size 9”.

This is just a funny ending. We expected something horrific or incredible, but no - just the shoe size, which is normally written on the sole of a shoe. So, the priest didn't write anything on the shoe.

This is an example of a classic “shaggy dog story” in which a long story concludes with a silly “punch line” or joke, which is always an anticlimax.

The joke ending just shows that the story is not serious and it was designed just to create tension, a creepy atmosphere, and to make everyone expect a big answer, but the big answer is just a silly joke.

The Bad Room 🦶 (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

24

Releasing the tension and breaking the atmosphere with a silly joke like this should be funny and surprising, and enjoyable.

A story like this might be told at a camp fire, or other fun social situation.

Thanks to the late-great Dave Allen



6. Full Episode Transcript

You're listening to Luke's English Podcast. For more information, visit teacherluke.co.uk.

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast and this episode of Learn English with a short story in which I will be telling you a short story and using it to help you learn English. Just before we begin, I want to give you a reminder that I would like you to send me your stories, send me your descriptions of strange, creepy, unexplained or frightening experiences.

Have you ever had a weird experience that you can't quite explain or a frightening experience that you can remember clearly? Write it down for me, describe it and send me your description and I'll be collecting descriptions and the one that I like the best, you will win and you will win a copy of Anna Brooke's latest book. You heard her talking about it on the podcast recently, it's called Death by Chocolate and so the best story will win a copy of the book but also stories that I like, I will read them out on the podcast in a forthcoming episode. So, strange, creepy, unexplained or frightening stories, descriptions of weird things that have happened to you, send them to me.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

25

You can email luketeacher at hotmail.com or just leave your description in the comments section of the Anna Brooke episode which is just a couple of episodes ago. Right, so to give you a bit of inspiration on the theme of creepy, unexplained stories, in this episode of Learn English with a Short Story I'm going to tell you a very odd story which I first heard from Dave Allen on his TV show. I don't know if you know about Dave Allen but he was an Irish comedian and storyteller who had a great programme on British television in the 1970s and 1980s and a lot of people watched Dave Allen on his television show.

I remember seeing him on TV, my parents were fans of his. What was so great about Dave Allen's show is that he simply sat on a stool in front of an audience and told stories to everyone. He was a fantastic storyteller, he was very, very funny but also his stories were extremely compelling.

He was a brilliant storyteller and so this is one of his stories, okay, that I'm going to tell you right now. It's called The Bad Room. I'd like you to listen very, very carefully.

A little test for your English. What is the meaning of the last line of the story? What's the significance of the last line of the story? So listen carefully. I will explain everything afterwards.

I'll go through the story line by line, explaining bits of vocabulary so you can genuinely learn a lot of English from this. But now, let's begin. Let's read The Bad Room.

And here we go. So this is The Bad Room. If I may, I'd like to tell you a true story.

A story about a house. A house that had what people in Ireland call a bad room. This room had an atmosphere, an unwelcoming, heavy presence.

People were reluctant to go into it. They avoided it, spoke about it in lowered voices and refused to have anything to do with it. If visitors heard about the room and asked to see it, the people who lived there would always warn them, please do not go near the room.

And if you must go near it, go with someone else, never alone. Because that room had an attraction, a strange, fatal attraction. Something that drew people inward like a magnet.

Those brave or foolish enough to open the door would be allowed to look inside, but never to step across the threshold. And always their companion would stand behind them, ready to hold them back. Because once the door opened, the pull deepened.

People wanted to go in. They had to be stopped. One foolish young man, stubborn and determined to prove everyone wrong, ignored all the warnings.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

26

People pleaded with him, scolded him, shouted at him, fought with him. And he said, no, I will spend the night in that room and rid us all of this superstitious nonsense. He stepped inside that room.

And the door, without a single human touch, closed slowly behind him. And they all waited. They waited until about six o'clock in the morning.

And from that room came a scream. A horrendous, soul-destroying, blood-freezing scream. They all rushed up to the room and burst through the door.

And there was nothing there at all. No young man, no sign of him. Except a pungent smell of animal and brimstone mixed together.

And lying on the floor was a single shoe. Nothing more. The story reached the newspapers, and from there it travelled far and wide, until it reached the ears of a renowned Jesuit priest.

An experienced exorcist. He decided he would go to this room and attempt to expel whatever evil lurked there. Again, the people pleaded.

Again, the warnings were ignored. Before entering, the priest gave only one instruction. If by chance something happens to me in this room, if the pattern is the same, one of my shoes will remain.

And whatever happens, whatever is the secret of the evil of that room, I will write that on my shoe. If I'm gone, look at the shoe, because the answer to this puzzle will be there. He stepped inside.

The door closed behind him. Downstairs, the family sat by the fire, listening to the steady tick of the grandfather clock. Tick.

Tick. Tick. From above, they heard the priest praying.

They smelled the faint waft of incense drifting down the stairs. At around half-past four, they looked at the dog who was sleeping by the fire. And in his sleep, he had begun to growl.

And as they watched him, the hair on the dog's back slowly rose, bristling. And finally, he let out a long, mournful, blood-curdling howl. Howl.

And then, from the room upstairs, they heard the scream. They ran upstairs, clutching lanterns, crosses, crucifixes, holy water. They threw open the door, and the same pungent smell hit them.

And on the floor lay one single shoe. Trembling, they picked it up, and they turned it over. And burned into the sole of that shoe were two words, size nine.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

27

Okay, that's the end of the story. Did you get it, everyone? Did you get it? Yes, that's right, it was a long joke. It was just a long joke.

That's what we call, in English, a shaggy dog story. A story that goes on and on and on, and finally has a very ridiculous punchline at the end. So yes, it was a joke.

The last line, size nine. This is what was written on the sole of the shoe. That's just what is sometimes written on the sole of a shoe, isn't it? The size of the shoe.

Of course, everyone was expecting the secret of the mystery to be written on the sole of the shoe. But in fact, all that was written there was just the size of the shoe, size nine, in this case. Right, so it was just a silly story, but a creepy story nonetheless, with a funny ending.

I wonder if you got it the first time around. So obviously, this is just the story of a room. A house with a room that is called a bad room, apparently in Ireland, which is a very superstitious place.

According to Dave Allen, I don't know if it's true or not, but some houses will have a bad room. And this room was very strange and creepy because it had a mysterious attraction. It attracted people in.

If you opened the door and looked inside the room, you would feel this urge to go inside. It's like it was pulling you in or like a magnet being pulled into the room. But if you go in there, well, basically, I guess there was some sort of evil presence in that room.

And anyone who visited the house was warned never to go in the room. And if they did need to go and visit it, that they should go with someone else so that that other person could stand behind them and hold onto them so that they don't get pulled into the room or that they don't voluntarily enter the room. But then one young man, a foolish young man who wanted to prove that it was a load of nonsense, decided he would spend the night in the room.

And he went in. And in the middle of the night, there was a scream from the room and everyone rushed upstairs to look inside. And there was nothing there.

This young man had disappeared except for his shoe. Just his shoe was left on the floor. So this a priest learned about this, a Jesuit priest, a Catholic priest, an exorcist, someone who is specialised in getting rid of evil spirits.

Right. He decided he would go there, he would spend the night in the room. And since he was an experienced exorcist, he would have the kind of the knowledge, the skills to be able to get rid of the evil spirit that lurked in the room.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

28

And just before you and everyone said, no, you mustn't do it. Everyone, you know, tried to persuade him not to, but he refused to listen and did it anyway. And just before he went in the room, he said, listen, if the same pattern happens, then one of my shoes will be left on the floor of this room.

And if that happens, I will write the secret on the shoe. Right. If I'm gone, look for the shoe and look at what's written there.

And of course, he screams in the middle of the night. It's very frightening. He screams.

They enter the room. He's gone. His shoe is on the floor.

They pick it up. What is the secret? But what's written on the sole of the shoe? Size nine. Just the size of the shoe, which is written on most shoes.

Most shoes have the size written on the sole. So just a silly joke, but a fun one. Let me go through the story line by line, and I'm going to just teach you bits of vocab from it, OK? You could also practise by repeating the lines of the story after me, which is always a good idea, a good way to just exercise your English.

So the bad room. If I may, I'd like to tell you a true story. A story about a house.

So by the way, listeners, you could always pause the podcast if you want to repeat these lines after me, OK? That would make it easier for you. A story about a house. A house that had what people in Ireland call a bad room.

This room had an atmosphere, an unwelcoming, heavy presence. I haven't really picked out any vocab yet in the story to teach you. I mean, a presence, that means that something is there.

There is a presence. I suppose it's interesting to notice that presence, p-r-e-s-e-n-c-e, a presence when someone or something is there, when it is present, sounds exactly like the plural of present meaning gift. So one present, two presents.

And there was a strange presence, a heavy, unwelcoming presence in the room. Those two words do sound the same. People were reluctant to go into it.

Right, now if you are reluctant to do something, it means you're kind of unwilling to do it. You're hesitant to do it. You don't really want to do it.

OK, for example, you know, I heard a strange noise in the middle of the night. I heard a strange noise coming from the spare bedroom and I wanted to investigate, but I was reluctant to open the door. Oh, I don't really want to.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

29

So if you're reluctant to do something, it means you don't really want to do it. I don't know, for example, if you are in a classroom situation or you go to a party and everyone's speaking English really fluently and you don't feel very confident, you might be reluctant to speak, meaning you don't really feel like speaking. You don't feel confident enough to speak.

You're reluctant to speak. I was reluctant to go to the party because I knew that I would have to speak English the whole time. And so I felt a bit reluctant at first, but then I did it anyway and it turned out to be a really good idea because I made some friends and practised my English a lot.

So if you're reluctant to do something, you might say reluctant to admit. I was reluctant to admit that I was wrong. I was having an argument with my wife and, you know, we were arguing and she argued better than me and she proved that perhaps I was wrong about something, but I was reluctant to admit it.

I didn't really want to admit it. I was reluctant to speak. You might say deeply reluctant to do something.

That's a nice word. Let's move on. So people were reluctant to go into this room.

Don't really want to go in. They avoided it. So to avoid something is to try not to do it, right? Try to go away from it.

Like, for example, if you are in a creepy old house in the middle of the night on your own, you would be reluctant to look in the mirror or you would avoid looking in the mirror. We often say things like avoid eye contact, avoid trouble, avoid doing something. It's often followed by a gerund.

They avoided it. They avoided going in there, right? They spoke about it in lowered voices. Lowered voices.

To lower your voice means to speak more quietly. Speak quietly. Lower your voice.

So it's like to whisper or just to speak less loudly. Lower your voice. They spoke about it in lowered voices, so they kind of spoke about it a bit like this or spoke about it quietly.

They lowered their voice. They spoke about it in lowered voices. Yeah.

And refuse to have anything to do with it. So to refuse to do something, that's another good one. So we've had to be reluctant to do something, to avoid doing something and refuse to do something.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

30

If you refuse to do something, you just basically say, no, you don't agree to do it. No, I will not do that. I'm not going in that room.

No way. Not me. Not a chance.

I absolutely refuse to go in there. In this case, they refused to have anything to do with it. So if you have something to do with something, this is quite a nice expression.

It means you are connected to something, right? So you know, you might say, oh, it's nothing to do with me. It has nothing to do with me. So who broke this? Who broke this glass? There's a broken glass on the table.

It has nothing to do with me. That has nothing to do with me, meaning there's no connection to me at all. So it has nothing to do with me.

It doesn't have anything to do with me. Does this have something to do with you? Well, it doesn't have anything to do with me. So a connection.

In this case, they refused to have anything to do with it, meaning that they did not want to have any dealings with it, no connection with it at all. They didn't want to be involved with it in any way. Okay? So they refused to have anything to do with it.

Didn't go anywhere near it. Nothing at all. Avoided it completely.

If visitors heard about the room and asked to see it, the people who lived there would always warn them, please do not go near the room, and if you must go near it, go with someone else. Never alone. Because that room had an attraction.

A strange, fatal attraction. Fatal attraction. Fatal.

It's a nice adjective. It means if something is fatal, it can cause death or cause some kind of disaster, probably death. A fatal mistake.

A fatal accident. A mistake that led to someone's death. An accident that caused death.

A fatal accident. Fatal error. Fatal injury.

A fatal consequence. In this case, a fatal attraction. There's a movie called Fatal Attraction, isn't there? Something that drew people inward, like a magnet.

So to draw is the verb here. In this case, draw people into the room. Draw, drew, drawn.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

31

To draw in means to pull or attract something in. Okay, like I walked, I was walking down the road and I saw a lovely looking pub and it just, it drew me in. Meaning I felt like, oh, I think I want to go into that pub.

It drew me in. In this case, drew people inward. Inward basically means towards the middle or towards the inside.

Okay, for example, the door, the door opened inward. The door opened inward and outwards. Inwards or inward.

So sometimes it has an S on it. It's the same thing. Inward or inwards.

Outward or outwards. Yes. So the door opened inward or the door opened outward.

You see, like a magnet, we know what a magnet is, right? It's a thing that attracts metal. You can use a magnet to attach something to your fridge. You know, the fridge that has a sort of metal door.

You can stick things to the fridge with magnets. So like a magnet, it means it's magnetic. It sort of pulls or attracts something to it.

A magnetic, a magnetic thing. You can also have a magnetic personality. If you have a magnetic personality, it means that you attract people to you, right? So it's not just used for metal, but anything that is, that attracts other things towards it could be magnetic or like a magnet.

Those brave or foolish enough to open the door would be allowed to look inside, but never to step across the threshold. A threshold, this is a word that's come up several times on the podcast in recent episodes, I feel. The threshold is basically the entrance line, the entrance line.

So in terms of a room, so we have thresholds in rooms and buildings, and then we have thresholds in other situations. But in a building, a threshold would just be the line that separates that room to not in the room. So you step across the threshold means you enter the room or enter the building, okay? To stand on the threshold means stand on the line just in the entrance to something between two things.

To cross the threshold, so you can stand on the threshold of a new era. That means you're right on the edge of entering a new era. So not just a room, but a new phase in your life.

You're on the threshold of a new discovery. Also in terms of tax, taxation, often taxation systems, they have different thresholds. For example, if you earn less than £30,000 a year, you will be in this tax band.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

32

But when you start to earn more than £30,000 a year, you cross a threshold. The threshold is set at £30,000. You cross that threshold into another tax band where you pay more tax.

So these lines are thresholds that divide different tax bands where you pay more tax the more you earn. So a threshold, a line dividing one room from another, or a line dividing like the outside of a building to the inside of a building, you cross the threshold into a building. But also lines that divide other things like the starting point of a new era, a new phase, or in this case, tax bands, which are divided by thresholds.

So it's used in things like financial English and stuff like that, not just describing buildings and rooms. And always their companion would stand behind them ready to hold them back. So to hold someone back, in this case, it's literal.

It means prevent someone from moving forwards, literally hold with the hands to stop them going into the room, hold them back. But it's also a useful phrase to know because it's used in a figurative sense as well. If something holds you back, it prevents you from making progress.

For example, you could say, my lack of confidence is really holding me back in my English. I don't feel like I'm making progress with my English. Well, what is it that's holding you back? Well, it's like, I haven't got a good routine.

I haven't established a good study routine. I think that's really holding me back. Or the fact that I don't have someone to speak to on a daily basis, that's really holding me back.

Or my confidence issues. I just don't feel very confident. And as a result, I don't open my mouth.

I'm sort of reluctant to speak. And this is really holding me back. You see? Right, moving on.

Once the door opened, the pull deepened. Now, I just wanted to point out here that use of the word like once here. And this is just a way to sequence things, isn't it? We've got once the door opened, the pull deepened.

So once, and then past simple, and then another past simple form. And it's just used to sequence things. So it just shows that one action follows another.

Now, what else could you use there instead of once? You could use several other words or phrases instead of once. You could say, when the door opened, the pull deepened. Or as soon as the door opened, the pull deepened.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

33

I think once and as soon as are really very similar because they mean sort of immediately, right? Immediately when. When the door opened, the pull deepened. It was at that moment that the pull deepened.

Using once or as soon as emphasises that it's straight away. And deepened, the pull deepened. In this case, deepen means to become stronger, more intense, or more serious.

Okay? For example, the silence deepened, the story deepened, my fear deepened. You can deepen a relationship, you can deepen a mystery, becomes deeper, stronger, more intense, more serious, right? In this case, the pull, the attraction of this creepy room deepened, it became stronger, became more intense. People wanted to go in.

They had to be stopped. Just a nice use of the passive form in an infinitive, had to be stopped, meaning other people had to stop them. One foolish young man, foolish, stupid, not clever, not wise, stubborn, and determined to prove everyone wrong, ignored all the warnings.

So stubborn. If you are stubborn, it means you are not willing to change your mind. So this young man has decided, I'm going to go in that room, and I'm going to spend the night there because I don't believe all this superstitious nonsense.

And he's so stubborn that even if everyone is trying to convince him, no, no, no, no, please don't do it. Trust us. You really shouldn't do that.

Well, I'm going to do it anyway. I've decided I'm going to do it, so I'm going to do it. No one's going to persuade me otherwise.

So very stubborn. Someone who's unwilling to change their mind. He was determined to prove everyone wrong.

If you prove everyone wrong, it means you show them that they are wrong, right? Wrong, right? Yes, you show people that they're wrong. You prove that they're wrong, right? Yeah, okay. People pleaded with him, scolded him, shouted at him, fought with him.

So I think you know shouted at him and fought with him, but what about pleaded with him? So they pleaded, they were like, please, please, please don't go in that room, please. So please, you know the word, but the verb form for this is to plead. P-L-E-A-D.

Past simple, pleaded. They pleaded with him. Pleased that they begged him.

It's similar to beg. Don't go in that room. Please don't go.

Trust us. You really mustn't go in that room. Oh, it's a load of old nonsense.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

34

They scolded him. If you scold someone, it means you speak very angrily with someone. You kind of tell them off.

Someone has done something wrong and you kind of speak very angrily with them. For example, if my little son, who is two years old, if he does something like he throws water all over the floor, he might get scolded by me or by his mum. You know, not too much, but we say, you mustn't do that.

Don't throw water on the floor. So we scolded him. To tell someone off is a synonym.

Tell off. That's a phrasal verb synonym. Scold is a bit more formal sounding than tell off.

But in this story, you can imagine, yes, that people just sort of spoke angrily with him in strong words, kind of shouted at him, right? Yeah. They scolded him. They pleaded with him.

They shouted at him. They fought with him. Notice the prepositions.

Plead with someone. Scold someone or tell someone off. Shout at someone.

Fight with someone. And he said, no, I will spend the night in that room. Interesting use of will just to, you know, show your intention, which can't be changed.

It's very strong intention. I will spend the in that room and rid us all of this superstitious nonsense to rid someone of something, meaning to get rid of something. So to rid us of this nonsense, to rid someone of something, it's slightly old fashioned language.

It has a slightly formal tone. And it means if you rid. I don't know what what's a good example of this.

Let's say the house has got mice in it. There are mice, right? One mouse, two mice. There are mice in the house.

And so you might call a professional to come in and rid the house of mice, meaning remove all the mice. In this case, this young man wants to rid us all of this superstitious nonsense. He wants to remove this superstitious nonsense from everyone so that everyone stops thinking in this ridiculous, superstitious way.

To rid us of something means remove it all and throw it away. A more everyday common expression is to get rid of something. And that means, yeah, throw throw it away, remove it.

There's look at all this rubbish in the corner of the room. Could you get rid of it, please? That's a much more everyday expression, meaning to remove something and throw it away. Get rid of it.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

35

I don't know. This shouldn't be here. I'd like you to get rid of it, please.

Let's get rid of all this rubbish. Rid us all of this rubbish sounds very old fashioned, quite formal in the in the context of the story. It works because it sounds quite sort of serious and it's the right kind of tone for this creepy story.

I will spend the night in that room and rid us all of this superstitious nonsense. It's the kind of. Yeah, a formal sort of tone that sounds very serious in the context of the story.

In more everyday English, you might just say, get rid of it. Can you get rid of all this stuff, please? This shouldn't be here. He stepped inside that room and the door without a single human touch closed slowly behind him.

And this is where I get the chance to show off my sound effects. And they all waited. They waited until about six o'clock in the morning and from that room came a scream, a horrendous soul destroying, blood freezing scream.

Nice language. Horrendous. Horrendous means extremely bad, shocking, horrible, awful, terrible.

Yes, horrendous scream. You can imagine. Oh, God, what was that? That was horrendous.

Just very, very bad. Stronger than horrible. That was horrible.

That was horrendous. That was horrific. Horrible, horrendous, horrific, awful.

These are all very similar. Horrendous is a bit stronger. We also have the word terrific, but watch out because terrific is not part of that group.

Terrific is a positive word. That was a terrific episode, Luke. That was absolutely terrific.

Not terrifying. So terrifying, horrible, horrendous, shocking, awful. All of those things are really bad, right? Terrifying especially means very frightening.

Horrendous means awful, extremely bad, terrible. But terrific is positive. Oh, this tastes terrific.

This is terrific. That was a terrific film. That was a terrific story, Luke.

Well done. Okay, so that's terrific and horrendous. So a horrendous soul destroying scream, a scream that destroys your soul.

Blood freezing scream. It freezes your blood. They all rushed up to the room and burst through the door.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

36

So to burst, burst in, burst through the door. It means enter the room suddenly and violently. Quickly open the door and they burst in the room.

Like, I don't know, the police would burst in the room and arrest the bank robbers. Her boyfriend burst through the door and caught them sleeping with each other in the same bed, for example, right? So to burst through the door, burst in the room. And there was nothing there at all.

No young man, no sign of him. If there's no sign of something, it means there's no trace, no evidence. Right.

So we say things like no sign of life, no sign of improvement. I've checked his work. I've checked his work over the last three months.

And honestly, I'm not seeing any sign of improvement at all. I'm not sure what's going wrong. What's holding him back? Why isn't he making any progress? No sign of improvement.

Well, to be honest, he hasn't been attending classes these last two weeks. There's been no sign of him at all in my classroom. So no indication or evidence that something is there.

Except a pungent smell. So a pungent smell is a very strong, sharp smell, right? Very powerful smell. A pungent smell.

It's interesting that we use the word pungent only with smell. A pungent smell. Pungent odour.

Odour is another word for smell. It's negative as well. It's usually negative.

So a strong, powerful and probably unpleasant smell. So all there was in the room was a pungent smell of animal. A kind of creepy, musky kind of animal smell.

And brimstone. Animal and brimstone mixed together. What is brimstone? It's the sort of word that you might read in the Bible.

And it is essentially a smell that comes out of the ground. And in the Bible, it is associated with hell, right? But in fact, brimstone is probably the smell of sulphur, which is a chemical that comes out of the ground. You know where there are hot springs? Hot springs where water runs close to, I suppose, volcanic rock under the ground that's hot.

And sulphur is a chemical that often bubbles up through that kind of hot spring water, and it smells a certain way. That is brimstone, in fact. But it's a word that's used typically in the Bible, and it refers to the smell of hell.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

37

So brimstone is like air, gas that comes from hell, okay? We talk about fire and brimstone in the Bible. It has a literary, religious connotation. The air smelled of brimstone.

It's not a word that people use very much. But in this story, it's quite appropriate because it evokes religious imagery and the kind of evil magic of hell. A pungent smell of animal and brimstone mixed together, and lying on the floor was a single shoe, nothing more.

The story reached the newspapers, and from there it travelled far and wide. To travel far and wide, it's just a nice fixed expression. It means to travel over long distances to many different places.

He travelled far and wide in search of answers. Right, in this case, the news travelled far and wide until it reached the ears of a renowned Jesuit priest. A Jesuit priest is a form of Catholic priest.

A renowned priest, that is a priest who is famous, famous for doing good work, someone who's got a great reputation, right? A renowned priest, famous for having a great reputation. World renowned, the world renowned Luke's English Podcast, a renowned expert in linguistics. David Crystal is a renowned expert in linguistics.

It's a sort of formal synonym of the word famous. Okay, by the way, what I'm going to do at the end of this is I'll do a vocab quiz at the end of this episode, just to give you a chance to review what you've picked up from this, okay? So you'll have a chance to recall the words that I'm going through nearer the end of the episode when I finish the story. An experienced exorcist.

So an exorcist, yes, is someone who removes evil spirits, right? Have you seen the film The Exorcist? It's an excellent horror film about a girl who gets possessed by the devil. Yeah, it's terrifying stuff. He decided he would go to this room and attempt to expel whatever evil lurked there.

To expel something is to force something to leave, right? It's actually probably most commonly used to talk about children who are badly behaved at school, and they are told by the school that they have to leave. The child is expelled from the school, right? In this case, it's this exorcist who is going to expel the evil from the room. Yeah, so make them leave.

In this case, it's to expel whatever eagle. Eagle? No, I don't think there was an eagle involved. To expel whatever evil lurked in the room.

So to lurk, this is a nice verb, and this is the sort of thing that an evil spirit would do. It means to wait and hide and wait secretly, right? This is what you are terrified of in your house when you wake up in the middle of the night and you're on your own, and you listen

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

38

to a scary story just before you went to bed. You wake up in the middle of the night and you are convinced that there's something lurking in the corner of the room, or you become convinced that there's something lurking in your bathroom, or there's something lurking behind the door.

Waiting, hiding secretly. Something evil, waiting and hiding. Lurking.

Yeah. I mean, we also use this on the internet, right? Someone who's lurking is someone who is in a chat room or someone who's in a community, maybe in a comment section, but they're not taking part. They're just sitting there observing.

That's lurking on the internet. Not actually commenting, not taking part, but they're there, but they're just not showing themselves. That's also lurking.

In this case, he decided to go into this room and attempt to expel whatever evil lurked there. Again, the people pleaded. Again, the warnings were ignored.

Before entering, the priest gave only one instruction. If, by chance, something happens to me in this room, if the pattern is the same, one of my shoes will remain, and whatever happens, whatever is the secret of the evil of that room, I will write that on my shoe. If I'm gone, look at the shoe because the answer to this puzzle will be there.

I mean, it's a bit ridiculous already, right? Because how is he going to quickly write something on the shoe? I don't know. But anyway, he stepped inside. The door closed behind him.

Downstairs, the family sat by the fire, listening to the steady tick of the grandfather clock. A grandfather clock is like a big, upright clock, an old-fashioned type of clock that is like a large thing that sits on the floor, and it's so tall, it's about the size of a person, and it's a long, upright clock that often goes tick, tock, tick, tock. That's a grandfather clock.

Rather wonderful things. Tick, tick, tick. From above, they heard the priest praying.

They smelled the faint waft of incense drifting down the stairs. So, the faint waft of incense. Incense is stuff that is burned, and it gives off a certain smell, and priests use incense when they're doing their religious ceremonies, right? If you go to church, you smell the smell of frankincense or something like that.

It's a lovely smell. Incense is used in religious ceremonies, you know, across all cultures, burning incense. But they smelled the faint waft of incense.

A waft is like a word to describe, and it's a noun to describe, a light movement of air or a smell. So, a smell wafts through the air. Maybe smoke could waft through the air as well.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

39

If your neighbour is baking a delicious cake, the smell of the cake might waft through the window. You see? So, it's a verb and it's a noun. So, the smell wafts through the window.

You can smell the waft of this delicious cake being baked in your neighbour's house. In this case, they smelled the faint waft of incense. Like a little smell that just kind of lightly carried through the air.

Faint. The faint waft. This is a weak, slight or not very easily noticed thing.

It's an adjective, right? Faint. The faint smell. It's like a light, weak kind of smell.

So, they're getting just a slight smell of the incense that he's burning in the room up there. So, he's doing some sort of little religious ceremony, and they can smell the faint waft of incense drifting down the stairs. At around half past four, they looked at the dog who was sleeping by the fire, and in his sleep, he had begun to growl.

So, this is what dogs do. They go... So, that's creepy. Definitely creepy.

If the dog is growling in its sleep, it's as if the dog is somehow able to sense the evil, the presence of evil. And even in its sleep, it's growling. So, that's growl, right? To make a low, threatening sound.

Yes. As they watched him, the hair on the dog's back slowly rose, bristling. So, the hair goes up on the back of the dog.

Bristle to bristle means, in the case of the fur, the dog's fur or hair, if hair or fur bristles, it means it stands up on end, right? And this is usually because of anger or fear or excitement. The dog's fur bristled when it saw the stranger, right? So, hair bristles, fur bristles. And for humans, you could say, I felt the hair on the back of my neck bristling, right? So, that's in reference to hair.

But this is also common in a more figurative sense, meaning to react in an angry or defensive way. So, this can refer to human behaviour. That's not the way it's used here, but it can refer to human behaviour, meaning to react defensively or to react angrily.

For example, he bristled at the accusation that he was cheating. What, me cheating? I don't think so. So, to bristle with anger, to bristle at criticism, okay? So, react defensively.

What, me? I don't think so. But in this case, the dog's hair bristled. It stood up on end because it was, I guess, angry or frightened.

Finally, he let out, meaning he made a sound, he let out a long mournful blood-curdling howl. So, a howl is what dogs do, wolves do this. That is a howl.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

40

A blood-curdling howl is, so blood-curdling to curdle is when liquid turns into like lumpy, a sort of, yeah, when liquid turns into lumps, often because it's gone bad. And this is typically what happens to milk. So, if you've left a bottle of milk, if you leave it out for a week, the milk will start to go all terrible and it'll go lumpy.

The milk curdles, right? Now, blood-curdling is just an expression that means, basically, you get really scared and it's enough to curdle your blood, it's enough to transform your blood into something else. It's just an image that's commonly used. So, blood-curdling, a blood-curdling scream is a very common collocation.

So, it just means a scream that like freezes your blood or curdles your blood, right? Like the way that milk curdles when it goes old. So, a blood-curdling howl, a mournful blood-curdling howl. Mournful is very sad.

Mourn, if you mourn someone, it means someone has died and you feel sad because someone has died. So, that's mourn, a very sad feeling. And mournful, you know, relates to that.

So, a mournful howl, a very sad howl. A blood-curdling howl is one that's very scary and mournful. So, this is, you know, pretty terrifying.

He let out this howl, meaning he made that noise. And then from the room upstairs, they heard the scream. They ran upstairs clutching lanterns, crosses, crucifixes, holy water.

Clutching, meaning holding tightly, right? They were holding it very tightly. For example, she clutched his arm. She was so frightened, she clutched his arm.

I clutched my bag, you know. It's often when you're feeling desperate or emotional, you clutch something, you hold it tight. In this case, they were clutching lanterns for light, clutching crosses and crucifixes.

These are obviously sort of religious symbols, you know, the cross. And clutching holy water, okay. They threw open the door.

Before we had burst into the room, but this time they threw open the door. And the same pungent smell hit them. There's that word pungent again.

And on the floor lay one single shoe. Trembling, so that means shaking slightly. Usually if you're scared or if you're cold, you would tremble.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

41

They picked it up and turned it over and burned into the sole of that shoe were two words, size nine. Yeah, it's just a joke. It is just a joke.

And that is the end of that story. Now, what I'm going to do at this point is just quickly go through. I've got a list of those words.

See if you can remember them, okay. So what word do we use to describe when you don't want to do something? You're hesitant. You don't really want to do it.

I don't really want to go to that party. I don't really want to speak. I'm not very confident.

I am to do it. I am reluctant to do it. What word do we use to mean that you go away from a place? You don't go near it.

You go around it. You, what is it? Avoid it. Avoid it.

Right. What's another way of saying speak quietly? Another way of saying speak quietly. This is a, this is a library.

You have to lower your voice. You speak in a lowered voice or hushed tones or you whisper. What's another way of saying no to, to just say that you are not going to do something.

Right. For example, I think you should go in that room. No, I'm not going to go in that room.

No way. Not me. Never.

He refused to do it. When, if you have a connection to something, I don't know, like, or if you don't have a connection to something, who broke this glass? Was it you? Did you break this? Oh, you'd say what? It's, it has nothing to do with me. It is nothing to do with me.

It has nothing to do with me. Does this have anything to do with you? What happened here? What word means it could cause death, like an accident that could lead to death or lead to disaster? What kind of accident? A fatal accident. What's another, a phrasal verb, which means to attract, to attract inside, like this room.

What did it do to people? It drew them in. It drew them in. Yes.

What, is this, is this word a preposition or is it an adverb? I think it's an adverb. It meaning towards the middle or towards the inside. It's inward.

The door opened inward. The door opened outward. What do we call a metal, a piece of metal that attracts other metal? You put it on your fridge and it sticks there.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

42

That is a magnet, right? What's the adjective for that? Magnetic. Right. Okay.

What do we call the line that divides two rooms? So you've got the doorway and at the bottom of that doorway, there's a line and you put your foot on it or you step over it and you cross from one room to another, or equally you would move from one, one band or one section to another section and you cross that line. That is the threshold, right? If you're not very confident, this might prevent you from making progress in English, right? If you're not speaking enough, this will prevent you from making progress. So what's the phrasal verb which means to prevent you from making progress? It is to hold you back, hold you back.

Okay. What verb means to become more serious, to become stronger, to become more intense? In this case, it was the attraction to the room which became more and more intense. The pull became deeper, it deepened.

So interesting that deep is the adjective and the verb is created by adding the suffix en, deep, deepen. We have other ones like that, short, shorten, length, lengthen, width, widen and deep, deepen. Yeah.

So what adjective describes the young man who wanted to spend the night in the room despite the fact everyone told him he shouldn't do it, but he just would not change his mind because he was very stubborn. Why did he want to spend that night in the room? He wanted to show that everyone was wrong. He wanted to them wrong.

He wanted to prove them wrong. But they all said, no, no, no, no, you mustn't do it. They begged and what pleaded, they pleaded with him.

And in fact, they spoke in very strong words. They got angry with him. And a bit like I might do with my son, if he did something very naughty, they, they scolded him, scolded him.

I mean, I would say they, I would tell my son off if he did something very naughty. Scold is a slightly old fashioned word. But anyway, what did he want to do? He wanted to make sure that the evil spirit went away.

He wanted to remove the evil spirit. He wanted to remove all the superstitious nonsense. He wanted to rid everyone of the superstitious nonsense.

In more normal English terms, you would say to get rid of it, right, to get rid of the evil. What was the scream? How do you describe the screams that you heard? It was something horrible, terrible, horrific or what? Horrendous. Horrendous.

They heard this horrendous scream. They ran up the stairs and they quickly entered the room. They, what? They burst in, they burst through the door.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

43

Did they see the, the, the young man? No, they didn't. There was no evidence of him there at all. There was no, there was no sign of him.

But there was a, there was a smell, a kind of very strong smell, a strong, not very nice smell, a, a what? A pungent smell. What's that stuff that comes from hell? The kind of smelly, sulphuric smell that is written in the Bible. That's brimstone.

The news made it, the news went a long way. It travelled, what? It travelled far and wide until it reached the ears of this priest. Okay.

He was this, this priest. What kind of priest was he? He had a good reputation. He was a, what? A renowned priest.

In fact, he was the sort of priest who gets rid of evil spirits. What kind of priest is that? That would be an exorcist, of course. What's another word that means to force someone to leave? Like, for example, a child who's been very bad at school and the school says you have to leave the school to expel the child or expel the evil spirit.

What, what verb means to wait secretly, to hide and wait secretly? Which is what this evil spirit was doing in this room. It's to lurk, to lurk. In the middle of the night, they could smell a slight smell.

What's the, what's another word for, for slight? Like a little trace of a smell, a faint smell. A little smell that they could smell from upstairs. That is a, a what? A waft.

Right. What did the dog do? It went, the dog growled and its hair stood up on end. It did what? This is, by the way, the same word you would use to describe the hairs on your toothbrush or any brush.

They are bristles, so the hair bristled, the hair on the back of the dog bristled and it, it let out this very sad howl. What's another word for sad? It's more, what? Mournful, a mournful howl and then they heard the scream again. It was a horrendous scream.

It's the scream, scream that did something to your blood. A what kind of a scream? A blood curdling scream and they ran upstairs clutching, oh, I gave you the answer. They were clutching holy water and stuff and then when they picked up the shoe, their hands were shaking.

What's another word for, to shake? Begins with a T. Trembling, their hands were trembling. Okay, that's just a little vocab review. You'll find a list of the vocab on the episode PDF for this episode where you'll find the story text, a vocab list as well and why not? You can also have a vocab quiz just to help test yourself with that language.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

44

Now, you should watch the original video of Dave Allen telling this story on his TV show because he does a much better job of telling the story. You've got to see Dave Allen telling this story in front of an audience. It is a wonderful thing.

He's very good at performing it. They dim the lights of the studio. There's some reverb on his voice.

It gives a really good atmosphere and he's just an excellent, he was an excellent storyteller. One of the best, I think, just one of the best storytellers and comedians. So you really must watch that.

I'll leave a link to the video on the episode page for this episode on my website so you can check it out. In the comment section of that, I had a little look through the comment section. I found one.

I found one which, to be honest, is the kind of thing, just a reminder. Now, you've only got three days left, by the way, because the end date for the competition for the creepy story, the creepy story competition, the end date is the 30th of April at midnight your time, 2026. So you've only got like three days from the date of this episode being published.

I mean, I might be a bit, I might be a bit relaxed about that. And if I get one a couple of days late, then maybe that's okay too. But in the comment section, I saw exactly the kind of thing that I'm looking for.

This is exactly the sort of thing I'm looking for. So this is a comment under the Dave Allen version of this story. And this is the sort of thing I'm looking for in terms of a story of a creepy experience.

So it goes like this. My sister-in-law decided to take a road trip from Wales to Scotland. She was near to the Peak District when a huge storm started.

So she decided to find a B&B, that's a bed and breakfast, a place where you can stay the night and have breakfast in the morning. So she was driving from Wales to Scotland and she was near the Peak District, which is a part of England with a lot of hills, when a huge storm hit. So she decided to find a B&B to stay for the night.

The one she found used to be an old Sexton house, Victorian built. So this is an old traditional house. In the early hours, meaning in the early hours of the night, the storm was getting worse and the windows were rattling like in an old horror film.

So the windows were rattling and she noticed the handle to the bedroom door was moving ever so slightly. So she woke up in the morning, it was a big storm in this very old house and she noticed that the door handle to her bedroom was moving slightly. So she hid under

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

45

the duvet, she hid under the thick blanket, listening out while the door handle jiggled up and down.

So she was hiding under the duvet, meanwhile the handle of the door was going up and down. Eventually dawn came, that's not a girl called Dawn. Hello, good morning.

No, dawn means obviously the morning, the sunrise came. The storm had blown over, meaning the storm went away and she went down to breakfast and the landlady, that's the woman who owned the B&B, started to talk about the storm, hoping it hadn't disturbed her too much. So she was saying, oh I hope the storm didn't bother you too much.

My sister-in-law was just about to mention the incident with the door handle when the landlady cut in, that's interrupted, and said, oh I forgot to mention my stupid cat has learnt how to open doors and yours is his favourite room where he likes to sleep. I hope he didn't disturb your sleep. So the door handle going was the cat trying to get in because the cat had learned how to open doors.

So this creepy experience with the door handle was in fact just the cat trying to open the door. There you go. All right, look, that's the end of the episode.

Thank you so much for watching. Thank you for listening. If you liked my episode then of course you must subscribe to my podcast every week.

I will send you something interesting to listen to that is bound to help you with your English, especially if you listen on a regular basis. Sometimes it's stories like this, sometimes it's conversations with guests, sometimes I talk about different topics, all manner of different things. I try to do a range of different things on my podcast in order to help you genuinely develop your English by listening.

But the best way is just to listen regularly and listen long term and that's how you'll find this really improves your English. I've been doing this for about 17 years now. I've been teaching English for over 25 years.

I've slowly been refining my methods and approaches for doing this. If you want to get my premium episodes in which I do lots of vocabulary reviews, lots of vocab quizzes, lots of pronunciation episodes to give you a chance to practise repeating after me, sign up to my premium podcast, teacherluke.co.uk. It gives you all of the episodes on my podcast with ad-free listening plus extra episodes. These are not just like bonus off cuts.

The premium episodes are ones where I really apply a lot of my teaching skills and I focus a lot on really broadening your vocabulary more than just putting vocab in stories. It also includes a lot of other support and PDFs and all sorts of other things. So you can sign up to that at teacherluke.co.uk slash premium.

The Bad Room (Learn English with a Short Story) [986]

46

But otherwise, leave your comments in the comments section. I'd love to read your comments, any responses you had to this story. What did you think? And did you understand it? Did you get the joke? Did you get the whole size nine thing? What did you think of that? I look forward to reading your responses.

And until next time, I will now say to all of you out there in podcast land, wherever you are, whatever you happen to be doing until next time. Good bye. Bye.

Bye. Bye. Bye.

Thanks for listening to Luke's English podcast. For more information, visit teacherluke.co.uk.