

Rambling in the Countryside 🏡 (feat. my daughter) [998] Transcript

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Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. How are you doing today? I hope you're doing fine. I think this is episode number 998, nearly episode 1000.

I'll be talking about that later on in the episode, my plans for episode 1000. But this one, I think, is number 999, I can't count. I think it's episode number 998.

And it's a kind of rambling episode in which I'm going to be talking to you and doing various bits of podcast housekeeping. I've got just some stuff that I need to deal with, stuff I need to manage. But I'm also going to be describing, well, the situation I'm in at this point.

A few updates, a few podcast updates. I'd like to talk a little bit about the World Cup, but not at great length. I know this is not a World Cup football rambling episode.

But nevertheless, I think it would be good to talk about it a little bit. So this one, I think, again, I think I've decided to call this one Rambling in the Countryside. Because, yes, I am in a different location to record this episode.

I'm in the French countryside. And, well, I'll tell you all about that in due course. I'm not alone.

Sitting opposite me is my daughter. You can speak now. Permission to speak granted.

Hello. So I am Olivia. Olivia, you're Olivia today, are you? Okay.

So she's sitting opposite me. What are you doing? You need to speak into the microphone. I'm colouring a doll.

You're colouring a... I'm colouring a doll, a doll. A doll. It's not a doll, though.

It's a picture of a girl. And you're colouring it in. Yes.

Where did you get that? From the supermarket. Okay. What you mean is that I generously bought it for you? It's the sort of thing your daughter, who is eight years old, if you've got an eight-year-old daughter, it's the sort of thing that she sees in the supermarket and instantly wants.

And there was a little bit of negotiation. But she successfully negotiated the purchase of this notepad, which has pictures of girls in it. And you have to colour in the pictures.

And they all have different outfits. One of them is completely stark naked. And you have to... Most of them are stark naked.

And you have to kind of like put their clothes on and design the way they look and stuff. It's just the stuff that my daughter absolutely loves. You want to say something else? Oh, she wants me to point out that also it comes with this clever little set of paints.

And you put water on them. You put water on them and put a brush into the paint. And then you can do little simple watercolour paints.

So I'm in the countryside currently with my daughter. It's just the two of us this week. But yes, if you're listening to the audio version, it may sound slightly different.

I'm in a room with lots of glass in it. There's loads of windows all around. And so the sound is probably bouncing around a little bit.

If you're watching the video version, you will see that there's lots of greenery behind me, lots of trees and bushes and things like that. And I

look a little bit different because I'm wearing a cap today, because often when I'm on holiday in the countryside, I will just put a cap on, for example, to go outside to go cycling or something like that. I might put my cap on.

So I'm wearing a cap. It's the only cap that actually suits me. The only cap in the world that I think actually suits me.

And I've owned this cap for a long time. Can you guess how long I've actually owned this cap? How old do you think this is? Like, oh, I know. It's... wait.

By the way, listeners, Olivia is not on camera because, well, it's just general child safeguarding. I don't think it's wise at this stage yet to put my daughter on video. I'd like to keep her identity anonymous.

She's just... she's eating some cheese as well as doing this stuff. She's also stuffing her face with cheese like a proper French girl would. But don't eat cheese when you're about to start talking.

What was the question? How old is this cap that I'm wearing? This cap is 42 years old. 42 years old. So you think that I got this cap when I was seven? Yes.

Well, no, it's a little bit younger than that. What? Oh, I know. 41 years old.

No, it's... 40, 40, 40. That's enough. It's about 20 years old.

So my friend Moto in Japan sent this cap to me as a little gift when I... well, I don't know how old I was, but it's about 20 years ago. And do you know what? If you're looking at the cap, and I sometimes wear this when I'm out and about in Paris, there's on the front there, it's black. It used to be black.

And now it's aged so much. And the sun has kind of caused the colour to wash out. It used to be jet black.

And now it's... what colour is this cap, do you think? Brown. It's a brownish grey kind of colour. And it's starting to get very tatty.

I know why it's from Tokyo, because there's Tokyo Tower. It is actually from Tokyo. So there's a picture on the front of the cap.

Whoa, whoa, chill out. Yeah, go on. Of Tokyo Tower.

That's right. It's a picture of Tokyo Tower. It looks like the Eiffel Tower, but it's actually Tokyo Tower.

I always thought that it was the Eiffel Tower. You always thought it was the Eiffel Tower. Just like I imagine every other person who ever sees me wearing this probably thinks, oh, he's wearing an Eiffel Tower cap.

No, it's Tokyo Tower. Wow, how fascinating. So we're here in the countryside because this year we decided that instead of going off to spend our summer holiday in Norway or visiting family in California or something like that, that this time we would do the French thing and that we would rent a house in the French countryside.

And that's what we've done. And in fact, we kind of have made a decision to rent this house long-term. So we'll be renting it for more than just the summer holiday.

We're going to rent it probably for the entire year because we were fed up. Yes, my daughter Olivia wants to say something. And more.

And more, potentially 12 months or more, if we like it, we'll continue. But it's a 12-month contract. And we were fed up of living in our tiny little apartment.

I mean, we love our apartment. We love the fact that it's so well located in Paris as well. But obviously it's very urban.

And most of the time, just a second, most of the time, you know, we're just in the city. The apartment is quite small and we really miss having access to nature. We miss, you know, the trees, the grass, the wildlife, all of those wonderful things.

And also we wanted our kids who are now at the sort of, I don't know how to describe it. They are, they're just living their childhood and it's a great time for them. And they really need to be running around in a garden, exploring nature, spending a lot of time outside, getting plenty of fresh air.

Yes, Olivia? I want an exploring kit. Sorry? I want an exploring kit. You want an exploring kit.

What's that then? What's an exploring kit? Well, like you have a hat and like exploring things like a pencil with gadgets or things like that. A pencil with a gadget. You mean a pen knife.

That's what you mean. You want an exploring kit with a compass and like a long rope. Because I want to be an explorer when I'm bigger.

When you're bigger, really. Okay. Well, we'll see about that.

When you finished your colouring book, then maybe we'll get you the exploring kit with a knife in it and things like that. So yeah, we decided that it was time that we let our children spend more time outside. And

so we made the decision to rent a place in the French countryside for long term.

Now, I know that renting, people always say that if you shouldn't rent, you shouldn't rent a house because it's essentially you're throwing money down the drain. Right? Yes? But no, you're not. Why not? Because it's lovely.

And like, you're not throwing money down the drain because you're having a good time. And it's not like wasting your money because you're having a great time. Watch out for the table.

Because if you bump this table, the camera shakes and everyone on YouTube gets miffed. And then they start planning to write a comment or they just skip to one of the other videos that they can see just on the sidebar. So we don't want to encourage them to do that.

But it's not a waste of money. Yeah, it's not at all. Right.

Because we have a lovely time. Well, we are having it. We are having a lovely time and the quality of life goes up.

So to put that in other words, you could say it's an investment. The money that we spend on renting this place, even though we don't own it. And even though we're not paying off a loan, you know, that we've that we took out in order to buy the place, which is normally what happens, you know, you buy a place, you borrow money and then every month you pay money.

But that is essentially going into the equity of the property or the ownership of the property. This fascinating stuff, isn't it? And so people say, don't rent. You're throwing money down the drain.

You need to buy something. And then even then even though you're paying money every month, the money does convert into your ownership of that property and you can get that money back plus more when you finally choose to sell it. But we're not in a position to buy a place like this.

And so we thought, right, well, we will, we will rent and it's not a waste of money because it's an investment in life right now, right here, right now. And both you and your brother are able to spend lots of time outdoors. You go to the local pony club and you practise riding ponies and looking after horses.

And I love making potions. You love making potions. What does that mean, making potions? Well, you put water, you put flowers, you put plants and then the, the water change colours.

Changes colour. Yeah. Yeah.

So this, And you can even put, if you put sun cream, it smells. Oh, okay. Making a potion basically is what my daughter does when she gets something like a cup, a bottle, a glass, a jar, or something like that.

And goes off into the garden and picks as many different things as she can find flowers, leaves, sticks, whatever it is, a dead bumblebee. I don't know. And she puts it in and fills it with water and mixes it all up.

And then that becomes a potion. The best potions are ones that involve lavender. Like you take lots of lavender and put that in because it smells beautifully of lavender.

And I already did that. You know, the one on my, on the bench, there's a lavender one. Really? Yeah.

So this garden is great. Cause it's got, it's got a quite a large lawn. There's a bench you can sit on with an enjoy a cup of coffee.

Olivia wants to say something else. So, and well, I have this potion where my potion really worked because I was planning for the water to drain into my ingredients and then no more water. Drain, you mean soak, soak into.

Yeah. And now it worked. And like that, I have more ingredients and that, that like really are already used and that, that are filled with water.

This is good. Is it? Yeah. Like that I can put it in other potions.

Right. You've, you've created these things that have absorbed all the water and now they're, they're, they're loaded up with potion. Yeah.

It's okay. You're not making real potions. Real potions would create magic tricks to happen as like someone drinks it and they turn into a frog that's a real potion, but your potions don't have actual powers, do they? Yes, they do.

Okay. What are the powers then? Well, there's a power where you can have super powers. There's another one where you can transform.

There's another one where you can, you can move things and like the table, you're moving the table again. Is there a potion to take that doesn't, that means you stop shaking the table? Well, there isn't. That's impossible.

Clever answer. Okay. All right.

So then there you go. That's where we are. And we, we worked out that even though we'll be like, like renting this place and paying for it every month.

And obviously you'd imagine we just come in the summer, but almost every weekend we're planning to come here. We're going to come here during the school holidays at other times of the year, we're going to spend Christmas here. It is a wonderful, wonderful place surrounded by lovely fields and nature.

And it's just fantastic. Even if it does smell a little bit of horse poo, occasionally when the wind blows in a certain direction. Yes.

We've got bicycles, which we're riding around. We don't have a car yet. So we are essentially the only way we can travel around to do our food shopping is to go out on our bikes and fill our backpacks full of food.

It's a lot of fun. We're going to buy a car. I'm actually going to own a car for the first time in my long life.

Um, Olivia would like to say something. Okay. So, and there are too many spiders here.

Yeah, there are lots, lots of spiders. The worst are the ones with thick legs. Thick legs.

Yeah. So of course a house in the countryside in the French countryside, there aren't many things. I mean, you should feel lucky that you don't live in some other part of the world.

I know she's terrified. You should, because in other parts of the world, there are poisonous snakes, poisonous spiders, all sorts of things, scorpions that creep into your slippers. Um, all sorts of snakes in the toilet, all sorts of things that you don't even want to think about.

You're lucky that here in this part of France, I think there aren't really any dangerous animals. And that includes even the big spiders that you see crawling across the carpet. They're harmless.

They're harmless. They just look scary, but they're harmless. But there's one who's dangerous.

Well, there's one who there's one that's that it's not a person, is it? There's one that's dangerous. Animals that are dangerous. The rats and the, and the, and the, and the, um, rats and mice, rats and mice.

Okay. Yeah. But they're everywhere, aren't they? Not every, I mean, everywhere in the world, you know, everywhere in the world.

So despite the fact that the S there are spiders and cobwebs and little creepy crawlies and things in the countryside, it is, it is lovely. So that's where we are. But I was, I was saying that we worked out that last year we went on holiday right to Norway.

We spent about three weeks there. Uh, plus some time in England, there was quite a lot of flying involved, uh, renting a car for a long period of time and a lot of other, you know, expenses. We worked out that our holiday in Norway is equivalent to about three months of rent for this place.

And there are many ways that choosing to come here on a regular basis will save us money while also increasing our quality of life. I'm not quite sure how I'm going to do my podcast while I'm here. What, what room I'm going to use that there's a lot more space here than there is in our apartments at home.

Uh, I'll find a space or find a spot for podcasting. It might just be on this sofa here, although I'll have to contend with you and your brother and

your mom as well. And I don't know how I'm going to deal with that particular conundrum, but that's something for me to work out.

Olivia would like to say something. Yes. Um, and it's lovely because you can even do it.

Oh no, you can't do it outside podcasting. I could, I can, I have, I have, I will. Uh, and it's, and it's, and it's, and this house is certainly a lot, a lot, like nearly a million times bigger than, than your office, a million, not a million, but like 10 times bigger.

It's certainly much bigger than my office, but it's not equipped in the same way as my office because my office is a bespoke place. Bespoke means it's been specifically designed and created for doing this podcast. Whereas what I'm doing now is a form of gorilla podcasting, not gorilla like the ape, but gorilla G E U R R. God, how do you spell gorilla? It's G U E R R I L L A gorilla.

Anyway, it's a different spelling of gorilla. It means finding ways to improvise your podcasting on the go so that you are essentially sort of breaking the rules. You're recording in the living room or you're recording in the garden.

You're not doing it in your normal podcasting space. You're just finding ways, um, every time to do it whenever you can. That's how I see that.

Yes. You're really breaking the rules. Well, I mean, not really breaking the rules, but not doing it in the normal standard way.

Yeah. Okay. You're muted.

I've muted you again. Yes. So that you, you don't cause you were rubbing the microphone against your t-shirt and breathing into it and stuff that people don't want to hear him breathing.

Do you on the podcast? I don't know. So anyway, there you go. That that's where we are now.

And that's where we're going to be, um, until, um, the kids go back to school. So pretty much for the rest of the summer, I will be here. And, um, starting next, I'm scratching my knee.

Yeah. Starting next week, all four of us will be here. And that means that I don't know how I'm going to continue doing my podcasting in the way that I normally would.

Right. You've come to expect, uh, one free episode every single week. Uh, plus yes, they have plus, plus a premium episodes on a regular basis as well.

So I'm going to be improvising. As I said, guerrilla podcasting, trying to find time and space to podcast in the midst of a family time here in the countryside. The fact we've got more time, the fact that we've got more space and we're not rushing around a foreign country, you know, being on holiday is great because it does mean that I probably will have more time to do this.

But what I will say is that it might not be on the same, uh, regular basis that you've had for the rest of the year. So I might not, you might not get an episode every Monday. You might get, you know, episodes arriving on different days of the week.

You might get more than one episode a week. We will see. You might get slightly less.

Uh, I'll attempt to give you the same number of episodes I would normally give you during this period, but they just, it might be a bit

haphazard. My uploading schedule might be a little bit haphazard. So there you go.

That is that. All right. Now, um, other bits of housekeeping.

So, uh, listeners, uh, you remember, don't you? Was it, uh, two months ago now? He says scratching his knee. I'm mine. My legs are a bit itchy yours as well.

They can't hear you because your microphone is muted. Yeah, mine are so scratchy. Why, why are your legs itching? Do you think? Because of the shiny.

So that's French. You need to put that in English. Do you know how to do that? Um, uh, like, I don't know how to say it basically.

Uh, so as you know, in the countryside, there are things like mosquitoes and other little stop kicking the table, please. Mosquitoes and other little creepy crawlies that will bite you and leave you scratching your legs and stuff like that. But it seems that here in this part of the world, there are these caterpillars, right? These caterpillars that make their nests in trees and they, and they shed the little, uh, hairs on their body.

These are caterpillars that are covered in hair. I don't know if they're like butterfly caterpillars or moth caterpillars. I don't know what they turn into eventually.

Cause of course all caterpillars, you know, uh, undergo metamorphosis and turn into other, you know, uh, butterflies or moths. Uh, but, um, what these ones, what they do is they nest in the trees and they, the loads of them all nesting in a big bunch and they spin a kind of web of thread around them. And then they cut that.

I think they sort of shed the hairs on their body and the hairs go in the air and go everywhere. And when they touch your skin, they actually kind of spike your skin a bit like the way a mosquito bites you and the hair goes in and it contains some sort of annoying chemical. And essentially it leaves very, very itchy little bites.

This is what it's like in the countryside. Us, this Parisian family going to the countryside with no idea about these things. And our first weekend here, we all on the first night, we woke up in the morning, scratching terribly.

I was covered. My arms were completely covered. Whatever recent weekend, but okay.

The second weekend, but the first weekend that we've been here in the summer, it was the first weekend. It was the first. How dare you contradict me on my own podcast? They can't hear you because you're not speaking into the microphone.

Um, anyway, um, we, we all got sort of all these little bites all over our arms and legs and they've been very irritating and scratchy, but, uh, I think it's less bad than it used to be. We still got a little bit of that, but that's life in the countryside, isn't it? You know, you're kind of living in, in the middle of nature and you end up with these things like you just end up scratching. It's like the weather's much nicer and the garden is lovely, but I keep scratching my knee.

What can you do? You know, this one is Chinese or Japanese. This girl that you're drawing is Chinese or Japanese. I could just quickly show her on the screen.

Um, okay. Yeah. All right.

Good. I'm looking forward to seeing what you do with that one. Um, so some of you listening, um, will remember that a few months ago I had Anna Brooke on the podcast and she told us various paranormal stories.

Um, if you remember all about the kind of weird experiences, weird sort of poltergeist experiences that she had at home. And, um, she talked about her new book, which is called death by chocolate. If you want to speak, speak into the microphone so we can hear you.

I love it. Death by chocolate. It's so exciting and I love it.

Like with, um, with, um, what is it called? Monsieur Framboise and the girl Coco and, um, his boyfriend, her boyfriend and her dog. Yeah. So, and, and they don't know that, that the little girl, that, um, that the grandma is, is don't spoil it.

Spoiler alert. You can't give away the big twist of the story, but you really enjoyed it. Okay.

So this is death by chocolate, a book for children around my daughter's age, sort of, you know, preteen basically. Um, and, um, Anna came on, she told the, the, the true stories of her paranormal experiences, which had inspired the book. And then we launched a competition, um, which was basically listeners.

We wanted you to send in your experiences, your descriptions and stories of paranormal experiences that you've had or just strange experiences. And I received about a hundred different stories and it's, it's first, first of all, it's taken me a long time to, um, go through them all. But the point is, the reason I'm saying this is because you might be thinking, well, when are we going to hear the stories that you've selected? What's happening with that competition? So, um, it's kind of on hold at the moment.

What I've done is I've, I went through all of the stories. It took me a long, long time and I chose, um, my favourites. So I made a short list of my favourite ones and I'm waiting for Anna to read my short list and to choose her favourite.

That's why it's taking so long because I'm waiting for Anna and Anna has been incredibly busy as well, uh, with the publication and, um, launch of her new book death by chocolate, but also just like for us, it's been the end of the school year, the beginning of the summer holidays. And that means that she's also been incredibly busy doing this, that, and the other. And there have been other, other things that, uh, she's had to deal with recently.

So I'm still waiting for her to read the short list I've given and choose her favourite story. Once we've done that, we'll be, I will be able to do the competition episode. I'll read you the stories that we chose.

I'll tell you the one that we consider to be our favourite, the person who's going to win a copy of Anna's book. But also I've decided I'm going to do a kind of listeners choice award for this as well, which means that when you listen to all those stories, you'll be given the option to vote for the one that you like the best. And the one that gets the most votes will be the winner of the listeners choice award.

And you will be given an item of Luke's English podcast merchandise. Oh, you're so excited. I can tell you, you might receive a Luke's English podcast mug.

I think it's probably going to be the prize that I'll send you a Luke's English podcast mug with a design of your choice on it based on the selection that you have in the, uh, LEP merch store. And my daughter would like to come in here. Yes.

But how do you make, how do you make the people vote? How do you like, how do I make them vote? How do you, um, let them vote? Yeah. Yeah. It's a very good question.

There's two ways I could do it. One way is to use a kind of a website where people can launch or you can, they just email you. Yeah, no, that's not good because then I've got a million emails coming into my inbox and it gets too difficult to manage.

The easiest way I think is to create a poll, an online poll, uh, through a link. I think you can do it with Google and it just creates a poll or I think on YouTube I can create a poll or simply this. I'll just say in the comment section, just name the story that you like the best, but we don't need to worry about those details yet because this isn't that episode, but I will find a way to let you choose your favourite story.

So that's going to be great. But the stories are really good. I was like really, really, really impressed.

I'll read them to you later. Uh, cause my daughter wants to hear them now, but, um, the stories are really, really good. I was really impressed and I've managed to, um, reduce the number and, and distil it down.

So we've got a good set of genuinely interesting, entertaining, quite scary, um, quite moving stories, uh, from listeners. So that is, that's something that's going to be coming up. Okay.

She's just said to me, can you say, can you say my daughter loves scary stories? My daughter loves scary, scary stories. Why do you love scary stories so much? I don't know, but into the microphone, please. I don't really know why it's just that they're exciting and, and there's a lot of movement and I love movement.

There's a lot of action in scary stories and I just love that. You, um, so recently I was in England with, um, your brother and talking to my daughter at this point. And, and when we were there, I went around all the, this, the charity shops that sell secondhand books and things.

And I bought loads of books for you. Uh, child, child, wait a minute that I bought a lot of books for you, child one and included in it was a Sherlock Holmes story. Yeah.

Just talk to me and answer my questions. There was a Sherlock Holmes story. Can you just tell us the name of the story and what you thought of it? Um, scandal in Bohemia, a scandal in Bohemia.

Yes. Um, and it was exciting. It wasn't very scary, but it was exciting.

Uh, and like, I liked how Sherlock Holmes, um, um, did that thing with his hands. He took red paint in his hand. He did like this.

Put it on his face. Yeah. And because he was in the middle of a fight and he did like this, which he asked the people to do a fight.

Wait a minute. People, when you say he did like this, people can't see what you're talking about. He put his hand on his face and dragged it.

So basically you put paint in his hand and smeared red paint and smeared it on his face to make it look like he was bleeding from the face. And he asked the people to do a fight. And then the girl, the girl who was, who was the baddie, she thought that he was really bleeding.

She took her in the house. And then he's when, when his, when Sherlock Holmes friend, Watson said fire fire. Well, um, the girl took the letter, the precious letter, and then Sherlock Holmes saw it and went and when Sherlock Holmes said, um, false alert, well, she, she put it back in the place that he was in a hiding place.

Yeah. So this is Sherlock Holmes, his way of tricking this woman, uh, into revealing, wait a minute, into revealing the location of some very important letter, but the girl, um, over, um, was more smart than him and took the letter to, and took with her and went somewhere else and leave another photo. That's right.

Um, so she outsmarted him. So this is the only person, one of the only people ever to outsmart Sherlock Holmes. There are two people who've done it.

Was it, uh, uh, Moriarty and hers. Irene Adler is the name of the character. So anyway, that was good.

A scandal in Bohemia. She really enjoyed it. Um, and, um, well, I'm going to do another Sherlock Holmes story on this podcast.

So maybe the next episode, episode number 999, I think that what I'm going to do is read through another Sherlock Holmes story for you. And I've been trying to think of ways to do it because what I can do with a, with a short, a very short story, that's about a thousand words or less is I can read it in 10 minutes and then go through every single line and explain loads of detailed vocabulary. And that's like a decent sort of hour and a half episode.

But a Sherlock Holmes story is typically about 9,000 words long. I've talked. Yeah.

I've talked about this before and, you know, just sort of debating about, um, wait a minute, debating about what the best, um, uh, approach is for, for telling a story like that on the podcast. Uh, because I could just tell the whole story from start to finish, but of course a lot of people are going to get lost and are not going to understand what I'm saying. But on the other hand, if I read through the story and stop regularly and

explain things, that's going to make, that's going to slow down the story.

There's a bird in our, in our flat. There's a little Robin who's just jumped into the, into the house and he's come currently bouncing around, um, investigating and now it's flying up against the window. Um, are you able to open that door or just shoo it shoo, shoo, shoo out of the room? Oh dear.

We're going to, Oh, it's flown in here. Oh, and it's, it's all right. Let's deal with this.

Okay. Sorry. Don't worry little bird.

Don't worry. Little Robin. Let's open this up for you.

It's on the wall. Get out of the way. So it's scared of you.

So don't go over there. Oh, and it's gone. Well, wasn't that exciting.

First time I've had a bird on this podcast. Um, and I think he'd appeared for a moment in on video. I think you could actually see it on video.

What an exciting moment. Um, so anyway, I can't remember what we were talking about. You were about to say something about, about, about my, um, uh, my approach to, to telling a Sherlock Holmes podcast, a Sherlock Holmes story on this podcast.

Um, so I really like Sherlock Holmes stories. So I'll maybe comment sometime on the Sherlock Holmes story. Yeah.

Well, if I tell the story and pause regularly during the telling of the story to explain details and explain things, the problem is that other people also get frustrated. So either the, the, the sort of higher level listeners

get a bit frustrated because the story is slowing down or the lower level listeners get frustrated because they can't keep up and they just get lost after about five minutes. So what do I do? Well, you know, I'm always trying to choose the best option.

I think what I will do this time, uh, is this and that the, the drawback of this approach is that it's going to take a lot longer. So what I will do this time, I think is just read the entire story from start to finish. And I've made a few little changes to some of the vocab, uh, throughout, but I'll read the whole story from start to finish.

And then I'll go through the story again and explain some details that that's probably going to make the episode about three hours long, but I did it once with the Apiornis Island, um, story, uh, the one about the bird, the large bird that, uh, hatches from an egg. Um, you know that story. So I did it with that one.

It ended up being about three hours long, but it was really, really popular. Lots of people commented on how much they liked it. So I think I'll probably take that approach, but I just listeners, I want you to, I want you to know that actually telling a story on the podcast is not as simple as you might think.

And if I just tell the story, a lot of people will get lost. And actually, occasionally I get comments from native English speakers who are usually the most critical audience of my podcast. Cause this podcast is not for native English speakers, but I do get comments from the occasional online English teacher who has chosen to criticise me for my work.

And they say things like, what is this? This is supposed to be learning English. Where's the learning? Where's the teacher teaching? He's just telling the story and that's it. And I kind of, there's a certain, uh, appeal

to that, that, uh, my audience liked listening to those stories told in my voice and that I, they liked the way I do it.

But I think I agree. I, there needs to be some sort of teaching involved. So essentially I'll read the whole story and then go through it again and explain details, but it's going to be a really long episode.

I don't know how long that will end. What, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, maybe just also ask an activity like, like, um, now try to like, um, change the vocab of the story and like do a thing like that. A little activity.

Yeah. I mean, I can offer my listeners some sort of series of activities that they can do with answers. I mean, that's normally the sort of thing I do in a premium episode, to be fair, like in a free episode, I'm not necessarily going to go that far and you know, do all that stuff.

Yeah. Yeah. Most of the episodes are free.

So anyway, that's probably what's going to come up in episode 999. Um, then there's episode 1000, right? So this episode is, is 998. The next episode 999, then it's episode 1000.

And I've got a little bit of a problem with that because, uh, well, first of all, uh, I don't have anything ready. And second of all, I think the audience, everyone expects something extra special because it's episode 1000. And I've talked about it over the last couple of months.

I keep saying, oh, episode 1000 is nearly here. Oh, I've better do something special. Um, and I keep talking about it, but, uh, as you know, it's been such a busy time that I haven't had a chance to prepare something super duper extra special.

And I suppose what I mean by something super duper extra special is a sort of long anthology episode where I feature conversations with regular guests and maybe even some, um, contributions from listeners. And it's a long thing with like a sort of best of, of, of the podcast where you hear from all my, uh, audience, uh, from all my regular guests in some format, some incredible, uh, smorgasbord of, of guest appearances. What's a smorgasbord is the question from my daughter.

It's basically a kind of a, a kind of a large plate or tray covered in different types of food. That's a smorgasbord and it's, um, um, it's, it's a Scandinavian thing, I think. Yeah.

Your mom is calling me. Everything is happening today. It's so hard to do a normal podcast in the midst of all this stuff.

Uh, I'm going to take the call. I'm going to pause the podcast and take this call. Bear with me listeners.

Okay. It's not urgent. I'll talk to your mom later, but news, good news.

Uh, you're able to go to your horse training this week every afternoon from 2 PM till 5 PM question. Am I gonna, am I gonna go on the horse or just help? Yeah. You're going to, I think, I think you're going to ride ponies.

I hope I have cats yet. So, okay. She's very pleased to be able to ride ponies this week.

So that's, that's is the best pony cat. What Katia is the best pony. Yes.

They've, they've all got names, these ponies and Katia is the best. Yes. Yeah.

Okay. And then it's S juice and then, be quiet now. Thank you.

Stop knocking the table. So, um, yes. Episode 1000.

Everyone probably expects something incredible. Stop knocking the table, please. Everyone.

Well, you are, everyone probably expects something incredible with, you know, all the, all your favourite guests, all being included in the same episode, but that actually requires a lot of organisation because I've got to arrange calls with all of them, record things with all of them, take all those recordings, somehow find a way to put them in. And, um, everything's been so crazy and up in the air, what with finding this place, moving into this place, trying to buy a car, going, testing cars, the kids ending school, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, all these different things. Um, travelling, travelling to England with my son and all that stuff.

And it's been really, really hard to find the time to organise episode 1000. And then I find it getting closer and closer with every single week. And so I don't really know what to do.

I've had some ideas. I've got some ideas for it, which I think are probably okay. Um, I got a suggestion from a listener called Alex.

You want to say something, Olivia, but it's maybe just going to be simple. What's that? How could it be simple? Just like always like just on a topic, just me talking on my own. But I don't think so.

I don't want people to, to be disappointed that if, if, if, uh, episode 1000 comes around and it's just me talking, maybe people will be like, Oh, I thought there would be something a bit more special than this, but it might not be possible. So I got a suggestion from, I've got a few suggestions from listeners. A lot of the suggestions to be fair, have been a little unrealistic.

They've been great suggestions, but they they've just been suggested by people who don't necessarily know what it takes to produce an episode like that. So some of the suggestions have been very outlandish and ambitious and don't sing, please outlandish and ambitious and, uh, the sorts of things that would take a hell of a lot of time and organisation to, to do. I got a suggestion from Alex, a regular long-term listener of the podcast who said, here's a quick and strange idea for the 1000th episode in case you're still not sure what to do.

Imagine a 10 hour ramble. I don't know if I can do a 10 hour ramble, but anyway, he said zero preparation, zero editing. I like the sound of that 100% your style.

And I guess the YouTube algorithms love this sort of thing. You could simply take a day and go and sit on a Hill somewhere in the French countryside with a couple of power banks. That means a couple of batteries and a microphone and reflect what it's all been about and where it's heading.

And, uh, and to not run out of things to say, simply open the archive of all your episodes and talk about them one by one with some nostalgia and warmth. And that will surely resonate with the listeners. If you want to talk about every single episode, you'll have about only 40 seconds for each one.

That's 10 hours divided by a thousand, right? Works out at about 40 seconds per episode. Oh my God, I can't possibly go through my entire archive and say something about each one. Um, cause it would take over 10 hours.

So he said, maybe you could select some episodes that you remember recording or choose some that mean a lot to you. Anyway, there's just some food for thought. Uh, sorry.

Thank you, Alex, for that suggestion. Yes. And, um, um, you could also, but maybe select your favourite ones, like with me and if you have violet and all the other names, all the different iterations of you that have been on this podcast over the years.

Yeah, certainly. Every episode with you is one of my favourites. That's, that's absolutely true.

And also mine. Also yours or your favourites. Well, I'd never really heard an episode.

You never really heard an episode. No, no, you're not. You don't listen to my podcast.

With Prune, my best friend. Yeah. Well, on her Alexa, we always try to put your podcast on and then it makes like a, uh, a, another girl that talks English with Lou English with Lucy.

Yeah. Yeah. I know.

You've got, so your friend has got an Amazon Alexa and you, when you're at her house, you say, Alexa play Luke's English podcast. And it puts on English with Lucy or something like that. It's like, what? Like we want my dad's not Lucy.

She's going to be on my podcast in the autumn. Lucy. Yeah.

Um, anyway, my brother, your uncle suggested another good idea. I might do this too. I might do all of this in one massive episode.

I don't know. It's going to take how many hours? Too many, obviously. But his suggestion was that simply he interviewed me.

He just has come up with a series of questions. Oh, that's good. He could ask me the questions.

And I think he's in quite a good position to be able to come up with insightful, interesting, and entertaining questions that could generate an interesting conversation. It's the other way around. What's the other way around? Normally, normally it's you ask the question to the, to the people help you.

But now it's, it's, it's, um, James, James who asked you who will ask me who might ask me. Yeah. Yeah.

I think that's a good idea too. And I'll just need to organise that with him. Um, so listeners, basically what I'm saying is for episode 1000, maybe just, you know, reduce your expectations somewhat, lower your expectations a bit, take the pressure off me a little bit and we'll see what we get.

Another thing is that if I'm not ready, I might need to publish some episodes that don't have numbers. So you might, it might get a bit weird over the next few weeks as I publish things randomly at different times of the week. And also there might be a few episodes that don't have numbers as I try to make time for myself to put off episode 1000.

So I might, you might get, you might get some more bonus episodes, some slightly more random things. Bear with me, everyone. Okay.

Yes. Um, I think we're nearly finished. I don't want to go on for too long here.

Um, yeah. How many hours has it been? It's been about 45 minutes. This so actually fairly short considering my normal output.

But I I'm quite happy with that. I'm okay with that. I wanted to talk about World Cup 2026 FIFA World Cup 26 here.

This is not a football ramble. I don't want to go on about this for ages. But I think that summarising the tournament and just giving a few comments about it, and at least sort of finishing the things I've said about it in previous World Cup episodes would be a good idea.

And non football fans might appreciate getting an overview of the World Cup. Okay. Yes.

I love the match of the Miami one where there was France, England, and that includes court six and France. Four. Yeah.

Because I'm English and French, but I'm more. I like more English than French. Why? I don't know.

It's just the way it's just the way you are, right? Yeah, that's fine. But Marguerite, or my friend likes French more than English. She's also your friend is also English and French, just like you, but she prefers France.

It's funny, isn't it? I don't really understand how these things go. But anyway, so the World Cup ended yesterday. I'm recording this on Monday, the 20th of July, and the final of the World Cup was yesterday.

And the winner was Spain, who beat Argentina one nil. It took them 120 minutes to do it, but they did it in the end. And so congratulations to Spain.

And I mean, how how can I describe the game? If you're Spanish, you should be very, very happy of yourself. I'm sure they are very happy with themselves. Proud of yourself.

Happy with yourself. I'm sure they are very happy with themselves. So the game itself was, I suppose, typically for a World Cup final, World Cup finals are never the best games of the World Cup, as we know.

And this was certainly true for that. But it was a tough game, not a particularly satisfying game. Not many goals, just one goal right at the end of extra time.

But Spain were absolutely dominant and clearly the better side. Spain were the much better team. They completely outplayed Argentina.

Argentina didn't get one single shot on goal for the entire 90 minutes. And well, they didn't get a shot on target for 90 minutes. They only got two shots on target in the entire game.

Both of them came in extra time. So it was not a good performance by Argentina. And I think a lot of people were quite happy, actually, to see Argentina not win that game.

I know it's a little sad. But for me, I thought actually the way that they played was not good. They played badly for several reasons.

And in a way, I think that they got what they deserved. So the first thing is that Argentina just didn't play very well. They didn't create many chances.

They didn't manage to do the things they needed to do. The second thing is that they just played really dirty again. And they were kicking and fouling and doing all sorts of other things.

And I don't know how they get away with it. I really don't. A lot of the challenges, a lot of the fouls against Spanish players were worthy of yellow cards, but they didn't get them.

One player did get sent off, fair enough. But I think the world, and maybe not the world, but a lot of people, unfortunately, were quite glad to see Argentina lose that. And for me, it's nothing to do with the political situation because I'm actually very, very balanced about that.

I'm very, very even-handed about all of the history and stuff. I'm just talking purely about the football and purely about the sort of behaviour and approach of the Argentinian players, which I thought was cynical and negative. And you saw it at the end.

There was actual violence where I think Argentinian players were punching some of the Spanish substitutes who ran onto the pitch and things like that. So kind of despicable stuff from Argentina, really. And they didn't deserve to win, quite frankly.

And I was worried that they wouldn't do anything for the entire 90 minutes and then they'd score one goal at the end and then they'd win on penalties. And I thought that would have been unjust. But I understand that Argentina are a great team.

They've got so much quality. They've got the greatest player in the world, right? Yeah. Messi is the greatest player in the world? Messi is generally, although he didn't win the Ballon d'Or this year, which is the prize for best player.

That was won by, was it, Rodri, the Spanish player. And Mbappe won the Golden Boot for the highest number of goals. So Argentina... And Harry Kane? Harry Kane, no, he didn't score that many goals, actually.

So Argentina, great team, capable of playing such fantastic football, but were disappointing, in fact, cynical and negative and didn't deserve to win. So I'm sorry, Argentina, for that. But I mean, what do you think about that, Argentinian fans? What do you think about the way Argentina carry themselves through this competition? I know that you

might be feeling a bit hard done by because you look at the world, you look at the internet and you think, why is my team so unpopular? And there are allegations of all this stuff about, there are allegations of things like match fixing and corruption and stuff.

I don't know about that. But what I do know is what I saw on the pitch and they were not great. I need to finish very soon.

There was also the bronze match between England and France, and that was a fantastic game. Ten goals in that game. England scored six and France scored four.

God knows what was going on there, but that was so entertaining and so bonkers and mad and crazy. Mbappé scored two goals, which meant that he went on to be the highest goal scorer in the competition. Yeah, the halftime show, obviously, because this one was being held in America, there was a big show at halftime with Madonna and Shakira and Justin Bieber and Robbie Williams and all sorts of other people.

Big entertainment show. And on the TV, it was quite funny because on the BBC, they had Wayne Rooney was one of the pundits. So a pundit is a kind of journalist.

Usually they are former players who now are in the TV studio commenting on the game. So one of the BBC's pundits for the final was Wayne Rooney, former England international megastar Wayne Rooney. And he's like a really kind of down-to-earth scouser.

And the presenter said to him, Wayne, what did you think of the halftime show? And Rooney said, well, you know, I thought it was crap. I thought it was just total crap. So he wasn't very happy with the halftime show.

I think that's enough from me today. I think I need to go into the kitchen and start preparing some dinner. So I'm going to stop here.

There's more I could say about the World Cup just to finish off, but I think I'm not going to. I have to know when enough is enough. And the fact that my daughter is sneaking into the kitchen to eat more cheese, which she definitely shouldn't be doing at this time.

So fatherhood is calling me away from the podcast, but there it is. Overall, the World Cup was a sort of bloated, exciting, mega competition full of goals, full of controversy, allegations of corruption. It might never be the same again.

Hydration breaks or commercial breaks split the game into four parts. I'm not entirely sure how I feel about that. In a way, it was quite good because during the hydration break, you could nip to the toilet, go to the kitchen to get yourself a snack.

It did make it a bit more comfortable to watch. But are they going to go back to the normal two half structure in the future? Who knows? FIFA, the corruption. How long are we going to continue watching football despite the fact that FIFA are doing the naughty shenanigans they're doing? I don't know.

But football is a fantastic sport. It remains the world's favourite sport. It's an amazing thing.

It's wonderful for the teams of the world to meet each other and compete against each other. It's still a fantastic international celebration and I love it. I absolutely love it.

Listeners, I'm looking forward to reading your comments. Tell us what you think about the World Cup. Also, tell us what you think about plans for Episode 1000 and any other thoughts that have occurred to you while listening to this episode.

My daughter is desperate to say something to me now. What is it? It's that my dad will show the three first drawings that I made. Okay, so my daughter would like to show on video.

This is just for the video version. The three drawings that she did. You coloured in these pictures of these girls.

So there's a girl wearing a nice pink jacket and a blue skirt and a yellow t-shirt with a tiger on it and she's wearing a red beret, I think. She looks really cool. Another one is the coolest one.

This is my daughter's favourite one. It shows a girl with sort of beautiful ginger hair, leather jacket, a white t-shirt with a rose on it, a kind of patchwork red, orange and yellow skirt, grey stockings and black boots. She's a sort of a rock chick.

Yes, so rad. And then the third one is the one that you thought looked maybe Korean or Japanese and there she is in a little black skirt with a black dress with a skull on it, a blue denim jacket over her shoulder and sort of thigh-high stocking socks and boots and a yellow hat on her head. They all look really cool.

I like the designs. These are boots. So these are thigh-high boots that she's wearing.

Great stuff. Great stuff. Great stuff.

Great stuff. Great stuff. Thank you to the Robin who came in and became the very first bird ever to feature in an episode of this podcast.

I think that's the case. I don't think we've had a bird on the podcast before. But that's it for episode 998 of this podcast.

Listeners, please leave your comments in the comments section. And thank you me. Thank you to Olivia for her contribution in this episode, even though she did bump the table quite a lot.

But that's OK. We don't mind, do we, listeners? Yeah. OK.

Speak to you next time, everyone. OK. But until then, I will just say the usual stuff about how, you know, I hope you have a fantastic morning, afternoon, evening or night wherever you are in podcast land.

She's saying, wait, wait, wait. Go on. And bye bye.

That's not that's not how it's done. Bye bye bye. But it's normally like that, isn't it? I think it's time to stop.

So let's do you want to do it together? Thanks for listening, everyone. Speak to you next time. But for now, it's just time to say goodbye.

Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.