

Short Stories with Peter: The Open Window by Saki (Abridged B1–B2 Level)

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

95 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Welcome to Short Stories with Peter from Your English Toolbox.

I am Peter.

Today, we are going to slow down and enter a story.

It begins with an open window.

It ends with one frightened man running away.

Between those two moments, a girl tells a lie.

This is The Open Window by Saki.

Listen for the small details.

In this story, the details are the trap.

Framton Nuttel had come to the countryside to rest.

His doctor had told him to avoid stress and excitement.

One autumn afternoon, he arrived at a house called The Grange.

A maid showed him into a sitting room.

A girl of about fifteen was waiting there.

Her name was Vera.

She looked neat and polite, but her bright eyes missed nothing.

My aunt will be here in a moment.

Framton noticed the open window and the wet garden beyond it.

Do you know many people here?

Hardly anyone.

Then you know almost nothing about her.

I am afraid not.

Vera became serious.

Then you do not know why that window is open.



Why is it open?

Three years ago, my aunt's husband and two younger brothers went out through it.

They were going shooting across the fields with their little brown dog.

The ground was soft after heavy rain.

They disappeared in the marshes, and their bodies were never found.

My aunt cannot accept that they are dead.

Every evening, she leaves the window open.

She believes they will return through it.

Her husband will carry his white coat, and the dog will run beside them.

The room felt colder to Framton.

At that moment, Mrs Sappleton entered.

I hope Vera has kept you company.

My husband and brothers are out shooting, and they always come in through that window.

Framton felt his stomach tighten.

Then Mrs Sappleton looked past him.

There they are at last.

Vera whispered beside him.

They have come back.

Framton turned towards the window.

Three men were walking across the lawn in the fading light.

One carried a gun.

Another had a white coat over his arm.

A small brown dog ran at their feet.

The man in front called out for his coat.

For Framton, every detail proved that Vera's story was true.

He believed that three dead men were walking towards the house.

But Vera's ghost story was a lie.

She had invented it only minutes earlier because Framton knew nothing about the family.

Framton grabbed his hat and walking stick.

He rushed from the room and ran down the drive.



The three men entered through the open window.

Who was that?

Mr Nuttel.

He came to rest, and then he suddenly ran away.

The adults had not heard Vera's first story.

They did not understand why Framton had fled.

Vera looked towards the road.

I think he was frightened of dogs.

Perhaps he had a bad experience in India.

Vera did not hesitate when her aunt asked what had happened.

Wild dogs chased him into a cemetery.

He spent the night in an empty grave while they waited above him.

The adults believed her.

She had told one invented story to frighten Framton and another to explain his escape.

She kept a perfectly serious face.

Before we leave Vera, notice how she makes her lie believable.

She does not give Framton proof.

She gives him details.

The wet ground.

The white coat.

The little brown dog.

That is how Vera can spin a yarn.

To spin a yarn is to invent a colourful story with convincing details.

And Framton has no local knowledge, so Vera takes him in.

To take someone in means to deceive them successfully.

Vera looks playful when we first meet her.

But playful is too gentle a word for what Vera does.

She has a mischievous streak.

That means she enjoys causing clever, often minor trouble.

She can also keep a straight face.



She does not smile or laugh while telling something absurd.

That serious face is part of the trap.

Vera had invented the ghost story before Framton saw the men.

We use the past perfect for an action completed before another moment in the past.

Was Vera playful, mischievous or cruel?

You can decide.

You can find a complete transcript, translations in several languages, and a vocabulary guide on our website, yourenglishtoolbox.com.

There is a direct link to the episode page and all its resources in this episode description.

This was The Open Window by Saki, abridged for B1–B2 English learners by Your English Toolbox.

I am Peter.

Thank you for listening.

