TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 193

Short Stories with Peter: The Three Evils

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

82 lines

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

Welcome to Short Stories with Peter, from Your English Toolbox.

Today, The Three Evils, an adapted Chinese legend about responsibility and change.

This original B1–B2 adaptation is based on a story in The Chinese Fairy Book, published in English in nineteen twenty-one.

The traditional tale includes danger and a later tragic event.

This adaptation focuses on the moment when a powerful young man chooses to change his life.

Listen for the question that turns strength into responsibility.

Long ago, in a village near green hills and a deep river, lived a young man called Chou.

Chou was strong, fearless and proud of his strength.

But he used it to frighten people.

He started arguments in the market and laughed when quieter people moved out of his way.

When the villagers spoke of trouble, they lowered their voices if Chou was near.

There are three evils in our district.

One was a tiger that came down from the hills at night.

Another was a dangerous creature in the river that overturned small boats.

Chou heard the elder speaking outside the tea house.

A tiger and a river creature are only two problems.

What is the third evil?

The third evil lives among us.

The elder did not say Chou's name.

No one else did either.

Chou smiled as if the answer did not matter.

I will deal with the tiger and the river creature before sunset.

He took a spear and walked into the hills.

The wind moved through the grass, and the village grew quiet behind him.

By evening, Chou returned from the hills alone.

He had driven the tiger far from the village.

The next day, he waited beside the river until he could guide the dangerous creature away from the boats.

For three days, Chou did not return home.

The villagers thought the river had taken him too.

Perhaps the three evils have finally gone.

Chou stood behind a tree and heard every word.

At first, anger rose inside him.

Then he remembered the silent faces in the market.

He remembered the way children stopped playing when he walked past.

For the first time, he understood the third evil.

They are afraid of me.

I thought strength made me important.

I made their lives smaller.

Chou did not enter the village that night.

Instead, he travelled to a distant town to speak with a scholar known for his clear advice.

When he arrived, Chou did not boast about the tiger or the river.

I have caused harm, and I do not know how to become different.

Knowing that is a beginning, not an ending.

What will you do when no one is watching?

Chou thought for a long time.

I will listen before I speak.

I will use my strength to protect, not to frighten.

Then begin with the people who have reason not to trust you.

Chou returned to the village without a spear.

At first, nobody welcomed him.

He did not demand forgiveness.

He repaired a broken bridge and carried water for an old neighbour.

When an argument began in the market, he stepped back and let others speak.

Days passed, and then weeks.

People began to notice that Chou's actions matched his new words.

One afternoon, the village elder met him beside the repaired bridge.

The tiger is gone from the hills.

The river is safer for the boats.

And the third evil chose to become a help.

Chou looked at the people crossing the bridge.

This time, he did not smile because they were afraid.

He smiled because they could walk past him without fear.

End of the story.

Now, let’s dive into the language and break down some of the key vocabulary from the story.

First, to deal with something means to take action to solve or manage a problem.

Chou said he would deal with the danger near the village.

At work, you might say, I will deal with that email this afternoon.

Second, to cause harm means to hurt someone or create damage.

Chou finally admitted that his behaviour had caused harm.

You can cause harm with actions, words or careless decisions.

Third, to have reason not to trust someone means that trust needs to be rebuilt.

The villagers had reason not to trust Chou after his earlier behaviour.

Trust changes slowly when actions are consistent.

Finally, to match your words means to do what you say you will do.

Chou's actions matched his promise to change.

Now, try a sentence of your own.

What is one small action that can rebuild trust?

When have you seen someone's actions match their words?

Real change is not one impressive moment.

It is a pattern that other people can see over time.

You can find the full transcript, vocabulary and practice at Your English Toolbox.

Thank you for listening, and I will see you in the next story.