TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 214

Short Stories with Peter: The Ox and the Hundred Carts

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

86 lines

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

It was a busy morning in the village square.

One ox faced a hundred carts.

A whole village watched.

The farmer shouted.

The ox did not move.

Why did the ox freeze?

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

Today’s story is called The Ox and the Hundred Carts.

Settle in, and let us begin.

Many years ago, a farmer lived near a busy village.

He owned a strong ox who helped him carry heavy loads.

After each day's work, the farmer fed him and brushed the dust from his back.

When the farmer called, the ox knew his voice.

One morning, the farmer watched the ox pull a loaded cart up a hill.

He felt proud, and he wanted the whole village to see what the animal could do.

You are stronger than any ox I have seen.

At the market, several men were preparing a long row of empty carts.

The farmer pointed towards them.

My ox could pull all one hundred carts.

The men looked at the carts, then at the farmer.

One hundred carts?

He made a bet, and the villagers joined the carts together.

A crowd gathered around the square.

The ox stood at the front of the line.

He had pulled heavy loads before, but never with so many people watching.

The farmer could hear the crowd whispering.

Suddenly, his pride changed into worry.

He pulled sharply at the rope and shouted at his old companion.

Move, you useless animal.

In his anger, the farmer struck the ox and called him names.

The ox had never heard that voice from him before.

He stood still.

The farmer called again, but the carts did not move.

The villagers watched in silence.

At last, the farmer admitted that he had lost the bet.

He paid what he had promised and walked home beside the ox.

That evening, the farmer sat outside the stable.

You have pulled heavier loads for me before.

What happened today?

In this old tale, the ox could answer him.

You used to speak to me kindly.

Today, you called me useless and struck me.

I was frightened, and I could not work with you that way.

The farmer looked down at the rope in his hands.

The crowd had seen his pride, but the ox had felt his anger.

I was wrong to treat you like that.

I am sorry I struck you and called you names.

I will not do it again.

The ox listened, and the farmer gave him food and water.

An apology could not change what had happened.

Let us try again tomorrow.

The next morning, the farmer returned to the village with the ox.

He had fed him well and placed a simple garland of flowers around his neck.

The same hundred carts stood in the square.

Are you going to try once more?

The farmer nodded, but he did not turn to the crowd.

This time, he faced the ox.

He checked the harness and loosened his grip on the rope.

Good friend, take your time.

We can try together, if you are ready.

The farmer waited.

The ox stepped forward and put his weight against the harness.

The first cart moved, then the next, then the whole long line.

The wheels rolled slowly across the square.

The villagers stepped aside and watched the final cart pass the place where the first one had stood.

The farmer had proved his claim, but that was not what stayed with him.

On the walk home, he kept his hand light on the rope and spoke gently to the ox.

End of the story.

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

First, to make a bet means to agree that someone will gain or lose something depending on what happens.

The farmer made a bet about the hundred carts.

Next, to boast means to speak too proudly about what you or someone close to you can do.

He boasted about the ox in front of the villagers.

A companion is someone who spends time or works with you.

The ox had been the farmer’s companion through many seasons.

To admit you were wrong means to say honestly that you made a mistake.

The farmer admitted he had lost the bet and treated the ox badly.

Finally, take your time is a kind way to say that someone does not need to hurry.

The farmer used those words when he spoke to the ox the second morning.

Now, why did the ox stop at the first attempt?

The farmer frightened and hurt him by shouting, striking him and calling him names.

And what changed before the second attempt?

He apologised, loosened his hold on the rope and waited until the ox was ready.

On the episode page, you can read the story, explore its vocabulary and slow down the audio whenever you need to.

The direct link is in the description.

Thank you for listening, and I will see you next time.