TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 225

Short Stories with Peter: The Bear and the Two Friends

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

68 lines

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

Two friends promised to stay together as they crossed a quiet wood.

Then a bear stepped onto the path.

Only one friend could reach the lowest branch of a tree.

Would they still trust each other when the bear was gone?

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

Today I am telling a new adaptation of The Travellers and the Bear, a fable traditionally attributed to Aesop.

Listen for what Ben does, and for what Eli says afterwards.

Ben and Eli had walked together since early morning.

Their path led through a wood towards the next town.

We should reach the town before the light fades.

We will stay together if anything goes wrong, right?

Right.

Ben noticed a tree growing beside the path.

Eli was looking ahead when the bushes moved.

A large bear came out and stopped in front of them.

Eli, there is a bear.

For one moment, neither friend moved.

Then Ben dropped his bag and ran to the tree.

Ben, wait for me.

Ben was taller, and he caught the lowest branch.

He pulled himself up.

Eli ran to the tree, but the lowest branch was beyond his reach.

Behind Eli, the bear was coming closer.

Ben, give me your hand.

Ben looked down, but he did not reach for Eli.

In his panic, Eli lay flat on the ground.

He held his breath and tried to keep still.

The bear sniffed Eli’s coat.

Then it lowered its head beside his ear.

Above them, Ben held tightly to the branch.

At last the bear turned away.

It walked back through the bushes and disappeared.

For several seconds, Eli remained on the ground.

Then he sat up and took a long breath.

Ben climbed down from the tree and picked up his bag.

His hands were still shaking.

Are you all right?

I am here.

It looked as if the bear whispered something in your ear.

What did it tell you?

Eli looked at his friend before answering.

It told me to be careful about the friends I rely on when danger comes.

Of course, the bear had said nothing.

Ben opened his mouth, but Eli had already turned towards the town.

Ben followed a few steps behind.

End of the story.

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

First, to rely on someone means to trust that person to help or support you.

Eli had hoped to rely on Ben when the bear appeared.

You can also rely on a colleague to finish an important task.

Next, beyond his reach means too far away for him to touch or get to.

The lowest branch was beyond Eli’s reach.

A shelf may be beyond your reach if it is too high.

Then, to hold your breath means to stop breathing for a short time.

Eli held his breath while the bear was near him.

You might hold your breath when you swim under water.

Finally, to face something alone means to deal with it without another person’s help.

Eli faced the frightening moment alone.

You might face a hard decision alone.

Now answer two questions about the story.

What did Ben do when the bear appeared?

He climbed a tree and left Eli below.

What did Eli mean by the bear’s advice?

Eli meant that he could no longer rely on Ben, because Ben left him alone with the bear.

Would you still trust Ben?

Read the story and explore more useful expressions on the episode page.

The link is in the description.

Thank you for listening, and see you next time.