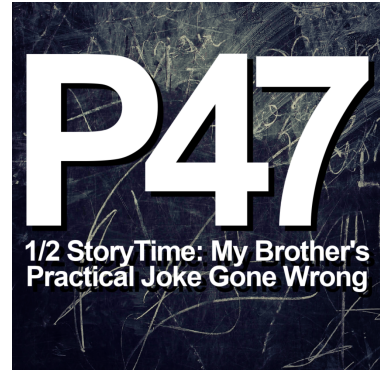


P47 [1/2] StoryTime: My Brother's Practical Joke Gone Wrong (A cautionary tale)

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Hello listeners and welcome back to LEP Premium. **This is P47 part 1** and it is yet another storytime episode. I hope you have been enjoying these episodes. If so then I am glad to say that I have plenty more to come in this long series.



It seems that I'm telling you all the stories I can find from my childhood that are vaguely exciting or interesting and as a result a lot of the stories feature moments when I have been naughty or done something wrong, something I shouldn't have. But I was generally a well-behaved lad I promise!

Anyway, continuing the theme of childhood mishaps and trouble, this time I'm going to tell you a story about something that happened to my brother.

The PDF for this should be easily found. Just check the show notes and you'll find a version for your phone, a version for your computer and a link to the video version as well.

So this is going to follow the usual pattern. First I'll tell you the story as it is written. Then I'll re-cap the story in spontaneous speech. Then I'll go through some vocabulary from the story and then there will be the memory tests and exercises. One for vocabulary, one for verb forms and one for prepositions. In part 2 we'll focus on pronunciation.

Alright, without any further ado, let's start the story.

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My brother's practical joke

If you thought my ninja mission against Mr Wharton was daring and dangerous, wait until you hear what my brother did.

My brother went to the same school as me. In fact, we had the same teachers. My English teacher Mr Hodgkins was his form tutor. His science teacher was my form tutor and so on.

One weekend, our uncle Nic came to stay. My brother and I always looked up to our Uncle Nic because he was always into guitars, motorbikes, rock music, travelling and things like that and so we were always impressed by his exploits. Plus, he's extremely tall.

One Sunday afternoon I think it probably was, we were sitting around the lunch table, and telling stories. Nic decided to tell us about a cool thing you can do with those felt board rubbers for cleaning chalk off blackboards.

All the classrooms in our schools had these blackboards and the teachers would write on them with chalk, and then rub off the chalk with a board rubber. The rubber had a wooden handle and then strips of thick felt sticking out of it, which would wipe the chalk away.

According to our Uncle Nic, as a practical joke, you could break the heads off some matches, stick them between the strips of felt in the board rubber, and wait for someone to rub the board. The friction against the blackboard ignites the matches and the board rubber catches fire. Wow, neat trick Nic, thanks. Thanks a lot.

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Of course my brother had to try it and that week he loaded up the board rubber in Mr Hodgkins's classroom, but he didn't get to see the results because the class ended before the rubber was used. What he expected was a quick flash, maybe a puff of smoke , "that's a surprise" and out.

But when he returned to class after lunch, there was a sort of scorch mark on the board and no board rubber to be seen. The kids leaving the class all seemed to be in a state of shocked excitement and were talking to each other about how the blackboard had "caught fire". James suddenly realised how serious this could have been.

Apparently Mr Hodgkins had wiped the board at the end of the last class, and the board rubber had gone up in a ball of flame in his hand. Smoke, flames and the smell of burning sulphur had filled the air. It must have been a shocking scene for everyone in the room, not least Mr Hodgkins.

Oops.

Then Hodgkins entered the room and he was not happy. Clearly fuming, he started angrily telling off the whole class, and then centred his anger and attention on the usual suspect #1 in the class, who was not even my brother. Mr Hodgkins and this other child didn't have a great relationship. On the other hand, James and the teacher actually got on quite well. The other boy was getting a full grilling from Mr Hodgkins when James decided he had to come clean.

"It was me"

"What?"

"It was me"

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Apparently this took the wind out of Mr Hodgkins's sails, because he had been absolutely convinced that this other boy was the culprit. He then calmed down. Perhaps he was surprised that my brother could be capable of doing a nasty trick like that, or maybe he suddenly felt bad about telling off this other boy.

In James' defence, I don't think he really thought carefully about what he was doing and perhaps just thought it would be funny to try out this newly found idea from his rock&roll uncle. But as soon as the idea became a reality, James realised how serious it could have actually been.

Mr Hodgkins didn't punish James. I think he was just taken aback by the fact that he'd jumped to conclusions and accused the wrong person.

...

I asked James for a comment about this story, and he said "Don't try this under any circumstances! Never play with matches! Thinking back to this now, I'm amazed I didn't get punished more severely. I think the teacher just let me get away with it because he felt bad about accusing the other boy and looking a bit stupid when everyone saw that he'd got it wrong."

A cautionary tale.

Some comments from Luke

Yes, this is yet another tale in which I talk about something shocking from my childhood. I hope you're not surprised at the apparently delinquent behaviour of my brother, my friends and me, during our childhood. We had a relatively

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normal school life. I'm just picking out the specifically interesting moments to make these stories more engaging.

Luke re-caps the story (no script for this bit)

Now I'm going to re-cap the story and describe what happened again, without reading from a script, just to make sure you got the main details and to hear the same story told spontaneously.

Luke speaks off-script for a while

Vocabulary

Let me now clarify some of the vocabulary from the story.

- If you thought my ninja mission against Mr Wharton was **daring** and dangerous
daring
- My brother and I always **looked up to** our Uncle Nic
to look up to someone
- we were always impressed by his **exploits**
exploits

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- a cool thing you can do with those **felt board rubbers** for cleaning chalk off **blackboards**

felt

board rubbers

blackboards



- **strips of thick felt** sticking out of it, which would wipe the **chalk** away

strips of felt

chalk

- **as a practical joke**, you could break **the heads** off some matches, stick them between the strips of felt in the board rubber

as a practical joke

the heads of matches (break the heads of matches off)

- The **friction** against the blackboard **ignites** the matches and the board rubber **catches fire**

friction

to ignite something

to set fire to something

to catch fire

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- What he expected was a quick flash, maybe **a puff of smoke** , “that’s a surprise” and out.

a puff of smoke

- there was a sort of **scorch mark** on the board

a scorch mark

- the board rubber had **gone up in a ball of flame**

to go up

a ball of flame

- Clearly **fuming**, he started angrily telling off the whole class

to fume (fuming)

- The other boy was **getting a full grilling** from Mr Hodgkins when James decided he had to **come clean**.

to get a grilling from someone

to be grilled by someone

to come clean

to own up to something

- This **took the wind out of Mr Hodgkins’ sails**

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to take the wind out of someone's sails

- he had been absolutely convinced that this other boy was **the culprit**

the culprit

- Mr Hodgkins didn't punish James. I think he was just **taken aback** by the fact that he'd **jumped to conclusions** and accused the wrong person.

to be taken aback

to jump to conclusions

- I asked James for a comment about this story, and he said "Don't try this **under any circumstances!**"

under any circumstances

- **a cautionary tale**

A cautionary tale

Language Practice Exercises

Here you will see 3 versions of the story.

- **Version 1** has all* the **vocabulary** removed (*all the things I just talked about). Can you remember it all?
- **Version 2** has some **verbs** removed. Can you put them back, in the correct forms?
- **Version 3** has the **prepositions** removed. Can you put them back?

Pronunciation (in part 2)

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In part 2 of this episode I'll give you a chance to repeat the story after me, line by line.

Language Practice 1: Vocabulary

Can you complete the story with the missing vocabulary items?

These are the words and phrases I explained earlier in this episode.

My brother's practical joke

If you thought my ninja mission against Mr Wharton was d_____ and dangerous, wait until you hear what my brother did.

My brother went to the same school as me. In fact, we had the same teachers. My English teacher Mr Hodgkins was his form tutor. His science teacher was my form tutor and so on.

One weekend, our uncle Nic came to stay. My brother and I always l_____ u___ t___ our Uncle Nic because he was always into guitars, motorbikes, rock music, travelling and things like that and so we were always impressed by his e_____. Plus, he's extremely tall.

One Sunday afternoon I think it probably was, we were sitting around the lunch table, and telling stories. Nic decided to tell us about a cool thing you can do with those felt board rubbers for cleaning chalk off blackboards.

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All the classrooms in our schools had these blackboards and the teachers would write on them with c_____, and then rub off the c_____ with a b_____ r_____. The rubber had a wooden handle and then strips of thick f_____ sticking out of it, which would wipe the c_____ away.

According to our Uncle Nic, as a p_____ joke, you could break the h_____ off some matches, stick them between the strips of felt in the board rubber, and wait for someone to rub the board. The f_____ against the blackboard i_____ the matches and the board rubber c_____ fire. Wow, neat trick Nic, thanks. Thanks a lot.

Of course my brother had to try it and that week he loaded up the board rubber in Mr Hodgkins's classroom, but he didn't get to see the results because the class ended before the rubber was used. What he expected was a quick flash, maybe a p_____ of smoke, "that's a surprise" and out.

But when he returned to class after lunch, there was a sort of s_____ mark on the board and no board rubber to be seen. The kids leaving the class all seemed to be in a state of shocked excitement and were talking to each other about how the blackboard had "caught fire". James suddenly realised how serious this could have been.

Apparently Mr Hodgkins had wiped the board at the end of the last class, and the board rubber had g_____ up in a b_____ of flame in his hand. Smoke, flames and the smell of burning sulphur had filled the air. It must have been a shocking scene for everyone in the room, not least Mr Hodgkins.

Oops.

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Then Hodgkins entered the room and he was not happy. Clearly f_____, he started angrily telling off the whole class, and then centred his anger and attention on the usual suspect #1 in the class, who was not even my brother. Mr Hodgkins and this other child didn't have a great relationship. On the other hand, James and the teacher actually got on quite well. The other boy was g_____ a full g_____ from Mr Hodgkins when James decided he had to c_____ c_____.

"It was me"

"What?"

"It was me"

Apparently this t_____ the w_____ out of Mr Hodgkins's s_____, because he had been absolutely convinced that this other boy was the c_____. He then calmed down. Perhaps he was surprised that my brother could be capable of doing a nasty trick like that, or maybe he suddenly felt bad about telling off this other boy.

In James' defence, I don't think he really thought carefully about what he was doing and perhaps just thought it would be funny to try out this newly found idea from his rock&roll uncle. But as soon as the idea became a reality, James realised how serious it could have actually been.

Mr Hodgkins didn't punish James. I think he was just t_____ a_____ by the fact that he'd j_____ to c_____ and accused the wrong person.

...

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I asked James for a comment about this story, and he said “Don't try this u_____ any c_____.! Never play with matches! Thinking back to this now, I'm amazed I didn't get punished more severely. I think the teacher just let me get away with it because he felt bad about accusing the other boy and looking a bit stupid when everyone saw that he'd got it wrong.”

A c_____ t_____.

Language Practice 2 - Verb Forms

Put the verbs back into the story in the correct form. When you've finished, check the original version to see the correct answers.

Possible verb forms

You will see that the text has gaps in it. This is where you complete the verb in (brackets) with the correct form. Some verbs have one gap, some have two gaps and some have three.

- One gap _____
 - (past simple *went*)
 - (gerund *-ing*)
 - Present simple (go)
- Two gaps _____
 - (negative past simple *didn't go*)
 - (past continuous *was/were + -ing*)
 - (infinitive *to go*)
 - (past perfect *had gone*)
- Three gaps _____
 - (modal verb for past deduction *would/could/might/may/must + have + past participle*)

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So those are the possibilities. Think carefully and use the context of the story to help you!

My brother's practical joke

If you _____(think) my ninja mission against Mr Wharton was daring and dangerous, wait until you hear what my brother did.

My brother went to the same school as me. In fact, we had the same teachers. My English teacher Mr Hodgkins was his form tutor. His science teacher was my form tutor and so on.

One weekend, our uncle Nic came _____ (stay). My brother and I always looked up to our Uncle Nic because he was always into guitars, motorbikes, rock music, travelling and things like that and so we were always impressed by his exploits. Plus, he's extremely tall.

One Sunday afternoon I think it probably was, we _____
_____ (sit) around the lunch table, and _____
(tell) stories. Nic decided _____ (tell) us about a cool
thing you can do with those felt board rubbers for _____
(clean) chalk off blackboards.

All the classrooms in our schools had these blackboards and the teachers would write on them with chalk, and then rub off the chalk with a board rubber. The rubber had a wooden handle and then strips of thick felt _____ (stick) out of it, which would wipe the chalk away.

According to our Uncle Nic, as a practical joke, you could break the heads off some matches, stick them between the strips of felt in the board rubber, and wait for someone to rub the board. The friction

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against the blackboard _____ (ignite) the matches and the board rubber _____ (catch) fire. Wow, neat trick Nic, thanks. Thanks a lot.

Of course my brother had to try it and that week he _____ (load) up the board rubber in Mr Hodgkins's classroom, but he _____ (not get) to see the results because the class ended before the rubber was used. What he expected was a quick flash, maybe a puff of smoke , "that's a surprise" and out.

But when he returned to class after lunch, there was a sort of scorch mark on the board and no board rubber to be seen. The kids _____ (leave) the class all _____ (seem) to be in a state of shocked excitement and _____ (talk) to each other about how the blackboard _____ (catch) fire. James suddenly realised how serious this _____ (be).

Apparently Mr Hodgkins _____ (wipe) the board at the end of the last class, and the board rubber _____ (go) up in a ball of flame in his hand. Smoke, flames and the smell of burning sulphur _____ (fill) the air. It _____ (be) a shocking scene for everyone in the room, not least Mr Hodgkins.

Oops.

Then Hodgkins _____ (enter) the room and he was not happy. Clearly _____ (fume), he started angrily _____ (tell) off the whole class, and then centred his anger and attention on the usual suspect #1 in the class, who was not even my brother. Mr Hodgkins and this other child _____ (not have) a great relationship. On the other hand, James and the teacher

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actually got on quite well. The other boy _____ (get) a full grilling from Mr Hodgkins when James decided he had to come clean.

“It was me”

“What?”

“It was me”

Apparently this took the wind out of Mr Hodgkins's sails, because he _____ (be) absolutely convinced that this other boy was the culprit. He then calmed down. Perhaps he was surprised that my brother could be capable of _____ (do) a nasty trick like that, or maybe he suddenly felt bad about _____ (tell) off this other boy.

In James' defence, I don't think he really thought carefully about what he was doing and perhaps just thought it would be funny to try out this newly found idea from his rock&roll uncle. But as soon as the idea became a reality, James realised how serious it could have actually been.

Mr Hodgkins _____ (punish) James. I think he was just taken aback by the fact that he'd jumped to conclusions and accused the wrong person.

...

I asked James for a comment about this story, and he said “Don't try this under any circumstances! Never play with matches! Thinking back to this now, I'm amazed I didn't get punished more severely. I think the teacher just let me get away with it because he felt bad about accusing the other boy and looking a bit stupid when everyone saw that he'd got it wrong.”

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A cautionary tale.

Language Practice 3 - Prepositions

As usual, I have removed prepositions from the story. Let's see if you can put them back in!

My brother's practical joke

If you thought my ninja mission _____ Mr Wharton was daring and dangerous, wait until you hear what my brother did.

My brother went to the same school as me. In fact, we had the same teachers. My English teacher Mr Hodgkins was his form tutor. His science teacher was my form tutor and so on.

One weekend, our uncle Nic came to stay. My brother and I always looked up ___ our Uncle Nic because he was always ___ guitars, motorbikes, rock music, travelling and things like that and so we were always impressed by his exploits. Plus, he's extremely tall.

One Sunday afternoon I think it probably was, we were sitting _____ the lunch table, and telling stories. Nic decided to tell us about a cool thing you can do with those felt board rubbers ___ cleaning chalk ___ blackboards.

All the classrooms in our schools had these blackboards and the teachers would write on them ___ chalk, and then rub ___ the chalk ___ a board rubber. The rubber had a wooden handle and

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then strips ____ thick felt sticking out ____ it, which would wipe the chalk away.

According ____ our Uncle Nic, as a practical joke, you could break the heads off some matches, stick them between the strips ____ felt ____ the board rubber, and wait ____ someone to rub the board. The friction _____ the blackboard ignites the matches and the board rubber catches fire. Wow, neat trick Nic, thanks. Thanks a lot.

Of course my brother had to try it and that week he loaded up the board rubber ____ Mr Hodgkins's classroom, but he didn't get to see the results because the class ended before the rubber was used. What he expected was a quick flash, maybe a puff ____ smoke , "that's a surprise" and out.

But when he returned to class after lunch, there was a sort of scorch mark on the board and no board rubber to be seen. The kids leaving the class all seemed to be in a state of shocked excitement and were talking to each other _____ how the blackboard had "caught fire". James suddenly realised how serious this could have been.

Apparently Mr Hodgkins had wiped the board ____ the end ____ the last class, and the board rubber had gone up ____ a ball ____ flame ____ his hand. Smoke, flames and the smell of burning sulphur had filled the air. It must have been a shocking scene ____ everyone ____ the room, not least Mr Hodgkins.

Oops.

Then Hodgkins entered the room and he was not happy. Clearly fuming, he started angrily telling off the whole class, and then centred his anger and attention ____ the usual suspect #1 ____ the class, who was not even my brother. Mr Hodgkins and this other

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child didn't have a great relationship. ____ the other hand, James and the teacher actually got on quite well. The other boy was getting a full grilling ____ Mr Hodgkins when James decided he had to come clean.

"It was me"

"What?"

"It was me"

Apparently this took the wind out ____ Mr Hodgkins's sails, because he had been absolutely convinced that this other boy was the culprit. He then calmed down. Perhaps he was surprised that my brother could be capable ____ doing a nasty trick like that, or maybe he suddenly felt bad _____ telling off this other boy.

In James' defence, I don't think he really thought carefully _____ what he was doing and perhaps just thought it would be funny to try out this newly found idea ____ his rock&roll uncle. But as soon as the idea became a reality, James realised how serious it could have actually been.

Mr Hodgkins didn't punish James. I think he was just taken aback by the fact that he'd jumped ____ conclusions and accused the wrong person.

...

I asked James ____ a comment _____ this story, and he said "Don't try this under any circumstances! Never play ____ matches! Thinking back ____ this now, I'm amazed I didn't get punished more severely. I think the teacher just let me get away ____ it because he felt bad _____ accusing the other boy and looking a bit stupid when everyone saw that he'd got it wrong."

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A cautionary tale.

Remember my storytelling technique which I outlined in P35 part 1.

Input

1. Listen to the story and enjoy it
2. Check unknown words (I will help you to do this)

Controlled practice

3. Do the language exercises on the PDF (for vocabulary, verb forms, & prepositions)
4. Listen & repeat after me to work on pronunciation (with and without the script)

Output

5. Retell my story (in your own words)
6. Try to tell another, similar story if you have one.

Go back to P35 part 1 to get more specific information and tips about this method.

End of part 1

Coming next in Part 2 - "Listen & Repeat" Pronunciation Practice

In part 2 I will let you repeat the story after me, line by line.