

THE EASTGATE BEAST

This is a story about two cousins, Lily and Blane. Their family owned a caravan in a place just past Stanhope in County Durham. They went there during most of their holiday time. Lily was a schoolteacher, who loved the school holidays! She couldn't wait for a few days peace. However, Blane was a young boy who was still at school, so she never really got any peace. But when he went to the van, he loved to muck around in the river, play in the quarries and in the old, abandoned, spooky houses on the fell tops above the van.

Lily had taken Blane to the caravan for their recent half term holidays. They were very excited because it was Halloween. It was one of their favourite holidays! That night at the local pub called the 'Cross Keys' there was an All Hallows Eve Festival, with music, dancing, food and a storyteller. Lily was all excited because she loved listening to stories, especially spooky ones. Blane, on the other hand, was just wishing this festival was going to be better than the usual boring sheep shows that happen in Stanhope. He would rather play on the Wii back at the van.

When they got there the Cross keys was heaving. Everyone was buzzing and wearing their Halloween costumes. Blane was dressed as Count Dracula. Suddenly the lights flickered, the air-conditioning turned super cold. A strange, hooded figure entered the room, the whole place were glued to their spots where they stood. The eerie shadow suddenly jumped up onto the pool table, cast off his hood and revealed himself as Adam the storyteller. Adam told the packed room many creepy tales, such as Babayaya, Jack O Lantern, The Hill Demon, Mr Dead and The Farm Demon. The whole room children and adults were hypnotised by the story teller. Adam finally told his last story, he whispered "This is a local story. It has been a myth around Weardale for many years. It is called the Eastgate Beast". Blane had heard the name of this before, he had heard rumours that it was told by parents to scare children not to go up in the fells and moors at night. Even Lily sometimes threatened him with it if he was being a pain. At the end of the story the lights began to flicker and the room grew cold once again. Suddenly, there was a loud bang and a puff of smoke from the pockets of the pool table. When the smoke cleared and the audience's temporary blindness faded away, Adam vanished.

"That was a fab story!" Blane commented to Lily when they were on their way back to the van.

"It was. Which was your favourite?"

"Jack or The Hill Demon one. They were both MINT!" replied Blane. "Lily can we walk by the spooky houses on our way back to the van?"

"Well, we'll have to be quick, it's starting to get dark. Plus I thought you wanted to get back in time for the X Factor to see Jedward, you weirdo." Sniggered Lily.

"What you on about man, their mint! But we'll be quick. I promise." Laughed Blane.

They had been walking along the fell top, for a few minutes towards the spooky houses, they could see the caravan site below down the hillside, across the road. One of the houses used to be an old mill house but the walls had crumbled over time. The other was an old house that people used to live in during the 1800s. Inside was bare, no furniture, just the old fire places that you see in Beamish and a set of rotten, wooden stairs. Lily and Blane had been here many times on walks before but something felt different tonight. Lily had a strange feeling in the pit of her stomach, she was relieved because at the same time Blane was feeling unsure too.

"L- L- L- Lily I-I think w-we should maybe go back now." He stuttered.

"Yeah, I think we should too." Said Lily in a hushed voice.

As they turned to head out of the door of the spooky house, Blane suddenly tripped over something metal and fell down next to a dead sheep. He dusted off the dirt from his clothes and picked up the strange metal object. It was made of iron because it was heavy and it was the size of a shoe box. It had some writing on it, it was hard to read from all the rust, but he made out that it was dated 1823.

“Wow, look at this relic, Lily, can I keep it?” Gaspd Blane. “Please?”

“Well I suppose it’s not really stealing if no body lives here any more. Ok! Just be quick, I want to get to the van. But you can carry it.” Lily answered.

“ok”

“And you can clean the car out tomorrow too.” She added.

“You’re having a laugh” sighed Blane.

“Slave driver” He muttered under his breath.

As they set off down the fell, the weather turned eerily mysterious. Darkness suddenly fell. A strange mist was rolling down the moor. In the distance there was a faint howling noise. The hairs on the back of Blane and Lily’s neck were standing up. They looked at each other and thought the same thing. They started bulleting down the fell as fast as they could. Blane was still clutching his relic for dear life. He had a feeling it was important. The night was so dark they could not see a hand in front of them.

“These are the times I wish I brought I torch with me.” Grumbled Lily.

Suddenly both of them fell down a ditch in the darkness at the bottom of one of the fields. As they lay there everything was silent. The wind had stopped... Then the moonlight shone through the clouds upon the moor. On top of the moor behind the spooky houses was the black, gigantic outline of a huge animal. It had a strong body like a lion or horse, the moonlight glinted off its muscular, jet black back. Hot foul air was blowing out of its nostrils as it was breathing. The thing that stood out most about the animal was its searching yellow eyes. It sniffed and looked down the moor looking for its prey. It locked eyes with Blane and Lily the hunt began.

“RUN” Screamed Lily.

The beast came barrelling down the moor, bringing the mist with it. It looked as if it was bringing hell with it. They ran as fast as they could, hearts pumping out of their chests. They dare not stop because the beast was hot on their heels. They ran through brushes, over the low dry stoned walls and even the barbed wire. They managed to reach the roadside, but strangely there was no traffic around? They leapt over the fence across the other side of the road, but still the beast was gaining. After they jumped the fence they shot across the open farm field with all the cows, which was right in front of the caravan. Even the cows were terrified and hid unmoving in the shadows.

Eventually, and exhausted they ran across the old, unused railway tracks and into the caravan, locking the doors. They started to barricade themselves in with the covers off the seats and some of the furniture. Surprisingly Blane sat down at the table and started to do his homework.

Lily shouted, “HOMEWORK, AT A TIME LIKE THIS!!! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?”

Blane shouted back, “It’s a catch 22 Lily! It’s either be killed by my teacher for not doing my homework, or by that thing on steroids out there. It’s like a crazy dog.”

Just as Blane finished his sentence, the power in the caravan went out.

“I don’t think that’s the fuse box this time.” Cried Lily.

Inside the van everything was silent, it felt like he calm before the storm.

Lily pulled back one of the curtains, she let out a silent gasp of terror. Lily was practically nose-to-nose with the beast through the thin window glass. Its yellow eyes where probing into the van windows.

The beast started to prowl around the caravan, scraping at the ground with its razor sharp claws. It was that strong that it was making the van rock. Inside the van Blane and Lily were shaking with fear, they could hear a shrill noise. It sounded like metal on metal. The beast was scratching away at the van. It was trying to breakthrough. Suddenly the van was flipped onto its side, inside Blane and Lily where thrown into the corner. They tumbled into the table and Blane knocked over a drink from earlier in the day. The drink fell on top of the relic Blane had taken from the spooky houses. Then all at once everything started to go into slow motion. The relic began to glow and hum. The humming noise got louder and louder and louder, Blane and Lily had to cover their ears.

But the noise kept growing and pulsing. Even the beast outside of the caravan seemed to be rolling around the ground and howling in pain. The noise was unbearable and so deafening that every living thing around the van passed out.

Sometime the next morning, Blane and Lily awoke, the sun was shining and the birds were tweeting. They thought the whole episode with the strange beast was just a nightmare, but they were disappointed... As they looked around, the van looked like a war zone, they realized that the relic Blane had found had somehow saved them, they were lucky to be alive. When they looked closely at the Relic they noticed that all the rust had fallen off the object and they could see the picture on the front. It was a picture of a dog, a large wild dog and an inscription underneath it. Blane and Lily looked at each other in amazement.

When the holidays were over and Blane was back at school. He handed his homework into the teacher. He was supposed to write a fictional ghost story over Halloween, but he wrote his true Halloween story. His teacher was so impressed and asked him to read it out to the whole assembly. He ended his story by reading the inscription on the bottom of his relic.

Things that should not have been forgotten have been forgotten.

The legend is true.

The story is not a myth,

The Eastgate Beast exists,

And it will come for you!

When the news of this story spread around Stanhope and reached Adam the storyteller he said to himself, "I will never tell that myth again"

By Blane