



The Monster – Paul Blake

“Quick, get him in the van,” Dimitry said as he pushed the man towards Leonid.

Leonid awkwardly caught the man as he stumbled. His hands were bound with cable ties and he had a burlap sack over his head. He was naked apart from a pair of baggy white y-fronts. Leonid wished he was wearing gloves as he supported the man’s obese, pale, and hairless chest. He could feel his fingers sliding over the sweat. Leonid shoved him into the white transit van and got in himself. He slid the door closed behind him. Dimitry was already in the driver’s seat, Sergey in the passenger’s seat.

“He’s in. Go, go, go!” Leonid called out as he tied the man’s ankles together with another cable tie.

The van lurched forward, Leonid put his arm down to steady himself and felt his hand touch something wet. He looked down and saw that he’d put his hand down in the puddle coming from underneath the man. He roughly wiped his hand on the burlap sack, smacking the man as he did.

“How we doing for time?” Sergey asked.

“We’re about twenty minutes over. Having to use kid gloves on the woman and baby slowed us down,” said Dimitry.

“Those were our orders. He’d never co-operate if they were harmed.”

“I know. I just hate being late.”

Leonid settled down on a bench in the back of the van and watched the man and the road ahead through the windshield. The sky turned from black to pink as the August morning sun began its rise as the van sped down the single lane Scottish countryside road. The man was jostled and bumped each time the wheels hit a hole in the gravel track. There was an occasional muffled grunt from the man. Leonid took a blanket from beside him and threw it over the man.

It was the morning rush hour by the time the van crossed the Kessock Bridge. Traffic was slow and frustrating. The men tensed each time a police car sped past in the opposite lane. Their hands rested on their weapons. But each car ignored them and the men slightly relaxed once they'd passed.

"Can't wait until we get to the marina," Sergey said. "We're losing time if we're going to reach the rendezvous as planned."

The van turned off the A9 and the traffic cleared a little, Dimitry sped up to make up for the lost time. They passed the football stadium as they circled round to the marina. They crossed back under the Kessock Bridge and entered an industrial area. There were a few cars and lorries, and fewer pedestrians. They turned off onto a patch of wasteland which led to the marina. They could see the masts from all the boats in their berths. The car park was right beside the boats. A solitary caravan the only occupant. Sergey nodded to the old man who opened the caravan door as they approached.

"Alright, chief?" Sergey asked in his best Scottish accent. "Looks like it'll be a grand day for sailing."

"Aye, watch out for all the weens in their day boats. Accident waiting tae happen they are."

"We'll be careful. The sun always brings out the eejits."

"I'll let ye get on before the tides change. Good sailing."

"Ta."

The men had been going to the marina every other day or so for the past two weeks. Getting ready their boat and practising the swap from the van to vessel. The old man had a boat at the marina and just lived in the car park when he wasn't sailing. Sergey had quickly built up a rapport with the man as a way to keep tabs on their boat. The old man would tell him if anyone had been sniffing around.

They parked the van in its usual spot. At the closest entrance to the berths. They'd reversed it in to give a little privacy, just in case. When the van stopped the man on the floor, who had been very still and quiet during the drive, started violently rocking, shaking the van. Leonid placed the tip of his gun to the man's heart. The cold metal stopped the man's movement instantly.

“That’s right, fucker. Any more of that and you’ll be saying hi to Thatcher in whichever place she ended up,” Leonid said.

Now the van had stopped Leonid could secure the man properly for the transfer. He took a pair of joined cable ties and tied the man’s ankles together. Tight. He rolled the man over and grimaced at the smell of stale piss. He placed a woollen blanket on the floor, the length of the man. He rolled the man back on the blanket and wrapped it around him. More cable ties kept the blanket in place. The man looked like an Egyptian mummy, albeit a pregnant one.

The back doors of the van opened, “You ready to go?” Sergey asked.

“Yep, all set.”

“Dimitry,” Sergey called. “It’s time.”

Leonid stepped out the back of the van and turned back and removed a long cardboard box and plastic beer cooler and placed them on the ground. He pulled the man by the ankles and Sergey caught the man’s shoulders and head before they left the van and hit the ground. They heaved the man and carried him like a carpet on their shoulders, Sergey at the front. Dimitry opened the gate to the berth and guided them to the boat.

The boat was a thirty-foot cruiser, older than any of the Russians. It was a combination engine and sail boat. Nothing fancy. Nothing likely to stick in people’s memories. Dimitry stepped aboard on to the weatherproofed deck. Opened the door to the cabin, then took the end of the man from Sergey. Sergey then jumped on board and took Leonid’s end. They took the man down into the cabin and dumped him on one of the two sofas that lined either side. They returned to the deck and closed the cabin door behind them.

While they were inside Leonid had returned to the van, locked up and collected the cooler and the box. The whole operation had taken less than four minutes. Dimitry stepped off the boat and started releasing the mooring lines. Sergey raised the stern anchor as Leonid came aboard. Dimitry followed and started the diesel engine. The boat vibrated as the engine took hold and Dimitry guided the boat out of the berth with expertise. It was soon heading out of the marina and for a short while in the mouth of the River Ness, the men went under Kessock Bridge for the final time, and joined the Moray Firth heading to the North Sea.

The waves rocked the boat as it bobbed in place in territorial waters. Dimitry had followed the GPS to the rendezvous point. He was watching the state-of-the-art radar and sonar systems they had installed a week ago at the marina. When they had hit the North Sea, they unfurled the sails and cut through the rolling waves with the wind behind them. They soon made up the lost time of their drive. When they reached their destination, they reefed the sails to slow the vessel.

In the cabin, Leonid got the man ready for their employer. He snipped the cable ties and removed the blanket. He clipped the ankle and wrist ties and removed the burlap sack. The man’s eyes were as wild as his trademark blonde hair. Leonid left the gag over the man’s mouth.

“Hello, Alexander,” Leonid said with a smile. “Time to get dressed. Your employer will be here soon.” He threw a set of clothes at the British Prime Minister and sat on the opposite sofa. The cardboard box from the van open beside him.

The man laid there, rubbing his wrists to regain circulation. Leonid reached into the box and removed his gun. He pointed it at the man. “Get a move on, we haven’t got all day. I’m sure you wouldn’t want him to see you like this.”

Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson pulled himself upright. He looked at the clothes. A pair of worn jeans, woollen socks, deck-safe shoes, and a navy-blue crew neck jumper. He slipped the jumper over his head. He placed his feet into the legs of his jeans, wrinkling his nose at his smell. He stood up and pulled them up. The jeans were tight on him and he struggled to fasten the button up fly.

In the cockpit, Dimitry saw a shape appear on the sonar. Its bearing was straight at the boat and closing at speed. He called out to Sergey, “Sergey, something’s approaching.” He flicked the screen to radar and it was clear. Flicked back and the shape was closer. “Something underwater.”

Alexander managed to do up the fly with a lot of breathing in. He sat back down on the sofa and lifted a leg to put on the first of the socks. The tightness of the jeans restricted his movement, caused him pain in his stomach. He stood back up and popped the top button and exhaled in relief. He reached for the sock and felt the boat lurch sideways knocking him off his feet as something struck the side of the cabin. He fell on Leonid, accidentally elbow first. A crack as Leonid’s nose broke. The boat shook again and Alexander was thrown across to his sofa, Leonid followed him and not of his own volition. Alexander’s knee lifted as he tried to balance on his back and Leonid’s bloody nose struck it with force. Leonid collapsed to the ground and stayed there.

Up top, Sergey grabbed Dimitry when the boat was first struck, preventing him from going overboard. He watched on the screen as the object twisted around and came back for another strike.

“Come on Dimitry, get us out of here.” He pulled Dimitry into position as they were struck the second time. Both men fell to the deck. They braced themselves for another impact.

On the screen, a second shape appeared and tracked the first.

Alexander steadied himself and looked around the cabin. The cardboard box that had been beside Leonid was laying on its side on the floor and a gun next to it. He tried to reach for it but his arms were too short to grab it while laying down. He slid off the sofa with the grace of a sealion at Chessington Zoo. He landed on the still Leonid and grabbed the gun. He staggered to the cabin door, his bare feet slipping on Leonid’s blood.

Underwater, the great white shark aimed for the boat. Its sleek, aquadynamic form glided through the water at speed. Fifty foot from its target. Forty. Thirty. It opened its mouth to bite through the fibreglass hull. It rolled its pupils back to protect its eyes. Ten-foot. So close.

The shark felt a burning down its right-hand side as something raked along its flank. It dived to get clear, under the keel of the boat. It was struck by heavy paddled flippers as it went. Teeth snapped at its tail. Blood trailed through the water. The shark pulled away from its pursuer and it circled to attempt to turn the tables. The boat firmly out of its mind. The water too dark to see far. Its receptors picked up the trail. It closed in on its prey. The large shape emerged from the darkness as the shark neared. Four flippers and a long neck. The shark aimed for the neck. The plesiosaur sensed its approach and twisted its neck clear as the shark bit down. The plesiosaur opened its mouth and sank its needle teeth into the belly of the shark, tearing and chomping.

Alexander opened the cabin door, unsteadily, gun in hand. He saw Dimitry and Sergey laying on the deck. He aimed the gun at the Dimitry. Hand shaking. Finger tightened on the trigger. From the water, there was an almighty splash as the shark broke the surface and landed on the deck. Blood flowed from beneath it. Teeth snapping. It caught Sergey's leg in its mouth and he screamed as he beat down on it with ineffectual fists. Alexander stepped back as he took in the scene. Dimitry, on his back, pulled himself away from the fifteen-foot ocean predator. Alexander pulled the trigger and shot the shark. The bullet passed through the dorsal fin and buried itself in Dimitry's head. He fired again and again. Hitting the shark, Sergey, and the already dead Dimitry. He stood there as he emptied the magazine and continued pulling the trigger. He didn't hear a splash, but he felt the shadow pass over him as Nessie landed on the boat and on Alexander to reclaim its prey. The weight of the shark and the ancient creature dropped the stern of the boat under the water and it began to sink.

Two miles away, the Captain of the luxury yacht called in Russian to his crew to turn the boat around as he watched through binoculars the Prime Minister, boat, and sea monster sink into the foaming sea.

“What is happening?” his employer asked.

“You wouldn't believe me, sir,” he replied.

END

Author's note.

I hope you enjoyed this story, thank you for taking the time to read it.

Twenty-seven of my other short stories can be found in my short story collection A Few Hours After This on Amazon - mybook.to/FewHoursEbook.

Paul Blake

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