

YEAR WALK
BEDTIME STORIES
FOR
AWFUL CHILDREN



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CHAPTER 1

THE HULDRA

There was once a boy who would go into town to dance every Saturday. But the boy didn't enjoy dancing, nor music. No, the boy only had one thing on his mind – girls. For every girl he asked to dance, his hands found new places to touch. A soft spot on the neck, an even softer spot on the back, and a spot softer than velvet on the waist. He did not care if the girls liked it or not, and soon enough no girl wanted to dance with him anymore.

So one Saturday afternoon, the boy decided to go to the neighbouring village to dance. As the boy walked through the woods, he heard beautiful music and singing coming from deep within the forest.

“Where there is music, there is dancing. And where there is dancing, there are girls,” said the boy to himself and followed the music. In a glade, he saw a beautiful woman dancing by herself.

“Come dance with me,” she said to the boy. And so he did.

They danced through the night, and the woman let him touch her wherever he wanted on her dress. Yet the boy wanted more. His hands slipped under her blouse, but instead of soft skin, his hands touched upon dry wood, and they slid into what felt like an endless crater on the woman’s back. He quickly pulled his hands back, and as he did the woman disappeared into thin air, leaving only an echo of dreadful laughter behind.



The last thing the boy saw before his eyes had dried up and turned into dead acorns, was his hands turning into rotten stumps and his fingers into withering branches.

CHAPTER 2

THE BROOK HORSE

There once lived a family of three in a small cottage, deep within the forest. One day, the mother was making soup, so she sent her daughter to fetch water from the nearby brook.

“What lives in the river, mother?” the little girl asked her mother as she was about to leave.

“A lot of creatures,” her mother replied.

“Are they dangerous?” the little girl asked.

“They are only dangerous if you make them wroth,” said the mother to her daughter.

On her way to the brook, the little girl picked up tiny rocks and threw them at some noisy birds. Throwing rocks at animals was one of her favorite games.

By the brook, the girl filled her bucket with the cool water, but just as she was about to turn back home, she noticed something moving below the water’s surface. She could not tell what it was, but knew it would be fun to throw rocks at it, all the same.



The little girl found a pebble and flung it into the water. The thing in the brook did nothing. The little girl picked up a stone and threw it in the water. Bubbles rose to the surface. She lifted a rock and heaved it into the brook, but no more bubbles appeared, so she laughed and went home.

When the little girl came home she gave the bucket to her mother, who poured the water into a big kettle. A short time later, when the soup was ready, the girl sat down with her mother and father to eat. She was very hungry and ate three whole bowls of soup, and when she was finished, she laid down her spoon feeling content. But she had a bubbly feeling in her stomach.

As she leaned back and burped, she noticed someone staring at her from outside the window – a strange creature with the body of a man and the head of a horse.



The little girl's eyes
grew wide from fear and she
started crying. Her mother tried to
dry the tears but they kept on coming.

Then the little girl started to cough up water. Her father patted her back, but the water kept on pouring. Water came out from the little girl's nostrils. Her father tried to wipe her nose but the water just wouldn't stop pouring, and the girl had started to swell as her body was filling up from the water. Finally, the girl burst and a wave of water knocked down her poor parents.

The family and their cottage is now gone, but a small stream marks the spot where it once stood.

CHAPTER 3

THE MYLING

There once lived a family on a big farm. They were rich and had plenty, because they owned large lands and had only one child. They were happy, for they had a beautiful daughter with the most wondrous blue eyes. On the farm there also lived a maid who was obedient and kind. One day she gave birth to a beautiful girl child. It was a child as fair as anyone had seen.

“Such shimmering deep blue eyes,” everyone said, and agreed that the newborn would grow up to be the most beautiful girl in town. Every day they noticed something new that was wonderful with the little baby, and no one seemed to notice the farmer’s daughter anymore. Soon the farmer’s daughter began to despise the little baby, and forged a despicable plan so that she would not have to live in its shadow.

The daughter went into her mother’s room and searched through a large jewelry box, where she found her mother’s favourite jewelry – a beautiful gold locket that glimmered radiantly. She took it and buried it beneath a dead tree on the hill. The mother in the family soon had everyone search the house for the missing locket.

“Have you borrowed my gold locket?” she asked her daughter.

“No,” replied the daughter and shook her head. “But I saw our maid wearing it”



Not many moments had passed of that stormy night until the mother banished the maid and her baby from the house.

“If you send us out in the wind and rain, my beautiful baby will surely die,” cried the maid. But no tears could quench the mother’s fury, who closed and barred the door to the farm.

The years went by and the family forgot about the maid, her beautiful baby and the gold locket. The daughter of the family grew up to be the most beautiful girl in town, and no one had ever seen eyes as blue as hers. But times grew hard and the fields grew barren. The mother was forced to sell her jewelry so that the family could eat, until she had none more to sell.

“I wish I had one more piece of jewelry to sell,” she cried out as she stared at the empty plates.

“I will find one more piece of jewelry for you, mother,” her daughter said.

As the daughter climbed the steep hill, she heard a frightful wail.

“It’s just the wind and rain,” she thought to herself. The sun was setting as she reached the dead oak tree where she had buried the gold locket many years ago.

She dug with her bare hands, and soon saw something glimmering in the ground. But it was not her mother’s long lost gold locket – her gaze met a pair of shimmering blue eyes, belonging to the rotten face of a frightful girl child. A tiny hand clasped the girl’s neck and dragged her into the earth.



Before the dirt and moss had filled her lungs, the farmer’s daughter’s last desperate scream could be heard from miles away.

“It’s just the wind and rain,” her starving mother whispered to herself back on the farm.



CHAPTER 4

THE NIGHT RAVEN

There was once a little boy who had delivered some of his mother's freshly baked cookies to his sick aunt, but most of them never reached her. On his way home the boy saw something black crash to the ground further down the road. He walked up to it and discovered a crow with a broken wing.

"Help me," cawed the crow.

The boy did not like helping animals, or people for that matter.

"What's in it for me?" the boy asked.

"If I can stay with you for three nights and be nursed back to health, you shall have three gifts," the crow replied.

The boy liked the sound of that, and brought the bird home with him. Having carefully hidden it in the winter storage, the boy went to bed, thinking only of his presents.

As soon as the sun rose, the boy rushed out to the crow.

“Where’s my gift?” the boy asked.

The crow twitched and out of its beak came a little tin soldier.

“I already have a dozen of tin soldiers. Tomorrow I shall have something nicer,” the boy proclaimed.

“That you shall,” said the bird.

When the sun rose on the second morning the boy visited the bird.

“Where’s my gift?” the boy asked.

The crow struggled to breathe, as it coughed up a wooden doll.

“Dolls are for girls! Tomorrow I shall have something nicer.”

“That you shall,” the bird said.

At dawn on the last morning the boy ran out to the crow.

“Where’s my gift?” the boy asked.

The crow was in great pain as it coughed up a locomotive.

“This train has no tracks, and can’t take me anywhere! Tomorrow I shall have something nicer.”

“Three nights have passed, and tomorrow you shall have nothing,” the bird said.

The boy got angry, took the crow in his hands and squeezed it hard. There appeared to be something left inside it!

“Something big and wonderful,” the boy thought, and squeezed with all his might.

Indeed it was big, but it was not wonderful. A giant terrifying raven appeared before the boy’s eyes.

The boy screamed, but before anyone could hear his cries for help the horrifying bird had eaten him alive, leaving only his bones behind.



CHAPTER 5

THE CHURCH GRIM

There once was a little boy, clever and kind. There wasn't anyone in the village in which he lived who did not think so.

"He will be someone when he grows up," they all said.

"A doctor or a priest," they all agreed.

One day after school, the boy stayed behind and helped the teacher putting all the desks in order.

"You're a good boy," the teacher said and ruffled the boy's hair.

The boy began the long walk home, through the woods. At the outskirts of the village he spied the miller. A bunch of sacks had fallen off the miller's cart, so the boy stopped and helped the miller haul the sacks back on the wagon.

"You're a good boy," the miller said and gave the boy a small coin.

On a narrow forest path, the boy passed the smithy, and heard the blacksmith cuss. The boy saw that there were nails all over the floor. He helped the blacksmith pick them up.

"You're a good boy," the blacksmith said and smiled.



As the boy passed the graveyard on his way home, he noticed a tall figure all dressed in black with his gaze turned to the gate.

“You’re a good boy,” it said in a flat voice as it turned around and revealed its terrible nature – half goat, half man, with a hideous smile filled with rotten teeth.

No one ever saw the boy again, but a couple of days later his father found the boy's left arm. The day after that, his mother found the boy's right foot. Over the next weeks the people of the village found several pieces of the boy, scattered all over the village and the woods.

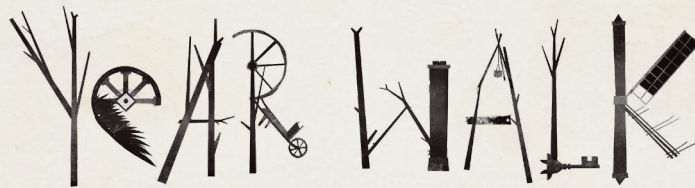
"But he was such a good boy," his mother cried.

And everyone in the village agreed.



THE END

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