



SCOTS hoose

HORROR WRITING COMPETITION 2022

The Winning Stories

Scots Hoose is honoured tae publish this year's winning story **THE DEATH DANCE** by Gregor Bates.

And wi great pleasure, we present stories by runners up by Alissa Nicol, Brodie-Anne Rumbles, Cara Mortimer and Jack McCabe.

The standard o the Scots horror stories in 2022 wis very high. Oor judges Victoria McNulty and Alan McClure were impressed by the imagination and writing skills o so many guid young Scots writers.

Thank you to all the fantastic pupils who took part and a big thanks to all the wonderful teachers for supporting this competition.

Enjoy these braw stories - dinnae get a fleg.

WINNER 2022

THE DEATH DANCE

by **Gregor Bates, S2**, Douglas Academy, East Dunbartonshire

The castle wis an auld grand place. People said it wis hauntit, but I didnae listen. I dinnae believe in ghosts and aw that, they were jist made up stories, weren't they? But I hae tae say, it didnae look half hauntit on that cauld, dreich nicht. There wis a smirr o rain that nicht, and ma kilt wis damp efter the oor long boat ride tae get tae the castle on this island. I should hae brought a jaiket, but I forgot, and so did ma mum and dad, but ma wee sister remembered. I did think it wis a bit strange, haein a ceildh in a run doon castle in the middle o nowhere, but then again, the auld man

who organised aw this wis a bit strange himself. Robert he wis cawed. He wis actin especially strange the day afore though, when he invited ma family tae this ceildh and I wondered whit wis wrang. I ken noo though, and I wish I didnae. Poor Robert. He didnae even get a proper burial.

“Oww!” I bawled. I had tripped ower a rock and hurt ma ankle, no a braw start tae the evening, I doubted I would even be able tae dance in the ceildh wi ma ankle being so sair. I hirpled intae the castle tae where the ceildh wis, and saw the main courtyard, wi towerin waws and a wee stage for the band tae play on. It wis quite a wee band as well, jist a bald accordian and a fiddler wi lang scraggy hair. Tae be honest, I wis feart jist lookin at them, wi their tartan scarves ower their chins and mooths, and daurk black glasses ower their een. Only their nebs could be seen, and that wisnae a braw sight either. I went over tae a wee stane table and ma mum and dad dumped oor stuff doon, pokes o crisps, bottles o juice, some cups and a tray wi some wee cakes in them. Dad had brought a pen-knife as well. “Jist in case!” he said, “you never ken whit might happen!” And he wis right, you never ken whit might happen. I certainly didnae anyway.

Soon the rest o the guests were ready and the music started for the first dance, The Dashing White Sergeant. In a way, it worked that I couldnae join in because o ma sair ankle, as you were tae mak groups o three and that meant ma sister, mum and dad could mak a group, and nobody had tae go awkwardly find a group wi other people. If ye dinnae ken already, The Dashing White Sergeant is a dance where your three pairs up wi another three and you aw spin aroond in a big circle, dance wi jist your own group and then go tae a different group and repeat. Unfortunately this is where it aw went aghley.

The music blared. The rhythm flowed. The dancers danced. Outside the wind howled. The trees whispered. The waves roared. People were smiling. Staring. Never blinking. The pulse o the music got stronger. Louder. Quicker. The dance lost any emotion. Joy. Energy. It almost felt mechanical. Robotic. Controlled. The wind wis silenced. The trees went quiet. The waves died doon. Aw ye could hear wis the ceildh music. The dancers faces went aw peelie-wally and their een turned reid. Then abruptly, the music stapped. The accordion player and the fiddler pit doon their instruments and pulled doon their scarves and took aff their daurk glasses tae reveal their faces. Smilin wickedly, wi daurk holes where their een should be. Their mooths had nae teeth nor lips, jist an eerie void. These musicians werenae human in the slightest! And their een sockets were staring richt at me...

I boltit . . . and rin as fast as ma legs wid cairry me. Thankfully, I wis a keen rinner, coming 2nd in the school 200m race and 1st in the 400m race. I wis built for this. I darted and weaved through passageways and corridors, sprinted and scaled up spiral staircases and lang ladders. At yin point, I found a toilet and locked myself in, pechin and wheezing. “That must hae been the fastest I’ve ever rin.” I thought. It wis incredibly painful though, as ma ankle wis still so sair. I wis so distracted that I didnae notice the mingin smell o rottin flesh...

There wis somebody in the bathtub!

Purple sairs had erupted aw over the man’s body and he wis so thin, you could see aw his banes. Yin o his een his fallen oot and bluid wis aw over his body. Nevertheless, I could recognise him. It wis Robert, the strange man who invited us

tae his ceilidh. The strange man who wis actin even stranger when he did so! Then somethin so unexpected happened I shouted ma heid aff in surprise. Robert started tae speak.

“I dinnae have lang left,” he groaned. “So I’m going tae talk fast! The fact that you are no hypnotised or covered in a rash, means you never danced, but did you at least see them dancin?”

“Aye,” I stammered, “I saw the musicians and how they hypnotised the dances...and then I saw the musicians take aff their disguises and aw the dancers’ een... They went reid!” Robert sighed. “I ken those ‘musicians’ you talk about,” Robert muttered. “They have been the subject o ma research for quite a lang time noo. These creatures are so powerful, nothin can stap them. I wis aboot tae raise an alarm when they got me. They played their wicked music and forced me tae dance, and they took control o ma body. They made me invite everyone tae this ceilidh. I could still think, but ma body didnae respond tae whit I wis telling it tae dae. I wis a prisoner in ma own body. It wis terrible. Haein tae go tae aw ma auld friends hames and luring them tae their death, it does that, the hypnotising, you ken. First, you lose control o your body, then the infection kicks in. Purple spots are the first symptoms, then you become incredibly hungry and thin. Next, you regain control o your body, but by that time there is nothing you can dae tae stap yourself from dying, slowly and painfully. I would guess that everyone in the ceilidh has about three oors left till there’s nae hope.”

I gasped. “But ma family?!”

Robert shook his heid and said, “They will aw die if you dae nothing about it. Tae get them tae survive you need tae kill the musicians. Only then will your family live. Go! And save everyone. Leave me here. I dinnae have lang left.”

Wi a smile on his face his een closed and he slumped back in the bathtub. He wis deid. I wis so feart I stood completely still. Then I remembered the ticking clock. Three oors left. But first I needed a braw plan. I remembered ma dad’s wee pen-knife. “You never ken whit might happen!” He said. But I didnae think that he would ever imagine this would happen. No in his wildest dreams.

It wis the hardest I had ever thought. How could I kill the musicians? I wisnae brave enough tae kill them in cauld bluid. Oh no. I wid hae tae find another way. I looked at ma watch. I had wasted half an oor awready. I had tae go intae action.

Creak! The auld stairs screamed as I tiptoed doon them. I sneaked past the passageways and corridors, inched myself through this castle, slowly and quietly. I peered through the doors and crawled past them. On more than yin occasion, I saw the brainwashed servants o the musicians, searching through rooms, lookin for something, or someone. Only efter I saw another dancer patrolling the corridors, constantly moving its heid every time it heard a noise I realised they were lookin for someone in particular. Me. I turned aroond slowly, ready tae mak a hasty retreat, when I saw a glint o metal and twa reid een. It wis ma dad wi his pen-knife. Aboot tae kill me.

I dinnae remember punching him in the heid, but I must hae done, because a reid mark had appeared on the top o his forehead and he wis clutching it in pain. In hindsight, I should have taken the pen-knife, but I couldnae think straight, I had jist been nearly murdered! Needless tae say, I darted away, and somehow, I ended up in

the courtyard, where the “ceildih” had taken place and found myself face tae face wi the musicians themselves...

A shiver went doon ma body and I honestly wis about tae faint when the fiddler spoke: “Well, well, well boy! Finally we meet! I wis looking forward tae this moment! Killing the boy who has been such a nuisance tae oor test run. For when you are deid, we shall tak ower the world! Playing in ceilidhs, dances, weddings, streets even. We shall rule over you eejits, and those who resist will die. Like you boy. Tak pleasure in knowing that you are the first...second actually, tae die as oor plans unfold. And who better tae kill you than your family?”

Ma family advanced on me, each at yin side o me. I wis so terribly feart and I had tae think quick. I looked aroond me for anything which might help but I saw nothing which could be used. Then I spotted it. Above the wee stane stage, which the musicians were standing on, there wis a towerin arch, wi the keystone at the tap (the piece holding it aw together) lookin like it wis about tae give way. This wis ma chance. Mess it up and I wis deid. I looked at ma watch. I had already used up twa oors and fifty-five minutes. I had five minutes left tae put ma plan in action. This wis the crucial moment.

I stared.

I stared as hard as I could, wi ma mooth open in shock and stage whispered: “Robert!”

It worked a treat.

The musicians turned their heids tae where I wis staring and I quickly picked up a decent sized boulder from the pebbly, stony floor o the courtyard and hurled it at the keystone as hard as I could, and magically, I somehow hit it deid on. By the time the musicians had realised whit wis happening, it wis too late. Wi a bluid curdling scream, they were crushed by an avalanche o broken arch and chunks o the waw. They were deid.

This time I did faint.

I awoke tae the sound o a fire crackling beside me. I saw ma dad tending tae it, adding on twigs tae it. Then he noticed me.

“Ma boy! Are you ok?” He queried. “Come here, coorie in! I’m so sorry aboot whit I did, it wis like I wis hypnotised and...and...”

“It’s awright dad” I said “It’s no your fault, I jist want tae go hame!” Dad smiled.

“We’ve got that covered. Someone found a torch, and we signalled in Morse Code, clever eh? They responded as well so we jist need tae sit tight for an oor aroond this fire I made.” I sighed in relief.

“I’ll tell you everything then,” I said. But ma dad interrupted.

“Sure, but whit are these purple spots on ma airms?”

RUNNER UP 2022

POOR WEE LIVVY

by **Alissa Nicol, S2**, Bellshill Academy, North Lanarkshire

Poor wee Livvy. Caught up in aw ae that mess. Her pals thought she could be sleekit like them. But it wis her that got them aw caught and ruined evrihin. She wis only twelve, the rest ae them fifteen. Course, it wisnae just the four ae them, Livvy, Lewis, Liam and Abby that night. Ma poor wee Emma wis the only adult present, just nineteen. She hisnae bin the same since she came hame that night. Naebody believed her, or the others, when they spoke oot about wit happened. The others wernae the same either, and Livvy hadnae returned at all.

That wan night, November 3rd, as I wis told, Livvy's best pals begged Livvy tae come wae them that night. Tae Bellshill Country Club. Course, they couldnae huv jist walked, it'd take far too long. So the four ae them convinced ma Emma tae drive them in her new motor. Maybe if she told them naw, it nivir would've happened.

...

"It's bloody baltic oot here. Dunno why yous want tae go oot here this time ae night." Emma complained, stannin in the freezin cawld outside the country club.

"S'no that cawld. If anyhin, I'd be mair worried about Liv." Aaron muttered the last part whilst gawkin at Livvy, whose eyes were fixed on the sign at the tap ae the gate which read; 'BELLSHILL COUNTRY CLUB'.

"Hoi, Liv! Stop starin at nuhin and help us figurr oot a way tae get in here." Abby nearly yelled.

It was already 10 on a Saturday night, and the formerly light trickles ae rain were noo pourin doon. It wis quiet, aw except the rain and particularly loud whispers comin fae Lewis and Liam. "Liv's maw's gonaae gee her a skelpin if anybody sees us and grasses."

"Sactly. Bit it's no lik we'll git aff scot-free."

Wisnae long before they noticed ivrywan lookin it them.

"Will you two eejits shut it and help us get in here?" Abby near-enough roared.

Eventually, they took they obvious solution and jist used a bin tae climb e'er the fence, and that wis them in.

"Will yous be awright e'er there?!" Emma shouted over the fence.

"Aye!" aw but Livvy shouted back.

"Sumhin's no right in that wean's heid." Lewis whispered to Liam, pointing at Livvy.

"OI!!" a voice yelled fae the bottom ae the golf course, accompanied by a tall figurr, aw o them seein the shining gold security badge.

"Yous don't look lik members! Get e'er here!!"

"Run!!" Abby yelled tae the rest ae the group. The group boosted tae different wee hidey holes. Livvy and Abby, ahint a massive oak tree. Lewis and Liam, ahint the wall ae the main lodge. The man shined his flashlight everywhere except where they were. Wisnae very good it his job, if ye ask me.

"Ow!" Livvy yelped. Abby swiftly put her hawn e'er Livvy's mouth, no tryin tae alarm the club's night guard. When she wis sure he couldnae see them, she asked wit was up wae Livvy.

"T-that hing! It scratched me!"

"Wit hing?"

"I-it wis a skinny wee pale hing! It hid a creepy, animal-lookin face and it's back wis aw bent!!"

"You expeect me tae believe that?"

"No! Look!!" Livvy pulled up her trooser leg, exposing a manky dark red gash.

"Ew! Still, couldnae huv been sumhin live. Maybe it wis a nail or a branch."

"Nane lyin around."

Abby's eyes widened as the others walked e'er.

"Wit's wrong?" Lewis asked the girls and Livvy gave the description ae the 'creepy hing' and wit it done tae Livvy.

"Sounds like a skinwalker, Liv." Liam piped up.

"A skinwalker?! That canae be good!!!" Livvy said, trembling.

"Awk, yer scarin her!" Abby said, sternly, hugging Livvy, tryin tae calm her doon. Soon, a random drum beat startit tae arise.

"Wit in the name ae God is that?" Lewis said, bewildered.

"Dunno. Sounds like a drum. There a marching band goin by?" Abby asked.

"At hauf ten on a Saturday night? You're aff yer nut, Abby." Liam remarked.

Soon, the drum beat wis accompanied by a high-pitched screechin sound. Ivry few seconds, a wee white animal hing wid belt doon wan side ae the golf course tae the other at the speed ae light. The group screamed as a chill went up their spines.

"Phone the polis, man!" Liam exclaimed.

"Wit ir the polis gonnae dae?" Abby questioned.

"Save us! Wit else!" Liam said, harshly.

"And we're meant tae say wit? 'Excuse me, we're bein hunted doon by a made-up creature'?"

The group once again screamed as a thud landed behind them.

"Weesht, it's jist me, Emma."

"Oh, thank God." All but Livvy said. They hadn't realised Livvy wasnae there, and hadn't been for aboot a minute and a hauf. It wisnae until Emma pointed it oot, hid they startit tae fully panic.

"Where's Liv?!" Abby shouted.

"Thought she wis wae you!" Liam and Lewis shouted back.

"Well, we kinda huv tae git her back, or I'm responsible." Emma said tae Abby.

"Wit'd yae want me tae dae?" Abby asked, sarcastically. The next thing seen wis the creature's return, as it pushed Abby on the freshly cut grass.

"Ow! Wan ae yous help me!" She screeched in pain.

"Oi! Git aff ae her!!" Lewis shouted tae it.

"Aye!!" Liam yelled.

The hing only screamed a blood-curdling scream back at them.

"I wis only jokin aboot it bein a skinwalker, but I'm pretty sure that is wan!" Liam stated. The creature's eyes widened at hearin that.

"Guess it agrees." Emma blanky said. Emma noticed a discarded wood plank next tae the fence. "Gimme that." she whispered tae Liam. He discreetly chucked it tae her whilst Lewis kept the skinwalker busy. Emma got ready tae chuck it at the beast. As she threw it, the skinwalker knocked the plank away, and scratched Emma's torso, knocking her tae the side.

"Emma!" Lewis and Liam yelled in unison.

"Oi!" wis heard fae a distance, once again accompanied by a tall figure and a flashlight. It startled both the skinwalker and the group. As Liam jolted back, scared, he fell intae the nearby fence, and as he looked up, he saw the skinwalker had drapped Abby and bolted doon the golf course.

"Oi! Git back here, ya wee hooligans!" the guard yelled tae the group. He sprinted e'er tae them, curious as tae why they hud broken in at aw.

After attempting to explain wit had happened multiple times, the guard refused tae believe them, and kicked them oot, phonin their parents in the process.

"Wait, wit are we meant tae say tae Livvy's mum??" Emma asked, anxiously. She wis sweatin buckets.

"I-I'll phone her and tell her she's went missing..." Lewis replied.

"Hink that'll be good enough?" Liam asked Lewis.

"Aye...it'll huv tae be..." Lewis sighed.

...

Six days had passed, and there wis nae sign ae Livvy anywhere. There wis a search party looking for her all e'er Bellshill, but they were close tae gein up. It wis hopeless.

Emma wis acting unusual, in the sense that she rarely spoke or ate, and flinched whenever anyone mentioned the incident, or spoke the name Livvy, as she felt responsible for the whole ordeal.

As for the others, they learned no tae break intae anywhere, or take kids wae them.

RUNNER UP 2022

RECORDIN ON BEEP

by **Brodie-Anne Rumbles, S3**, Banff Academy, Aberdeenshire

Recordin on beep, beep, beep.....

Recording of Dr Arthur Lanlay.

Date 24 o November 1992, 12:30 am, my seicont patient the day, patient 19541 Echidna Gaeltach, this ma foremaist time meetin the patient, am readin her court files an notes the noo. I pick up ma glaisses and push them onto ma neb.

Her notes read as follows..

Echidna Gaeltacht (35yrs), trial for manslaughter. Convicted fer the murder o Louis Gaeltacht (34yrs) husband o suspect of and of Atlas Gaeltacht (10 yrs) and Sybil Gaeltacht (3yrs) dochter an son o Miss Gaeltacht. She pleaded Guilty wi insanity, pleadin that it wis nae her deein it, it wis somethin that had tikken ower her, it wa-[REDACTED] The rest o this recordin haes bin eliminated. As weel as the rest of patient 19541 court files, aa yi'll need tae ken is she wis trialt an convicted an foun guilty. She noo bides unner Dr Arthur Lanley's care in the Carfax Mayfield asylum.

We bring tae you a latter recording of Dr Arthur Lanley. This has been a voice ower by agent [REDACTED].

11:30 I hae hidden ma recordin tape in ma pooch. I decided tae meet Miss Gealtach when she wis seeminly calm an athoot her strecht jaicket. As I dander intae the room and poued ower a cheer. Miss Gealtach was jist 35 year aal, though she lookit muckle aaler. Her cheeks hae hollowed oot, her een deep, blaick, an wild. Her body language is frantic and shairp. "Ay ay, Miss Echidna. I am Dr Arthur Lanlay. I am here tae help ye, tae help ye get better," I say, makkin nae movement an avoidin sayin her surname.. the name that wis her husband and childer's name, an aa. "Fit wye div ye seek to help me? Me, een fa has tikken life and could easy tak again, like yours." Delusional. Truly she his been dulefu fae some sic form o psychosis. Has she killed? Aye, but kill me – niver! I am nae a common person like her husband and childer. I attempted to mak mair talk. Tho I gat naething but seelence.

Date 25th of November

"Ay, ay, Echidna. Fit like the day?" Seelence. Patient 19541 turns her heid fae me and ignores my presence in the room.

Date 26th of November

"Ay, ay, Echidn. Div ye think you are ready to talk the day?" Seelence, Seelence, and nae reponer or answer.

Date 27th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 28th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 29th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 29th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 30th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 30th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik.

Date 30th of November

Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, Seelence, and Seelence patient 19541 refuses to spik. "Fit wye will ye nae spik up, wumman. Fa gies you the richt tae ignore ME! – YER DOCTOR! YER SAUVIOUR!" The wumman chitters unner my skelloch o abuse. I forcefully grab her airm, haudin it wi the grip o airm. The maument I grabbed her airm she lat oot a deafening skelloch, a blindin screch. It is a belloch o wumman, o men, o sons, o dochters, o birds, o whales, o aa leevin things, o aa the deid, an a God o me. I lat her gairdie gae stumblin, fawin back on the caal fleer desperately kiverin, rippin, and tearin my lugs. There wis a CRACK,

a CLASH and CUT. Nae jist ma lugs achin wi a sair pain, but there were shairp cuts seepin into my bane, my marrae, my saul, makkin an infineet, paralysin, aa consumin yakkin pain. I feel my wairm, het bluid seepin, seepin fae my verra ain veins. I glance tae deek the gless windaes hae shattered aa aroon the room and intae ma flesh. I leuk ower tae patient 19541 to see her aiblach body is riddled wi the same wounds rippin an destroyin her skin as on me. She has something that can anely be bluid, tho it didna leuk onything like bluid. It wis fu o eldritch colours, eens that couldna, didna exist. Her skellochin carries on and on. It begins owerwhelm ma body, entering my ablach ben ma lugs, neb, my moo. The soon is destroying me. Obliterating me in the wye waves kill saund, in the way a Hypernova destroys solar systems and hale worlds. I get ane measly glance o the wretch afore I dee, afore everything that is and wi me is obliterated into naethin, naethin. Her ablach contorts, rips apairt, revealin new organs and een. I am gaein to dee onyweye, but after seein that, that thing, I want, I crave deith upon mysel. I think it she didna kill me, an I had laid ma een upon her loathsome form, I wad hae hid tae kill mysel.

Recording off beep, beep, beep.....

RUNNER UP 2022

BEWAUR O TH TAP...TAP...TAP

by **Cara Mortimer, S2**, St Margaret's High School, North Lanarkshire

Ah've hid a feelin fur th last couple o weeks, a feelin that sumwan ur sumhins watchin me. At first ah ignored it but it's no goin awa an noo at's geein me the boak, tae be completely honest wae ye.

It all stertit wan Sunday nicht aroon about th time a seen a wee speeder buildin a wab in th coarner ae ma room. It didne really bother me as lang as it stayed oot ae ma road. Ah hid jist goat oot th shower an ah decidit tae pit nail polish oan. Ah didnae ken why ah decided tae dae ma nails raither than just sleep, but it didnae maitter. It ended up it wis takin ages, over an oor an ah wis barely feenished wan haun, no tae mention that noo ah wis cravin a wee scan. Ma maw an da were in their kip an ah wis supposed tae be asleep by noo, tae, cause it wis half-past eleeven at nicht. Ah made ma way oot ma room.

It wis awfae daurk oot in th loaby an quiet, tae. Ah creepit in tae th scullery, timerous as a wee moose, an ah raked in the cupboard lookin fur a bit o a scan, sumhin ah really wantit tae eat. Ah kent ma maw wid go radgey if ah woke her, fur she hid her work emorra. Ah helpt masel tae a can o ginger, (Irn Bru Extra cause ye ken whit they say, it's PHENOMENAL!) an a wee bag o jeely bear sweeties. An then ah made ma way oot in tae th daurk upsterrs loaby agin. As a got tae ma bedroom door, ah came tae a halt and aw th herrs on my heid stood up and ma lugs stairtit twitchin. Oot o th quiet an th daurk ah heard...

Tap...Tap... Tap...

“Wit wis that?” ah thought. “Probably just rain, it’s always rainin oot here.” Ah brought ma free haun up tae the haunle o ma door an grabbed it ticht ready tae open it when...

Scud.

Skitter.

Scud.

That wisnae rain. That wis footsteps scuddin the flerr. Nae doot sumwan wis in there, sumwan or sumhin? Ah wis feart noo, by th way. Ah opent th door slowly,

turnin,

turnin,

turnin th haunle.

An a goat ready tae chuck ma can o ginger an skelp embdy wha wis er...

...But er wis naebdy er!

Ah goat roon tae enterin an lookt aroon ma room. At’s when ma eyes wur met wae thon wee toatie baby speeder ae some sorts, aw black an herry. Its wee taes tappin acroass the flerr. “Ah warned ye!” ah telt it. Really, ah thocht it wis merr a wee sin fur me, than fur it that it wis in ma road in ma room, so ah wheecht it up, an flushed it doon th cludgie wae nae mercy at aw! No wan bit, ah tell ye! Ah pullt th plug an didnae even gie it anither thocht.

Efter scrannin ma jeely sweeties and tannin ma bru, ah wis feenishin ma nails aff. Ah lay doon in ma bed, it now being three in th mornin. A keeked at the cloack an worked oot it gied me three oors tae get a bit o kip, but ah couldnae help but wunner why ah heard muckle footsteps only tae be met by a daft wee speeder on the flerr. Ah fell asleep hinkin about aw ae this but it wis that nicht hings aw stairtit tae go wrang...

Ah hid continuous nichtmerrs aw ae them different except for a creature, sum kin o bogle or sperrit, ah’m sure. Ah didnae ever see its coupin mind ye, but it wis about six, tae seven feet lang an hid loads o airms aw about th same length as me. It wis aye follaein me in ma nichtmerrs an ah ayeways woke up froze wae fricht, efter it whispered tae me in a bluid-curdlin hiss,

“Yer time’s nearly up lassie, fur ye must be struck fae this earth. Ye cannae escape yer fate nor slow it doon. Ye made yer choice, yer jist a helpless wee lassie, caught in ma wab, so ye ur.”

Ah didnae tell anyone, no that many fowk would even listen tae me onyways, but even my ma an da didnae know about ma nichtmerrs. Ah didnae want them tae know. An this cairried oan fur a full week.

But wan nicht it wis different. Ah woke up from ma kip tae realise ah didnae hiv a bad dream. Ah felt relieved, as ah wis gettin fair scunnert wi ayeways haein nichtmerrs. When ah stood up, it wis still daurk, so ah checkt oot th time. It wis seven. Seven?! Ah wis late! Ah threw oan ma claes and bolted doon ma sterrs an that's when ah kent aw hings wurnae as they should be. In oor livin room evryhin was aw ower th place, oor gaff wis a midden and there wis cobwabs evrywhaur.

But afore ah could move, ah heard it.

Skitterin...

Wit wis that?

Skitterin...

It soundit close. Whur is it? Ahint me? In front of me?

Skitterin....

Maybe a dug? Aye, the neebors. They hiv dug. Richt? Ah'm braw, evryhin's braw. Still ah cannae move. Ah'm too feart!

Scud. Tap. Scud. Tap...

That's nae dug. It's too close noo. Ah cannae breathe. Ma hert's racin.

Ah seen it! Tap...Tap...Tap...

A muckle great speeder. Six or Seven feet lang, black as mirk and aw herry. Thon lang airms fae ma dreams, thon gless eyes! Am ah still dreamin? Ah'll wake up, noo. Richt...? Haud oan a minute, that's no airms, it's legs, aw eight ae them... Tap...Tap...Tap...

Thon glisterin white een stairt richt through me, intae ma soul an a kent a wis fur it. Ah couldnae look awa. Slowly, wan leg at a time, th hing fae ma nichtmerrs walked tae me...scud...tap...scud ...tap...

Ah couldnae move.

Twa claws reached oot tae grab us by th throat. Ah wis ready to wake up noo! But it wouldnae end. An that's when a kent that voice...

“Hello wee yin. Ah ken ye fae yer dreams but ye dinnae ken me. Ah'm an auld, auld speerit fae lang, lang ago. In Scotlan they cry me Auld Ettie. Aye, Auld Ettie Cap. Mibbe ye'd ken me better if ah telt ye ah'm th Maw tae aw th wee speeders yer kin squash, an stoat and flush doon th cludgie. At's your time noo, dinnae try tae ficht it, dinnae try tae escape it. Ye cannae get oot. Ye won't wake up agin.”

An Auld Ettie Cap smiled an showed her peggy grin, black smoke startit tae pour oot fae her fangs. Ah kicked oot an ah strugglt tae get oot ae her grip aroon me. It wis nae use. Ah looked around tryin to find an escape, ah saw millions o speeders coverin th bluidy waws an smelt a helluva reek comin fae th auld broken fireplace. Ah started

skirlin an greetin “Help me sumwan!” but naebdy wis listenin. Ah gave in ma strugglin an en a blacked oot intae th pitmirk.

Ah don’t know where ah am now. Ah canny see a thing. Aw ah can hear is ma skirls and greets. An ah can feel the creepin an the crawlin aye ower ma skin. Am in pain but ah cannae stoap anyhin. Ah want tae greet but ah cannae. Ah want tae skirl but ah cannae. Ah miss ma maw an ma da. Wit happent tae me? Am ah deid? Am ah alive? Naebdy will ever ken. A hope that this is aw a dream. Am ah gonnae wake up fae this hell? If ah dae ah’m gonnae tell evrywan wit happened. Ah’m gonnae get them aw telt.

“Watch oot. If ye hear th tap...tap...tap... Bewaur o Auld Ettie Cap!”

