

The Larvastone of Bruntwood

By James Jalal

Some of you are scared of spiders. Grown men can turn into nervous wrecks at the sight of one but ... what if you knew that there is something even more terrifying out there.

It was a glorious autumn Sunday and Ted was walking through the woods of Bruntwood Park, after hanging out with his two mates, Greg and Pete. They had been mucking around with the twigs, pretending they were master swordsmen.

Ted was making his way home and reminiscing about the great time he had, whilst also thinking about how to work on his sword mastery for next time. However, he had a strange feeling – he couldn't work out if he didn't like being alone in the woods, or he was being watched. He knew deep down that it couldn't be the first, as he had walked home on his own hundreds of times. He carried on walking, but the eerie, uneasy sensation didn't subside.

He wanted to call home, but his phone had no signal. Feeling anxious, he quickened his pace.

He froze ...

He could hear movement in the trees and bushes all around him. The panic had well and truly set in.

Eventually he caught a glimpse of something but couldn't quite believe his eyes. A long smooth tail protruding from the bush. It looked like a scorpion tail.

“OW!”

Something struck him on the chest and threw him backwards and onto the floor knocking the wind out of him. As he stood up he grabbed a rock that was by his feet. In front of him a creature emerged. It had piercing yellow eyes and thick black hair all over its body. Grey pinchers surrounded it, with the scorpion tail that Ted had already spotted before.

Part of him wanted to look more closely at the monster but his instinct took over and he threw the rock at it, striking it in the head and ran.

Ted made it home, exhausted and terrified after his escape. He couldn't work out if the pain in his chest was his heart beating or the ferocious blow he had been dealt by that creature. He passed out on his bed.

Monday morning as Ted made his walk to school, he met up with Greg and Pete. “What's up with you this morning Ted, you look whiter than a snowflake” joked Greg.

Ted told them everything. After a moment of silence, Greg and Pete burst out laughing.

“I'm being serious guys, this isn't a time for laughing. There's something in those woods and after school I'm going back there to see what it is. Up to you if you want to come.”

“I'm 100% in” said Greg.

“Yeah, me too, only so I can prove what fibber you are” Pete said sarcastically.

The grey rain clouds started to congregate over the park as the boys made their way into the woods after school had finished for the day. Ted had been counting down the minutes and seconds until the bell rang.

Ted led the boys to where he had encountered the creature. Nothing.

“See told you that you were fibbing” said Pete with a sense of pride.

“But it was right here” a desperate Ted pleaded.

“Come on lads, I’ve seen enough, back to my house for PlayStation” Greg said with disappointment.

As Greg turned on his heels, the ground beneath him gave way. “Argh!” screamed Greg as he disappeared from sight. Ted and Pete looked at each other in shock as they stood over the spot where Greg once stood. A long, winding vertical tunnel had appeared.

“Come on Pete we’ve got to go and rescue Greg”

“Er, I’ll stay up here and be lookout” said Pete hesitantly.

“Brave as a lion as usual” sighed Ted as he jumped into the hole.

At the bottom of the tunnel, Greg dusted himself off after a heavy landing. He could just about see his surroundings as the light was coming down from the tunnel. He found himself in a huge cave.

“Hello! Anyone here?”

No one replied. His tummy started to rumble. He hadn’t had any food for ages and he knew Ted always carried an energy bar in his pocket. How he wished to have a bite.

“Argh!” a voice shouted.

Greg quickly rushed to the end of the tunnel and Ted came flying out, landing on him. They lay there in a heap.

“Greg, are you alright?”

“Yeah I’m good” Greg replied while dusting himself off yet again. “Do you still have that bar?”

Ted sighed. “All you think about is food don’t you?” He passed him the bar and Greg devoured it within seconds.

The boys looked around the cave but as they went in deeper, it got darker. Ted held up his hand in front of his face and couldn’t see it.

“Help!” an unfamiliar voice cried. The boys stood still as statues.

“Who, who is it?” Greg asked.

A faint light suddenly appeared. It seemed to be coming from behind a door. Ted approached it cautiously and felt for a handle. He slowly opened the door and behind it was a man wrapped in

spider webs laying on the ground. He had a torch in his hand. They approached him slowly. He had a cut face and his ripped shirt had Richard, Head Groundsmen written on it.

“Mate, you look awful! Who did this to you?” Greg asked

“Get me out of these webs first, and I’ll tell you.”

They pulled as hard as they could but the webs were thick like bungee rope and eventually Richard managed to squeeze himself out. When he stood up, they could see he was tall and athletic. He went on to tell them about his encounter with a spider with yellow eyes that came at him from nowhere when he was doing his rounds of Bruntwood Park.

“I told you!” Ted nudged Greg in his ribcage.

“We need to get out of here before we become Monday nights three course meal for the spiders” said Greg.

Something had caught Richard’s attention and he was shining his torch on it. Ted and Greg joined him in having a look. Someone had left a message and picture engraved on the wall.

“If you see this message then beware, you follow the path I take that leads to the Larvastone of Bruntwood. Be prepared with potions of vinegar and salt to fight the Spidion or meet your peril.”
Albert 1970

Beneath the passage was a picture of the creature that Ted and Richard had seen. The Spidion.

“Albert Widow” said Richard. “He was my Chemistry teacher at Ladybarn School and went missing. We all just assumed he’d gone mad and went somewhere far away from here.”

“He must’ve gone mad to come down here” mumbled Greg.

Before they could process the information, all hell broke loose. Out of the darkness emerged two Spidion’s, grabbing Ted, Greg and Richard in the blink of an eye. They struggled and fought and Ted managed to wriggle free. Greg and Richard however, were trapped and dragged away.

Ted picked up the torch left by Richard and followed. He could see a rich and warm light behind a rock almost twice his size. It made it look like an eclipse. As he made his way around the rock, he couldn’t believe his eyes. The cave went deeper and lower and was lit up by a stone that was as warm and bright as the sun. Around the Larvastone of Bruntwood gathered hundreds of Spidion’s, taking in the warmth it was radiating.

Ted crouched low on his belly so as not to be seen, he scanned the area below him and located Richard and Greg. They were thrown in the corner wrapped in webbing next to a pile of human bones!

“Oh god, they’re going to be spidion food!”

He had the urge to go after them but remembered the passage written on the wall. “Potions of vinegar” he said to himself. He had to think quickly. He retreated slowly and back to where he entered.

Quickly as his legs could take him he ran to the foot of the tunnel and climbed back up to where Peter was waiting.

“Where’s Greg!? What’s happened to Greg!?” Peter asked Ted.

“No time to explain. I need you to go to the shop and buy as much vinegar as you can and meet me back here in 20 minutes. NO DITHERING PETE!”

Peter could see that Ted was being deadly serious and nodded. They both went their separate ways. Ted made his way to his house in a breathless sprint. He went to the shed in the back garden and unlocked it. In the shed lay three pump action super soakers that Ted’s dad had confiscated after a water fight had gotten out of hand. The fight had resulted in Ted’s Nan being taken to hospital after being squirted in the eye! He grabbed them and made his way back to Bruntwood Park to meet Peter.

Peter stood there with a shopping bag full of every type of vinegar he could get his hands on in the shop. White wine vinegar and the type he put on his fish and chips for his usual Friday night dinner. As Ted approached, he threw a super soaker at him and instructed him to start filling up.

“I’ll tell you more on the way down, you’re coming with me Pete, no arguments”

“OK, Ted.”

With the super soaker’s filled and extra ammo in their school bags, Ted and Peter made their way down the tunnel and into the first cave.

“You’re mad! We have to phone the police or tell our parents or something!”

“Shut up, they’ll hear us.”

Ted crouched down in the spot he was before. Pete was shocked at what was in front of them. Keeping his eyes fixed on the Spidion’s, he went to take the same position as Ted but slipped! It caused some rocks to fall down the slope.

All at once, the Spidion’s turned around and saw Ted and Pete.

They looked at each other “One, two, three fire!!”

They unleashed their vinegar loaded super-soakers at the Spidion’s. As they were hit, the creature would start to disintegrate. The monster screamed in horror as all of his body disappeared and all there was left of where it stood, was a pile of dust.

Richard and Greg watched from the other side of the cave. Something strange was happening. The Larvastone was spawning new Spidion’s!

“They have to destroy the stone” said Richard

“I better not miss my dinner, I’m hungry!” moaned Greg.

Ted saw his chance to get to Richard and Greg. He action man rolled his way towards them like a seasoned soldier. He had a pen knife in his pocket and cut the prisoners free from the webs.

“Thanks Ted”

“No time for thanks Greg” said Ted. Here, take these. He passed them two other super soaker’s.

Richard headed straight for the Larvastone. “I’m ending this now! Nobody does this under my park!”

Ted, Greg and Pete lined up together and decimated the Spidion’s as they came at them. Richard reached the stone and lifted it above his head, ready to smash it when a Spidion tail pierced his leg. He hit the ground with the stone next to him.

“Quick we have to get to him lads” shouted Greg.

They made it. “Smash it” said Richard as he gasped for breath as the venom set in.

Pete lifted it above his head and violently threw it to the ground. It smashed into two. Its light went out and the Spidion’s disintegrated instantly.

They turned their attention to Richard. “The vinegar, try the vinegar!” said Greg.

Ted took out a bottle from his bag and poured it on Richard’s leg. Almost immediately, his leg started to sizzle like the vinegar was burning through the poison. Richard opened his eyes and looked around not knowing if he was alive or dead. When he saw Greg munching on a chocolate that he got from Ted’s bag, he knew he was alive.

“Let’s get out of here” said Ted.

The four of them made their way back up to the woods in silence. As Richard was filling the hole in the ground with soil, the boys looked at each other with a sense of pride. This will be with them forever they thought. They made their way home mimicking what they did to the Spidion’s.

Meanwhile back in the cave, the Larvastone of Bruntwood lay broken. Dr Albert Widow emerged from the darkness and put it back together. Its light shone again and the Spidion’s returned.....

The End