

ZOMBIES IN THE CEMETERY

HAL AMES

Blakemore University, located just outside of the town of Blakemore, sits in a valley surrounded by beautiful maple trees. In the fall, the leaves turn shades of red, yellow and orange and when the sun is shining, they glow like a burst of fire.

In the early fall, the cool night air blows down from the tops of the hills and spreads a thin mist over the valley. It always marks the beginning of another school year. The sound of students going from place to place fills the air.

Every year there are competitions to claim the title of best of the best. It is also the time when the new students are invited to join in the activities.

The different teams of six people were created and they gave themselves names. They made an agreement before the competition that the losing team would spend the night in the cemetery on the outskirts of the town.

For two days, they compete in silly games. Even though it was a lot of fun, everyone tried their very best. No one wanted to spend the night in the cemetery.

It came down to the last event as to who was going to win and who was going to spend the night among the tombstones.

The last game was a three-legged race. All of the competitors from the same team had to compete. The last two racers across the line would be the losers.

When it was over, the team that called themselves the 'Blue Crew' lost the event; John and Sophie had fallen down and were not able to catch up. Now they had to make plans to spend the night off campus in the cemetery down the road.

The members of the other teams jumped up and down in victory, while the Blue Crew lay on the grass realizing that the night was going to be very long.

Roger was the first to speak.

“Okay, we need to decide who is going to bring what. I’ll bring the food. Who else wants to bring something?” he asked.

“I’ll bring some blankets,” John spoke up.

“I’ll bring wood for a fire,” Gordon offered.

“I’ll bring something to drink,” Sophie added.

Roger sat down in front of the others, and said excitedly, “This could be a lot of fun. Imagine the stories we can tell our children!”

Not everyone was as excited as Roger was about what was going to happen that night.

“It might be fun for you, but I was looking forward to sleeping in a warm bed tonight,” Carly said. “I don’t want to do this.”

“If you’re going to be part of our group, you have to go. It’s part of being a member of the Blue Crew. It won’t be so bad. We’ll all be together,” Gordon tried to reassure her. “Don’t worry.”

They spent the afternoon getting the things they would need to make the night as comfortable as possible.

Jenna arrived late. She had a test she needed to take before she was free for the weekend.

After dinner, the members of the Blue Crew left the campus. It took about thirty minutes to walk to the old cemetery. The cemetery dated back to the sixteen hundreds, when the first settlers came to the valley. There were many stories told by the local people about mysterious things happening there, especially on the first day of autumn, when the sun is on the equator. This day was the fall equinox.

For a long time the group stood at the entrance. Above them was a sign that said, ‘Graceland Cemetery 1698’.

“What should we do?” Sophie asked, very sheepishly. “Do we really have to go in?”

“We lost the bet. If we had won, we would have expected the other team to do this. In order to keep our pride, we have to go through with this,” Robert answered. “It’s not going to be that bad, I’m sure of it.”

Slowly they walked past the gate and into the cemetery.

“Where are we going to sleep?” Carly asked.

They looked around and then John spoke up. “How about next to that large monument over there? It’s on top of the hill which will allow us to see the whole cemetery. If something is going on, we’ll be able to see it.”

“Why don’t we stay closer to the entrance? That way if something happens we can get out quickly,” Sophie suggested.

“I like the idea of being on top of the hill,” Gordon agreed with John.

The others picked up the supplies and headed to the top of the hill.

The sun was just beginning to set when they reached the top. The fog began to roll over the tops of the hills around them and settled along the river below. As they looked down on the puffy white fog, it appeared as if they were floating on top of clouds.

The sky above them was clear. The moon was bright and almost full in the sky above them. This was very unusual for this time of year. Normally it was cloudy and windy.

A few bats flew through the branches of the trees looking for insects.

They began to make a campfire so Sophie and Carly could prepare the food, while the guys searched for more wood for the fire.

Jenna tried to set up the tent, but it kept falling down on her. Everyone was laughing. Jenna almost cried as she sat in the middle of tent that was collapsed over her head waiting for help.

John and Roger, even though they were laughing, helped her out. They discovered some of the parts were missing and the tent was not going to work.

“Who forgot the poles?” Jenna yelled out in obvious frustration.

“I guess that would be me,” Roger admitted.

After eating their snacks, they opened their bedrolls and spread them onto the ground.

“I think there are rocks under here,” Carly complained. “The ground is so hard, I don’t think I’m going to get any sleep tonight.”

The smell of the smoke, as it rose from the fire, and the crackling of the wood, helped to make the place feel more comfortable. They sat around the fire with blankets on their laps, and to make the time go by faster, they began to sing songs. Robert had brought his guitar.

After they finished singing and as they prepared to get into their sleeping bags, Gordon reached into his backpack and took out an old brown covered book.

“What is that book?” Robert inquired after seeing the cover.

“This one?” Phil showed it to Robert.

“Yeah that one. What is it?” he inquired further.

“Earlier today, I bought this book at the magic store in town. My friend Phil and I were walking down Main Street, when he suggested we should go into the magic store. While we were looking around, the owner came up to us, and asked us if there was anything we might like to look at. Phil told him about our bet so he recommended this book. If Phil’s team had lost, then he would have brought this book with him,” Gordon explained. “The owner of the store told us the book was very old and that the spells in it were real. We thought it would be fun to try some black magic since we were going to be in a cemetery all night.”

“Black magic? I’m not so sure about this,” Jenna spoke up.

“We all know this is just a joke, right?” Gordon said, trying to settle her down. “I don’t really believe what the owner told us, but I thought it would be fun.”

He opened the book and put his flashlight onto the words. In it were many strange phrases. The others huddled around him to see what he was reading.

“Why don’t we read this together,” Gordon suggested.

“It’s too creepy for me,” Carly responded as she pulled away and stared at the

others. “What if what the owner of the store said is true. We have no idea what we are doing. For all we know, we could be conjuring up evil spirits or something worse.”

“Don’t be silly. How can saying a few words do any harm,” John joked with her. “Do you believe in ghosts?”

“Of course not,” she answered, not exactly convinced about what she was saying. “But still, we don’t know where that book came from.”

The others ignored her and began to recite the words.

“Hopu noti anga do,” they read the words out loud.

The boys were laughing but the girls were very afraid.

“See, nothing happened,” Gordon laughed.

Suddenly the wind began to blow and the leaves on the trees spun in circles.

The temperature began to go down. It was getting much colder. Everyone climbed onto their sleeping bags around the fire. The weather had taken a turn for the worse. It was not unusual for the weather to change at this time of year. It was just that it didn’t normally happen so fast.

Dark clouds rolled in blocking the moon. The fire went out in a gust of wind leaving them in darkness.

Carly screamed. The others were too afraid to say anything.

Only the orange glow of the embers gave them light to see where they were. It quickly became colder as a thick fog filled the air. The group cuddled together trying to keep warm.

The ground began to shake, while loud noises, which came from all over the cemetery, filled the air.

The five university students were so scared they sat up with their eyes wide open, looking for anything that might be coming toward them.

Dark shadows began to move around in the fog. Carly screamed again and then she disappeared.

“Where’s Carly?” Sophie screamed as she reached out to touch her.

“What do you mean?” Robert yelled.

“She was here a second ago. She was right next to me,” Sophie yelled back. “She just disappeared! What if they take all of us?”

“Keep close, and don’t let go. We need to protect ourselves,” Robert said in a very serious tone.

As the shadows moved closer and closer, they discovered that when the shadows got close, they could flash their flashlights at them, and then the shadows would run away.

The fog was so thick it was hard to see anything. The strange sounds kept them awake.

“I think we need to get out of here,” John suggested. “If we run really fast we should be able to get to the gate before the shadows realize we left.”

“I don’t think that it is such a good idea,” Gordon spoke up. “We don’t know what is out there, or even how many. They already have Carly, we don’t need to make it any worse. If we run they might get another one of us.”

“I agree with Sophie, we should make a run for it,” Robert agreed.

“Do you even know where the gate is? I have no idea what direction to go. This fog is so thick I can barely see my hand in front of my face,” Gordon stated.

Just then, another shadow jumped out of the fog. John flashed his light into the shadow’s face. Whatever it was, it was covered in dirt, and its head was twisted to the side of its neck. The monster let out a scream and then ran away.

“What was that?!” Jenna screamed out.

Answering a little cautiously, Gordon responded with a gulp, “I.. It looked like a zombie to me.”

“ZOMBIE?!” Jenna screamed again. “I thought zombies were just in horror movies. Did we do something wrong when we read that book?”

“Quiet Jenna! We need to keep quiet,” Gordon said to her.

“I never expected to be attacked by zombies, I’m just saying,” Jenna said more

softly, but still in a panic.

“Maybe we should move to another spot. They know where we are now,” Robert suggested.

“Good idea. Hold onto the hand of the person next to you. Let’s go over to the tree,” Gordon instructed the group. “It will provide us with a little more protection.”

Slowly they moved on their hands and knees watching carefully for any shadows.

When the tree came into view, a shadow jumped in front of them, grabbed Gordon and ran away, pulling Gordon, who was screaming at the top of his lungs.

“HELP ME!”

Robert reached out to try to catch him, but he was gone.

“What just happened?” Sophie asked.

“They got Gordon. Don’t let go of each other,” Robert said as he held onto Jenna, Sophie and John as tightly as he could.

Now that Carly and Gordon were gone, the remaining kids didn’t know what to do. They pulled a blanket over their heads and shook with fear.

The sounds continued the rest of the night, but fortunately no one else was taken.

When the skies began to brighten in the morning, the sounds stopped.

Sophie had fallen asleep on John’s lap.

When they pushed the blanket off, they looked around. There was still a mist floating near the ground. The only sounds they heard were coming from the birds and the squirrels.

It was cold and damp.

They looked at the graves around them. Nothing was different from when they arrived the afternoon before.

They went to get the supplies they had left at the top of the hill to take with them back to the school.

While they walked back to the campsite, Robert asked John, “What do you think happened here last night?”

“I’m not sure, but we need to contact the police as soon as we get back to school. We have to report that Carly and Gordon are missing. Keep your eyes up. We need to make sure everything is safe and most of all we need to stay together,” John directed.

The others did not argue. It was time to get out of the cemetery and back to the school.

“Is there any food left. I’m starving,” Sophie asked, while looking through the bags.

“How can you think about food at a time like this?” Robert asked.

“I’m just saying, I’m hungry,” she replied.

After packing up all of the supplies, they ran down the hill to get out of the cemetery as fast as they could.

When they got close to the entrance, John noticed something. He stopped and looked at the ground.

“Look at all of these footprints. There are a lot more than just ours here,” John said as he bent down to look more closely at the dirt.

“There are prints coming and going. There must be twenty different kinds of shoes. This is really strange,” John commented.

Robert joined him. “You’re right. I wonder if those shadows left the cemetery, and are causing problems in the rest of the valley.”

“If the prints were only going out, that would make sense, but they are both coming and going,” John said, puzzled at what he was looking at.

“I don’t care!” Jenna blurted out. “I just want to get back to school, take a shower, and eat breakfast. Let’s get out of here!”

“OK, let’s get going, I agree,” Robert showed his support for Jenna.

When they got to the road, John noticed muddy footprints on the pavement, leaving the cemetery.

“This is strange as well. These footprints are going the same direction we’re going. They’re headed toward the university. I think I smell a rat here,” John commented.

“What do you mean?” Sophie asked, still walking down the road, not stopping to look at the tracks.

“We’ll see when we get back to school,” was all John would answer.

John was in such a hurry to get back, the others were having a hard time keeping up with him.

When they got to the dormitory, the first person they saw was Gordon’s friend Phil.

“Where’s everyone else?” John asked Phil in a strong voice.

“I think they are in the cafeteria having breakfast. Why do you want to know?” he responded.

John looked down at Phil’s shoes, and then looked him in the eye.

“Why are your shoes covered in mud?” John asked.

“Ah..., I went for a morning run. I went through the field and it was wetter than I thought it would be. Why do you ask?” Phil asked.

“Never mind,” John said. “Let’s find the others.”

John led Jenna, Sophie, and Robert to the cafeteria. Where they saw their friends in the far corner eating and laughing.

When the students at the table saw the three coming toward them, they suddenly became very quiet.

Then John saw Gordon and Carly sitting with them.

“I knew something was not right when I saw all of those footprints at the gate. You guys set this whole thing up, didn’t you?” John was visibly angry.

Phil spoke up. “It was just a joke. We weren’t sure who was going to lose. Any one of us could have been out there.”

“Who is we?” Jenna interjected.

“That would be Gordon and I,” Phil answered moving backward in order not to get hit.

“Seriously? You pulled a prank on us?” Sophie asked, as she moved in front of

John to confront the students who were now chuckling under their breaths. “Do you know how frightened we were?”

Raymond stood up, and spoke, “We wanted to see if you would stay there all night. You did, and now, you guys are legendary! People will talk about this for years to come how you stayed the whole night in the cemetery filled with zombies!”

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. cemetery _____ | a. stone marking a grave |
| 2. outskirts _____ | b. make a magic spell |
| 3. tombstone _____ | c. turned, bent, not straight |
| 4. settlers _____ | d. where students live |
| 5. monument _____ | e. edge, the furthest point |
| 6. huddled _____ | f. grouped together, close |
| 7. conjure _____ | g. place where people are buried |
| 8. twisted _____ | h. compare, the same |
| 9. dormitory _____ | i. people who are first to an area |
| 10. legendary _____ | j. of whom stories are told |

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. The students attended Blakemore College. | T / F |
| 2. Robert played the violin. | T / F |
| 3. Carly lost the three legged race with John. | T / F |
| 4. The trees in the valley were maple trees. | T / F |
| 5. Phil bought a book at the magic store. | T / F |
| 6. The Blue Crew won the competition. | T / F |
| 7. Gordon had been taken by the shadows. | T / F |
| 8. There were many footprints at the entrance to the cemetery. | T / F |
| 9. Robert brought the food. | T / F |
| 10. The story of the Zombies was going to be legendary. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. What was the name of the team that lost? _____
 - a) Blue Crew
 - b) Boo Clue
 - c) Zombies
 - d) Losers

2. What was the name of the cemetery? _____
 - a) Hope Land
 - b) Peaceful Valley
 - c) Graceland
 - d) Blakemore

3. How many students went to the cemetery? _____
 - a) 4
 - b) 5
 - c) 6
 - d) 3

4. Who was taken by the shadows first? _____
 - a) Sophie
 - b) Gordon
 - c) Robert
 - d) Carly

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What did the losing team have to do?

2. what was the name of the school?

3. Who brought the brown book to the cemetery?

4. Who played the guitar?

5. What colors were the leaves on the trees?

6. What season was it?

7. What did the shadows do when the flashlight was flashed at them?

8. How long did the students stay in the cemetery?

9. Who did John meet at the dormitory?

10. Who were the shadows?
