

A NIGHT IN A CEMETERY

HAL AMES



Blakemore University, located just outside of the town of Blakemore, sits in a valley surrounded by beautiful maple trees. It was fall and the leaves were beginning to turn shades of red, yellow, and orange, and when the sun was shining, they glowed like a burst of fire.

During this time of year, the cool night air blows down from the tops of the hills and spreads a thin mist across the valley. It marks the beginning of another school year, and the sound of students going from place to place filled the air.

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

They broke up into several different teams of six people and 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 competed 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 spend the night among the tombstones.

The last game was a three-legged race. The competition was so close that 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 game. John and Sophie fell 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. They realized 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 the 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. Just think about the stories we can tell our children! We’ll tell them stories about sleeping in a cemetery. I think this could be great.”

Not everyone was as excited as Roger appeared to be 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. Come on. it won’t be so bad. We’ll all be together,” Gordon tried to reassure her. “Don’t worry.”

“OK, I guess I can go along. I have a tent in my room I brought to school in case I went on a hike. I can bring that along if you want,” Carly offered.

Everyone agreed that would be something they could use.

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

After dinner, the members of the Blue Crew left the university. 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. This was the day they were going to spend the night.

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 there?"

"We lost the bet. If we had won, we would have expected the other team to do this. In order for us to keep our pride, we must go through with this," Roger 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 set up our camp to sleep?" Carly asked.

"Sleep? You think we are going to sleep?" Gordon teased.

They looked around and then Roger 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 Roger.

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

Jenna arrived late. She had a test she needed to take before she was free for the weekend. She was disappointed that the team had lost, and she was not excited about sleeping in the cemetery.

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 still 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.

Sophie heard the noise and screamed "What was that?"

“It’s just a few bats. They are harmless, *unless* they are vampire bats, then you need to watch out.” Roger teased her.

“Vampire bats?!” Carly perked up.

Everyone else laughed.

“Don’t worry. There aren’t any vampire bats in this part of the country,” Roger informed her.

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 on her. Everyone was laughing. Jenna almost cried as she sat in the middle of the tent that had collapsed over her head waiting for help.

“Get me out of here!” she yelled.

John and Roger, even though they were laughing hysterically, 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,” Carly admitted.

“How am I supposed to put up the tent if I don’t have all the parts?” Jenna questioned while still caught inside the tent.

Everyone laughed except Jenna. It was nice to have something to laugh at.

After eating their snacks, they opened their bedrolls and spread them out 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.”

“Stop complaining Carly. We all need to make the best of it,” Gordon said. “Just put this blanket under your sleeping bag,” he said, as he handed her a blanket.

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. Roger had brought

his guitar.

After they finished singing, and as they prepared to get into their sleeping bags, John suggested that they tell ghost stories.

“I remember when I was in summer camp we would sit around the campfire and tell ghost stories. It was fun, but telling them in a cemetery, that should make them a lot scarier,” John shared with the group.

John began to tell the story, “Many years ago, there was a man who was very sick. His family took him to the hospital where he died. They placed him into a pine box and took him to a cemetery just like this one. The problem was he was not really dead. He was buried alive.

“When he woke up, he found himself in the box.

“He kicked and clawed and hit the inside of the box until he was able to break it. Since his casket wasn’t covered with dirt yet, he escaped.

“After he got out, he went crazy. He ran through the town at night screaming he was going to get revenge against those who had tried to bury him alive. He began to kill the people who had thought he was dead and had him put into the box.

“The police tried to find him, but he was able to hide after each of the killings.

“Finally, the police found where he was hiding and they chased him back into the cemetery. When they caught up with him, they shot him.

“As he died, he fell into the very hole where he had been buried alive. To this day, people hear him wandering among the gravestones moaning, ‘I was buried alive and I’m going to get my revenge!’”

Everyone laughed at the story, but looked around to see if anything suspicious was happening.

Gordon reached into his backpack and took out an old brown book with a black symbol on the cover.

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

“This one?” Gordon showed it to Roger.

“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 our teams had made, so the owner recommended this book. It’s a book of magic spells.

“If Phil’s team had lost, then he would have brought this book with him,” Gordon explained. “Since I was the one who lost, I brought it.

“The owner of the store told us the book was very old and that the spells in it are real. We thought it would be fun to try some black magic, since one of us was 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 calm 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, there 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 even 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, as she looked around the cemetery. “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 aspi fon rapi ,” they read the words out loud.

The boys were laughing, but the girls were not amused.

“See, nothing happened,” Gordon laughed.

It was getting late so they agreed to get some sleep.

As they began to get into their sleeping bags for the night, the wind began to blow harder, and the leaves on the trees fell and spun in circles to the ground.

The temperature began to go down. It was getting much colder. Everyone moved their sleeping bags closer to the fire. The weather had quickly taken a turn for the worse.

It was not unusual for the weather to change this time of year. It was just that it didn't normally happen so fast.

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

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

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

The ground seemed to shake, while loud noises, which sounded like screams and groans, came from all over the cemetery and filling the air.

The six 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. They could see the outlines of people moving from place to place, but the fog was so thick, it was impossible to see who or what they were.

Suddenly, Carly screamed and then she disappeared.

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

“What do you mean?” Roger 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,” Roger said in a very serious tone.

As the shadows moved closer and closer, they discovered that when the shadows got closer, if they flashed their flashlights at them, the shadows would run away.

The fog was so thick it was hard to see anything. The strange sounds kept them awake. At this point, no one thought about going to sleep.

“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’s such a good idea,” Gordon spoke up. “We don’t know what’s 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 John, we should make a run for it,” Roger agreed.

“Do you even know where the gate is? I have no idea which 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, “It.. 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,” Roger 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’ll provide us with a little more protection.”

Slowly they crawled 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 him away while he screamed at the top of his lungs, “HELP ME!”

Roger 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,” Roger said as he held onto Jenna, Sophie and John as tightly as he could.

Now that Carly and Gordon were gone, the remaining four students 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. Fortunately, no one else was taken.

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

Sophie had fallen asleep on John’s lap, which was a big surprise, since the others were still panicked at what had happened the night before and they had not slept at all.

When they pushed the blanket off, they looked around. There was still 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 had arrived the evening before, except for footprints going in all directions.

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

On the way up to the campsite, Roger asked John, “What do you think happened here last night?”

John answered, “I’m not sure, but what I know is we need to contact the police as soon as we get back to school. We have to report to the police 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.”

No one argued. 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?” Roger asked.

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

“I’m hungry too,” Jenna spoke up while searching for something to eat in her backpack.

John found a candy bar and tossed it to Sophie.

“Split that between the two of you. That should keep you satisfied until we get back to the university,” John commented.

After packing up all the equipment they had brought with them, 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 these footprints. There are a lot more than just ours here,” John said as he bent down to look more closely at the mud.

“There are prints coming and going. There must be twenty different kinds of shoes. This is really strange. They must be from the zombies.” John paused as he looked up and down the path. “I wonder if they left the cemetery when the sun came up.”

Roger joined him, “You’re right. Maybe they are causing problems in the rest of the valley. We may have caused more problems by saying that spell last night than we could ever imagine.”

“Do you think they are going to attack the school?” Jenna asked, afraid of the answer.

“I don’t care! Carly and Gordon are missing. We need to get back and call the police,” Jenna blurted out. “Plus, I just want to get back to my room, take a shower, and eat breakfast. Let’s get out of here!”

“Okay, let’s get going, I agree,” Roger 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 muddy footprints are going the same direction as we are,” John realized. “They’re headed toward the university!”

“What do you mean?” Sophie asked, still walking down the road, not stopping to look at the footprints. “Do you think the zombies went to our school?”

“We’ll only know the answer to that when we get back. For now, we just need to get safely back to school,” was all John would answer. “Keep your eyes open! We don’t know if we are going to run into them.”

John began to run as he turned toward the campus. He 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.

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

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

“We think zombies are coming to the school!” Roger blurted out.

“Zombies? Why do you think zombies are coming here? I haven’t seen any zombies,” Phil stated a bit surprised.

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 a lot wetter than I thought it would be. Why do you ask?” Phil responded with a question of his own.

“Never mind,” John said. Then turning to his friends, he said, “Let’s find the others.”

John led Jenna, Sophie, and Roger to the cafeteria where they saw their friends who had participated in the games sitting in the far corner eating and laughing.

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

Then John saw Gordon and Carly sitting with them.

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

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

“Who is we?” Jenna interjected.

“That would be Phil and me,” Gordon 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 spoke up, “We wanted to see if you would stay there all night, and you did, and now, you guys are legendary! People will talk about this for years to come about 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, invoke |
| 3. tombstone _____ | c. turned, bent, not straight |
| 4. settlers _____ | d. building where students live |
| 5. monument _____ | e. edge, the furthest point |
| 6. huddled _____ | f. grouped together, close |
| 7. conjure _____ | g. graveyard, where the dead are buried |
| 8. twisted _____ | h. large memorial |
| 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 University. | T / F |
| 2. Roger 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 brought a book of magic spells. | T / F |
| 6. The Blue Crew won the competition. | T / F |
| 7. Gordon was taken by the zombies. | T / F |
| 8. There were many footprints at the entrance to the cemetery. | T / F |
| 9. Roger brought the food. | T / F |
| 10. The story of the Zombies in the cemetery 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) 7

4. Who was taken by the zombies first? _____
 - a) Sophie
 - b) Gordon
 - c) Roger
 - 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 zombies do when the flashlight was flashed in their faces?

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

9. Who did John first meet at the dormitory?

10. Who were the zombies?
