

# Journey to the North

The sun shone as before, the clouds raced\* across the sky as before, but everything was different now. The monster had stolen any hope of happiness from me forever.

As you can imagine, Walton, these were the worst moments of my life.

I have nearly come to the end of my story, there is not much left to tell you. We arrived in Geneva and found that my father and Ernest were safe. When I told my father the news of Elizabeth's murder, he was heartbroken\*. She had been like a daughter to him, he had loved her as much as he loved his own sons. His grief was terrible to see. I felt such hatred for the monster that he had done this to my dear father. In the end, the death of Elizabeth was too much for him. He had lost so many people that he loved. He had no more strength left and he was unable to get up from his bed. In a few days he was dead.



I do not remember much from that time, except that everything became dark. Sometimes I dreamt of walking in fields of flowers with the people that I loved, but when I woke up, I found myself back in my prison, my living hell. After many months I understood that I had been taken away from my home and kept in a prison cell because everyone thought I had gone mad.

I recovered\* and was allowed to go home, but this new freedom was like a torture to me. As I got better I began to remember who had made all of this happen. I decided to do everything I could to

As I thought of all the people I had loved in my life who had been destroyed by the monster, I suddenly became terrified that he would do the same to my father and my brother, Ernest. I decided to leave Evian immediately.

The weather was terrible. It was pouring\* with rain. There were no horses available for hire\*, and the wind was blowing in the wrong direction to sail back to Geneva, so I found a rowing\* boat. I paid some men to help me row back and since it was still early in the morning we should arrive by the time it got dark.

In spite of everything that had happened, I wanted to help the men row, but I soon found that I did not have the mental or physical strength to even hold the oar\* and certainly not to row. As we rowed I saw the same scenery that only the day before I had enjoyed with my dear Elizabeth. I saw the same mountains, the same fish that she had so loved watching as we had sailed towards Evian. She was now no more than a shadow, a memory. I could not stop the tears that fell from my eyes.

There is nothing more dreadful\* for a person than a sudden shock.

**pouring** (here) raining very heavily  
**hire** pay money to have something for a time  
**rowing** moving a boat through water

**oar** long piece of wood for moving a boat  
**dreadful** terrible

**raced** (here) moved quickly  
**heartbroken** feeling strong grief which you cannot overcome

**recovered** got better

destroy the monster. Wherever he was in the world, I would find him and kill him.



A month after I had been released\* from prison, I went to see a judge in Geneva. I told him that I knew who had destroyed my family and I asked him to help me find and kill him.

'I promise you,' he said, 'we will do what we can to discover this criminal.' I felt encouraged\* and began to tell him the truth.

'My story is very strange,' I said, 'I am afraid you will not believe me, but there is so much evidence that I feel sure in the end you will see that my story is true.'

I told him everything that had happened as calmly as I could. At first he did not seem to believe me, but after some time, he began to listen carefully and seemed both horrified and surprised at what I told him.

'This is the creature I want you to catch. I ask you to use all your power and influence\* to help me.'

At this point the judge's attitude\* changed. He had listened carefully to my story, but I realised that he had listened to it as people listen to stories about ghosts. When I asked him do something about it, he said.

'I would love to help you, but I think this creature would be too powerful for us. Several months have passed since his last attack and I do not think we would ever find him.'

'I am sure you will find him near my house in Geneva,' I replied, 'he could be hunted\* like any animal in the mountains.'

**released** set free  
**encouraged** (here) felt he would be listened to and so wanted to tell his story

**influence** power to make things happen or get people to do things  
**attitude** way someone thinks about something, how they behave  
**hunted** followed an animal to kill it

I saw now that the judge did not believe a word of what I had said. 'You do not believe me. You will not help me.'

I looked and felt very angry and the judge seemed intimidated\*.

'No, of course we will help you. If I am able to catch this monster you speak of, I promise you he will be punished for his terrible crimes. My worry is that he will be too strong and too clever for us. We would never be able to catch him. We will do what we can, but it would be wrong for me to give you false hope.'

'Whatever I say will not make you change your mind, will it?' I said to him, 'Then so be it. I am filled with rage when I think that this murderer, who I created, walks free. I tell you, I will dedicate the rest of my life to destroying him.'

I was shaking with rage and agitation, I knew I was speaking the truth, but to a judge from Geneva, who had never experienced anything unusual in his whole life, I appeared simply mad. He tried to calm me down as if I were a child.

I shouted at him, wild with frustration\*. 'Man, you do not know what you are talking about! You do not understand anything!'

With that, I ran from his house, angry and disturbed\*, and started to make plans. If no one would help me, I would find a way to catch and kill the monster myself.



I was obsessed with the idea of revenge. It was all that I thought about, day and night. This feeling of revenge was good though. It gave me

**intimidated** frightened by someone who is angry or aggressive  
**frustration** upset because no one will believe you, or when you are unable to do something  
**disturbed** feeling strong negative emotions



great strength and I now felt calm. I was able to use my intelligence to make careful plans. Without it, I would have fallen back into the insanity of the past few months.

My first decision was to leave Geneva forever. My home, my country, it had been a place I had loved before, when I was young and did not know what my future was to be, now I hated it. I got some money and took some of the jewels\* that my mother had had when she was alive, and left.



I started to look for anything which would help me find the monster. I searched the area around Geneva and that evening I found myself at the town cemetery\*. It was the cemetery where William, Elizabeth and my father had their graves\*. I walked over to their tomb\*. It was a silent night, the only sound was the leaves moving gently in the breeze. I felt the presence of the spirits of the dead, they seemed to create a shadow around me.

How could it be that I was alive and they were dead? The thing that had murdered them was also still alive. I knelt\* on the ground and kissed the earth in front of the tomb and made my promise to the dead.

'By the sacred\* earth where I kneel, by the spirits I feel around me, by the grief that I feel, I swear\* I will not die until I have found and destroyed the creature that did this. I ask the spirits of the dead, the spirits of revenge, to help me. I want the monster to feel the grief and despair that I have felt.'

**jewel** valuable stone, or metal which make a necklace, ring etc

**cemetery** area where bodies are buried

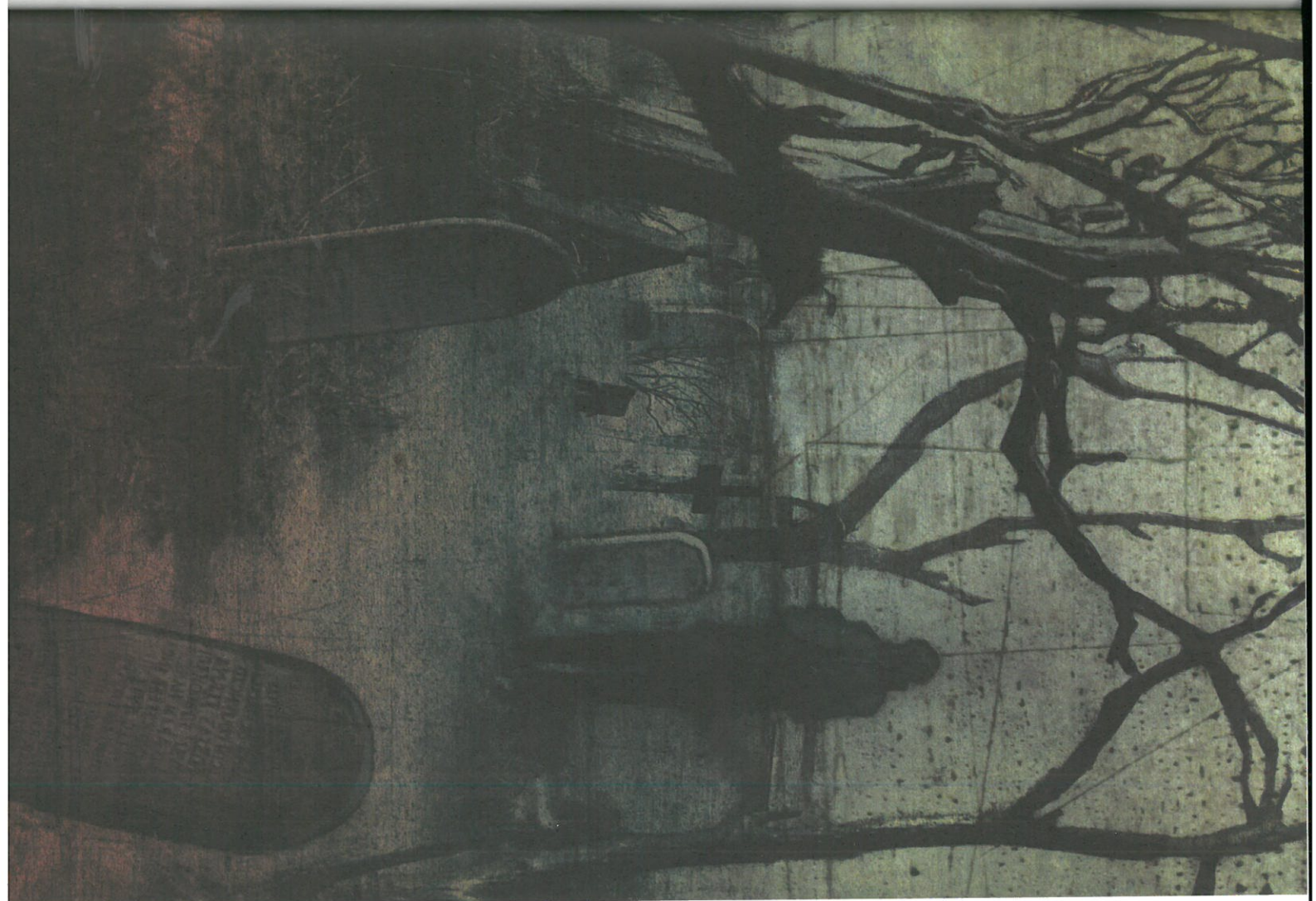
**graves** small area of land where each body is buried

**tomb** stone monument marking a grave

**knelt** got onto your knees (to kneel)

**sacred** holy, of special religious importance

**swear** make a strong promise



My words felt powerful. I felt that my murdered friends were listening, that I was doing the right thing.

At that moment, as I finished my promise, I heard a terrible, evil laugh coming out of the silence of the night. It echoed around the cemetery, echoed around the mountains and in my head. The laugh was so horrible that it seemed as if hell itself was laughing at me. When the laughter stopped, I heard the voice I knew so well, coming from behind me.

'I am satisfied\*, you miserable man, I am satisfied because you have promised that you will live.'

I ran immediately towards the place where I had heard the voice, but he was too quick for me and I could not catch him. I kept looking for him but I could see nothing in the darkness. Then the clouds were blown from the moon, and in the distance I saw the grotesque\* shape of the monster. He was running away with superhuman speed. He looked as if he were the devil himself.



I started to travel around the world, never staying for long in one place. I tell you, this journey will never end until I die. I have been to terrible places, deserts and barbaric\* countries. I experienced the worst things a traveller can imagine. Many times I lay in a desert or in some desolate part of the world and asked for death to come, but the need for revenge kept me alive. I could not die while my enemy lived.

For many months I followed the Rhone\* until I came to the blue Mediterranean Sea. By some strange chance, it was there that I saw

satisfied happy, content  
grotesque strange and ugly

barbaric not civilised, violent  
Rhone important French river

the monster climb secretly onto a ship which was travelling to Turkey and then on to Russia. Though I did not catch him I followed his trail through the wilds\* of Russia. Sometimes I was lucky, he had been seen by some terrified peasants\*. Sometimes the monster himself, perhaps because he thought I would give up and die, left me a sign.

As we travelled north, it began to snow heavily. You are young, Walton, and have not experienced these things, how can you begin to imagine how I survived the hardships\* and cold of northern Russia? I felt I was in hell, but I also felt the presence of a guiding spirit\*. When the situation looked impossible, when I was almost dead from hunger, I would come across some peasants who would share their food with me. Someone was helping me.



I followed many rivers, which the creature avoided because that was where most of the people lived, but I also travelled through places where the only living things I saw were the wild animals.

At night I found my only comfort. In my dreams I found happiness and joy again. These lovely dreams helped me find the strength not to stop, not to simply fall down and die. Each day I looked forward to the night when I would be with the people I loved, for in my sleep I saw my home, my beloved wife, my family. I heard Elizabeth's voice, saw my friend Clerval. I convinced myself that my days were nothing more than a nightmare, and that my dreams at night were my reality. This is how I survived. The thought of my friends and family gave me hope again.

wilds empty places where people do not live  
peasants poor people who work the land

hardships great difficulties  
guiding spirit good supernatural force which helps you



I do not know what the monster was thinking all this time. Sometimes I would find a tree which he had carved\* a message on.

'You have not won yet,' he wrote, 'you are still in my power. Follow me. I am looking for the frozen lands of the north, where I want to watch you suffer the torments\* of the ice and the cold.'

Another time he wrote, 'Near here you will find a hare\* that I have killed for you. Eat it! Get your strength back! Come on my enemy, you have many hours of misery ahead of you. I want you to live to experience it.'

His words filled me with rage. 'I will never give up\*.' I shouted. 'I will never give up until one of us is dead.'



The conditions became more and more terrible. The rivers were frozen, there were almost no people. The few people I saw had shut\* themselves in their houses for the winter. I managed to get furs to keep me warm and I bought a sledge and some dogs to pull it.



One day, I came across a small group of houses. The people told me how, only the day before, a gigantic monster had come to them. He had guns and pistols. The people were terrified and ran away. I climbed a steep, icy mountain and felt almost dead. I was about to give up all hope when, far off in the distance, I saw a tiny figure on a sledge, racing further to the north. I knew it was the monster. I gave a shout of triumph and pushed the sledge over the top of the mountain.

carved wrote in wood with a knife or other tool  
torments (archaic) great sufferings  
hare animal, like a large rabbit

give up stop (in defeat)  
shut closed

After that, I travelled as fast as I could for two days and, then one day, no more than a mile ahead of me, I saw my enemy.

At that moment the ice began to break beneath me. It sounded like an earthquake\* as it cracked and split\*. I found myself floating on a small piece of ice, which was getting smaller and smaller. The sea was now between me and my enemy and I had no hope of ever finding him. It was at that point that you found me and saved me from a terrible death on the ice.

earthquake when the earth shakes violently

split broke open