

Hairwoof

By Sally-Anne Jones

The bright, full silver moon glittered through the tiny crack in Bethany's curtains.

Bethany knew very well what was lurking in the shadows outside and woods beyond.

What rustled the trees at night.

What howled in the wind at the moon.

Drooling, hairy, angry, claw scratching, teeth gnashing hairwoofs that's what!

Hairwoofs hunt and are most ferocious on nights when there is a full moon. The rest of the time they wait with their knives, forks and bibs at the ready (they are somewhat messy eaters), for a full moon to feast under. They mainly eat people, this being their favourite food, but they are also very fond of chocolate chip cookies.

Bethany placed Lee, her brave little lion, on her headboard so that he could keep guard. He was to wake her if he suspected that a snuffling, snarling hairwoof was anywhere near.

Whenever they spotted a full moon in the night sky Lee would listen for the terrible scratching claws of a tiptoeing hairwoof clumsily creeping up the stairs (noisily crunching cookies on its way).

Bethany felt much safer when Lee kept guard.

Bethany got up to check the lock on the window then closed the curtains tight with not a crack or gap in sight. She climbed into bed and began to count the butterflies on her walls to stop her from thinking horrible hairwoof thoughts.

There are 403 blue

221 Red

187 Green

This particular night a loud storm raged outside and Bethany was still wide awake as she reached the last butterfly. She tried counting sheep, horses and even ducks, but they kept flying away before she could count them.

She heard her mother busy in the kitchen downstairs.

'Bzzzzzzing' went the timer for the cooker.

Bethany's eyes filled with horror "No!" she gasped, as the unmistakable smell of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies came wafting upstairs, seeping under her bedroom door.

Bethany decided that something had to be done! She grabbed Lee from the headboard and crept quietly out onto the landing. She looked up to the attic room and climbed the stairs. She reached the window and opened it slightly, placing Lee on the windowsill so that he could look out.

"Lee, you're so brave and hardly ever get scared. From up here you can see the whole town. If you see a howling hairwoof you're to wake me at once!" She gave him a hug and a little nod of thanks. She climbed back downstairs, got in to bed and hid in a small and quiet ball under her duvet.

Upstairs in the attic a gust of wind circled around Lee and blew him off the windowsill, outside and clean off the roof. Lee closed his eyes whilst he was carried down the street and into the woods. The rain was lashing down and the wind howled. The lion shuddered with thoughts of a hairwoof savaging him and gobbling him up. The wind dropped him deep in the woods. He tried not to panic but everyone knows that hairwoofs do their awful hairwoof scheming and plotting in the woods, disguised amongst the trees.

Lee was surrounded by dark, looming fir trees. They swayed in the wind. They creaked and rustled. They groaned and swooshed all around him. He tried to remain calm and brave. But then he saw it. It was huge. It was hairy. It had claws and rows of teeth as sharp as pins. Its front paws were raised in the air. This giant hairwoof looked ready to pounce!

Meanwhile, Bethany was attempting to count cows but their noisy mooing was putting her off so instead she decided to check on Lee up in the attic. To her dismay she discovered that he was gone! She was sure that a hairwoof had captured him and had taken him to the woods. So she set off in search of him. She knew she shouldn't, but this was an emergency. Lee needed her.

She went outside, down the hill and deep into the woods. The wind was biting and the fir trees around her caught on her coat and got tangled in her hair. All the while she tried not to think of hungry hairwoofs howling around glittering camping stoves, making steaming cauldrons of lion stuffing soup!

Back in the woods, Lee peered through his paws at the hairwoof's monstrous, snarling nose.

Lee saw the hairwoof's beady eyes, stern with determination.

He saw its great, drooling mouth pursed, awaiting its prey.

He looked down towards its vast belly, which he was sure he could hear growling hungrily.

The hairwoof shook his great paws in the air, closed his eyes tight and instead of pouncing on Lee, he threw two small dice to the floor. The hairwoof squealed with delight as the dice landed and leapt into the air counting as he hopped his way along a numbered path. Lee looked on in amazement, this hairwoof wasn't hunting, it was playing hopscotch!

As the hairwoof clumsily hopped along, snapping branches and bashing into tree trunks it caught a glimpse of a ferocious lion looking on. The hairwoof came to a crashing halt and closed his eyes in fear, shaking, attempting to tiptoe away from the lion. Lee quickly saw that this hairwoof was not at all scary! So he clapped and clapped with all his might to show the hairwoof how clever he was...well faced with all those teeth and claws, no one would tell such a creature any different!

Lee quickly saw that the hairwoof had been quite lonely so asked the hairwoof if he could join in, at least until the storm calmed down. They had such fun playing together. The hairwoof had made a skipping rope from twine. A football from muddy leaves and soil. Giant chess pieces carved from bark and a badminton bat made of spider webs and twigs.

Lee decided to teach the hairwoof the rules of hide and seek. The monster had not played this game before. It covered its eyes and began to count to 10. As this was the hairwoof's very first game, Lee decided not to hide too far away.

"1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9.....10. Coming ready or not!" Bellowed the hairwoof.

Just at that moment, as the hairwoof launched into the air with its sights set firmly on Lee, Bethany appeared.

"No!" She shrieked and she grabbed Lee from out of the hairwoof's reach and ran.

The hairwoof hit the ground in a rather confused hairy heap thinking that this was a very bizarre game indeed!

Lee tried to tell Bethany that this hairwoof was not like the ones they had been afraid of but his words were lost in the pounding storm. Suddenly a powerful gust of wind lifted Bethany and Lee up amongst the trees and into the thrashing branches. They began to fall down and down through the trees and towards the ground. As they fell they saw a silhouette of a great hairy beast clambering towards them! The hairwoof got closer and closer and managed to catch them just in time.

"I've found you!" said the hairwoof and smiled. Bethany and Lee beamed back with thanks.

Since Bethany, Lee and the hairwoof became friends the hairwoof has slightly improved at hide and seek, although he still is rather easy to spot. They also found out the hard way that they should probably let him win at chess! And Bethany's mother cannot seem to keep up with what she thinks is Bethany's rather monstrous appetite for chocolate chip cookies!

Together Bethany and the hairwoof perform matinee and evening dance recitals for the privileged audience of Lee, stone rabbit and Polar; however the audience are encouraged to sit a safe distance away whilst they practice their pointe work, pirouettes and plié. Bethany is grateful to have someone to help Lee keep guard, after all faced with a lion and a hairwoof who wouldn't be scared away! Except, that is, for giant zombees thought Bethany with dismay.