

'Bathgate Hills' Story by Anonymous

"Nathen! Nathaniel... Slow down would ye!" James shouted to his friend. Nathen was 17 years young, with blue eyes and brown hair. James was 16, a foot shorter with ebony hair, and doe eyes.

"Why? Scared the monsters are gonna get cha!" He teased, turning around and poking James playfully. "Don't worry Jammi, I'll protect you Hun'." he joked, putting his arm around James' shoulders.

"I hate it when you call me that," James sighed, although he didn't actually mind.

"Which one?" Nathen inquired

"Both but especially 'Hun'"

"No, you don't." Nathen said bluntly. James simply smiled, sighed, and continued walking.

"Why are you taking me through the 'Bathgate Hills' anyway? It's cold and starting to get dark." James complained.

"I can drive you back if you like, I knew you wanted to get away from your dad though. I've got a surprise further up, but if you're not up for it that's fine. I can take you back whenever you want." He said sincerely

"I'll stay, but I wouldn't do this for anyone, y'know." He said grumpily

After a few more minutes, a thought fell into James' head. **'What did Nathen mean 'monsters?'** but continued up the trail.

After a few minutes it took over, and Nathen could tell.

"You all right, Jammi?"

"Wha... what?" James said coming out of his daze.

"You feeling alright?"

"Oh, yeah... Nathe' what did you mean monsters?" James asked worriedly.

"Oh, nothing just the stories y'know."

"Stories?"

"Yeah, all the people who went missing up here in the 20s, when they were found they're just... different."

"Different?" James asked frantically

"Yeah, just... different... They were never the same, constantly looking over their shoulder at something that wasn't there. They say that fourteen-foot-tall monsters with scales and ginormous teeth would drag them into caves and tell them horrible things forthcoming... Do horrid hypotheticals to terrorize them... When they're about to go crazy it would leave. All had the same stories" Nathen said, before noticing James looking behind him.

"You alright mate? They're just stories"

"Nathaniel... turn around **very slowly and quietly...**" He whispered, not moving. Nathen turned and looked over as well. Suddenly, he heard movement ahead.

"Alright Hun', get behind me and take my hand" James did so, as Nathen picked up a stick

"Who's there! Show yourself!" He heard twigs snapping to his right and jumped around pulling James behind him.

Suddenly Nathen felt breath on his neck

"Hold your breath for a second," James did as he was asked, but Nathen still felt it.

He was just about to hit 'It' when- "WAIT! IT'S JUST ME!" Nathen dropped the stick, recognizing the voice.

"JESUS CHRIST, GEORGE!"

"You shoulda' seen yer' faces" He laughed

"Why Geo?!"

"Funny... The picnic is set up, Nathen." George said winking

"Way to ruin the surprise."

"Sorrriyyy!" George said walking away

"C'mon, let's go Jammi." Nathen said and the two boys continued walking up the trail hand-in-hand, sharing a laugh about it.