

The Beast

The Vicar and the Vicar's children had been worried for a while because there had been big clumps of hair left around the churchyard. And it wasn't human hair!

"It's the beast of Buckden," said the vicar, and she thought she was joking.

But actually there was a beast. And the beast was worried too. The beast was worried because his fur was falling out! He was starting to go bald, and he needed his fur to keep warm.

So he decided to move further south, because he knew that the climate was warmer in the south.

So he moved to the Forest of Dean, in the south of Gloucestershire. It was lovely there. He could roam about in the woods and it didn't matter so much that his fur was still falling out.

One day, he was wandering around in the woods, and to his surprise he saw the Vicar of Buckden and her children – they had come all the way to the Forest of Dean! What could they be doing there?

"We're on holiday," said the Vicar, "And you must be the Beast of Buckden – I recognise your fur!"

The Beast explained about his fur falling out, and said he was starting to get too cold again, so the Vicar said perhaps he should move even further south.

So the Beast moved to Exmouth, right on the south coast of Devon. The Beast thought the Exmouth must be very warm because it had a seaside.

And the Beast was happy in Exmouth for a while. But still his fur was falling out. The next holiday, the Vicar of Buckden was on holiday in Devon, visiting Granny, and found some of the Beast's fur on the beach. The Vicar and her children worried about the Beast, hoping he was alright. But they didn't see him that holiday.

Then, a couple of weeks after they got back from their holiday, a big parcel arrived. It had a note attached, which read:

Dear Vicar,

I have decided to go and live on a tropical island, because of my fur falling out, and it will be so warm there that I won't need fur at all, so I went to the hairdresser and got them to cut all my fur off, and took it to a person who had a spinning wheel so they could spin it into wool, and then took the wool to someone who can make clothes, and they made this coat out of my fur. I hope you like it. It can remind you of me.

Love from The Beast.

And the Vicar thought that the coat was probably the hairiest coat she had ever seen. But she wore it every day. And they all remembered the beast. Sometimes he even sent them a postcard from his island.

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This story came about because we really did find some odd hairy fur in the churchyard once, and I joked that it was from the Beast of Buckden. We always look out for the Beast when we are on holiday. And I do have an extremely hairy coat, except that I got it from a charity shop. The lady who was working there when I bought it is a member of the congregation and asked me the following Sunday, "How's the coat? Is it very ravenous?" Thus was this story born!