

The Prey
by
Cassandra Humbert

Based on "The Pride of the Prey"

Name (of company, if applicable)
Address
Phone Number

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - LOBBY - DAY

Sheriff SUSAN, 42, stirs a fresh cup of coffee. She jumps at the sudden SLAM of the front door. In strolls GREG, 30, who greets the sheriff with a charming smile.

GREG

Pardon me, ma'am, is the sheriff in right now?

SUSAN

You're talking to her. How can I help?

GREG

Well, my name is Greg Adams. You may have heard of me from your neighboring towns.

SUSAN

Adams? Can't say I remember it.

GREG

You know, THE Greg Adams? Conqueror of Lakeview's vicious alligator?

SUSAN

Oh! You were the kid that wrestled an elk for three hours.

GREG

... Yes, you got it.

SUSAN

What brings you to Ulrich, then?

GREG

Your local legend, of course: the dreaded beast of Ulrich.

Susan goes quiet. She looks around the lobby frantically before heading towards the offices. Greg eyes her suspiciously, and she gestures for him to follow.

SUSAN

Come on, we shouldn't talk about this out here.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Greg shifts in the wooden chair as Susan cleans up some files on her desk.

SUSAN

Sorry, but that stuff tends to freak my guys out.

GREG

That's understandable. I was nearly scared just reading those stories.

SUSAN

Nearly scared?

GREG

Well, based on its tactics, it's obviously a wolf of some kind.

SUSAN

What kind of wolf can climb a two-story building?

GREG

You'd be surprised, ma'am.

Susan rubs her eyes and leans back in her chair.

SUSAN

So, what, do you want to try and find it? Maybe take a photo for your advertisements?

GREG

I'm going to kill it for you.

There is silence between them. Then, Susan LAUGHS uncontrollably.

SUSAN

Wow, that's-- that's priceless.

GREG

You don't think I can do it?

SUSAN

Greg, honey, every farmer in this town has tried to kill that thing. Only half of them made it back in one piece.

GREG

And the others?

SUSAN

They forgot to bring torches. Never stood a chance.

GREG

Ma'am, I can assure you, I'm much more experienced than your farmers. If anyone can do this, it's me.

SUSAN

(scoffs)

I appreciate the enthusiasm, kid, but you'd have to be the best hunter on the planet to take that thing down.

GREG

Then let me prove it to you.

SUSAN

Sorry, but I've got a town to run. The last thing I need is another headstrong guy like you getting into trouble. Come on, I'll see you out.

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Greg SHUTS the door of his truck. Susan stands beside him and pats the open windowsill.

SUSAN

Keep looking, buddy. I'm sure you'll find something more your style.

She walks away and re-enters the station. Greg lets out a HUFF and straightens himself out in the mirror.

GREG

This is what I'm meant for. I'll show her, I'm the best there is.

Greg pulls a map out of the truck's compartment. He shifts the truck into gear and drives out of the parking lot.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

Greg's truck pulls up to the mouth of a giant cave in the side of a hill. He gets out, climbs onto the trunk, and gathers his backpack full of tools.

With a hunting knife in his hilt and a flashlight in his hand, Greg approaches the entrance. He takes a deep breath and steps inside.

INT. CAVE - CHAMBER ONE - CONTINUOUS

Water drips from the ceiling and onto Greg's forehead as he trudges along the rocky path. A rancid smell causes him to cringe. He studies the smell with another sniff.

GREG

Fox... some deer... and something else.

His feet catch on a pile of bones. He crouches down and picks up a few loose fragments.

GREG (CONT'D)

Must have been a good lunch. What's this one?

He picks up something small and smooth, with a metallic center. As he turns it around in his hand, he gasps.

GREG (CONT'D)

It's a tooth. A *human* tooth.

A GROWL echoes from the depths of the cave. Greg stands up and pulls out his knife. He creeps forward steadily. Suddenly, someone cries out.

ANNA (O.S.)

Help, please!

GREG

Hello?

ANNA (O.S.)

Oh, thank heavens! I thought I would be down here forever. Please, come find me!

The crying voice shakes some rocks loose from an open crevice. Greg tries to squeeze through it, but his backpack is too thick.

Hastily, he opens it and tosses aside a water bottle, some bandages, and some bundles of rope.

GREG

I won't be here long. If I really need it, I can just come back.

He forces himself through the crevice much easier this time and ends up in...

INT. CAVE - CHAMBER TWO

This chamber is much darker than the last one. The smell is stronger, too. Greg steadies himself as his path takes a sharp decline.

GREG

Ma'am? Are you still there?

ANNA (O.S.)

Yes! Oh please, hurry!

GREG

Don't worry, ma'am, I'm on my way. You're in good hands now.

ANNA (O.S.)

Are you one of the sheriff's boys?

GREG

No, I'm an hunter. You may have heard of me. The name is Greg Adams.

ANNA (O.S.)

THE Greg Adams? Oh sir, it's an honor to meet you! I wish it were under better circumstances.

GREG

Well, I appreciate it. Don't worry, we'll have time to talk after I kill the Ulrich beast.

Another GROWL shakes the room and chips the roof of the cave. Greg dodges the falling pebbles and hugs the wall until the rumbling stops.

After everything calms down, Greg hears CRYING.

ANNA (O.S.)

Please, come find me.

GREG

Hey, it's going to be okay. What's your name, ma'am?

ANNA (O.S.)

It's Anna, sir.

GREG

Listen to me, Anna. I will get you out of here, and I'll make sure that beast can't hurt you.

ANNA (O.S.)

... Thank you. I'm sorry for losing my head.

GREG

It's all good. Everyone goes through it.

ANNA (O.S.)

Except you, right?

GREG

Well, years of experience helps.

Greg approaches a chasm in the floor. He reaches into his pack and pulls out some rope. When he measures it against the pit, it becomes obvious that the rope is too short.

ANNA (O.S.)

Are you still there, Mr. Adams?

GREG

Yes, I'm just trying to cross this pit here.

ANNA (O.S.)

Can you jump it?

GREG

I might, but that doesn't seem safe.

ANNA (O.S.)

It's okay, sir. I believe in you.

Greg smiles. He gives himself room for a head start, then dashes towards the pit. With one big jump, he just barely snags the ledge of the cliff.

He tries to pull himself up. Another GROWL sends him into a jagged piece of rock that cuts into his leg. He cries out and forces himself over the ledge.

Greg gets back on his feet and calls out to Anna.

GREG

I made it!

ANNA (O.S.)

Yes! I knew you could!

GREG

I'm on my way. Just hang tight.

ANNA (O.S.)

You're my hero, sir!

GREG

Thanks, Anna. Maybe you can tell the sheriff that. Hunting the beast *and* saving a citizen? I mean, that thing's barely shown itself this whole time. It knows who's boss.

ANNA (O.S.)

You're a natural hunter, Mr. Adams.

GREG

I'm glad you think so. Maybe I can teach you some tricks after all this.

There is no response. The cave gets eerily quiet. Greg sneaks forward.

GREG (CONT'D)

Anna?

ANNA (O.S.)

... It's here.

Greg grips his knife again and dashes further into the darkness.

INT. CAVE - MAIN DEN - CONTINUOUS

Greg stumbles into a large cavern. The smell is so overwhelming that he gags. He swings his flashlight around the room.

The beam lands on the source of the smell: a large mesh of bones and small animals. Sticking out of the pile is half of a human skull.

Something in the cavern starts crying.

GREG

Anna?

Footsteps creep up behind him. He turns around and stares into a pair of dark sockets. This is THE ULRICH BEAST, the grotesque deer-woman hybrid.

The Ulrich greets him with a smile that stretches across its face. It speaks in Anna's voice.

ULRICH

You're a *natural* hunter, Mr. Adams.

GREG

You... you're the beast.

ULRICH

A stunning observation.

GREG

Where's Anna?

ULRICH

Long gone. She had a good set of pipes, though. Perfect for luring in foolish young men like you.

Greg steps back as the Ulrich circles around him.

GREG

How is this possible?

ULRICH

What, me existing or you failing?

GREG

I didn't fail.

ULRICH

How much did you toss aside just to get here?

Greg checks his pack: two flares, a flare gun, and that small bit of rope from earlier. The Ulrich CHUCKLES.

ULRICH (CONT'D)

And that cut on your leg! Surely, only an expert could pull off such an amazing feat.

GREG

Why did you do all of this? Why keep up the act?

ULRICH

It's funny to see people like you crumble at the idea of being outsmarted. It makes you taste better.

The Ulrich closes in. Greg stabs his knife into the Ulrich's leg. It groans, then laughs.

ULRICH (CONT'D)

Nice try.

Greg looks back towards the exit of the den. He reaches for one of the flares and loads it into the gun. He points it at the Ulrich.

GREG

Stay back! I know you hate fire!

ULRICH

You seriously think one of those is going to kill me?

GREG

No, but it'll definitely sting.

He fires the gun. The flare singes the Ulrich, and it stumbles backwards. Greg grabs the rope and ties one end around its neck and the other to a large rock.

He dashes out of the den. The Ulrich follows in close pursuit, dragging the rock along with it.

INT. CAVE - CHAMBER TWO - CONTINUOUS

Greg runs as fast as his injured leg can manage. He spots the chasm and leaps as far as he can, landing on the ledge.

The Ulrich scurries behind him as he struggles to get back up.

ULRICH

You can't keep running forever!

Greg hoists himself back up and readies the flare gun. The Ulrich appears and dashes towards the chasm. It leaps into the air and--

BANG!

Greg fires a flare into the Ulrich's face. It SCREECHES in pain and misses the ledge. As it slides down the depths of the pit, Greg continues running through the cave.

EXT. DEN ENTRANCE - NOON

Greg limps to his truck and hops in. He listens for any sign of the Ulrich. No screeches, no cries. He starts the engine and drives back out of the forest.

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NOON

Sheriff Susan stands outside whiles she smokes. Greg pulls into the parking lot with a SCREECH. He exits the truck and greets her with a stressed smile.

GREG
Hey there, sheriff.

SUSAN
Adams? What happened to your leg?

GREG
I got into trouble.

The sheriff helps him over to a bench.

SUSAN
I'll go get you some help.

GREG
I found it, you know.

SUSAN
You what?

GREG
Your beast. It put up a good fight. I managed to wear it down a bit.

SUSAN
And you're still alive.

GREG
For the most part.

The sheriff shakes her head and laughs.

SUSAN
Man, you really are the best hunter on the planet!

GREG
Thank you kindly, but I wouldn't go that far.

SUSAN
Are you kidding? You actually showed that thing who's boss.

GREG
No, ma'am. It showed me.

Susan helps him up and brings him into the station, safe and sound.