

PETER THE BEAST

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARN -- EARLY MORNING

The first hint of dawn creeps across a Scottish countryside, barley stalks cowering in the breeze.

TITLE: SCOTTISH LOWLANDS, 1902

SEAMUS (8), a small, sullen boy, sits on a stone walkway outside the barn, knees held to his chest.

From inside comes a sweet, sad lullaby.

SEAMUS'S MOTHER (O.S.)
*Rest tired eyes a while. Sweet is
thy baby's smile.*

INT. BARN -- EARLY MORNING

Seamus shuffles in and sees his MOTHER sitting next to a small water basin, cradling the lifeless body of PETER (12). She dips a cloth in the water and runs it along his neck.

SEAMUS'S MOTHER
*Angels are guarding and they watch
o'er thee...*
(looks up)
Come, Seamus.

Humming, Mother dips the cloth in the crimson water.

Seamus inches forward and sees Peter's neck, torn and bloody, the remaining skin pale. Mother cleans the wound tenderly.

SEAMUS'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Kiss Peter goodbye.

Seamus nervously kisses Peter on the forehead, just as--

PETER'S EYES SPRING OPEN --

SEAMUS
Mama...

And Peter smiles a MOUTH FULL OF FANGS.

SEAMUS'S MOTHER
(quietly)
Seamus... Go.
(he's frozen in terror)
GO!

A surge of adrenaline -- Seamus RUNS -- ducks behind an animal pen, just in time to hear --

SCREAMING. Flesh ripped from the body. Scratching and scraping and gurgling of blood. And then --

PETER (O.S.)
Seamus, do you want to play?

Seamus peers out. Mother is slumped over the chair, her head bleeding into the water basin. Half of her neck gone.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You won't believe it, Seamus!

The barn door swings open and SEAMUS'S FATHER runs in, carrying a knife. He sees his wife's body and freezes.

SEAMUS'S FATHER
Moirra...

Peter emerges, bloody and wet, wearing puppy dog eyes.

SEAMUS'S FATHER (CONT'D)
What is this madness? Dear Lord--

PETER
Papa? What's happened, Papa?

Father drops to his knees in shock. Peter takes him in an embrace. As his Father begins to sob, Peter SNAPS HIS NECK.

Seamus lets slip a CRY. Looks back. Peter is gone.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Brother!

HANGING FROM A CEILING BEAM, Peter drops down on Seamus. Seamus scrambles out of the pen, just missing Peter's grasp.

PETER (CONT'D)
Look at these games we can play!

Peter pushes Mother into the dirt, scarlet water soaking in.

PETER (CONT'D)
I don't mean to hurt you, brother.

Seamus crawls toward the door. Peter POUNCES --

PETER (CONT'D)
I just mean to share with you this lovely gift.

Peter pushes him down, SNAPS HIS JAW at his brother's neck. Seamus rolls onto his back and raises his arms as a shield.

PETER BITES SEAMUS'S LEFT HAND -- Flesh rips away like paper.

With a last burst of energy, Seamus reaches toward his Father's corpse and grabs the KNIFE. PLUNGES IT deep in Peter's stomach.

Seamus pulls open the heavy door, and a bright ray of sunshine hits Peter. He SHRIEKS.

EXT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Seamus doesn't look back. He runs straight for the sun. The remnants of his hand pour a trail of carnage over the barley.

INT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Safe inside a shadow, Peter watches Seamus run far, far away.

DISSOLVE TO:

OPENING CREDITS MONTAGE:

-- DAY: Seamus collapses in the street of a small village.

-- NIGHT: A NUN treats Seamus's rotting hand inside a church. A SHADOW moves outside the stained-glass window.

-- DAY: Tired and shivering, Seamus sits on the side of the road in the city of HULL. A horse-drawn carriage stops.

-- NIGHT: Seamus lies on a surgical table, sweating and pale, his mangled hand outstretched beside him. A DOCTOR'S AIDE inserts a tube into his mouth. The DOCTOR picks up a SAW.

-- DAY: Seamus stands at the edge of a small FISHING BOAT, looking out at the overwhelming CITY OF LONDON.

-- NIGHT: Seamus runs from SOMETHING. Toward a large Victorian building. He passes through an iron gate toward ST. NICHOLAS ORPHANAGE and KNOCKS REPEATEDLY at the heavy wooden door.

SMASH TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The FRANTIC KNOCKING becomes a CRASH OF THUNDER and the sting of rain falling on the cobblestones below.

TITLE: LONDON, 1918 -- THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR

A dozen CHILDREN lie two to a bed in a cramped, dimly lit room, a large picture window behind them. They pay rapt attention to MISS ALVERSTON (55), hare-lipped and hunchbacked.

MISS ALVERSTON

But Peter the Beast found poor Seamus,
you see. Found 'im in this very room.