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# EXTRACT

## A

# Scottish Ghost Story

By

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**Cast**

ALEX

**Time**

A few years ago

**Settings**

A castle in the lowlands of Scotland.

ALEX: Let's start with a secret.  
I was actually going to call this play The Haunted Castle.  
But that would be a bit mis-leading.  
As the building in question is actually a Country House rather than a castle, strictly speaking.  
And The Haunted Castle sounded a lot better title than The Haunted Country House.  
But it is in Scotland - so A Scottish Ghost Story it was.  
And if you ever go to Colstoun, you'll see for yourself that Country House really doesn't do it justice.  
These days it's an event centre and bed and breakfast with a cooking school and the most beautiful Walled Garden in Scotland.  
But when our story is set, back in the 1990s, it was a ramshackle sprawling estate with literally a ghost in every room.  
My step-mother was the first to encounter one – an elegant lady sitting in the parlour playing a piano.  
When she asked who the lady was Ludovic Broun-Lindsay, my cousin, who was quite used to ghosts at this stage, explained calmly that the pianist was most probably Elizabeth Broun who died over 200 years previously.  
There was also the legendary petrified pear given to the Brouns by Hugo de Giffard, a reputed wizard, which still has the bite marks before it was magically turned to stone.  
I was a regular visitor to Colstoun back then as it is the ancestral home of the Broun clan, of which I'm a member, and we were always welcome whenever we found ourselves in the Lowlands to crash, if you can "crash" in a place like Colstoun.  
A brief family history.  
The Brouns came to Scotland in the 1200s from France, where we were rumoured to be related to the French royal family, maybe we should have stayed there.  
But Walter Le Brun travelled to Scotland where he became a Broun, and soon took up residency in Colstoun where the Broun family spent many centuries as one of the most prominent families in Scotland, often seen at the court of the King, when the Kings were Scottish that is.  
Indeed in 1686, the then head of the Broun clan, Patrick, was made a Baronet of Nova Scotia for services to the crown and he became Sir Patrick Broun, a title passed down all the way today to my cousin, Sir Wayne Broun.  
But back then nearly 250 years ago, when Patrick knelt before the king on that fateful day, little did he know the tragedy that would befall his family only twenty short years later – and the reason for our story tonight.  
Ludovic explained all this to me late one night at Colstoun as he sipped on his port after a dinner of pheasant, complete with gunshot pellets, shot on the property that day.

ALEX: (CONT) "It's all the fault of the coach driver," he said. Ludovic always sounded more English than Scottish, so its not that I'm just doing a bad Scottish accent. "The reason why you Aussies stole the title. And that old bastard John Broun."

Sir John was the Baron Broun before Wayne. "Does this have anything to do with the pear?" I asked. "No you foolish boy." I was a boy back then. "It has to do with Patrick's son Robert being drowned along with his only grandsons. About the end of the family line at Colstoun." That wasn't exactly true as Robert's daughters Jean, Margaret and Elizabeth remained at Colstoun as do their descendants to this day, including Ludovic, but the title followed the next male heir to the new colony in Australia then eventually to Sir Wayne. And this was all because the coach driver coming back from Haddington one night, tried to cross the flooded River Tyne at the wrong place and drowned Robert and his sons Patrick and George.

Ludovic told me the whole story with a mixture of anger and distress, the two-hundred-year old wound still clearly fresh. Soon after Ludovic bid me goodnight and I made my way up the stairs and along the ancient staircase to the East Wing, where the guest rooms were.

It was a bitterly cold Scottish winter night but the sky was clear and the moonlight shone through the windows, illuminating my steps as I made my way further and further away from the warmth and light of the main house.

I had just reached the door of my room when I sensed someone behind me, perhaps Ludovic making sure I didn't get lost. I turned to let him know I was okay but the figure striding towards me was not Ludovic – it was someone else.

A man dressed in a blood red jacket, dark silver buttons, deep burgundy kilt and a long black cape. And around his waist, glinting in the moonlight, his dirk, a shiny silver blade.

As he strode quickly towards me he disappeared and then re-appeared as the moonlight from the windows cut his silhouette against the ancient walls.

Each time he faded into the darkness I breathed a sigh of relief, cursing an over-active imagination but then seconds later he would appear again as he passed the next window.

But it was not his shocking red coat or long black beard or even knife that terrified me to the core – it was the look in his eyes. Disgust, fury, a relentless gaze burning for revenge.

I wanted to turn the handle, slip inside the room but my hand wouldn't move.

I was frozen to the spot as he took step after step towards me. Twenty metres, ten metres, five metres – just as I was sure he was about to draw his knife – he stopped.