Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

The Ghost of Shadow Vale

written by

Jonathan Stroud

published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd.

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

The Ghost of Shadow Vale

By

Jonathan Stroud

Barrington Stoke Reloaded

Chapter 1

The Haunted Valley

This is something that happened in Iceland way back. People still talk of it, but rarely after dark.

In the north of the country there was a long, deep valley that ran from the hills down to the sea. In winter the sun never reached the bottom of the valley, so it was called the Shadow Vale. A farmer named Thorhall lived here with his wife and household. He was a rich man who owned a large flock of sheep, but he was unlucky too, because the valley was haunted.

One day Thorhall went to see a friend of his, Skapti the Lawgiver.

“I need some help, Skapti,” Thorhall said.

“What’s the problem?” asked Skapti.

“I can’t find anyone willing to be my shepherd,” Thorhall replied, scratching worriedly at his beard. “We’ve had trouble high up in the valley. There’s something wicked up there, hiding among the rocks and stones. Men have come back injured, goggle-eyed, scared almost to death. They’ve packed and left, without a word, and now my sheep are roaming free up on the mountain.”

Skapti thought for a moment, looking into the fire. “Here’s my advice,” he said. “See what you make of it. I know a fellow named Glam. He came here from Sweden last year. I’ve never met anyone stronger or more stubborn. He’s unlikely to be put off by talk of ghosts or trolls. He needs a job too, but I warn you that he’s not the most pleasant man around.”

“That doesn’t bother me,” Thorhall said, standing up. “How can I find him?”

“He’s up on the hillside, collecting wood,” Skapti replied. “You’ll know him when you see him.”

Thorhall set off up the mountain and it wasn’t long before he saw a man coming towards him, carrying a huge bundle of twigs and branches. Thorhall immediately began to wonder whether he should forget his plan, because there was something unnerving about the look of the stranger. He was almost seven feet tall, with a chest like a barrel and great strong muscular arms. His head was huge, with piercing eyes the colour of slate and a shock of hair streaked grey like a wolf’s pelt.

The two men stopped and stared at each other.

“I’m looking for someone named Glam,” Thorhall began.

The tall man said nothing. His eyes seemed to pierce the farmer through.

“I’ve a job to offer him,” Thorhall went on. “If he wants it, that is.”

“My name is Glam,” the man said. “And I’m not afraid of work, if my terms are met.”

“What are your terms?” Thorhall asked, nervously.

“That I’m left to do things my own way,” Glam said. He turned and spat on the stones beside him. “I don’t like interference.”

“That’s fine by me,” Thorhall said. “I need a shepherd, but I should tell you that the hillside above my farm is said to be haunted.”

Glam laughed, showing his teeth. “It’ll take more than old wives’ tales to put me off,” he said. “Anyway, I’d find ghosts better company than most men.”