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Claire Mabey & Jill Calder



Cass and the Beast

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Written by Claire Mabey

Illustrated by Jill Calder

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The townsfolk
had given it a name:

Beast.





They said, "Uncanny sense of smell."

And, "Fathomless as a pond at night."

They said, "Never try to hunt it. It would sniff you out and munch you whole before you had a chance to draw your knife."



I don't believe you, thought Cass, who was hardly ever scared. And when she was, it was people who frightened her, not beasts.




SOA



Cass watched. The beast moved slowly between the trees.

Cass fancied she heard its belly rumble.
Probably the beast has terrible breath, she thought.
Probably it's starving.





After everyone else had gone to bed,
Cass crept out her front door with nothing
but her thin winter coat and a scrap of bread.

Cass smelled the beast before she saw it.
It had a damp scent like a cat after the rain:
slick fur and warm blood beating underneath.



"Hello," she called to the mountain of its back.
"Are you hungry?"



The beast turned.



For Aunty Margaret ~ CM

For all my family in New Zealand, including Jack, Ellen, Shaun, Brodie, Matilda, Atticus, Kaia and Arlo ~ JC

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