

A CAT OF ONE COLOUR

by

Steve Miles

2015 Steve Miles

[stevemiles80@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stevemiles80@yahoo.co.uk)

**FADE IN:**

**INT. GRAHAM'S HIDE - DAY**

A slice of rugged moorland lays framed in the viewing portal of a small bird-watching hide.

GRAHAM (O.S.)  
Grandpa first brought me here. He  
loved to roam these moors.

A pair of hands rub together for warmth.

GRAHAM (O.S.)  
Sometimes he'd be gone for days.  
Nan never seemed to worry mind.

A small kettle bubbles over a camp-stove. A waiting mug and jar of instant coffee rest upon a book entitled: BIG CATS OF THE WORLD -- A FIELD GUIDE.

Fingers work the focus-wheel on a pair of binoculars.

GRAHAM (O.S.)  
'Where's Gramps' we'd say, me and  
me sister that was. 'Off on one of  
his wanders' she'd say. 'He'll turn  
up somewhere.' Then she'd stuff her  
apron with ham and lock herself in  
the shed.

GRAHAM CHEESESTONE, mid 40s, pasty, cherubic features set in an open balaclava, binoculars glued to the landscape beyond the viewing portal.

GRAHAM  
He always did mind. Turned up in  
Aberystwyth once, over two hundred  
miles away. No bus pass, didn't  
believe in luxury.

He takes a sip of coffee.

GRAHAM  
He were practically part of this  
landscape. It was him what first  
seen it.

**EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

Amateur footage. Handheld and blurry. The 'Beast', a seemingly 'large' feline slinks through a field.

SUPER: BODMIN FM. MARCH 15TH, 2007.

NEWSREADER (V.O.)

Police were called to the village of Pottscrow after a number of locals called to report sightings of a large feline--

**EXT. FARMLAND - STILE - DAY**

BARRY MOGGS, 50s, stoic and hard lived, addresses the camera. Sheep graze behind him.

SUPER: BARRY MOGGS, POTTSCROW FARMER

BARRY

I've noticed a commotion, sheep was running every which way but wool, in all my years I've never seen a flock so riled.

**EXT. MOORLAND - DAY**

More amateur footage. The 'beast', distant and indistinct makes a brief foray into frame before slipping from view.

**EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY**

JUDY MOORCROFT, late 30s, stands beside her parked car. She gestures to a point in the road ahead.

SUPER: JUDY MOORCROFT, EYEWITNESS

JUDY

It were right there in the middle of the lane. Just staring at me with it's big yellow eyes.

**INTERCUT - BARRY/JUDY**

Barry shakes his head in awe.

BARRY

Thought it were just a big dog.

JUDY

I said to myself, Judy love that's  
a funny looking dog.

BARRY

It were no dog.

JUDY

I've two of me own.

BARRY

It were a dirty great big--

**EXT. BODMIN MOOR - DAY**

Graham hefts his pack along a muddy trail. He pauses to scan the horizon through binoculars:

GRAHAM (V.O.)

Melanistic Leopard. Panthera  
Pardus. Commonly known as the Black  
Panther. Two hundred pounds of  
mother nature's crowning glory. I'm  
a fan, I'll admit.

**EXT. BODMIN MOOR - GRAHAM'S CAMP - DAY**

Graham carefully threads the carbon poles through the  
flysheet sleeves of his hide.

GRAHAM

Name's Graham Cheesestone. I work  
in the fencing industry. Not the  
swords. Panel, rail, occasional  
picket. I've been called an amateur  
big cat enthusiast. Not sure what  
I'd have to do to qualify as an  
expert. Certificate of some kind I  
expect. I have read a lot of books.

Graham untangles a guide line.

GRAHAM

Suppose I've always had an interest  
in the unknown. It's stuff like  
that gets me thinking.

He hammers a peg into the ground with his boot heel.

GRAHAM

At school teachers would be all  
'well this fella here did this', or  
'that war there happened then.'

He stops, casts a concerned look around.

He pulls off a sock, places it between the shoe and the peg  
to dampen the noise.

GRAHAM

I'd just be sitting there thinking,  
what aren't they telling us? Know  
what I mean?

**INT. GRAHAM'S HIDE - DAY**

Graham scours the valley through binoculars.

GRAHAM

(sotto)

Local postie saw it about a week  
ago. He was taking a shortcut  
across the valley. Dark black coat,  
maybe six feet in length, the cat,  
not the Postie.

He fishes a piece of liquorice from a pocket.

GRAHAM

His name's Phil. Worked this valley  
for years. Always trust a Postie.  
They see stuff the rest of us  
don't. Up early I suppose.

Spotting something he freezes...

...he relaxes. Returns to his liquorice.

GRAHAM

Fox.

**EXT. WOODLAND - DAY**

Graham, in the background, picks his way through the  
undergrowth, stopping every so often to inspect tree trunks.

GRAHAM (V.O.)

People are always saying to me  
'Graham if they're up there, we  
would've seen 'em by now'. See,

(MORE)

GRAHAM (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 thing is they're nocturnal. We've a  
 lot of dark up here, you think  
 about it fifty percent of the day  
 is night, sometimes more. If I only  
 came out at night you'd not know I  
 were about. I have a job. Nobody  
 wants to buy a fence after dark.

He photographs the mid-section of a trunk.

GRAHAM  
 That's a claw mark.

Several lines in the bark. Barely visible. Graham makes a  
 raking gesture with his fingers to indicate a claw.

GRAHAM  
 They do it to mark territory and  
 sharpen their claws. Serves a very  
 practical purpose. Here get this.

He directs the camera to another point in the trunk, crudely  
 carved into the bark: JIMMY '98.

GRAHAM  
 Jimmy probably did it cause he was  
 bored.

#### **A LARGE BUSH**

shakes as something moves beneath it.

GRAHAM  
 (from within the bush)  
 People fret at the idea of a big  
 cat roaming these fair isles. But  
 what is a big cat really? It's all  
 relative when you think about it.

Graham emerges on his hands and knees. He pauses to inspect  
 some scat. Rolls it in his fingers.

GRAHAM  
 What do people with no knowledge of  
 small cats use for reference?

He sniffs the scat.

GRAHAM  
 Badger.

**INT. GRAHAM'S CAR - DAY**

Graham drives. Twigs caught in his balaclava.

A small plastic lion figurine is tacked to the dash.

GRAHAM

It's not all sitting in fields. In fact a large part of the job, if you can call it that, is to investigate sightings in the area. On our way to one now. I'm quite excited.

A figure stands at the roadside ahead.

GRAHAM

Better stop.

He brings the car to a halt beside VAL CHEESESTONE, 40s, surrounded by grocery bags, the body language of a long-suffering wife.

GRAHAM

She's upset look. Kept her waiting.

Val peers in the open window.

VAL

Been sitting in that bloody tent?

GRAHAM

Hide, it's called a hide. And I'm observing.

She shuffles off towards the boot.

VAL

Try observing the time. It's called a watch.

Graham glances sheepishly at the camera.

GRAHAM

No good deed.

VAL (O.S.)

Graham open the boot!

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

Graham's car pulls away. A bumper sticker reads: 'I brake for Cryptoids'.

**INT. JARVIS' COTTAGE - KITCHEN - DAY**

JARVIS BASHE, late 60s, jovial with a wild beard. He leans on the counter-top, head back, teacup in hand. He lets out a strange gurgling sound -- he stops.

JARVIS

That's not quite it, I need a little more--

He swills his cup, disappointed.

JARVIS

I'm all out of tea here, Graham.

CLICK. Graham stops his dictaphone.

GRAHAM

But it was like that? The noise it made?

JARVIS

Aye. Like the rustling of leaves, only more feminine.

Graham flicks the camera a weary look.

**EXT. JARVIS' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Val sits in the car. Munches on a bag of crisps.

**EXT. JARVIS' BACK GARDEN - DAY**

Jarvis foots a ladder against a shed. He throws the camera a toothy grin.

JARVIS

It was over there by the pond, pawin' around after me Koi. I starts bangin' on the window, he's off like a rocket, made this roof in one leap.

He pauses to crane his neck at the shed roof.

JARVIS

He's up there looking for prints.  
Won't be any, had it re-felted  
friday.

(to Graham)

Find anything?

Graham's head appears. He hands Jarvis a frisbee.

GRAHAM

You've some felting come loose.

JARVIS

(to camera)

I'll want to get that taken care of  
'fore winter.

**INT. CHEESESTONE BUNGALOW - LOUNGE - DAY**

Modest. The uncluttered, coaster and doily glow of  
everything in its rightful, scuff-free place.

A framed B/W picture on a wall. It shows an old man looking  
wistfully out across the moors.

GRAHAM

That was Gramps. Mack Cheesestone.  
No longer with us, on account of  
his dying. We scattered his ashes  
on that very spot.

Graham plucks down the picture, points out the spot.

GRAHAM

He wanted a viking burial truth be  
known. Fiery arrow to a floating  
funeral pyre. That were a council  
matter, out of my hands.

A desk. Books and jars lined on a shelf above.

A handwritten label on one jar: Scat. Pottscrow, March '07.

A selection of Disney films stand out on a bookcase.

GRAHAM

They're Val's. For when the nieces  
and nephews come over. Me sisters'  
kids. Val's an only child.

French doors look out over a tidy, well kept lawn. A bare  
rotary line leans to one side.

GRAHAM

Never had time for kids. Not sure  
we ever really will...

Graham, a different sort of distance in his eyes now.

BRRING! Graham snaps out of it. Reaches for a house phone.

GRAHAM

That'll be Tarney, got to arrange  
tomorrow's meeting. Excuse me.

**INT. CHEESESTONE BUNGALOW - KITCHEN - DAY**

Val kneels before an open cupboard transferring tinned  
vegetables from a stack on the counter above.

VAL

I worry, I know it's silly, can't  
help myself. I tell him, 'Graham  
luv' I know you want to find what's  
out there, but what if it finds  
you? You'll end up eaten that's  
what.

Through the kitchen window: Graham drapes the flysheet of  
his hide to air over the line.

VAL

I've nothing against hobbies. I've  
a friend, John, he bird-watches. He  
ticks them off on a list.

Val, still storing away the tins.

VAL

Sees a Warbler, done. Bunting,  
done, tick 'em off go home. His  
friend calls: 'John there's a  
Bunting'. 'What kind?' 'Lark...'  
Checks his list, Lark Bunting --  
seen it. 'No thanks pal gonna stay  
home with the wife...' You can't  
insure against getting eaten.  
Partially or whole. I checked.

She shakes her head. Still the tins keep coming.

**INT. GRAHAM'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Val drives. Graham in the passenger seat, camera and binoculars at the ready. The engine STRAINS in low gear.

GRAHAM

We're off to the flea market. Always take the back-roads. It's the long way round, but there's more sightings out here than anywhere else. You can put it in fourth, Val love, they put it after third for that very reason.

VAL

It's in fourth.

GRAHAM

Val's one for the market. Likes her trinkets don't you. Those little statues of kids with big heads weeing in ponds.

VAL

Cherubs.  
(to camera)  
I collect ceramics.

GRAHAM

Dozens of the things. It's in third.

Irrked, Val re-directs his attention to a passing field.

VAL

What's that out there?

Graham snaps to it with the binoculars.

GRAHAM

Cyclist.

VAL

Out there?

GRAHAM

Got a helmet on.

VAL

What's he doing in a field?

GRAHAM  
A mountain bike.

VAL  
Waste of good money out there.

**INT. FLEA MARKET - DAY**

Rows of trestle tables set out with wares. The air alive with the hum and bustle of the CROWD.

Val scans a table laden with ceramic miniatures.

**INT. FLEA MARKET - TEA CART - DAY**

Graham sits at a table with TARNEY, 60s, well groomed, officious and ROGER, 40s, bookish and camera shy.

GRAHAM  
Right then, this is Tarney, club secretary and local big cat expert. No formal qualification.

Tarney nods to camera.

TARNEY  
How do.

GRAHAM  
And that there is Roger, media.

A bashful wave from Roger.

GRAHAM  
And along with Paul, public relations, he's at a wedding, and myself we form the Bodmin Cryptozoological Association. Or the BCA, not to be confused with the British Caving Association.

TARNEY  
Nor the British Cheerleading Association...

They turn to their teas in hushed unison, as if at the memory of some never to be mentioned event.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Tarney proudly displays a notebook to the camera:

GRAHAM (O.S.)

It was Tarney here who came up with what we call the Mystery Big Cat Numerical Verification System.

TARNEY

I classify and record each sighting according to a strict set of factors.

GRAHAM

Bloody genius.

Tarney picks a random page from the notebook.

TARNEY

A Two-B for instance would be an unsubstantiated, rural sighting in the rain, by a credible witness. Say a milkman or a postie.

GRAHAM

(taps his nose)

Milkman, or woman, up early. Gets quite competitive a Two-B, brings out the crowds.

**EXT. BODMIN MOOR - DAY**

Three hides, side-by-side. Birds chirp...

**INT. FLEA MARKET - TEA CART - DAY**

Graham looks into the camera. Level. Serious.

GRAHAM

Unlike your Four-B.

Tarney flips a page.

TARNEY

See now your Four-B is essentially the same thing, though it slips a grade when the witness is unreliable, say a hairdresser, or a postwoman--

A COUGH from Roger interrupts.

Graham winces, directs Tarney's attention to the camera.

GRAHAM  
What we talked about...

TARNEY  
Not saying it's their fault.

GRAHAM  
Don't say anything.

Graham grabs the notebook.

GRAHAM  
We try to educate people, raise awareness, it was ignorance what did it for the Tasmanian Tiger.

Graham counts on his fingers.

GRAHAM  
Done all kinds, radio, TV, newspaper. School drop-ins.

**INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY**

A figure in a homemade BLACK PANTHER costume walks up to a classroom door and bursts inside.

SCREAMS of terror from within...

**INT. FLEA MARKET - TEA CART - DAY**

Graham faces the camera, guilty as charged.

GRAHAM  
Best to call ahead.

**INT. FLEA MARKET - DAY**

Val shows off her new cherub to Graham.

GRAHAM  
That's nice that. You've done well there, Val.

VAL  
Had to choose.

GRAHAM  
There was more than one?

VAL  
Always is.

GRAHAM  
You should get it.

VAL  
No it's okay.

GRAHAM  
Go on. Treat yourself.

Graham reaches for his wallet.

VAL  
It's three pounds.

He quickly replaces it before she's had time to notice.

Their eyes fall back to the cherub in her hand.

GRAHAM  
Still, it's the fun of collecting.

VAL  
Yeah.

GRAHAM  
Can take years...

**EXT. BODMIN MOOR - DAY**

Graham's hide cuts a lonely shape against the damp landscape.

A HIKER, 40s, approaches from behind.

GRAHAM (V.O.)  
I don't feel the cold. I've this coat, Val gave it me for Christmas.

**INT. GRAHAM'S HIDE - DAY**

Graham mans the binoculars.

GRAHAM  
Don't need it, but she was all 'you're not coming home giving--

The Hiker stoops in front of the lens -- Graham flails off his camp stool in a spray of coffee.

GRAHAM  
Bloody hell!

HIKER  
Find yer tiger yet?

Graham brushes himself off. A hint of panic in his voice:

GRAHAM  
No, not yet.

HIKER  
Ah well, always tomorrow.

The Hiker continues on his way.

GRAHAM  
(to camera)  
Not likely a tiger, very unlikely.  
Stripes wouldn't cut it on open  
moor. Whatever it is hopefully it  
eats dickheads.

**EXT. BODMIN MOOR - DAY**

Graham traverses a hillside. The valley spread out below.

GRAHAM (V.O.)  
It's heartening to me. To think  
there's things we've yet to see.  
Things that's such a part of this  
land they're practically invisible.

He pauses, soaking up the distance.

GRAHAM (V.O.)  
I like to think that was what kept  
old Grandpa Mack on the roam. Keeps  
me warm a thought like that.

He tenses, eyes locked on the distance -- he relaxes.

GRAHAM  
Cow.

**INT. GRAHAM'S HIDE - DAY**

Graham gazes from the portal.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

What would you do if you actually  
saw it?

Graham pops a piece of liquorice in his mouth, chews it  
over, deep in thought...

GRAHAM

Tell you now, I'd not hang about...

**FADE OUT**