

SIMON

THE  
SWAGMAN

AND

THE  
BABY VAMPIRE

## SIMON, THE SWAGMAN, AND THE BABY VAMPIRE

Once a jolly swagman  
Laid not by a billabong  
But rather a place  
Of sand, rock and stone.

This clever swagman  
Sang his sad and lonely song  
Wrinkles on his face  
As he lived all alone.

His story of solitude  
Was peaceful and calm  
Until the fateful day  
Tragedy struck the land.  
There was no more food  
The swagman was harmed  
Then one sad day  
He could no longer stand.

It is said that the swagman  
Still sings all alone  
His spirit does not wander  
But finds others to save  
This clever, old man  
The quarry his home  
Many people still ponder  
Will he ever leave his grave?

## Chapter 1: The Incident

It started off as a faint whirl of sound but the repetitive wail grew louder as the seconds ticked by. It seemed that the sound had caught everyone's attention; they don't hear sirens very often. The school stood still and people turned to watch the ambulance travel past in a haze of sound and speed. It came from the Quarry that much was obvious. The dirt plastered to the tyres was leaving marks on the road. The teachers had puzzled expressions however just carried on with the day's normal routine. The students were pulled inside, though the sirens were still on everyone's mind. That's when Simons mum came, all flustered and out of breath. "Si quick grab your things, something's happened to Izzy." Alison said as she grabbed Simon's hand pulling him from the room.

"What's happened Mum, where's Dad?" Simon asked as he struggled to keep in stride with his mum's quick walk.

"No time honey, we've got to get to the hospital" Alison gasped as she closed the car door behind Simon. The car ride was quiet the faint noise of the radio was not comforting. Neither Simon nor Alison really understood the situation that had been shaped before them. Time seemed to slow, Alison's hands were shaking as she gripped the steering wheel. Simon stared into the slow moving scenery, it seemed different today less transfixing and more simple. The drive didn't take too long, Simon was still confused as to why he had left school early. The car came to a stop outside the emergency room. Alison took a deep breath and glanced down at her eldest child. "Ready?" she asked before she took hold of the handle and opened the door. As they walked through the automatic doors it seemed only their world had become hectic. The doctors bustled around them and the lonely people sitting in the plastic chairs seems to be unaffected by their presence, too preoccupied in their own worlds. Simon felt his mum take hold of his hand again. Alison's palms were sweaty and her grip slipped a little. She turned to the nurse. "Excuse me, Where's my daughter? My baby, she was just bought here." The nurse gave a small reassuring smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"Follow me, Mrs. Evans" The hospital wasn't large but the halls seemed to go for miles. They walked past a man in a white coat, he looked like the doctors that save lives in movies. His name tag read 'Dr. Kemm, The Chemist'. He seemed trustworthy and gave a warm smile. Though Simon thought his name was ironic and laughed to himself. They turned a corner away from the doctor. That's when they reached a room not too far from a nurse station. As Simon walked into the room his gaze landing first on the big purple curtains and then on the small figure taking up only one third of the large bed. Izzy was asleep, her long eyelashes touching her cheeks. Simon's parents shuffle in behind him looking longingly at their small child. The young nurse stands in the doorway. "She'll be fine Mr. and Mrs. Evans. Its only a flesh wound and a concussion" Alison gasps and takes a seat next to the bed. Her eyes are watery whilst she turn to Scott.

"I'm sorry Scott, I should have kept my eyes on her. We should never at let them travel Swagman's trail." Simon looks up; he didn't know that his parents knew their secret path. Shocked that he didn't realize, he looks to his mum. Alison turns, gazing at him with a half-smile. "Don't worry, your Dad and I aren't mad, Si." He returns the small smile and walks towards the end of the bed. Reaching up towards his sister he had to stand on his toes, but fails to reach Izzy's arm. That's when he noticed the blood bag going under the blanket, it had a constant, almost timed drip. He tilted his head and gazed at it, he seemed puzzled, before his eyebrows shot up as he drew to a conclusion. The blood bag and her pale form could only mean one thing.



## Chapter 2: The Baby Vampire

A vampire. Little Izzy is a baby vampire. Simon came to this conclusion as he watched the blood dripping into her arm from the long tube attached to the beeping machine. Simon's mind ticked and whirled with a number of childish images of Izzy with large, curious eyes, fangs gleaming white behind her little pink lips.

Once the initial shock faded, Simon grew concerned. In fact, he was so scared for his sister's health that his eyes began to water and his hands trembled slightly. Simon padded over to his mother's side and tugged at the hem of her sleeve. She looked down at her son, noticing the shine of tears in his blue eyes. Alison crouched down and put one hand on Simon's shoulder, comforting him, the other swiping under Simon's eye to rid him of a stray tear. "What's wrong Si? Chin up. Izzy will be just fine." She said tenderly, holding back her own doubts to ease Simon.

Simon raised his hand and pointed towards Izzy, lying still and quiet on the pink sheeted hospital bed. "Izzy is a vampire mum!" he yelled, waving his arms frantically. Alison smiled in mild amusement; Simon had such a wild imagination.

"Izzy – a vampire? Simon, where did this come from?"

Simon stomped the ground impatiently, waving his arms more violently.

"Can't you see? She needs blood to survive mum, look! She's pale and she probably has great big fangs in her mouth."

Allison stood up straight and said somewhat sternly, "Enough Si, there's no such thing as vampires."

Simon's mother walked back to Scott, Simon's father, who was standing still near Izzy's bed.

Simon stood by the doorway, head drooped towards the floor. His mum didn't believe him, didn't believe that Izzy was a vampire. Simon wracked his brain, thinking of ways to help his sister without inference from his parents.

Then the idea hit him! He had overheard one of the doctors saying that the chemist did a good job saving someone earlier that day. Simon rushed out the door of Izzy's ward in search of the chemist. The walls of the hospital were all white. The big tiles on the floor were a light grey and Simon hopped carefully on each one so he wouldn't step on the cracks between them. He peered carefully through each window, standing on his tip toes to increase his vision.

An assortment of doctors and nurses bustled around the hospital, chatting to each other about various patients, and even their plans for the weekend.

Finally, at the end of the corridor, Simon saw the chemist he was looking for. Forgetting the cracks in the tiles, Simon ran towards the chemist. The chemist looked up, noticing the young boy rushing towards him. The Chemist handed his clipboard to his blonde haired assistant and walked towards Simon.

Simon stopped in front of the Chemist and looked up at him, his eyes wide and bright with excitement.

"Mr Chemist, you can help my sister can't you?" Simon said breathlessly.

The Chemist leant down to speak with Simon. "What do you mean little man? Call me Dr Kemm."

"My sister is sick and she needs blood to survive. She's also pale and I bet she's got little fangs in her mouth! That could only mean she's a baby vampire, Dr Kemm!" Simon explained.

Dr Kemm smiled and replied with, "A baby vampire you say? How fascinating! But you know buddy, there's not much I can do. Just give it some time, Izzy will be okay."

Dr Kemm straightened and grasped Simon's shoulder, giving it a quick squeeze and walked off to attend to another patient.

Simon walked back to his sister's ward, all hope lost to cure his little sister's vampirism. Until, that is, he heard his mum and dad talking in Izzy's room.

"That damn quarry. My poor Izzy." Alison said to Scott, shaking her head in sadness. Scott comforted her and said, "She's lost a lot of blood from her thigh, but with enough transfusions she'll be back to normal in no time." Scott reassured his wife.

Simon entered the room, approaching his parents. They gestured towards the door, saying “Come on Si, we’ll take you home” Alison said with a small smile.

The incomplete family drove down the road towards their house. Simon was in the back seat, peering out the window, deep in thought.

His parents had said that his sister was injured at the quarry.

In school Simon and his school friends learned the tale of The Great Australian Quarry Ghost, the ghostly swagman that saves people from his home in the town’s quarry. Simon knew that he had to visit the swagman in the quarry near his house for information to save his sister.

Tonight was the night.



### Chapter 3: Swagman's Trail

He can save her, the answer would be at the quarry. Simon needed to go there right now. The car began to slow. His parents were whispering softly in the front seat. They never whispered, not unless something was wrong. Simon could see his Grandma standing on their front porch, her hands were clasped tightly before her. Alison and Scott didn't get out of the car. It was the first time Simon had ever reached the porch before his Dad. Scott always raced Simon. But not today, today he was preoccupied. Grandma grabbed Simon's shoulders and pulled him to her. When he turned around the car had gone. It was getting darker, his grandma led him inside. Simon walked straight to his room. There was something troubling him. He had heard his parents, and he knew Izzy had been hurt at the quarry. There was only one man who could help him save Izzy. He had to find the swagman.

He looked out his window into the black night. The quarry was not far from his home. Izzy and Simon would often go to the quarry on their adventures. They had a secret path that led there, not even their parents knew about it. At least, that's what Simon had thought up until today. They liked to call it the swagman trail, it would usually make them laugh at the odd name, but tonight Simon didn't really find any humor in it. It started behind their house and led through the bush land, where it finally came to the quarry. It was getting darker and darker, but Simon knew what he had to do. He carefully slid open the window, not wanting to alert his grandmother. He climbed quietly out the window. His feet landed softly on the wet grass. He could hear the wind whistling through his house. It always whistled when something was wrong, or at least that's what Simon thought, seeming as it always warned the family of an approaching storm.

He ran across the backyard towards the fence. Climbing through the loose plank that only he and Izzy knew about, he grabbed his bike that was tilted against the other side. The night was getting colder. Simon could barely see where he was going, the bike hitting rocks every few meters, effecting his control. Luckily he had been on the trail so many times before, he knew it well enough, even in the dark.

The moonlight was the only thing lighting his way. Weaving through the tall, brooding trees, he finally pedaled into the clearing, before the edge of the quarry. Cautiously he moved towards the quarry's edge. They weren't allowed to go this close. He had told Izzy often enough, and she usually always listened to Simon. If only she had listened, she wouldn't have turned into a vampire. The quarry was very deep. From where Simon stood he couldn't see the bottom. Somewhere down there was the answer to saving Izzy, and he knew he had to find it. He leant his bike against a tree and carefully began to walk down the first steep slope of the quarry. The surface was soft and the stones kept sliding from beneath his feet. The further he went the darker it became. He began to fall. His foot had slipped, and unable to catch himself he tumbled down the slope.

Even in the dark he was able to tell that his knee was bleeding. It was hurting him. He wanted to go home, he wanted to be back with his family. But he knew he had to continue on so that he could help Izzy stay human. He was the only one who could help her, his mother sure didn't believe him, and he knew that none of the other adults were going to either. No one believed in vampires, but Simon knew better. He had to go on. Standing in the darkness, he went to continue. He could barely make out anything in the darkness. Unable to tell how far he had fallen, Simon realized he didn't know where he was. He was lost.



## Chapter 4: The Great Australian Quarry Ghost

Simon was lost. Another addition to his problems. Izzy was a vampire and counting on him, and now he was lost. He shivered. It was bitterly cold, and the darkness was thick, with only some small moonlight illuminating the quarry. He took a few steps forward, kicking some stones. They echoed around the empty quarry. Those damned stones, which landed him down here. He summoned some courage, for the sake of his sister. He took a deep breath, puffed up his chest like he saw in his cartoons, and shouted to the empty space: "Swagman?! I need your help! Please help me!"

Nothing but silence answered his cries. The wind whistled through the dark, and the rain roared cantankerously. It made Simon feel even more isolated. Still he waited, but there was no response to his pleas. The legend of the Swagman ghost was merely just a legend, Simon was forced to admit. He turned around, peering through the darkness. Which way was out of the quarry? Night had fallen so deeply that even the moonlight was struggling to break through the darkness. Simon had all but given up hope. But suddenly, on the whispering of the wind, Simon heard a voice. Faint and distant, but it was there. Singing a familiar song, so very softly. He whirled around to the direction of the sound. Could it be?

He walked quickly, following the source of the singing. It grew louder. Simon rounded a mountain of dirt, and stopped. Sitting on a stone with a swag at his feet, was an old, bearded man. He smiled with aged lips towards Simon. Whether it was the half-darkness or the dust of the quarry, Simon thought that the man looked...faded.

"Are you the Swagman?" asked Simon cautiously. Could it be possible that the legend was true? Simon only came here in desperation, but here he was, the Swagman himself.

The man stroked his furry beard thoughtfully.

"I was, at a time long ago," he said, "and who may you be?"

"Simon."

"How can I help you, Simon?"

Simon took a deep breath. "It's my sister," he said, "She's a vampire."

The Swagman's eyes widened in surprise and he leaned back on his stone seat.

"A vampire you say? How curious. I personally don't believe in supernatural beings."

He chuckled, until he saw that Simon was completely serious.

"She's unwell," Simon said, stress in his voice. "Because she's a vampire. Can you help her?"

"Help her?" he asked, as he readjusted his cap. "Could you please tell me more about her? But take a seat, I insist."

Simon sat on a rock and faced the Swagman.

"She fell in the quarry earlier today. In the hospital, she was drinking blood."

"So you thought she was a vampire," interrupted the Swagman.

"Yes!" agreed Simon, "So I thought that if she became a vampire in the quarry, you would know how to turn her back!"

He stroked his beard thoughtfully.

"A good idea. But only you can help her, Simon."

Simon looked crestfallen.

"However," the Swagman interrupted, "I can give advice."

He leant down to meet Simon at eye level, and Simon noticed that the Swagman radiated with a blue hue.

"The sister relies on the blood of another,

But not that of the Father or Mother.

Give her a part,  
Of the love in your heart,  
As her saviour is only her brother."

Simon absorbed the Swagman's words. His thoughts raced, trying to interpret his meaning. But then the old man saw a light in Simon's eyes, as realization struck him.

"Thank you, Mr Swagman! I think I understand!" Simon said as he ran out of the quarry and back towards his home.



## Chapter 5: Pinchy the Crab

The next day, Simon went to the hospital to visit Izzy. He spent half the night pondering the swagman's wise words, and decided he would give his baby sister his favourite soft toy, a big toy crab called Pinchy. Simon's grandma drove them both to the hospital, and they both exited the car at the same time. Simon trailed behind his grandma, Pinchy dragging on the floor as he clutched at one claw, letting it dangle loosely.

When both Simon and his grandma had entered Izzy's room, Alison and Scott greeted them with gentle smiles. Izzy lay on her bed still, looking peaceful but still pale. Simon walked over to Izzy and placed the plush crab on her bed. "Here Izzy," Simon said, "The Swagman said this will cure you."

Alison placed her hand gently on Simon's head, ruffling his hair. "What a nice gesture Si!" She said proudly.

Simon sat on the soft chair near Izzy's bed and watched her sleep. She looked so pale, so vampiric. He wondered if he could glimpse her pointy fangs. Simon glanced at his parents and grandma, checking that they were preoccupied in their own conversation, so they won't notice Simon's abnormal behaviour. Simon leant closer to his sleeping baby vampire sister, and inched his pointer finger close to her little lips. Just as he was about to lift Izzy's top lip up, Alison smacked his hand away. "Simon! Is this another one of your vampire ideas? Leave your sister alone!" Alison chastised Simon, walking back to continue her conversation.

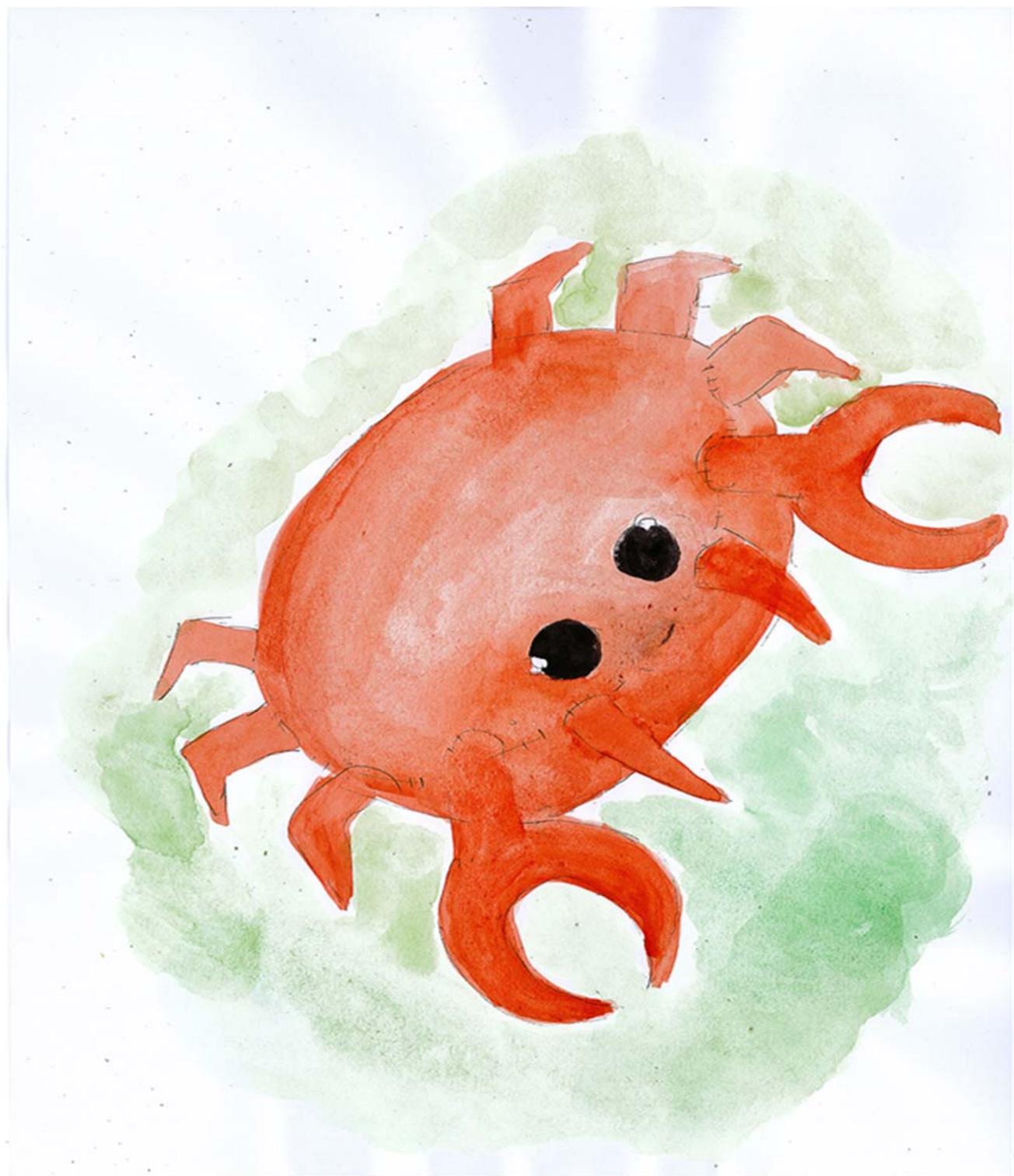
A little while after Simon's attempt to determine his sister's supernatural status, Scott approached Simon. "Your mother and I are going to the cafeteria for a quick breakfast, and grandma is going home. Are you able to stay with Izzy while we're gone?" Scott asked Simon. Simon looked up at his dad and nodded his head in acceptance.

Simon sat quietly next to his sister for a few minutes, swinging his legs back and forth, his feet just touching the floor. He glanced at his slumbering sister and said "I went to see the Swagman last tonight, Izzy. I wanted to save you from being a vampire."

Izzy slept on as Simon continued his narrative. "The swagman told me I had to give you something from my heart. You gave me Pinchy for my 5th birthday, and he has been my favourite toy ever since. So I think the Swagman was talking about Pinchy, so I hope that it cures you." Simon still sat there, swinging his legs, now twiddling his thumbs as well.

After some time, his parents entered the room, followed by Dr Kemm, the Chemist. Alison sat on the other chair by Izzy's other side, whilst Scott stood by the foot of her hospital bed. Dr Kemm cleared his throat and began to give his opinion.

"We have conducted a few tests on Izzy's blood and it appears she has a rare type of blood. In saying this, we have exhausted our blood supplies for her. She is getting better, but she will need a little more blood to ensure a full recovery. Now, do any of you have that type of blood?"



## Chapter 6: The Recovery

At that moment, Simon knew immediately that Pinchy wasn't the answer. The Swagman's words echoed through his mind as he put two and two together.

"The sister relies on the blood of another,  
But not that of the father or mother.  
Give her a part,  
Of the love in your heart,  
As her saviour is only her brother."

The love in Simon's heart wasn't Pinchy! It was the blood type that he shared with his sister.

Simon got off his chair and walked towards Dr Kemm. "Mr Chemist, I think I have the blood that can help her." Simon said earnestly.

Dr Kemm looked at Simon's parents, as if seeking silent confirmation. Both Scott and Alison nodded their heads in acceptance. Dr Kemm looked down at Simon and said, "Very well Simon. Follow me." Dr Kemm led Simon down the corridor to a small room. A nurse came in and set up the needles and equipment required to take some of Simon's blood.

The nurse put the needle in one of Simon's veins on the inside of his elbow. He gasped as he felt a sharp twinge of pain. He remembered that it was all for his sister.

Once the blood had been taken from Simon, he was led back to Izzy's room, clutching a chocolate chip cookie in his left hand. Dr Kemm switched blood bags connected to Izzy's drip to the bag of Simon's blood. He and his parents waited anxiously for Izzy to respond to the new blood.

A few hours passed with Simon nestled in the chair of Izzy's left side, Scott in the other chair and Alison perched upon Izzy's bed.

Izzy stirred suddenly, sending a shiver of excitement through each of her family members. Simon looked at his parents happily.

Izzy's eyes opened slowly, a sliver of blue showing between her eyelids. "Izzy, you're not a vampire anymore!" Simon shouted excitably. Alison and Scott exchanged glances with soft smiles and rolled their eyes. Simon had such a wild imagination.

Izzy looked at Simon curiously, but didn't say anything. Dr Kemm walked back into the room and smiled at the sight of Izzy. "Izzy, glad to see you're awake!"

Izzy yawned and closed her eyes again, nestling into her pillow to get more comfortable.

"She'll need to stay in the hospital for just one more night, then she should be able to leave some time tomorrow." Dr Kemm explained.

Alison and Scott kissed Izzy on the forehead before they left to take Simon home. During the car trip, Simon's parents praised him on his efforts to make his sister well.

That night, when both Simon's parents were in bed sleeping peacefully, Simon snuck out his bedroom window. He ran full speed down Swagman's Trail towards the quarry. He stood on the big hill and called out loud, "Swagman! Thank you for helping me save my sister from being a vampire!"

He waited patiently for the Swagman's reply, but it never came.

Smiling to himself, Simon walked back down Swagman's Trail towards his house.

The End.



## Epilogue

Now the jolly swagman  
His job finally complete  
Had helped a lonely wonderer  
Get back on his two feet

He showed this young wonderer  
That kindness is the key  
To live a happy life  
And let his spirit free

This clever old man  
Taught one very important lesson  
That to give a helping hand  
One's lonely life would glisten

Once this lesson was learned  
He was no longer enslaved  
And this jolly swagman was  
Finally freed from his grave.

## Blurb

Simon's little sister Izzy was injured at the town quarry, losing a lot of blood. Simon believes that because Izzy needs blood transfusions, she had been turned into a vampire. Simon learns in school that there is a ghost of a Swagman that resides in the quarry that is said to help people in need. During the night, Simon travels to the quarry in seek of the Swagman to help his sister.