

*Newton Park's  
Twisted Tales -  
Little  
Rona Corr*



## Little Rona Corr

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But why am I here, up this tree on this dark, dank night? What am I hiding from? Where did all this fear come from? Perhaps I should start from the beginning.

My name is Rona Corr. I am a ten-year-old girl from a small town in Ireland. I live with my mum and dad in a little wooden cottage with a golden, thatched roof. A white picket fence surrounds our dainty home and a beautifully manicured garden is enclosed inside. My mother is a gardener, she loves the earth and watching things grow. In fact, she tends most of the gardens in the town. Loved by all, my mum is softly spoken, caring and very timid. My father is a carpenter, very skilled at his craft, but not as amiable as my mum. My father is renowned for his arrogance and being frightfully opinionated. The townsfolk often wonder why two people who are so vastly different got married in the first place, but it works and they love me, which is the most important thing in my opinion.

My life is just grand, I love school, my teacher Miss O'Riordan is just brilliant, so enthusiastic and full of joy. I've been learning so much, but my favourite subject has to be history. It amazes me how much amazing stuff has happened in the past and all my short life I just wished I could be a part of a huge historical event. Little did I know, my wish was about to be granted in a truly horrific way.

It was a shame things had to change, I'd just had the most wonderful Christmas with my friends and family. Santa had brought me everything I wanted. I got a brand new bike, which was purple and that's my favourite colour, so I was really quite pleased about that. Lots of fascinating history books, mostly about the Tudors and Stuarts. Queen Elizabeth I is my favourite ruler of all time, she was so brave and in truth, sometimes a bit scary. William Shakespeare's plays have always fascinated me too, he was an absolute genius. Romeo and Juliet is definitely the best. But to be honest, the Stuarts period was my favourite era, the civil war, the great fire of London and the plague, must have been such exciting times to live through.

My favourite Christmas gift however, was from my mum, she gave me a brand new anorak, which was obviously purple too. A strange thing to get excited about you may think, but it rains a lot on the west coast of Ireland and I love venturing outdoors.

Unfortunately, the happiness and tranquillity didn't last very long. The trouble began pretty much straight away after the festive break. Everyone had had such a lovely time, the pubs were still full, every house was bustling with song, laughter and far too much food. With parties still in full swing, the initial reports of children going missing just passed the adults by. When the first news came out I remember being scared and having nightmares, but my mum was always there to make me feel better. My dad told me to stop being stupid and that there was nothing to worry about how wrong he was.

By the end of January, things were getting more serious. More and more children were going missing and now the press had eye witness reports of a huge hairy beast grabbing children away from their parents, even in broad daylight. The beast moved so fast and was so strong the children and their parents had no chance. Scientists named the monster Nocroa. Half-gorilla, half-man is how it was described, no one knew where it had come from, why it was taking the children or where it was taking them, but in all honesty, people didn't really seem to care at first. On the other hand, the papers and news bulletins would talk of nothing else, the number of lost children would escalate daily and we were all now being called, 'vulnerable people'.

There were calls from government experts for all us kids to stay in our homes until the Nocroa was stopped. Unfortunately, no one paid any attention. Children were still sent to school, we often ventured out to visit families, met up in the park, drove to the beach and even went for long walks in the forest. I was pretty nervous, but my dad was still super stubborn and said, "Don't talk nonsense, little Rona Corr. There are no such things as monsters!" He'd then show me the stats and to be honest, no one we knew was missing. Maybe it was just a big city problem? The chances of being captured by the Nocroa seemed incredibly thin, but our combined complacency meant even more children were taken. Countrywide the numbers were now in the thousands! But still all the families just ignored the warnings and were going about their business as normal. We all went shopping, to concerts, the cinema and even sports events.

Finally, enough was enough and the Prime Minister appeared on the news. I remember it so clearly, I was on the fluffy, cream rug in front of the roaring fire. The warming glow made my face beam red as I researched facts about the execution of Mary Queen of Scots for my homework. My mum was on the sofa, reading her gardening magazine and snuggling into my dad's side. He slouched next to her, remote in one hand, bottle of Corona beer in the other.

Suddenly, my dad's rugby highlights were interrupted by an important, live news bulletin. The Prime Minister appeared on screen with his floppy blonde hair and chubby face, but he looked serious, not his usual playful, jokey self. I looked up, at that moment I realised that I was in fact living through my very own historic event. The Prime Minister said some stuff about the Nocroa being the biggest threat to our society since the Great War. Talked of the pain and loss so many families were feeling and how serious the situation was. He resembled a headmaster disciplining his school and we were all his pupils. He scolded us for not taking the threat seriously and by irresponsibly taking our children outside we were risking their lives. It had to stop, he demanded. The Prime Minister then placed us all into lock-down. The schools closed and no one was allowed to leave their houses. Everything was cancelled, all social gatherings and events. Some adults still had to work and only people over twenty were allowed to visit the shops for supplies. I watched on, both horrified and excited, it seemed the threat was very real.

The report ended and my dad scoffed. "Absolute nonsense," he sneered. "There's no such thing as monsters! Still no one we know has been taken and no one will, absolute nonsense." He finished his beer and said, "Little Rona Corr, nip to the shop for me, I'm out of drink."

I told him I was too young to buy alcohol, but Dougal at the off licence was his best friend, he knew us and was always a bit flexible with the law. I also explained that I didn't really want to go outside, what if the Nocroa got me. "Here," my dad yelled as he passed me a twenty pound note. "Now stop being a baby, there is no such thing as monsters. If you go to the shop, you can buy yourself some sweets too."

I still protested but he was insistent that there was nothing to worry about. It was all lies and there was no threat to me whatsoever. I was still unsure. After all, the Prime Minister had just made it illegal for me to leave the house, but I trusted my dad and to be frank, I was never going to win this argument. Putting on my purple anorak I headed out to Dougal's shop, breaking the enforced lock-down.

The sun had set, it was grey and gloomy outside. Rain fell heavily, so I pulled the large purple hood over my head to protect myself from the freezing cold droplets. I walked briskly, not wanting to be captured by the Nocroa, but also not wanting to be caught by the police for breaking my lock-down.

I could just about see the shop at the end of the road, when I heard a spine-chilling growl. It seemed as if it was really close to me, I was far too scared to turn. Then I could hear heavy footsteps getting closer and closer. I fled as quickly as I could, making a dash for the safety of Dougal's shop. All of a sudden, a huge, menacing figure leapt out in front of me. It was shadowy and black, in the dim light I could just about see its fiery red eyes staring at me. It moved towards me, slowly at first, then travelled faster and faster. I turned and ran as fast as I could, deep into the forest, I ran and ran and ran until I couldn't hear the fearsome growl of the Nocroa any more. I speedily and clumsily climbed a tree, as high as I could and stayed as quiet as a mouse, listening intently for any sound, any evidence at all that the monster had followed me.

It's still dark, it's still cold and I can still feel the fear rushing through my veins. The freezing rain drips through the saturated leaves of the tree, that at present feels like my only salvation. I cling to the branch high up in the canopy, afraid to open my eyes and look down. Why didn't I listen? Why didn't I just stay at home? My body shivers and shakes partly through fear, but mostly due to the damp and cold. My bones ache and tears drip from my watery eyes, as the rain tumbles on my purple anorak, making a loud drumming noise. I really don't want to die, I want my mum. I even wish my dad was here. The thought of never seeing them again breaks my heart.

I stay up the tree, in fact, I become one with the tree, praying to God for him to help me make it home. Every minute seems like an eternity. Eventually, a slight orangey haze appears in the grey sky, morning is nearly here. My spirit lifts, as for the first time I feel hope in my heart, hope that I might make it home alive.

All of a sudden, from the forest floor I hear a gentle voice, "Little Rona Corr! Little Rona Corr!" I know that voice, it's my mother! I leap down from the tree and race towards where the soft, angelic voice is coming from. Yet again, I run and I run and I run and eventually I run straight into my mum's arms. I hug her so tight and don't let her go until we arrive home safe and sound. On the way, I tell her all about my encounter with the Nocroa and how petrified I was. She holds me tighter and tells me that the monster has been caught, just a few towns away. All the kidnapped children have been found too, all alive, but quite traumatised. The relief I felt inside, well, I just can't put it into words.

When I get home, I head straight up to bed and listen as my mum gives my dad the most incredible telling off I've ever heard. My dad eventually comes upstairs to apologise to me, I know he still thinks I made it all up. After all was said and done, my adventure was over and I'd most certainly lived through my historic event. It was much more terrifying than I expected it to be, but I think I came out if it wiser and learnt to pay much more attention to warnings. I'd definitely never be that complacent again. Every single life is important and we need to always think of others, be kind and just do the right thing.

Waking up after a disturbed nights sleep, it all just felt like an extremely bad dream. I slowly roll out of bed and put my dressing gown on to protect myself from the freezing morning. As I push my icy feet into my soft fluffy slippers, I contemplate everything that happened to me the night before. Did I imagine my encounter with the Nocroa or was it real? As I slowly meander down the stairs I hear the television blaring out. The morning news is on, confirming the fact that the authorities had stopped the Nocroa and all the missing children had been found safe and sound. My mum and dad are perched on the sofa drinking tea and dunking custard creams into the piping hot brew. Mum looks up and gives me a loving, sympathetic smile. I move over to her and snuggle up close, then yet again the Prime Minister appears live on the broadcast.

He smiles a little and looks a bit more relaxed then he did the previous night. "Good morning," he says in a firm, authoritative tone. "The rumours are true, the Nocroa has been caught. All the victims have been accounted for. They are physically unharmed, but mentally distraught. They have been through such a terrible ordeal, but we are convinced in time they will make a full recovery. They are being looked after by medical professionals in a secure, stable environment. We were very lucky on this occasion. Although, many of the children who suffered would have been perfectly fine if everyone had just paid attention to the warnings. For those who ignored the advice of our experts and put your own children in peril, I have no words, I am angry and disappointed in your actions and decision making. Sometimes, we have to make personal sacrifice for the greater good and temporarily put our own desires to one side. We are all part of a community, part of a family and we should look after one another as much as we do ourselves. Who knows. Maybe if some of you had thought more about the vulnerable ones in society and less about your own needs, we could have saved the majority of these children from their torment. But now we must move forward, hopefully these lessons will be learnt and we can have a future built around togetherness, empathy and love."

The End