

## Triton Savage and the Red Monstrosity – Lucas, Year 6, NSW

I am Triton and I am deaf. I go to Simongton High, and I am telling you the story of how my life turned upside down. Not just upside down, but upside down and all around. Now I'm telling you not to go to hotels and turn on the fire alarm, and if you see a big red monster, just go back to bed. None of the things that happened to me will repeat in history.

At Simongton High, it's not a great place to be deaf. We live in a hot area, so forest fires happen often at our school, so I'll just be minding my own business and the whole school runs me over. They should probably have red lights flashing, I can't *hear* the fire alarm.

I got bullied a lot at my old school for being deaf. And I couldn't say anything back. My lip reading isn't too shabby, but I would prefer American Sign Language. No one in the whole school except for my friends, bothered to learn sign language.

I was in the hallway sorting my school locker, getting ready for the excursion. I noticed that everyone was bee-lining to the bus lines like flies to light, so with my common sense I figured that a teacher had decided to call the kids to bus half an hour early.

My friend tapped me on the back, and he signed to me, 'Fire alarm.'

We marched down the hall, to the cafeteria where we stay waiting for either the fire to go out, or for the firefighters to get here.

But inside the cafeteria was a reptilian creature that I didn't know existed. Anything above its chest was poking through our 60-foot-tall roof, though you could tell it was crouching as low as it could. It was red like fire, with limbs extremely short compared to its ethereal body. But I could still wrestle one of its toes, I would probably get ripped up by one of its razor-sharp talons though.

When I entered the cafeteria, it froze in its steps. It poked its head down under the roof where it could see me. It roared, revealing more blades stuffed into its gums, just like his toes. My presence seemed to agitate it.

It charged. I stepped out of the way. It hit the wall and knocked out a tooth that landed in my back, stabbing me painfully, barely missing my ribcage. I wondered if I could pull it out and stab it. A blinding hot pain stabbed my lower back. I was pulled off my feet. The monster kicked me into the river, stabbing me with its talons in the process. I hit the freezing water that was a brick wall and blacked out.

I should've died painfully, but I woke up on the riverside, the fang in the mud next to me. I had some scars where the monster stabbed me, but otherwise I made a full recovery. Now I hoped to wake up in my bed and it was all a bad dream.

But nothing happened, I laid there for a while, thinking of how to get home, inspecting the talon that had been in my back. A rustle emanated from the bushes. I scrambled to my feet, not anxious for another impaling.

Suddenly something stepped out of the bushes. I grabbed the talon, hoping it would magically keep the thing away.

‘I-I’ll hit you with my talon, stay back -please,’ I signed.

I fell to the ground. How could I stab someone with a talon? They stepped forward, I blindly swung my sword, I must have looked like an idiot, because they chuckled at my attempt at murder. Or they were screaming, hard to tell when you’re deaf.

‘Stop.’ A simple sign, hitting your hand like a knife on a chopping board.

Why would I stop? I was a boy who had just been stabbed, thrown across the world, and I didn’t know where I was. Yet he did know sign language, which was odd. That only made me more sceptical.

I eventually tired out and stopped swinging the talon. Looking up at the man, he looked like a farmer with his broad hat made with straw-like material. He had red clothes with a criss-cross pattern. Basically, your stereotypical farmer.

‘Tell me why I found you in my river?’

By the time I finished explaining, his eyebrows were so high they were hidden behind his broad hat. In this time, he also explained that he was deaf too. I thought he was going to call an ambulance to send me to an asylum. The farmer just stood there.

He signed, ‘This monster sounds like the thing that’s been stealing my crops.’ It was his turn to explain.

He told me that something was stealing whole acres of crops from his farm. When he set up a camera to catch it, he saw the monster. He thought he was insane. When he told his neighbours, they called the police. Now, he knew the monster was real and he had an idea to stop it.

His idea *was* an idea, though not necessarily a good one. He wanted to slay the beast, while at the same time proving we weren’t insane. He wanted to load a truck with all his crops, dump them on top of a building, and when the creature took the bait, I needed to stab it with my talon.

It took a long time to harvest all the crops on that hot summer day and loading them into the truck took all night in the cold, but muggy breeze. We set off at 6 am, on the road to the nearest multi storey parking lot. It was a choice between the one at the Sydney Airport and the one at Western Sydney Airport. We decided that it would be better to go to the Western Sydney Airport because we would cause less destruction and it was closer to both Simongton High and the farm.

As we drove, we talked little. Partly because we might have been driving to our deaths, but mostly because it’s hard to sign to each other while you’re driving. The road was a wasteland of dirt and tar. It looked dry and ancient, as if it had been there for hundreds of years. It might have been, but I doubted it, it was probably just unfinished. Nothing was finished in Sydney. I preferred it in Penrith, because it was the quietest place you could have in Sydney.

I was signing to him, 'Do you think this will work?' but the truck suddenly flipped, so it looked more like, 'Is the donkey in the shower?!'

We did a barrel roll, up down, right left, forward back. We screeched to a stop fifty metres ahead of where we flipped. We had scraped half the truck off, and we were now upside down looking at the road through the smashed wind shield.

It was such an impossible angle that something had to be acting as a lever to keep us there. When I looked back, I saw the giant red guy stuffing its face with corn and wheat. His foot was lodged under the truck to keep the yummy crops pouring out of the back of the truck.

We tried the door, but the lock was broken. We smashed the window and leapt out. I got heaps of cuts from the glass, but I would heal. The monster ignored us and kept munching. We were running out of crops to distract it.

I had an idea too crazy to explain in sign language, so I just sprinted to the orange bushes across the road. The farmer seemed to know what I was doing, which was great because I didn't. When I got over to our new backup crops that weren't ours, I realised we needed elevation. Luckily, the monster got frustrated with his meal coming at only 500 miles per hour. So, it opened the truck like a can of tuna, emptied the thing, and threw it at us. There was now elevation, but not so luckily, that elevation had trapped me like a cage.

I crawled to the edge of the cage where there was a gap, and I passed the talon to the farmer. I expected him to use it himself, but he just cut a hole through the metal truck and helped me out. The monster finished his meal and charged towards us for the rest of his meal. As it crouched down to stuff its face with more food, I ran my blade through the roof of its mouth. It fell sideways, obviously dead.

The town was saved, and nobody knew, I was fine with that as long as the monster hadn't stepped on all of the KFCs, because I really needed a hamburger.