

DASH
DEFEATS THE CLOAK OF
“Fa-teeg”



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On With Life for Family/Carers/Parents of UI8's

“Our main aim is to reach as many Carers nationally as possible who care for a loved one with an acquired brain injury. We offer Information, Education, Training and Support to families, which in turn helps to improve Carers’ and Family Members’ overall wellbeing.”

A note from the Author:

In seeking to develop resources for schools, the story of Dash has been created with the support of the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland “On With Life” Team - Susan Fitzpatrick, Ged Barry Ryan, Dolores Gallagher, Sara Prodoni and myself.

*This story has been reviewed by
Dr. Brian Mc Clean, Principal Clinical Psychologist, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland*

A special thanks to my sons Christopher and Conor for their support.

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Introduction

The story of Dash teaches us about brain injury as experienced through the eyes of a young wolf, after having an accident. We learn that not all injuries are visible - we can't see them so we should listen to and support our friends who may be struggling with invisible injuries like fatigue. This story encourages empathy, understanding, and kindness towards others.

The story is a resource for national schools and is created to inform us more about one common side effect of an acquired brain injury - Fatigue, a deep form of tiredness.

Dash Defeats the Cloak of “Fa-teeg”

Once upon a time, there was a young wolf cub named Dash who lived with his family, the wolf pack, called *White Fangs*. They lived in the wilderness, far away from any dangers of humans.



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Dash was the strongest of the litter, an energetic and curious cub, always eager to learn and play with the other cubs. The cave, where their den was set, went deep into a mountain side. Sheba, his mother, warned him not to venture too far in. Ever!



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As he grew older and stronger, Dash joined in with exciting wolf hunts so the pack could survive and stay strong.



The pack would chase down buffalo and take turns leading the hunt. This gave each wolf in the pack a chance to rest. Dash was always eager to lead the pack due to his strength and speed. During the hunt, he was filled with excitement, enjoying being part of the pack.

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After hunting and feasting, with bellies full, there was play-fight time. This could look like the young wolves were fighting for real, but this was only practice fighting, strengthening the wolves’ bonds and skills in case they were attacked by a rival pack.



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At times, the pack would hold a counsel of the elders, when important decisions were made. The elders would tell stories of past exciting hunts, and Dash loved nothing better than to listen to these. Afterwards, everyone would sing and howl at the moon.



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Although forbidden to do so, one day Dash and one of his brothers decided to explore the deep cave at the back of their den. They padded along carefully and came to a high pile of rocks, right up to the roof, blocking their way. “I’ll go up and see if there’s a way through,” said Dash.

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He clambered over the rocks but, as he did, he could feel them starting to move beneath him. Before he had a chance to escape, a large rock began to roll down from the top. He rushed to get out of the way shouting to his brother, “Get out quick”. After the dust settled, Dash lay trapped beneath a big rock, one of his front paws and the side of his head feeling very sore.



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Luckily, the pack were able to rescue Dash, their strong paws able to loosen the rocks enough to pull him free. Over the next few weeks, the wolves cared for him gently back at the den, making sure to give him the nicest pieces of meat to help him get better. Dash slowly recovered physically, and the pack told him he looked well again, but he knew he didn't feel fully better. He just couldn't explain it.



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Finally, his paw got well enough so he could go out on a wolf hunt. Dash found that he needed to spend a shorter time leading the pack. He didn't seem to have the same strength and energy he used to have.

He found himself going to the back of the pack more often, letting a different wolf lead.

He also noticed that instead of enjoying the fun with his mates during play-fight time, he would find himself getting cross and irritable.

At these times, he would go off on his own, finding his favourite spot beneath a shady tree and rest for a while.

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Sadly, the storytelling that he had once loved, now seemed to go on forever, and he'd sometimes fall asleep in the middle of it. Dash found that after the hunting, storytelling and play fighting, he would need a few days to rest and feel like himself again.

Not like him!

He knew things were different since he had his accident.

His paw was better, *but there was something else not better.*

He felt as if an invisible cloak surrounded him and had power over him, and the pack couldn't see it. His mates sometimes didn't let him join in their games and Dash became sad and confused by this invisible cloak that had this awful power.

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He wondered how he could get anyone to help him, as there was no proof to be seen on the outside. However, Sheba his mother, noticed the change in him and spoke to the wise old She-wolf called Seeker.



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This elder She-wolf was kind and watched over the pack, especially the cubs. Seeker spoke gently with Dash, and he was happy as she seemed to understand his struggle. As Seeker listened, he felt the invisible cloak start to lose its power.



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“Dash” she said, “the invisible cloak you wear is called Fa-teeg, (fatigue in human language) which is invisible to us and felt only by you. The accident when you hit your head is why it has come. I have seen this before. Because Fa-teeg has come, it means that until it’s overpowered you will have deep feelings of tiredness.

This Fa-teeg cloak can be defeated.



First, speak to the Council of Wolves, it really helps when others understand.

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What’s more, a magical power of special energy to defeat Fa-teeg can be given to you each day, as a gift. This is from Gaia, Goddess of Dreams. Gaia only gives this gift during dreamtime. Dreamtime you must have *during hours of daylight*. “Can you rest in the daytime?”

Dash nodded.



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Now he'd be able to control Fa-teeg, instead of it controlling him. Seeker described what the Goddess Gaia looked like so Dash would recognise her easily in dreamtime.

Seeker called for a special Council meeting, and Dash shyly but bravely spoke at it.

He told them everything that happened since his accident, and all about the deep tiredness. He said, “I know it's hard for you to understand because the cloak of Fa-teeg cannot be seen.”

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The pack realised Dash needed their support, because of his accident. They wanted him to get better and be happy again, as each member was very important to them.

The wolf elders vowed never to let the invisible cloak of Fa-teeg have such power over one of their pack ever again.

In time, Dash took back full control of his life. One day, a long way off, he became the pack’s new leader, generous and kind and sharing his wisdom with others.

Beating Fa-teeg was just the start of Dash’s adventures!



The END

Oh, by the way...

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...Dash says, if he was a pupil coming back to school after a head injury, he'd like to offer some advice on Fa-teeg (Fatigue):

1. “Fa-teeg” can be the toughest thing to deal with because it's invisible. Chat with me and I'll tell you what I can about it. Some days are worse than others, some better.



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2. Because of “Fa-teeg” I may seem irritable and grumpy. I don’t wish to be this way and I haven’t fallen out with you. Please don’t be hurt or think I don’t want to play or be your friend. Although there is a change, I am still me.



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3. I may be overwhelmed from too much going on in the classroom. Is there a special place I could take a rest? Like my shady spot under the tree. I really do much better getting dreamtime during the day, if I can manage it.



4. Because of “Fa-teeg”, I may need extra time to do my work. I do need to take breaks though. I might not seem as quick with my answers as I used to be, at times - that can be the effect of Fa-teeg.

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5. If there are times of heavy concentration, like when I was on a hunt or listening to stories, I may need some days rest afterwards.



6. “Fa-teeg” can affect memory, concentration, attention; all the things that are needed for learning new stuff. It’s not that I’m not able or lazy, it’s just that I can’t take in all of the information if I’m tired.

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7. If my teacher and my mates could know more about Fa-teeg and how it affects me, it would be much better for me.

8. I need help understanding all of this as well and will rely on you, my teacher, and other special people to help us all understand.

Your friend from the wilderness,

Dash The Wolf Cub







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