**Evil Eric Eczema**

**and the boy who beat him**

*This story is about a [clever and kind] boy who was good at [doing crosswords and puzzles and drawing]. His name was [Tom], and he lived in [Featherstone], [Staffordshire]. He had very bad eczema so his [Mum and Dad] took him to the [Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham] where he was given special treatments called [Double Base], [Betnovate-C] and [Haelan Tape].*

This is a story about a clever boy who managed to stand up and deal with a nasty, sneaky, pesky bully. The thing is that the bully wasn’t a human being. No, the bully’s name was Eric Eczema, and he was horrible. He was so horrible that children called him Evil Eric Eczema.

Evil Eric liked nothing better than creeping into the homes of children while everyone was asleep and getting onto their skin. When he was there, he took delight in causing horrible, horrendous havoc.

When Evil Eric got on a child’s skin he would make it flaky and sore, which would drive the children mad. He would suck out all the moisture to make it dry, which the children would truly hate. He would make their skin agonisingly itchy, which would make those kids go half crazy!

They really could not stand Evil Eric and his horrible habits. They just wanted him to go away. Or *at least* stop being such a nasty pest all the time.

Evil Eric Eczema would visit all sorts of children all over the whole world – rich or poor, big or small, girl or boy – he wasn’t bothered as long as he could pester and fester, and make them stay up late itching and scratching.

One of these children was a *[clever and kind]* boy who lived in *[Featherstone], [Staffordshire]*. His name was *[Tom]*  He was very good at *[doing crosswords and puzzles and drawing]*.

Evil Eric Eczema had been bothering *[Tom]*  for years and years and years. He got on *[Tom]* ’s skin and made it dry and itchy so that he felt like scratching it sore. He made little bits go red, he even made some bits flake off. Evil Eric Eczema was a *real* pain for *[Tom]*: he was fed up of him. *[Tom]*  thought Evil Eric Eczema was a right old nuisance. One day *[Tom]*  decided that he would show Evil Eric that *he* was the boss, not Eric.

*[Tom]*’s *[Mum and Dad]*  wanted to help out too, so they decided to go and visit some people who they heard could help *[Tom]*  show Evil Eric who was the boss. These people were at the *[Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham]* .

When they got to the *[Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham]*  they met a special skin Doctor and their team. This doctor had helped lots of other boys like *[Tom]*  defeat Evil Eric Eczema before. The doctor was very clever, and very carefully inspected where Evil Eric Eczema had been on *[Tom]* ’s skin.

The doctor and nurse explained to *[Tom]*  and his *[Mum and Dad]*  what could be done to beat Evil Eric (or *at least* stop him being such a nuisance). They said that they would give *[Tom]*  some super special weapons that he could use to show Evil Eric Eczema who was boss (of course, they had lots of other weapons that *[Tom]*  could try if those ones didn’t work enough).

The first weapon was called *[Double Base]*, which was a good and reliable weapon to have in the fight against Evil Eric. *[Double Base]* had a special job, which was to put back in all the moisture that Evil Eric had sucked and stolen out of *[Tom]* ’s skin.

The second weapon was very special. It was one that Evil Eric was absolutely, utterly, knee-shakingly petrified of. The name of this special weapon was *[Betnovate-C]*, which was part of the Steroid family. *[Betnovate-C]* was a special cream that came out of a white tube. It was clear and cold and fresh, like a mountain steam, and could cool the hot, red rash of Evil Eric Eczema like a powerful, crashing waterfall pouring down on his horrid head.

The third weapon was a cousin of *[Betnovate-C]*, as it was part of the steroid family too. It was called *[Haelan Tape]*. *[Tom]* and his *[Mum and Dad]*  could put it on Evil Eric Eczema and it would fight off the itchiness, as well as protecting *[Tom]*’s skin. Evil Eric Eczema did not like to be suffocated by *[Haelan Tape]*. He knew *[Tom]*  had now got three powerful weapons he could use to show Evil Eric who was boss.

*[Tom]* and his *[Mum and Dad]*  were shown how to use these three weapons in the places where Evil Eric was causing the most mischief. These were the places where *[Tom]* ’s skin was red and dry and flaky and sore. Evil Eric did not like this one bit. He knew that he was in trouble when *[Betnovate-C]*, *[Haelan Tape]* and *[Double Base]* visited those places where he had been wreaking havoc on *[Tom]* ’s skin.

When Evil Eric felt *[Tom]* ’s (or his *[Mum and Dad]* ) hand coming down with *[Betnovate-C]*, he would get scared then angry and try to fight back. *[Tom]*  could sometimes feel this battle on between *[Betnovate-C]* and Evil Eric going on. It felt like stinging – Evil Eric’s anger about being defeated was hot and sharp.

But *[Tom]*  knew that the cool and fresh *[Betnovate-C]* would win in the end, with the help of *[Haelan Tape]* and *[Double Base]* too. Evil Eric’s resistance couldn’t last forever. *[Tom]*  knew that if he didn’t give up and kept using his weapons he would win.

After some weeks of using these things, Evil Eric Eczema began to realise that *[Tom]*  was beginning to be the boss and not him. “They’re getting the better of me they are, *[Tom]*  and all his weapons and all that,” Evil Eric muttered moodily, “he ain’t even falling for my trick of keeping *[Betnovate-C]* off anymore,” he growled.

“Hey, I know – if I hide for a bit, maybe he will think I’ve gone away and he’ll stop using them. Then I’ll come straight back… surprise!! Heh heh.”

So Evil Eric hid away. But *[Tom]*  was clever too. He remembered the doctor had told him that this was one of Eric Eczema’s tricks. So he didn’t fall for it and kept on using all his weapons. “Graaghhh!!” yelled Evil Eric to himself, “he ain’t fallen for it one bit! I can’t deal with this, I’d better get lost.” And with that, *[Tom]* ’s skin became less dry, and less flaky and less red and itchy … what a relief!

*[Tom]*  and his family were very happy. They had stood up to Evil Eric Eczema and shown him that *[Tom]*  was the boss. They knew that Evil Eric might sneak back and try his old bullying tricks, but they also knew how to deal with him, and what weapons they could use. And they knew that the people at the *[Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham]*  would be able to help them out again if things got tough…

**The End.**

Produced by Dr Rohan Naidoo in collaboration with the Children’s Dermatology Department, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts and the Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology, University of Nottingham

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