

One wet evening, Tom, who was alone in his room, was playing on his Xbox when his phone started to mysteriously buzz. It was a call from his friend James.

“Hey mate, would you come down to the park later after dark to help me make a dance video?” James said, his voice sounding far away.

“Sure, let me just check my parents are asleep and I’ll come meet you,” Tom replied without any hesitation. He thought for a moment as he listened out for his parents, unsure whether it was a good idea. After deliberating, he excitedly finished his game, turned off his bedroom light and shoved his camera into his backpack. As quiet as a mouse, whilst his mum slept, he tiptoed down the stairs and stepped silently into the night. He could feel his blood racing through his body.

Ten minutes later, Tom arrived at the outskirts of the derelict, deserted park. The gates stood high, looming over him, and the trees whispered a silent warning. He shivered. As he shuffled through the park, old lampposts illuminated a dusty pathway, but everywhere else was consumed by darkness. He felt like he was being watched as a blanket of clouds held back the moonlight. All was still.

As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, Tom could see the play equipment in the distance. Quickly, he set up his camera ready to film. He looked around but could see nothing but rusty swings, long grass and overgrown hedges. A light began to flicker. A strange, icy feeling ran down his spine. Was someone there?

Warily, Tom sat on the moss-covered bench and waited for James. He wondered how long it would be until he arrived. Behind him, he heard the metal chains chinking a sharp tone. He whipped his head around and could hear the grinding of the merry-go-round as it slowly turned. He heard a scurry. Tom jumped up, looked around and froze. Nothing was there. The wind howled menacingly as his heart pounded in his chest like a hammer.

Without a second thought, Tom raced back through the park, his feet hammering against the ground as he headed for home. He paused at a lamppost at the edge of Willow Lane to catch his breath, suddenly realising he had left his camera behind. Tom looked back the way he came and saw the finger-like branches clawing at the starless sky. A shiver ran down his spine and he quickly turned back towards his house. He’d go get the camera tomorrow.

Early the next morning, Tom returned to the park to fetch his camera. The park did not look or feel so scary in the light of day. When he looked through his camera footage, he saw James and his friends laughing pulling ropes to make rustling noises in the bushes and throwing chains on the old merry go round. He stared blankly at the video and wondered why his friends would do that to him.

Knowing that his friends had tricked him, anger ran through Tom’s veins. He vowed not to be so easily tricked by James again.