Opening

Build Up

Climax

Resolution

Ending

The School that Stood Alone

Everyone knew the stories about it. Yet no one dared visit it. It just stood on its own, like an unwanted and abandoned person.

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The fading winter night began to draw in as Lionel and Adele played ball at the park. Even though their mum had told them to return before it got too dark, they continued to play long after this time. Rain began to fall slowly and the winter leaves were whipped up into a frenzy by the gusting breeze. It was as if a cold skeletal hand had descended on the park and had gripped it tightly.

Adele, who played football at school, was shooting at her brother Lionel. She’d scored five straight times and just wanted to make it six. This time however, the ball flew high over the bar and disappeared over the dense hedgerow, which separated the park from an unknown site on the other side.

Lionel frowned. He knew the ball was lost and certainly had no intention of going to get it, especially with the light fading so fast.

Adele smirked as she could see the fear on her brother’s face.

“Come on. Let go get it. It’ll only take a few minutes,” smiled Adele, and with that, she headed towards a hole in the thick hedge.

Lionel looked at the looming hedge and the darkness that lay beyond it. His eyes were drawn to the now descending mist, laying a blanket across the park and the first street light he saw turn on. His hands were clammy and his stomach sank. Something didn’t feel right.

“Well,” shouted Adele, “You coming or not?”

Lionel gulped heavily and considered his options - walking home on his own at this time or staying with his older sister? Neither choices were great, but his sister was the better choice.

“Sure,” mumbled Lionel, “I’m coming.”

Lionel rushed to catch up to Adele and just saw her squeeze through the whole in the hedge. Lionel followed, scratching himself on razor sharp thorns in the process. His stomach churned.

He continued to move through the bushes, sensing the rain beginning to fall and the howling wind whipped across him like wolves calling to the moon. Within a few minutes, he had freed himself of the tangles and stood on free ground at last.

A building loomed suddenly in front of him. It was neglected and dilapidated. Tiles hung limply from the broken roof and it was as silent as an eerie grave. It was almost as if the building was sad, with dread clinging to it. Scaffolding, like a rusty exoskeleton, surrounded the walls and scorch marks were visible on the crumbling walls.

“What’s this?” enquired Lionel. An uneasy feeling beginning to crawl over his skin.

Adele stood motionless. “It’s . . . Harbrooke Primary. Or it was. You know the story, right?”

Lionel stayed transfixed on the building, eyeing the ivy that crawled over the desolate building. “No. Should I?”

Adele’s mouth was dry now. “It used to be a popular school until it was destroyed by that fire. No one knew how it started but at least the children got out. Shame about the teachers though. All five of them - gone. That’s why no one likes to come here. The story is enough . . .”

Lionel felt his heart racing. He couldn’t be sure but he was certain he’d caught the glimpse of something inside the build. Something that reflected light.

“I guess the ball must have gone inside the building,” commented Adele. “Come on – let’s go find it. Nothing to worry about. It’s just rumours. I’m sure it’s safe inside . . .” Her voice trailed off, as she walked to the crumbled entrance hall.