

The Spitfire

"Now Paddy, don't go playing up by that crash site my Aunt had warned me often enough. "It's not safe. Who knows what has been left behind." Did I listen? Of course I didn't. Most days after school that was exactly where I went. Daft really, but she actually thought that I was at hockey club with John (I don't even like hockey!). Aunt worries too much. I've still not forgotten how she used to tell me not to play near Quiet Quarry in case the water dragon leaped out of the water to gobble me up. Of course, I was younger then.

The crash site she was talking about was just across a field, opposite the local Secondary School. Charcoal covered every inch of the site, and bits of rusty debris would dance in the wind, echoing creaks and screeches across the open field. It was there we found the abandoned plane. It had been empty for years. The windows were covered in a sticky, brown-green slime, and weeds grew around the wheels like malicious chains. At first, the smell inside was deadly, but it soon became our special place. Most days after school we rushed straight there. Just to hang out.

That afternoon, a treacherous storm raged. You could feel it brewing in the air all morning. The trees crashed around like wild monsters, battering any leaves that hadn't already dropped. Rain pounded against the plane, beating relentlessly off its metal roof. Despite the occasional drip, inside felt safe. I'd found an old bean bag and John has brought along some old blankets his Dad was throwing out. We'd also managed to get our hands on a torch, which sputtered a joyful glow. Outside, the dusk grew darker as the shadows crept closer. Soon the streetlights would come on, offering a pool of orange light.

We were arguing over whether gravy is acceptable to eat with chips when we heard it: a boom of thunder so close we felt it in our blood. John wiped the slime away from a window and we peered out. Before we knew it, another clap of thunder boomed through the sky simultaneously as a crack of lightning pierced the wing.

The Caravan

"Now Mitch, don't go playing up by the pylon," my Mum had warned me often enough. "It's dangerous. You'll get yourself electrocuted." Did I listen? Of course I didn't. Most days after school that was exactly where I went. Daft really, but she actually thought that I was doing my homework with Connor. Mum worries too much. I've still not forgotten how she used to tell me not to play under Hanger Bridge by the railway in case the troll snatched me. Of course, I was younger then.

The pylon she was talking about stood at the end of Muggie Moss Road. Red and brown rust fluttered from its lean body and it made odd creaking sounds when the wind blew. It was there we found the caravan. It had been empty for years. If you go past, you'll just see a small patch of overgrown land under the pylon, a mess of brambles and nettles that smothered the van. It was damp inside and the windows were smeared with green grime. Moss clung to its wheels. It was a place of dead spiders and dust but it was our special place. Most days after school we went straight there. Just to muck about.

That afternoon, a storm raged. It had been brewing all morning. The trees were like crazed zombies thrashing wildly. Rain lashed down, drumming on the metal roof. Inside the caravan it felt safe, almost cosy really. We shoved newspaper into any cracks to keep out the wind. I'd found a bit of old carpet and Connor had brought along some cushions that his Mum had thrown out. He'd also found a candle and in the semi-gloom its flame flickered with a cheerful glow. Outside dusk shadowed the bushes. Soon the streetlights would come on, casting orange pools of light.

We were arguing over whether the last goal in the Man United game was the best yet when we heard it: a clap of thunder so close that it sounded like an explosion. Connor wiped the condensation from the window and we peered out. At that very moment, there was another tremendous crack, and lightning struck the pylon. Sparks flew, the pylon shuddered and, as if in slow motion, it crashed down towards the caravan roof.