

**Going to the abandoned house seems like harmless fun, but should Amy be worried?**

Amy normally hated Monday mornings, but this term had been different. Kamal had joined her art class in September and she certainly didn't hate Kamal; in fact, quite the opposite. She was waiting outside the art class when her friend Tara arrived.

'Hi Amy! Your mum just texted me. She says you forgot your inhaler again and why don't you switch your phone on?' Amy wasn't a big fan of technology. She hated sending text messages and didn't have a Facebook account either.

'So, did he ask you to the disco, then?' Not for the first time, Amy wished she hadn't told Tara about her feelings for Kamal. She knew Tara wouldn't tell anyone else. It was just that Tara was Amy's best friend and she seemed to think that gave her the right to know everything that was going on in Amy's life. 'I don't think he's interested anyway,' said Amy. 'Besides, it's not like you ever see him on his own. He's always hanging out with Grant.' Neither of them liked Grant.

'What's this art project they're doing together, then?' asked Amy. 'Oh, it's something to do with graffiti, I think,' said Tara. 'They've been working on it at that old abandoned house behind the factory after school.' 'But that's a ruin!' said Amy. 'Isn't it dangerous?' 'Aah, are you worried lover boy's going to get hurt?' Tara teased. 'Shut up, Tara! Hey look, here they come now!'

Kamal and Grant walked over, whispering to each other. 'Hi Kamal!' said Tara, ignoring Grant. 'Are you going to the Halloween disco tomorrow?' 'Yeah, maybe. Hi Amy,' Kamal said, smiling. 'Do you want to come up to the house and see our graffiti project after school?' 'Ow!' Amy gave Tara a pained look. 'Stop elbowing me!' 'I'm coming too!' Tara insisted.

After school that day, Kamal took Amy and Tara up to the abandoned house. No one had lived there for years. There were piles of rubbish in the corners and weeds growing everywhere. The windows were broken and the walls were covered with mould. It was definitely creepy. Amy didn't like it there. The boys had been working in one of the downstairs rooms. They had cleared the rubbish out and the walls were covered in lurid paintings of zombies and skeletons. 'We're going to take photos and enter them in the school competition,' said Kamal proudly. Amy didn't look too impressed. 'Very nice,' she said sarcastically. 'Where's Grant, then?' asked Tara. 'Er, he's gone to get more paint.' Kamal looked away quickly. 'Aaah, have you two had a quarrel, then?' Tara jeered. 'I don't like it here, and it's getting dark.' Amy had had enough of zombies for one day. 'Can we go now?'

Just then, they heard a loud groaning noise coming from a cupboard in the corner of the room. 'What was that?' Amy sounded frightened. 'I didn't hear anything,' said Kamal. Something started banging and scraping against the door and moaning in a low voice. Someone or something was trying to get out. 'Oh no! What is it?' Amy was trembling now. 'What are you talking about? There's nothing!' Kamal was trying not to smile when the door suddenly burst open and a horrific, bloodstained zombie lurched into the room, moaning and waving its arms. Amy screamed and covered her eyes. 'Oh, very funny, Grant!' said Tara looking bored. Kamal and Grant started giggling uncontrollably. 'Ha ha, got you!' laughed Grant, very pleased with himself. Tara turned to Amy to suggest leaving and it was then she noticed her friend was leaning against the wall gasping for breath. Kamal looked worried now. 'Is she OK? We were only having a

laugh.' 'No, she's not OK, you idiot. She's having an asthma attack and she hasn't got her inhaler.' Tara reached for her phone. 'I'm calling her dad'

The next evening was Halloween. Amy and Tara were at the school disco. 'Are you sure you're OK now?' asked Tara. 'I'm fine,' said Amy. 'It wasn't a serious attack. I think it was breathing in those paint fumes that started it.' Tara looked around. 'So, where are the zombies, then?' 'Who cares? I don't want to see Kamal again.' Amy grabbed Tara's arm. 'Come on, let's dance!'

Amy and Tara were having a great time when Grant arrived, looking worried. 'Hi, my phone has been stolen. Have you two seen Kamal? He was supposed to be here ages ago. Can you give him a call?' 'Get lost, loser!' Tara turned away and carried on dancing. Grant gave her a pained look and left. 'Tell him I'm looking for him if you see him,' he called over his shoulder. Tara really didn't like Grant.

Just then Tara's phone beeped and she looked at the screen. 'Ha!' she said, 'I'm not falling for that!' 'What is it?' asked Amy. 'Kamal just sent a text. Listen to this!' Tara read out Kamal's text.

*'I'm at the house. I'm trapped. Please help. My battery is running out. Call an ambulance.'*

The girls carried on dancing. Lots of their friends had seen Kamal's text too, but Tara told everyone to ignore it. It was just another one of his little jokes.

The next morning, Amy's mum and dad were listening to the news on the radio while they were having breakfast. 'Is Amy up yet?' Dad asked. 'No, today's a holiday and she didn't get back home from the disco until midnight,' said mum, turning the volume up on the radio.

*'This morning, police are asking for members of the public to come forward if they have any information relating to the tragic death of a sixteen-year-old school boy last night in an abandoned house on Moortown Road ...'*

Dad put down his newspaper and looked at the radio. 'But that's where Amy went with her friends on Monday.'

*'... the boy, who died from loss of blood, was discovered early this morning partly buried under a pile of rubble and has been identified as Kamal Naseer ...'*

Brendan Dunne