

Me, Him, and the Swing

My day was going perfectly fine until I met him.

I took a deep breath and walked through the front doors of my new school in Canada. The air inside was warm despite it being 0 degrees outside. I looked down at my schedule, it said “Louis Evans, Locker: 3145”. I must find my locker first, so I walked upstairs to the third floor. I was putting my jacket away when a voice behind me, “look who we have here.” I turned to see a big, buff guy, with his friends behind him looking just as nasty as he was. He snarled and said, “What are you doing here, you’re blocking my way.” I stared him in the eyes because looking weak in this situation wouldn’t help me. Plus, I’ve had a fair share of bullies in my old school. “This is my locker,” I gestured, “and besides, there’s a whole hallway you can walk in.” A strange look passed his face. Disbelief? Horror? But the next second the snarl returned, “well you better watch out then because my locker is right here.” He pointed at the one next to mine. “And now clear out.” I grabbed my things and walked away. Just great. This was a “wonderful” way to start my day.

During lunch, I was in the washroom, the next thing I know I’m hearing his unmistakable voice. “Remember that newbie we saw? Those glasses look hideous on him.” I tensed knowing he was talking about me. “From the look he gave me, he was not intimidated at all.” “Sometimes people don’t show it when they’re scared, Lucifer.” This was a new voice, probably one of his friends. And Lucifer was probably his last name. Who still calls their friends by their last name? “Ha yes, I bet that scared little duckling would not dare to go to the haunted park at Queen Elizabeth! I bet he would be quaking in his boots!” A chorus of laughter followed and then there was silence again.

A chill ran down my spine. A haunted park? At Queen Elizabeth? That was so close my house. “I should go and check it out,” I thought. “But it’s haunted,” another part of my brain said. “Yes, but ghosts don’t exist... Just walking through it once won’t hurt you...” I sighed and decided that I will go check it out today after school.

In a blink of an eye, 3 o’clock arrived. I was beginning to second guess my decision. But I found out cutting through that park was actually a faster way to get home so I slowly made my

way to it. The thick trees towered over me like claws of unknown monsters. I soon came to a clearing and saw a children's park. Slides, monkey bars, and a swing... Everything was as normal as it could be. Except that swing was swinging back and forth... with no one on it. I walked over and looked at it carefully, it didn't seem to be slowing down at all. "It can't be haunted", I tried to convince myself. "It must have been a child wanting to make it seem like it is. Yeah, that's it. There's no actual ghost. A child must have left just now and pushed the swing." But still, I couldn't help but feel creeped out by that.

Afterwards I would often take that shortcut home. Some days the swing would be swinging mysteriously and others it would be perfectly still. I've always wondered what would happen if I tried to stop that swing...

One day, I left school late because I had to finish a project. I started to walk home, and it got dark very quickly. I put my hood up trying to block out the cold, bitter wind. I debated on whether I should walk through the park, thinking about the stories of dark, creepy woods at night. In the end, I decided to do it because it was getting colder by the second and all I wanted to do was to get to the warmth of my home. I gritted my teeth with determination and I entered the trees.

The swing was swinging in the park, not to my surprise. The creaking of it mixed with the howling of the wind made me want to get out of there as fast as possible. "Was the swing louder than usual? No, it's probably just the wind..." In the end, curiosity got the best of me, and I walked up to it. With my heart beating like a drum, I stretched out my hand. A split second before my hand made contact with it, I heard the merry laughter of a child. "What on earth?" Then I touched it.

Immediately, someone grabbed my shoulder. I turned and nearly jumped out of my skin when I saw a woman with her hand outstretched. She had long dark hair that fell onto her face and was in a flowing white gown that covered her feet. She had no eyes, no nose, no mouth, just bones. "Don't," she said. Her voice sounded like wind roaring in the dead of night, "My son is playing." "Who? There was no one on the swings?" My brain was still trying to process what happened as I ran out of there like my life depended on it, which in this case, it kind of did.

One thing was clear: that was a ghost.

I vaguely remember getting home and collapsing on my bed that night. Afterwards I avoided Queen Elizabeth Park at all costs, taking the main roads instead. One night a few weeks after the incident, I worked up the courage to look up the park. I found out that there had been a fire that killed a dozen people a while ago. Among them was a couple and their child. And their last name was Lucifer.

His family... They were his family!