

The Old Canal

"Now I don't want you playing down by the old canal. You know it's playing with fire," said Mrs Mac, digging her hands deep into the washing-up bowl. Tom and Tíree nodded as if they understood.

Ten minutes later, they reached the old, deserted canal. Cautiously, they peered in. The water was still, black and deep. By the bank, they could see a rusted shopping trolley, old crisp packets and soggy newspapers. In the reeds, something rustled.

Although it looked dangerous, Tom grinned at his brother. He took the rope swing that dangled from an overhanging branch and leaped out over the canal. Swinging backwards and forwards, he whooped like a siren. Although Tíree was laughing, inside his heart was thudding. It was his turn next.

"You're scared because you can't swim," teased Tom. Tíree wanted to show he wasn't scared, so he grabbed the rope and swung way out across the canal. Halfway over the rope snapped... Tíree crashed down into the foul, stagnant water and sunk beneath the surface.

Desperate, Tom leapt in. At first, he could see nothing—just darkness and weed tangling his feet. Then he saw red! It was Tíree's hoodie! Frantically, Tom grabbed it and tugged Tíree to the side of the canal. They lay on the bank, gasping and wheezing like old men.

Twenty minutes later, they were standing in Mrs Mac's kitchen, explaining why they were soaking wet. Mrs Mac grounded them for a week for disobeying her warning! The old canal was very dangerous and they had been very, very lucky to escape from its dark waters.