

The cursed tree

The leaves rustled above and a small piece of paper landed on Alfie's hand. It read YES in large, blue handwriting. A broad smile crossed his face. Finally, he was honourable enough to join the Midnight Tree Club. His Midnight would be tonight.

His dressing gown stuck to his legs as the summer storm flashed black and white. Alfie hurtled towards the twisted tree; too nervous to notice the raised roots grasping at him like gnarled old hands. The leaves created no shelter from the rain but all that Alfie was aware of was his own panting and, strangely, the continuous ticking of his watch. 10 to midnight. No sign of anyone else. Maybe they were already up there. He was going to go up.

Third branch. 7 to midnight.

Still not a sound. Eerie silence. Thunder's stopped. So has his watch. Alfie's still counting.

Fifth branch. Still no one. 5 to midnight. 3 to midnight. Alfie was getting impatient. 1 minute to midnight. Losing his grip, Alfie's hands rotated, reaching for a branch and his legs buckled underneath him.

Midnight.

Alfie plummeted down; knocking his head on a small stump.

He woke with a start. How long had he been laying there? The night sky was as dark as ever and the moon was hidden by clouds blacker than coal as Alfie stumbled blindly home. Had someone turned the lights off? No. He was outside, how could they?

Feeling for the brass door knob, he almost floated to bed. Alfie's head hit the pillow heavily and instantly he fell asleep. No dreams reached little Alfie that night.

8 o'clock. "Alfie!" cried his mother from below but not a sound was returned. Not a floorboard creaking or a complaint.

An anxious feeling began to form in the pit of his mother's stomach as she hurried up the stairs. Pulling open his bedroom door she fell to her knees. "Alfie, no!" Turning pale, his mother cried, "No, no, no...". Alfie was no longer.

Later that day, I, Alfie, was buried beneath the very tree I fell from. A myth lives on, though. If you ever climb up my tree, it's likely you'll feel a pair of hands yanking you down to the tangled roots below. Don't ever climb Old Alfie's Tree as no one ever does, not until you have permission. A blue note. But even then, you're not welcome. And let's just say you won't be around for much longer. Don't say I didn't warn you. Toby knew the myth off by heart but despite that, he desperately wanted to climb the swaying, rotting, almost vile-looking old tree. Something other than its looks was drawing him towards it. The decaying leaves shifted and a yellowing piece of paper fell down, with scribbled writing saying, Yes. Midnight. Tonight. He would climb.

By: Harri