

A FREE PREVIEW

Never Got Caught

*The first four stories from a 1990s Essex childhood,
in which the grown-ups never once found out.*

Bramblewick, Essex · 1993–1994
nevergotcaught.co.uk

STORY 1

The Great Milk Crate Prank

1993 · BACK GARDEN, BRAMBLEWICK

“For about one and a half seconds I was the tallest boy in Essex. Then I was a boy in a hedge.”

WHAT HAPPENS

It is 1993, and a stack of empty milk crates looks like the perfect way to build a viewing platform. The higher we build it, the better the view. We're about to find out just how wobbly five feet of plastic can be when someone tries to climb it for the very first time...

ON THE BACK COVER

Some ideas are brilliant, some are just a bit wobbly. Building a tower out of milk crates in the back garden feels like the best idea in the world.

The problem is not getting to the top. The problem is staying there.

Luckily, with grown-ups, you just have to look innocent and hope they don't notice the hedge is moving.

READ THIS BIT OUT LOUD

For a moment, I could see for miles. Then... the wobbling began.

STORY 2

Two On One Bike

1993 · THE LANE PAST THE POSTBOX, BRAMBLEWICK

“Barry sat on the handlebars, which meant Barry could not steer and I could not see. We agreed this was fine.”

WHAT HAPPENS

My Raleigh bicycle was built for one. But Barry is sitting on the handlebars, which means I can't see and he can't steer. We are gathering speed down the lane, pedalling furiously towards the bright red postbox. Can two boys on one bike brake in time?

ON THE BACK COVER

There is a perfect division of labour. One boy provides the pedal power. The other boy sits on the handlebars and blocks the view.

What could possibly go wrong? Other than the steering, the brakes, and the large metal object getting closer by the second.

Even if they crash, the parents will never know who was really to blame.

READ THIS BIT OUT LOUD

The postbox was getting closer. A lot closer. And a lot faster.

STORY 3

The Great Nettle Catastrophe

1993 · THE NETTLE DITCH, BRAMBLEWICK

“The ditch was full of nettles. We know exactly how full, because we counted them later, on my legs.”

WHAT HAPPENS

There is a shortcut home from the park, but it means taking a leap of faith over a deep ditch. A ditch that is completely full of stinging nettles. With a running jump and my eyes squeezed shut, I sail through the air. Am I going to make it to the other side?

ON THE BACK COVER

Shortcuts are rarely as short as you think. Especially when they involve a running jump over a ditch full of things that sting.

One boy must brave the nettles to get home for his tea. His legs are about to become a map of just how many there are.

Good thing Mum just bought a big tube of soothing cream.

READ THIS BIT OUT LOUD

I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and jumped right into... oh no.

STORY 4

The Hovis Bag Water Bomb

1994 · THE STREET WITH THE NEW CAVALIER, BRAMBLEWICK

“A bread bag holds four pints of water. A brand new Cavalier holds all four of them at once.”

WHAT HAPPENS

In 1994, a plastic bread bag makes the perfect water bomb, holding almost four pints. From an upstairs window, we spot the perfect target: a neighbour's shiny new Vauxhall Cavalier, parked directly below. The bag feels heavy in my hands as I lean out and take aim...

ON THE BACK COVER

An upstairs window, a bag full of water and a summer afternoon. It's the perfect recipe for a bit of mischief.

Down below, a neighbour is proudly polishing his brand-new car. He hasn't spotted the boys watching from above, or the bulging Hovis bag they're about to drop.

Whatever happens next, the grown-ups will just blame the dodgy sunroof.

READ THIS BIT OUT LOUD

I let go of the bag, and for a second... it just hung in the air.

THAT'S THE FIRST FOUR

There are forty more.

One new story lands every Sunday — no marketing, no ads, no sponsored rubbish. Just the next thing we got away with.

Read the rest at nevergotcaught.co.uk

Questions, memories or complaints:

dan@nevergotcaught.co.uk