

CHOICES

Scenario 20

The Revenge Zombie

Your friend Marco is brilliant at computers.

One day you are at his house. You are playing the latest video game.

You take a break.

"You're good at this," you say.

You share a Coke.

"What else have you been up to?"

"Would you like to see something top secret?" he whispers.

And he shows you how he can get into someone's social media account.

You stare at him. You realise what this means. Marco can go anywhere and do anything.

"I can do stuff," he says.

"Like what?"

"Post things on people's accounts. Things that will make them look bad. People you hate. I can make it absolutely invisible. No one will ever know."

You stare at him in amazement.

"How about some sweet revenge? I've done it before. Wanna try?"

What should you do?

A You say, “Well, let’s see if you really can. Come on. Show me.” And you rub your hands with glee.

What next?

Within minutes, Marco has hacked into the account of Jane, a person you just had a fight with.

“What do you want me to do?” he chuckles.

“How about a picture of her? Riding a goat. Backwards.”

“Easy.”

You clap your hands with delight.

And so it goes. Half an hour later Jane’s page is covered with stupid stuff – embarrassing stuff.

The next day, at school, you wait for her to arrive.

She comes in. Her face is red. She is awfully upset.

The boys laugh at her. The girls smile.

No one knows who did it.

But you know.

Think about it

Cyberbullying is online harassment.

It can mean nasty things like mean texts, or email, or posts, or images and videos. It is normally anonymous (unnamed). Bullies like to hurt. If they can do it without being seen, all the better.

It is tempting to get revenge without being caught. But is it a proper thing to do?

Imagine if someone tied you up, put a hood over your head, and then people came and punched you, one by one. And then ran away, laughing because they would never get caught.

That's what cyberbullying is. One fifth of all bullying occurs online.

In an international survey, parents reported that 34% of their children had been bullied (USA), 20% (Australia) and 18% (UK). Worse still, 56% of parents of kids 11-13 said they had been bullied. (Comparitech)

"The effects of cyberbullying can be intense and long lasting. The sense of being anonymous online can lead people to say things that are far worse than what they would say in person. Children who experience cyberbullying are at risk of emotional, behavioural and mental health issues." (Michigan State University)

Cyberbullying is still bullying. Hiding behind a screen doesn't make it less hateful.

Do you want to look at another scenario involving bullying? (Go to 14)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 20)

B You say, "Marco - that's a terrible idea. It's disgusting. Let's just play games instead."

What next?

You leave Marco later with a bad taste in your mouth.

He isn't a nice guy.

Someone who is prepared to bully another person has a problem. And to do it in secrecy, so that he will never be found out.

The fact that he's smart doesn't excuse him. He might be a genius, but that doesn't help if he's mean.

What should you do?

If you tell your parents, maybe they can talk to Marco's parents. And help him.

Because if he goes on and does what he promised you, with you or someone else, people could get hurt. Seriously hurt.

Think about it

In most countries, cyberbullying is against the law. In America, almost all States have laws against it. It is also illegal in most other developed countries.

If someone is seriously injured, as a result of online bullying, and it is referred to the police, the law can come after the perpetrators.

Regrettably, there are cases of children hurting themselves as a result of being bullied through social media.

What might seem like fun to a keyboard warrior could end up having a terrible effect on the victim.

Cyberbullying is a crime.

Do you want to look at another scenario involving breaking the law? (Go to 2)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 20)