



‘WHERE THE HECK have you been? We’ve been waiting ages.’

Fliss had emerged, blinking against the sudden glare, on a narrow street at the back of the building. Gemma, Grant and Gary, keen to move on to the next thing, gazed reproachfully at her.

‘Sorry. I got lost.’

‘Lost?’ sneered Gemma. ‘How could you get lost in a tunnel, for goodness sake. You walk through and that’s it.’

‘And you were miles in front of us,’ put in Grant. ‘We expected to find you waiting here when we got out.’

Gary grinned. ‘You shot off up that tunnel in a heck of a hurry, Fliss. For someone who’s not chicken, I mean.’

‘Chicken’s got nothing to do with it. It was that moving floor. It was like a dream I had – a nightmare. My feet taking me where I didn’t want to go. And then there was this hole in the wall, and I went through and I was behind the tunnel. It was pitch black, and I kept bumping into stuff – rubbish and that. I thought I’d never find my way out.’

‘You’re a nut,’ said Grant. ‘I never saw any hole, and if I had I wouldn’t have gone through. Anyway, where we going next – amusements?’

Gary shook his head. ‘Not me. I don’t like fruit machines. You lose all your money. I’m off to the shops.’

‘Me too,’ said Fliss. She needed to talk to Gary, away from the other two.

‘Well, I’m going with Grant,’ said Gemma. ‘I won two pounds for ten pence on a machine last year, at Blackpool.’

When Grant and Gemma had gone, Fliss said, ‘I’ve got something to tell you, Gary.’

‘What?’ They were back on the seafront, heading for the gift shops. Gary was walking fast.

‘Slow down a bit and I’ll tell you. It’s not the flipping Olympics, you know.’

Gary stopped. ‘Go on then – what?’

She told him about Sal Haggerlythe, and what the old woman had said. When she'd told him about the promise she'd made, she said, 'Will you help me, Gary? I don't think I'd attempt it by myself.'

Gary pulled a face. 'I guess so. I mean, we've been together all the way along, haven't we? Trot and Lisa too. I just don't know what it is we're supposed to do, Fliss.'

'She said we'd be told.'

'Yeah, but she's barmy, isn't she? If I hadn't seen all that weird stuff with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe a word she said.'

'But you have seen it. Old Sal might be mad, Gary, but she knows all about The Crow's Nest.'

'Hmm. Well, we'll just have to wait and see if we're told, won't we?'

If we're not, I don't see how we can do anything except keep Ellie-May from going in that cupboard.'

They shopped. Fliss bought a brown photo mounted on a block for her parents. It was by somebody called Sutcliffe, who lived a long time ago and was a famous photographer. It showed two children playing with a toy boat. She'd seen one like it, but bigger, on the wall at The Crow's Nest.

Gary found a leather key-fob with the abbey and the word Whitby embossed on it for his dad, and a little vase encrusted with seashells for his mum.

By the time they'd decided on these purchases, it was half-past two. They were due to meet the teachers back at the bandstand at

three, so they made their way in that direction and spent the last twenty minutes in the lifeboat museum.

Some of the others were there too, and they compared presents and donated their last few pennies to the lifeboats.

At three, Fliss, Gary and the others left the museum and crossed the road to the bandstand, where the teachers were waiting. Nearly everybody was there. The twins weren't, and neither was Trot. Everybody sat down except Mrs Evans, who stood gazing along the seafront and looking at her watch.

The twins turned up. Mrs Evans frowned at them. 'What time were we to meet?' she asked.

'Three o'clock, Miss,' murmured Joanne.

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'Three o'clock, Miss,' murmured Joanne.

'And what time is it now, Joanne?'

'Miss, eight minutes past. We were on the donkeys, Miss.'

'Hmmm.'

It was almost a quarter-past three when Trot came trudging up the slipway from the beach. He was carrying a torn plastic kite, and looked fed up.

'And where have you been, David Trotter? Do you know what the time is?'

'Yes, Miss. Sorry, Miss. I was trying to mend my kite.'

Mrs Evans looked at the kite. It was made of clear polythene on a rigid plastic frame. It had a picture of a bat on it, but the polythene was badly torn and hung in tatters from its frame. She sighed. 'What was the

last thing I said before we went off to do our shopping, David?'

'I don't know, Miss.'

'No, because you weren't listening. I warned everybody not to spend money on cheap, rubbishy goods, David. How much was that kite?'

'One pound forty, Miss.'

'One pound forty, and look at it. Didn't you notice how thin that polythene was? Didn't you realize that the first good gust of wind would rip it to pieces?'

'No, Miss.'

'No, Miss. Well, it did, didn't it?' She turned to the group. 'You know, I sometimes wonder whether the other teachers and myself aren't just wasting our breath talking to you people. First there was Lisa Wat-

mough, going into a shop before we even got here, buying a trashy flashlight which is probably broken already. Then Gary Bazzard spends I don't know how much on a stick of rock the size of a telegraph pole.' Her eyes found Gary, who looked surprised. 'Oh, yes, Gary – I know all about that rock. It's in your room now, melting, with a beard of bed-fluff on it. You've sucked at it till you're sick of it, and now you don't know what to do with it.' She looked at Trot again. 'And now you, with your kite. I only hope that next time, if there is a next time, you'll be told.'

You'll be told. Fliss, whose mind had been wandering, looked up sharply. Mrs Evans, talking about –

Buying things. Things you shouldn't. Lisa. Gary. Trot. Why

those three? It's a connection, isn't it? Must be. Can't be coincidence, can it? Her heart kicked. You'll be told.

Yeah, but hold on a minute. What about me? I'm one of them. I started it, in fact, and I haven't been in trouble for buying anything. I've been late for breakfast, but that's different. Nobody's said to me, 'You shouldn't have bought that, it's rubbish.' Nobody's –

The pebble. The big pebble. I didn't buy it, of course, but Mrs Evans told me to put it down, and it's a thing, like a torch or a stick of rock or a kite.

That's it. The four of us. Nobody else has been told off for something they've got, have they? She sat, frowning, gnawing her lip.

A torch. A stick of rock. A pebble.  
A kite.

You'll be told.