

SPIES ALL
AROUND

the other. But perhaps they could learn.

"I don't mind helping," Dennis volunteered. "But I'm not milking a bull."

Polly sighed. "You milk cows not bulls, stupid!"

"What do you do with bulls then?"

"You don't need to know that."

That was one thing they would have to learn for themselves.

Mary hadn't stopped all day. As soon as she finished one job, Miss Millington gave her another. It was as if nobody had cleaned Westbourne Hall for twenty years.

By nightfall, Mary was exhausted. She lay in bed and wondered how long she could go on like this. It would be hard but she wasn't going to be beaten. Especially not by Grainger and Millington.

In the dining room, Grainger was telling Millington about his visit to Wells Farm.

"Well, if the old fool won't go of her own accord, she'll just have to be persuaded," Millington replied.

Grainger smiled. "That's what I was thinking," he said. "I mean accidents do happen, don't they?"

Later that night, a pair of wire cutters snipped through one of the Wells Farm fences. One by one, the cows started to drift out on to the road.

It was the first "accident". It wouldn't be the last.

"Mrs Hobbs! You must come right away."

Mr Jenkins was hammering on the front door of Wells Farm. It was early morning. Polly, Norman and Dennis were still in bed.

"Quick, Mrs Hobbs! There's an emergency."

The door flew open.

"Mr Jenkins, whatever's wrong?" Amy was alarmed. "It's not the invasion, is it?"

"Worse than that," said Jenkins. "It's your cows. The fence is down. They're all along the road."

"My goodness, no!"

Already Jenkins was hurrying back down the path. Amy set off after him, then stopped.

"Polly!" she yelled through the open door. "Get those boys up now!"

The more help the better, Amy thought. Even Norman and Dennis would be some use.

The two boys were better than nothing. But only just. They stood in the backgound and flapped their arms. They still didn't trust those cows.

As the last of the animals was herded back into the field, there was a blast on a car hooter. Phillip Grainger was waiting to get past.

"Bit of trouble I see," he shouted out as he drove on. "Wouldn't happen if people looked after their fences properly."

Polly, Norman and Dennis watched Grainger's car disappear down the lane. The more they saw of that man, the more they disliked him.

"Take no notice," said Amy. "He's not worth it."

"That's right," Mr Jenkins agreed. "Now somebody fetch me a pair of pliers and I'll get this fence fixed for you. The rest of you can get your breakfasts."

When Polly got back with the pliers, Mr Jenkins was examining the broken ends of the wire fence. He looked puzzled. "I know it doesn't make sense," he said. "But it looks to me as if this has been cut."

Polly was amazed. If the wire had been cut, who could have done it? And why? As far as Polly was concerned, there was only one suspect - Phillip Grainger. Hadn't he said there was going to be trouble?

Mr Jenkins twisted the strands of fence together.

"There!" he said. "That should do it for now, Polly."

But Polly wasn't listening. She was still thinking about the cut wires.

Jenkins handed over the pliers and climbed on to his bike. "Still plenty of letters to deliver," he said. "Don't forget tonight's meeting in the Village Hall."

Jenkins wobbled off along the road.

Polly didn't even notice him go. Her gaze was fixed on the distant Westbourne Hall. If only we could find out what's going on there, she thought.

At Westbourne Hall, Mary was washing up the breakfast things. One by one, she dried the knives and forks and dropped them into the cutlery drawer.

It was then that she noticed the wire cutters. Mary reached for them. But a hand grabbed her wrist. It was Miss Millington.

"I'll look after those," Millington snapped. "You just get on with your work."

"But I've finished the dishes," Mary told her.

Millington glared at Mary. "Then get this table scrubbed," she ordered. "It's filthy."

Mary filled a bucket with water and started to scrub the top of the kitchen table. She had almost finished when the front doorbell rang. Mary put down the scrubbing brush and sneaked into the hallway.

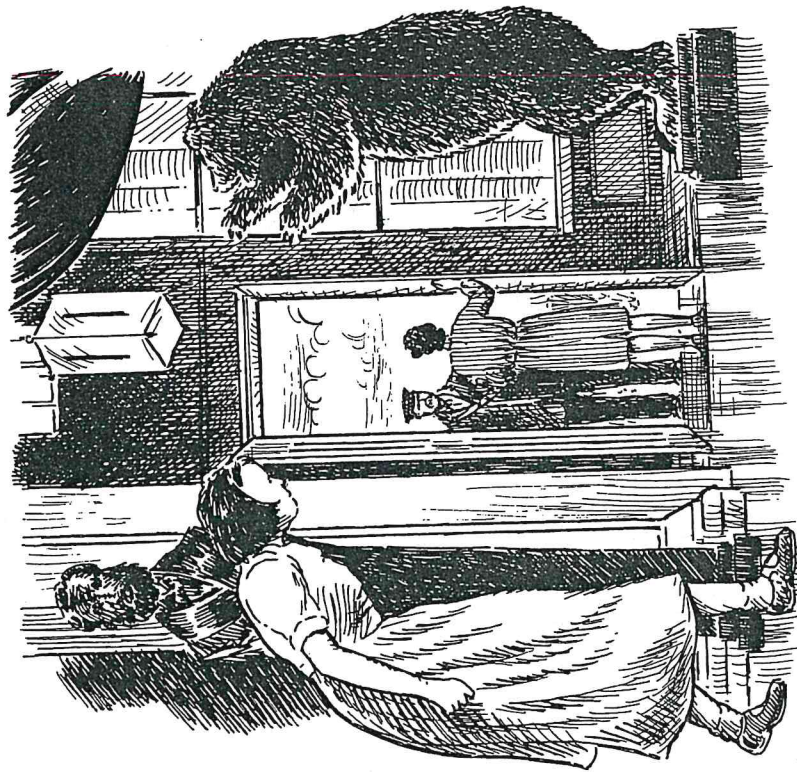
Miss Millington was at the door. "No, she's not here," Mary heard her say.

Mary peered round the corner. Mr Jenkins was standing in the doorway.

"Not here?" he questioned.

"No," Millington told him. "She went out for a walk

earlier on. She just loves getting out into the countryside. She could be away for hours."



Mary gasped. They were talking about her. And Millington was telling lies.

"I should see her," Mr Jenkins insisted quietly. "It is required."

"Some other time," Millington tried to close the door. But Jenkins held it open.

"There's a Civil Defence lecture," he said. "Seven o'clock in the Village Hall. Perhaps I'll see her there." "Perhaps," said Millington. She slammed the door in Mr Jenkins' face.

"But why would Grainger cut the fence?" Norman asked.

Polly was milking one of the cows. "All part of his plan to drive us off the farm, isn't it?" she said. "And it won't be the last thing he does either."

Norman thought about it. If Polly was right, and Grainger really was out to cause trouble for Amy, then it was even more important for him and Dennis to help out around the farm.

"You can start by feeding the pigs," Polly told them.

The pigs! That was something that Norman and Dennis were not looking forward to. The smell of the pigsty made them feel ill. Then Dennis had a bright idea. At least, it seemed like a bright idea. They could wear their gas masks – then they wouldn't be able to smell anything.

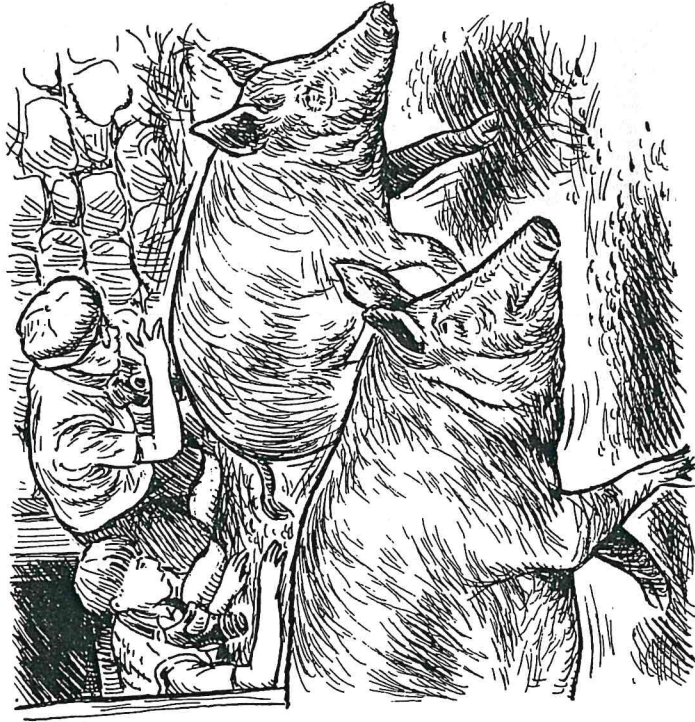
They raced back to the house and pulled on their gas masks. Then went to feed the pigs.

There were two problems with gas masks. It was hard to breath. And almost impossible to see.

In the end, Norman and Dennis found the pigsty.

They even found the gate to get in. But once they were inside, they couldn't find the pigs. They had no need to worry. The pigs found them! As they rushed forward to get their food, the pigs crashed into Dennis. Dennis slipped and grabbed Norman. The next thing they knew, Dennis and Norman were lying in the mud.

Two of the pigs escaped into the farmyard. Dennis and Norman chased after them. Hens flew in all directions. One of the pigs ran into the duck pond and wouldn't come out.



"What am I going to do with you?" Amy sighed when she saw them.

"We wanted to help," said Norman.

Amy nodded. She knew they were trying. And they couldn't help being townies. It would take some time to learn country ways.

Amy gazed at Dennis's gas mask. The goat had eaten half of it and it was in tatters. "What Mr Jenkins will say if he sees that, I hate to think," she told Dennis. "Put it back in its box. And just hope that Jerry doesn't pick tonight to try and gas us all."

Dennis was in luck. There was no gas attack that night and Mr Jenkins never looked at his gas mask. He was too busy warning the villagers about the black market.

"Watch out for spivs," he told the audience in the Village Hall. "Trying to sell cigarettes. Or soap. Or nylon stockings."

The audience nodded. Since the war began, there were lots of shortages. Some things were strictly rationed. You could only buy small amounts. Other things were hardly ever in the shops. Yet, there always seemed to be somebody around who could get hold of what you wanted. If you were willing to pay extra.

"If anybody tries to sell you something like that, you report them to the police," Mr Jenkins continued. "This has got to be stamped out."

Norman wasn't very interested in the black market. He was gazing round the hall to see who was there.

He spotted Mary. She was sandwiched between Grainger and Millington. Millington was watching her like a hawk.

Norman nudged Polly and Dennis. They turned round and stared at Mary.

"Pay attention!" Amy hissed. She poked them with her finger.

They turned back to the front just as Mr Jenkins changed the subject.

"Now, something we all need to be on the look-out for," he told the audience. "Spies!"

Suddenly, Polly, Norman and Dennis were interested. Spies were exciting.

"They come parachuting down at night," Mr Jenkins announced. "So look out for parachutists, because spies are everywhere."

Polly, Norman and Dennis were amazed. They'd never realised there were so many spies. But Mr Jenkins seemed certain.

"They're all around us," he insisted. "The person next to you is a spy. Your mother's a spy. Your best friend's a spy. I'm a spy!"

The whole audience gasped in astonishment.

"At least, I might be," said Mr Jenkins. "That's why it's important never to say anything that could be of use to the enemy. Because 'Careless Talk Costs Lives'. Remember that."

Norman closed his eyes and thought hard. He was determined to remember it. When he opened his eyes

again, Mr Jenkins was showing the audience some spy posters.

"Here are some typical disguises," he pointed out. Polly, Norman and Dennis paid close attention.

There was a man in a smart suit. A factory worker in a headscarf. A farmer. And finally, a strange picture of a pretty young woman. On one side, she wore a summer dress. On the other side, a German uniform.

"Any of these people could be spies," Mr Jenkins told them. "So keep a look-out."

He didn't need to say that twice. If there were spies around then Polly, Norman and Dennis were going to find them.

They started the search as soon as the meeting was over. People were standing around chatting outside the Village Hall.

"I bet most of these are spies," said Dennis.

"How can they be?" asked Polly. "They'd all be spying on each other."

"Well one of them must be a spy," said Dennis. "Mr Jenkins said there were spies everywhere."

Norman was watching out for Mary. Finally, he saw her leaving the hall with Grainger and Millington.

"Glad you were able to come," Mr Jenkins said to Grainger.

Grainger forced a smile. "Wouldn't have missed it for the world, Jenkins," he said. "Never realised you were such an expert on spies."

"I try to keep informed," Mr Jenkins told him.

"Think you'd recognise one if you met one?"

Grainger sneered.

"I'd have my suspicions," Mr Jenkins replied.

"Suspensions aren't enough though. You need proof."

Grainger tried to lead Mary and Miss Millington away. But Mr Jenkins blocked the path.

"How's Mary settling in?" he asked.

"She's fine. As you can see," Millington snapped.

But Mr Jenkins wasn't giving up. "Everything as it should be, Mary?"

Millington gripped Mary's arm. "Mr Jenkins is speaking to you, Mary." There was something threatening about the way Millington spoke.

Her grip on Mary's arm grew even tighter.

"Yes, thank you," said Mary. "It's a bit like being at home."

"That's the way," Mr Jenkins smiled. Millington started to push her way through the crowd. But Grainger noticed Amy.

"Bit of a mishap last night, then?" he gloated.

"Difficult when you're on your own, isn't it?"

Amy looked him straight in the eyes. "I'm not on my own any more," she told him. "I've got my evacuees to help now."

Grainger stared at Norman and Dennis. "Well, let's hope nothing happens to them then." His voice was full

of menace. But before Amy could reply, he was pushing his way through the crowd towards his car.

Amy and the children walked back to Wells Farm across the fields. Dennis kept watch on the sky through his telescope. He was looking for parachutists.

"There! That's one up there!" he pointed.

Polly looked up. "That's a cloud," she scoffed.

"Looks like a parachute to me," Dennis insisted.

"Dennis," said Norman. "If it was a parachutist they'd wait until it was dark, wouldn't they?"

Dennis thought about it. It was a good point. But he was taking no chances. He turned his telescope back to the skies.

Polly was thinking about Mary. "She doesn't look very happy, does she?" she said to Norman.

"No," Norman agreed.

Mary hadn't looked at all happy. But that was hardly surprising. Living with Grainger couldn't be much fun. And Miss Millington didn't seem any better. Perhaps they should try and talk to Mary.

"I bet she could tell us things about Grainger, as well," Norman said. "If we could get to see her."

Polly nodded. "It's worth a try."

But how could they do it? Seeing Polly without Grainger and Millington finding out wasn't going to be easy. Not easy at all.

Norman's head was buzzing when he went to bed. Everything going round and round in his mind. "Spies are everywhere." That's what Mr Jenkins had said.

But if spies were everywhere, there must be a spy in the village. Who was it? Who was nasty enough to be a spy? Suddenly, it came to Norman. It was obvious. There was only one person it could be.

"Dennis!" he said. "I just thought who the spy is."

Dennis was still looking for parachutists through the window.

"Who?" he asked.

"Grainger!" Norman told him. "The spy is Grainger."



Mary was hungry. She was always hungry. She had been sent to bed without supper again.

Then she remembered the half bar of chocolate under her pillow. But when she lifted the pillow, the chocolate had melted and spread itself all over the sheet and pillowcase. It hadn't spoiled the pound note. But she couldn't eat that!

She would have to go to sleep hungry again. But she couldn't. All she could think about was chocolate.

Suddenly, there were footsteps outside the bedroom door. Mary closed her eyes and pretended to be asleep. The door opened. There was a moment's pause. And then the door closed again. Mary opened her eyes. What was going on?

In the hallway, Grainger was getting ready to go out into the night.

"Time I was going," he told Millington as she came down the stairs. "Don't want to miss the contact."

"Be careful," Millington replied. "If anybody sees you, they'll get suspicious."

Grainger stepped outside. "I won't be seen," he said. "There's nobody for miles. Except for that old biddy at Wells Farm." He nodded towards the stairs. "What about the girl?"

"Dead to the world," said Millington. "I just checked."

"In that case," Grainger smiled. "I've got nothing to worry about, have I?"

But Grainger did have something to worry about. Because, as he set off into the night, Mary was watching from her bedroom window.



TROUBLE
FOR MARY

"This is the last of the marmalade."

Millington was spreading marmalade thickly on her breakfast toast. Mary was pouring tea. Grainger pushed his cup towards her.

"I've got to go in and see old Hubbard this morning," he told Millington. "I'll pick some up then."

Millington looked surprised. "I thought he couldn't get any."

"He'll get some. Or he won't get what he wants from me, will he?" said Grainger.

His eyes were fixed on Mary. She was trying hard not to yawn.

"Late going to sleep?" Grainger asked.

Mary hesitated. She didn't want Grainger to know that she'd seen him go out into the night.

"No, sir," she said quietly.

"Didn't get woken up by anything? Things going bump in the night?"

Mary shook her head.

"Good!" said Grainger. "Wouldn't like to think of you lying awake at night. Not healthy. Understand?" His voice was cold and threatening.

Mary understood. There was something going on that Grainger and Millington didn't want her to know about. She was going to have to be very careful.

"He is a spy. I'm certain of it." Norman told Dennis.

But Dennis wasn't so sure. "He doesn't look like any of those pictures on the posters," he pointed out. "And what about Millington?"

"She's definitely not a spy, she's not pretty enough," said Norman.

The woman spy on the poster had been very pretty. Nothing like Miss Millington. She was more like a witch.

"Norman! Dennis!" Amy's voice echoed across the farmyard. She was on her way to the village shop. "Behave!" she warned them. "No getting into mischief while I'm away."

"We won't," said Norman. "We'll just be helping out."

Amy sighed. "Well don't go helping too much, will you?" she pleaded. "I couldn't stand another day like yesterday."

When Amy arrived at Mr Hubbard's shop, half the shelves were empty. The shortages were getting worse. Especially things which were brought in by sea. German submarines were attacking British ships, trying to stop supplies getting through.

There were notices all round the shop.

"No sugar till next week."

"Cigarettes out of stock."

"Don't ask for chocolate. We haven't got it."

"It doesn't get any better," Amy said to Mrs Calver while they were waiting to be served. Mrs Calver was a housewife who lived in the village.

Mrs Calver shook her head. "Marmalade. That's what my Eddie likes. Do you think I can get any?"

Amy knew she couldn't. She'd tried to get some herself. "They say it's all stolen and ends up on the black market," she told Mrs Calver.

"I tried a recipe for carrot marmalade. Two weeks sugar ration it took," said Mrs Calver. "My Eddie took one mouthful and threw the rest in the bin."

"What can I do for you, Mrs Calver?" asked the shop assistant, finally.

"Marmalade!" said Mrs Calver.

The shop assistant sighed. Mrs Calver always asked for marmalade. "Try next week," she suggested.

But Mrs Calver persisted. "You're sure there's none under the counter?" she demanded. "That's what they do, you know," she told Amy. "Put things on one side.

Then sell them overpriced to them who've got plenty of money."

Before Amy could agree, the door opened and Grainger stormed in.

"Is Hubbard in?" he barked. "I am expected."

The shop assistant opened a door leading to the back room. "Best go through, Mr Grainger," she said.

As Grainger pushed past, he noticed Amy. "Well, well, Mrs Hobbs," he sneered. "No more broken fences, I hope."

"Didn't know you were so concerned," said Amy.

"Oh, yes." Grainger didn't look at all concerned.

"See, I hate to think what else might go wrong!"

The two women watched Grainger disappear into the back room.

"I bet he won't have any trouble getting marmalade," said Mrs Calver.

"Money!" said Amy.

"But where's it come from?" said Mrs Calver. "That's what I want to know."

"Well, where's it come from?" Millington was holding up the pound note that she had found under Mary's pillow.

"My mother gave it to me," Mary told her.

"No, she didn't," Millington insisted. "You stole it from my purse. Admit it!"

Mary blinked away the tears that were welling up in her eyes. She wasn't going to let Millington see her cry. "If it's not stolen, why was it hidden in your room?"

Mary took a deep breath. "It wasn't hidden. I put it there to keep it safe."

"Not much of a liar, are you?" Millington scoffed.

"I'm not a liar at all," Mary shouted. "And if you don't believe me, you can write to my parents!"

There was a silence. Millington seemed uncertain what to say. She didn't want Mary's parents causing trouble. They might get in touch with the authorities. Millington didn't want them snooping around Westbourne Hall.

She turned away. "Perhaps I jumped to the wrong conclusion," she said. "A pound is a lot of money for a little girl to have."

Millington reached up and took a vase from the mantelpiece above the fireplace. She popped the pound note inside and put the vase back. "Should be safe there, shouldn't it?" she smiled. "I mean, we wouldn't want you to lose it."

Polly, Norman and Dennis had given up on work and were playing hide-and-seek instead. It was Dennis's turn to seek.

"Coming - ready or not!" he shouted.

Dennis ran out into the farmyard and looked around. Where were they hiding? The door to the cowshed was half open. Dennis smiled to himself. That's where they were.

Dennis stepped inside. The cowshed was dark. There were threatening shadows everywhere.

"You can come out now," he shouted. "I know you're in here."

But there was no reply. And nobody moved.

Dennis strained his ears. Was that somebody breathing? Suddenly, something creaked behind him. He twisted round. There was nobody there. Was this a trick? "It's all right," he said. "You can come out. I give up."

But still nothing happened. If Polly and Norman were in there, they weren't letting on.

Dennis gulped. There was definitely something strange. He could sense it.

Something scabbled across the floor.

That was the final straw. Dennis had had enough.

He turned and ran for the door. As he got there, the door burst open. A mysterious stranger blocked the doorway. Dennis ran straight into him. A rough pair of hands grabbed hold of him.

"Let go!" Dennis shouted.

But no matter how much he struggled, the hands didn't let go. They gripped him even tighter, lifting him off the ground.

"Help!" yelled Dennis.

Norman and Polly hurtled out of their hiding place. They crashed into the attacker. All four fell to the ground in a shouting, battling, scuffling heap of arms and legs.



"Hey you! That's enough now. Just pack it in," a voice ordered.

Private Wilson, a British soldier, was looking down at them. He had his rifle at the ready. The scuffling stopped.

Polly, Norman and Dennis rolled away from the attacker and picked themselves up. The attacker was wearing a coat with a yellow circle painted on the back. The yellow circle showed that he was a prisoner of war.

"Good job you turned up," Polly said to Wilson. "He was trying to kill us."

"Are you all right?" Wilson asked.

"Just about," said Dennis, rubbing at a graze on his leg.

"Not you!" said Wilson. "Him!" He nodded towards the man, who was staggering to his feet.

The children couldn't believe their ears. The soldier seemed more bothered about the prisoner of war than them.

"You OK, Luigi?" Wilson asked.

The prisoner of war nodded. "OK! Yes." He offered his hand to Dennis. "Now friends?"

Dennis took a step backwards. He wasn't going to be grabbed again. Norman and Polly weren't going to risk it either. Not until they found out what was going on.

That was what Amy wanted to know. "What in the name of goodness is going on here?" Amy charged across the farmyard, weighed down with shopping bags.

"Who's he?"

The prisoner of war stepped forward and bowed politely. "Luigi Balzoni, Signora."

Amy ignored him and turned to Private Wilson. "Well?"

"He's an Italian P.O.W.," said Wilson. "Here to help out on the farm."

"Here to murder us in our beds more like," snapped Amy.

Wilson shook his head. "Not him. He's Italian. Glad to be out of the war. He wouldn't harm a fly."

"He won't have the chance," Amy told him. "You can take him back where he's come from."

But Wilson had no intention of taking Luigi back. "Sorry, Missis," he said as he marched towards the road. "I can't do that. My orders are to drop him off and pick him up again at six o'clock. And that's what I'm doing."

Wilson disappeared out of the yard, leaving Amy glaring at the Italian.

Amy was taking no chances. "In!" she ordered the children. "Before he slits our throats."

Amy locked and bolted the door. Then set Dennis to keep watch on Luigi through the window while Norman and Polly helped with the dinner.

"I don't know what they can have been thinking of, sending one of those Italians here," Amy said as they sat down to eat.

"He doesn't look very dangerous to me," said Norman. "Oh, doesn't he?" said Amy. "I suppose you'd have him in here eating our food, would you?"

Norman shrugged. "I might. He looked hungry."

Dennis was standing up, trying to see out the window. "Sit down, Dennis," Amy told him.

But Dennis didn't sit down. He was stretching his neck to get a better view of the yard.

Amy was getting angry. "Dennis! Sit down!"

"But Auntie Amy—"

"Just sit down!"

"But he's gone!"

Gone! Everyone got up and peered out the window. Dennis was right. Luigi wasn't there.

"He's escaped!" Amy shouted. She picked up the rolling pin and set off towards the scullery door. "We've got to find him before he murders half the village."

It didn't take long to find Luigi. They saw him as soon as they got outside. He had taken off his coat and was busy cleaning out the pigsty.

He looked across at them and held his nose. "Pigs! Big smells, yes?" He pulled a face.

Dennis started to laugh. The next minute everybody was laughing. Even Amy. From then on, Luigi was like one of the family.

Mary was more like a slave than one of Millington's family. She had cleared away the dinner things and washed up. Now she was polishing the huge dining room table.

It was hard, back-breaking work. It hadn't been polished for years.

After a while, Mary stopped to rest. Her eyes strayed up to the vase above the fireplace. Mary was still angry about that. Millington had no right to take her money away from her.

The house was quiet. Millington was probably upstairs having an afternoon nap.

Mary hurried over to the fireplace and reached up for the vase. It was higher than it looked. At last, her fingers managed to slide the vase towards the edge of the mantelpiece.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Millington's voice took Mary completely by surprise. She was so shocked that the vase slipped from her grasp and smashed on the floor.

Mary dropped to her knees and started to pick up the pieces. Perhaps it could be glued together again. Then she realised. The pound note had gone. Somebody had taken it. Mary looked up accusingly at Millington.

But Millington was ready for her. "Get up to your room at once," she ordered. "And stay there."



It was time to make contact with Mary. Dennis had made friends with Luigi and stayed behind to help him. So it was just Polly and Norman who sneaked through the woods towards the back of Westbourne Hall.

Getting to see Mary, without Millington or Grainger catching them, wasn't going to be easy. They had to keep a close look-out and pick the right moment.

It was then that they found the greenhouse. It looked unused. As though nobody had been inside it for years. The windows were so dirty, and the plants so overgrown, that nobody could see in from outside. But from inside they could just see the back of the Hall.

It was the perfect hideout. They could watch for Mary from there with no danger of being seen by Millington or Grainger. Not only that, but once Mary knew about it, it would make the ideal secret meeting place.

But, that afternoon, there was no sign of Mary. So, after a couple of hours, Norman and Polly hurried back to Wells Farm to tell Dennis about the hideout.

Up in her bedroom, Mary had written a letter to her parents. If they knew how unhappy she was, perhaps they would take her home. It was worth a try. Even if her father did tell her not to be so silly.

Then the door to Mary's bedroom opened and Millington stepped in. She was carrying a tray with a hunk of bread and a glass of water on it. That was all Mary was getting to eat.

"I hope this has taught you a lesson," Millington snapped as she slammed the tray down. "I won't have disobedience in this house."

She sounded just like Mary's father.

"You'll be allowed down tomorrow," Millington continued. "You can catch up with your work then."

Millington was about to leave when Mary held out the letter.

"Excuse me, Miss Millington," she said politely. "I'd be grateful if Mr Grainger could post this letter to my parents. Just to let them know I'm all right."

"Very well."

Millington took the letter from Mary and left the room. On the stairs, she tore open the envelope and read through the letter. Then she put it on the fire. That was one letter that was never going near a postbox.