

THE SECRET QUARRY

Mary followed Grainger through the woods until he stopped at a place where a narrow track led off the lane. He signalled with his torch. Headlamps flashed back at him. The headlamps started to move down the lane towards Grainger.

Grainger walked down the track. As the headlamps got nearer, Mary could see that it was a lorry. The lorry turned on to the track and slowly followed Grainger out of sight.

Mary decided it was time to get back to Westbourne Hall. She would have to wait to find out where the track led.

The next day, Polly, Norman and Dennis made their way through the woods towards the Westbourne Hall hideout. They were after the pilot's papers. But as they got near, they heard a loud hammering. They were in for a shock.

It was Luigi. He had almost finished boarding up the entrance to the greenhouse.

"Luigi!" Dennis yelled.

The Italian stopped hammering and turned in surprise. A broad smile spread across his face. "Hey! What you do here, huh?" he grinned.

"Not what are we doing?" said Norman. "What are you doing?"

Luigi pulled a face. "This Grainger – he say stop up the door so nobody get in."

Dennis ran forward. "But we've got to get in, Luigi. We left something in there."

Luigi shook his head. "No. See, all stopped up. Too late. Now please, you go. Grainger come back. Big trouble for you."

Suddenly, Mary appeared down the side of the greenhouse. "He's right. Grainger's on his way now," she said. "Come with me. I've got something to show you."

Mary led the way to the track that the lorry had driven along. On the way, she told them about what she'd seen the night before. Then about the things she'd found in Grainger's bedroom.

"So there was definitely no wireless transmitter," Norman couldn't hide his disappointment.

"Just the cigarettes and things," Mary told him.

"The wireless could be hidden somewhere else though," Dennis pointed out.

"Never mind that now," said Polly. "Look at this."

The track had come to a stop at an old quarry. Barbed wire was stretched across the entrance. And signs read - "DANGER - KEEP OUT" and "NO ENTRY!"

"I think they want to keep us out," grinned Dennis.

"Too bad," said Norman. He ducked under the wire.

"We're going in."

There were tyre marks and footprints all over the floor of the quarry.

"That proves somebody's been here," said Norman.

But Dennis had found something much more interesting. In one corner of the quarry, a tunnel led up into the rock.

"Got the torch?" asked Norman.

Dennis reached into his pocket and pulled it out. Norman turned to Polly and Mary. "You two keep a

look-out," he told them. "Anybody comes - whistle."

"I can't whistle!" said Polly.

"I can!" said Mary. She pushed her fingers in her mouth and gave an ear-splitting blast. "My father says it's common," she grinned. "That's why I do it."

Norman and Dennis looked into the tunnel. It was very dark. Dennis passed the torch to Norman. "You go first," he said.

After a couple of minutes, they were in almost total darkness. There was no light in front or behind. Just the weak beam of the torch.

They stumbled on uphill for what seemed like miles.

They were getting nowhere. Then suddenly, without warning, the tunnel opened out and they found themselves in a brick-lined cellar.

Norman looked round. In one corner there were piles of boxes.

"Where are we?" hissed Dennis.

Norman was mystified. But then he realised.

"Dennis!" he said. "You know where I think we are? Under Westbourne Hall!"

Dennis's eyes grew wide with fright. "Oh no!" he gasped. "What if Grainger catches us?"

They had to get away as quickly as possible. But the torch battery was getting low and neither of them wanted to go back through the tunnel without that. Then Norman spotted slivers of daylight. There was a door.

"This way!" he told Dennis. They were in luck. The key was in the lock. Norman turned it and opened the door. Light flooded in.

They were at the bottom of a flight of stairs leading up to ground level. Dennis closed the door while Norman checked that there was nobody around.

"All right," he called back down to Dennis.

But Norman had spoken too soon.

Grainger's voice echoed across the yard. "Get away from those steps!" He was striding towards them. He had a heavy walking stick in his hand.

He stopped at the top of the flight of steps. Looking down at them. "I thought I told you to stay off my land,"

he barked. There was a look of pure hatred on his face. "I think it's about time I taught you two a lesson!"

He raised his stick in the air ready to strike down at Norman and Dennis. But before he could do it, someone grabbed his wrist. It was Luigi.



Grainger was taken completely by surprise. He was even more shocked when Luigi twisted the stick out of his grip.

"What do you think you're up to, Balzoni?" Grainger gasped.

Luigi said nothing. Just broke the stick across his thigh and threw the two halves to the ground. "You go now. Please," he told Dennis and Norman.

The two boys inched past Grainger.

"You're going to wish you hadn't done this, you know," Grainger said, glaring at Luigi. Then he turned to Norman and Dennis. "And you two!" he snapped. "Get out of here now!"

Norman and Dennis raced through the woods back to Polly and Mary.

The two girls listened in amazement to the news about the tunnel and the escape from Grainger.

"We've just got to find out what's going on down here," said Norman, finally.

Mary nodded. "Next time there's a lorry," she said. "I'll follow it and see what they do."

It was a good idea. But very dangerous.

"You can't do it on your own," Norman insisted.

"No," Polly agreed. "Come for us first. Throw dirt at the bedroom window."

"All right," Mary smiled. "Now I'd better go. I've been away too long." Mary had never looked happier. "This is getting exciting, isn't it?" she said as she hurried away.

But a strange thing was happening. As Mary was getting more and more confident, Norman was starting to worry.

What Dennis said later made him worry even more. "They could be taking lorry loads of guns down there," he suggested as they sat in the barn. "Building up supplies. For parachutists."

"Guns?" said Polly. "You think so?"

"Or explosives!"

Norman knew then that they were getting out of their depth. If this was to do with guns and explosives, then they had to tell somebody.

"But who?" said Dennis. "Nobody'd believe us."

"Somebody might," said Norman. There was only one person who they could trust to listen to their suspicions - Mike Johnson.

Mike listened carefully as they told him all about Grainger and Belling and the lorries in the night. At the end, he gave a low whistle.

"You know," he admitted. "This is all pretty hard to believe. I mean, Mr Grainger is like the big man round here. You got to have proof before you go grabbing hold of a guy like that and accusing him of being a spy."

"But we've got proof!" Polly insisted.

"Not that he's a spy," Mike pointed out. "Sure sounds like he's up to something. But I don't know what."

Norman's heart sank. "You're not going to do anything then?"

"Hold on!" Mike told him. "Did I say that? Maybe we can't touch Grainger yet. But Vivienne Belling is different. She's a stranger round here. Asking questions. Taking photographs."

"Speaking German!" Polly added.

Mike nodded. "I'd say that lady has one or two questions to answer. And if she ties in with Grainger, we'll have him as well."

Polly, Norman and Dennis gave a shout of excitement.

But Mike stopped them. "Now you guys listen," he warned. From now on, leave this to me. Don't do anything else till I get back to you. Promise?"

They promised. But it was a promise that was hard to keep. Especially a couple of days later when Mr Jenkins pedalled madly into the yard with the latest news.

"The police have got Luigi," he told Amy.

"Luigi?" Amy couldn't believe her ears. "Whatever for?"

"Stealing!" Jenkins told her. "Mr Grainger says he's been stealing from Westbourne Hall."

"That's a lie," Amy insisted. "Luigi would never do that."

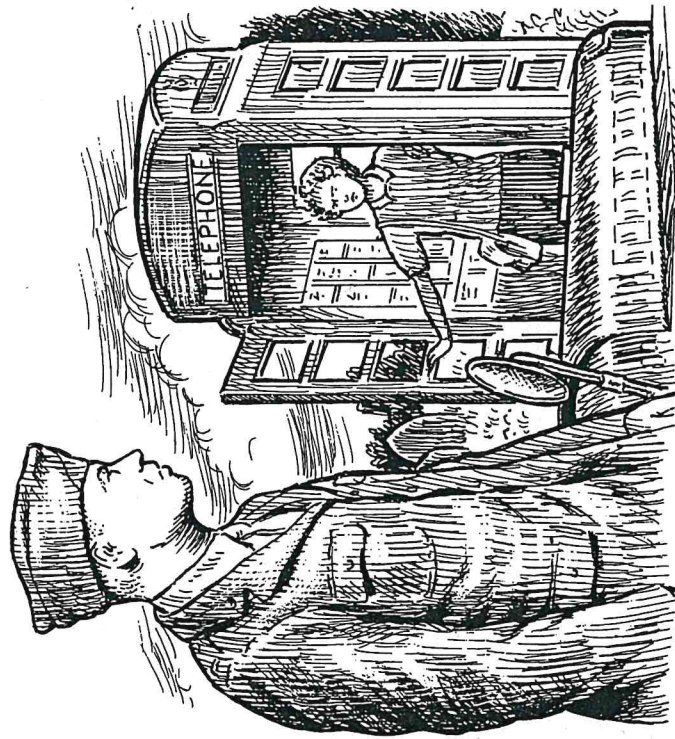
Dennis was even more angry than Amy. "It's Grainger!" he told the others. "He said he'd get Luigi."

Now he's done it! We've got to do something."

"No!" said Norman. "We promised Mike we'd leave it to him."

Dennis was disgusted. "Mike!" he hissed. "We don't even know if he's doing anything."

But Dennis had no need to worry. Because at that moment Mike Johnson and two American soldiers were waiting outside a telephone box in the village. Inside the box, Vivienne Belling was speaking urgently into the mouthpiece.



"The message is - I have all the information. Including photographs. Be ready for action any time." She looked pleased with herself as she put the 'phone down. She wasn't so pleased when she turned round and found three soldiers waiting outside.

At Westbourne Hall, the telephone rang. Grainger picked it up.

He listened for a moment. A look of panic spread across his face. "What do you think you're doing telephoning me?" he snapped. There was a brief pause. "I don't care what's cropped up he," he said. "And tonight's out of the question." His face was growing red with anger. "That's your problem," he shouted into the mouthpiece. "I've told you we can't..." But the line had gone dead.

He turned to Millington in despair. "It's tonight," he said.

Outside the door, Mary had heard everything. She grinned to herself. Things were definitely on the move.

At Wells Farm, Norman, Polly and Dennis were waiting. It was as though everything had come to a stop. They couldn't do anything until they heard from Mike Johnson. And Mike seemed to be taking for ever.

Then suddenly, his jeep was roaring up to the gate. As soon as the children saw the look on Mike's face, they knew that something was wrong.

"Did you get her?" Polly asked. "What's happened?"

Mike took a deep breath. "Look guys," he told them. "This is not going to be easy for you. You're going to have to trust me, OK?"

There was an uneasy silence. Polly, Norman and Dennis didn't know what to expect. What came next was as bad as could be.

"Forget about spies!" said Mike. "Forget about Vivienne Belling. Forget about Grainger. Keep well away from Westbourne Hall."

Norman was amazed. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Just take my word," said Mike. "That's what you have to do. And listen – this is an order!"

It was the biggest blow yet. Hopes had been so high. Now it looked as though Mike had deserted them. They went to bed that night in a state of shock. They couldn't think what to do next. They didn't have to wait long before that problem was solved for them.

It was hardly dark when a handful of gravel clattered against the window. It was Mary.

"Come on!" she called up to them. "It's now!"

In no time at all, Norman, Dennis and Polly were out in the farmyard.

"Come on!" Mary whispered. "We've got to hurry. The lorries went down there half an hour ago."

Mary seemed to have no fear at all. The thought of getting her own back on Grainger and Millington was driving her forward.

Norman, Polly and Dennis weren't quite so brave. In the dark of night, everything seemed more dangerous. More threatening. The mist was growing thicker all the time. They would have turned back but Mary kept urging them on.

At last, they were looking down into the quarry from above. Lights had been rigged up. Two lorries were there. A gang of men were unloading boxes from one of them. Millington was checking off the boxes on a list while Grainger bustled around telling everybody what to do.

As the boxes came off the lorry, they were taken up the tunnel to Westbourne Hall. It was too far away to

see what was in the boxes. But one thing was certain - it wasn't guns.

"They're not heavy enough!" Dennis whispered.

"What is in them then?" Polly wondered.

They soon found out. One of the men dropped a box as he was sliding it off the lorry. It crashed to the ground.

"Watch what you're doing!" Millington snapped. "We're not paying for anything broken."

"Very sorry!" the man sneered. "I didn't realise stockings and soap broke so easily!"

"Perhaps not," Grainger warned him. "But there's perfume in some of these. And cigarettes. So just be careful!"

So that was it. The lorries were loaded with goods for the black market. Grainger and Millington were buying up things that were in short supply and selling them again at a huge profit. Some of the boxes had US Army marks on them. They had been stolen from the base.

The children slid back from the edge. Now they knew exactly what was going on, they were disappointed.

"So they're not spies then," Dennis complained.

"Just crooks!" said Polly.

But Mary wasn't going to let that spoil things. "It's still against the law," she pointed out. "They'll go to prison if they're caught."

The thought of Grainger and Millington in prison made everyone feel a little better.

"We've got to get the police," said Norman.

"How?" asked Polly. "They'll probably be gone by the time we get to the telephone box."

But Mary had already thought of that. "We won't go to the telephone box. We'll telephone from the Hall. There's nobody there."

Polly grinned. Mary was right. "Come on!" she said.

But before Polly had gone more than half a dozen steps, her foot disappeared into a pothole and she fell to the ground. "Owww! My ankle!" she yelled. The pain was agonising.

Dennis and Norman helped her up. But it was no good. She could barely walk. She would slow them down too much.

Norman made a decision. "You and Dennis stay here. I'll go with Mary to telephone."

Polly didn't like it. But there was no other way. "All right then," she said. "But hurry up!"

Polly wasn't the only person with a problem. Down in the quarry, Grainger was struggling to untie the canvas sheet that was covering the second lorry's load.

"Hurry up! We haven't got all night," Millington was getting jumpy. The sooner the lorries were unloaded and away, the better.

Grainger tugged at the rope with all his might but it was stuck fast.

"Cut it," Millington snapped.

"Nobody's got a knife!" said Grainger.

"Don't you think of anything?" Millington sighed. She stalked off towards the tunnel. "I'll go and get one."

Norman and Mary slipped into Westbourne Hall through a side door.

Mary led the way through to the dining room. She picked up the telephone receiver.

"What do I say?" she asked Norman.

Norman tried to think. "Get the operator. Ask for the police. Tell them to get to Westbourne Quarry straight away."

Still Mary wasn't sure. Why would the police take any notice of what she said?

"Tell them you're Miss Millington," Norman said.

"But that's a lie!" A woman's voice cut through the air.

Mary turned.

Millington was standing in the doorway. She had a kitchen knife in her hand. "Put the telephone down," she growled.

Mary shook her head.

Millington edged forward. "Just do what I tell you," she hissed. "Put the telephone down."

Mary started to replace the handset. Then she stopped. "No!" she told Millington. "I'm not doing

anything else you say." Mary was not going to give up. Not now they were so close to winning.

But Millington had a plan. She crouched down and grabbed the telephone wire. In one quick movement of her hand, she sliced through the wire with the knife.

As she did it, Mary hurled the telephone at her.

Millington fell back in surprise. It was all Mary and Norman needed.

They raced into the hall and headed for the back door.

They didn't get far. Grainger was blocking the way.

He reached out and grabbed Mary. "What's going on?" he snarled.

Mary's reply was instant. She kicked Grainger's shin as hard as she could.

Grainger doubled over in pain.

"The front!" shouted Mary.

Norman and Mary ran back towards the front doors.

Millington was on her way out of the dining room. She

dived at Mary but Mary dodged sideways and

Millington crashed to the floor again. Grainger had

recovered from Mary's kick and was racing after them.

Millington slid straight into his legs and he tumbled down on top of her.

Norman and Mary reached the front entrance while

Grainger and Millington were still picking themselves

up. Mary grabbed the door handle and twisted it. The

handle turned but the door stayed firmly shut. It was

locked. There was no way out.

Grainger and Millington had trapped them. This time there was no escape.



"Something's wrong. They should be back by now." Polly was worried. Norman and Mary had been away too long.

Dennis was peering down into the quarry. "Wait!" he said. "There's something happening."

Polly scrambled forward to see what was going on. What she saw took her breath away. Grainger and Millington were marching Norman and Mary across the quarry towards an old shed. Grainger opened the door and pushed the children inside. Then he fastened the door shut.

"They'll be all right there for a bit," he told Millington. "Now come on."

Grainger started to move away but Millington grabbed his arm.

"We can't leave it like that," she hissed. "They know too much. We've got to deal with them."

"Don't be stupid," Grainger scoffed.

But Millington was deadly serious. "What's your idea?" she asked. "Let them go? To put us in jail?"

Grainger was worried now. "Look," he said. "What we're doing is against the law. But nobody gets hurt."

"There's no other way," Millington insisted. "There'll be no problem. It'll look like an accident. Two kids messing around in a quarry at night. Very dangerous."

Grainger pulled his arm free and started to walk away. "I've told you - no!" he said.

But Millington wasn't going to give up. "We'll sort it out later," she said.

Dennis and Polly had to do something if Norman and Mary were to have any chance. But what?

Polly struggled to her feet. "I think I can get down to the telephone box by the bridge," she told Dennis. Her ankle was still painful but she would just have to forget about it.

Dennis nodded. "Do that!" he said. "I'm going down into the quarry."



The gang had started to unload the second lorry. Even Grainger was helping, trying to keep away from Millington. But as he pulled a box down she caught up with him.

"Those kids!" she hissed. "What if the other two are around somewhere?"

"You think you're the only one with any brains?" Grainger sneered. "I've already sent somebody to look for them."



Polly hobbled painfully along the track towards the lane. Suddenly, a torch was shining straight into her eyes. Somebody was blocking the way. But Polly was too dazzled to see who.

A woman's voice broke the silence. "You! Don't you ever give up?"



It was Vivienne Belling. "You really are a bit of a nuisance," Belling continued.

Polly had never been so angry. Nobody was going to stop her now. Especially not Vivienne Belling. She hurled herself forward in a mad rage. "And you're a dirty rotten spy!" she yelled.

Her hands grabbed Belling's hair. She pulled with all her might.

Belling screamed. "Get her off, will you?"

Somebody grabbed Polly from behind and dragged her away. "Polly! It's OK. It's me!"

It was Mike Johnson.

Polly stared at him in amazement. What was going on? "What are you doing here?" she demanded.

Mike ignored the question. "The others!" he said. "Where are they?"

"Down at the quarry," Polly answered. "They got caught."

"We've got to get in there at top speed," Mike told Belling.

Belling signalled along the track with her torch. Engines started up, then army vehicles and a police car roared down the track.

As they skidded into the quarry, the men who were unloading the lorries scattered in every direction. They had no chance of escape – they were outnumbered two to one by soldiers and policemen.

Millington turned towards the shed. "The kids!" she shouted to Grainger. "Get hold of those kids!"

But Grainger had had enough. He blocked the way. "Leave them!" he ordered.

"Never!" Millington pushed him over and sprinted towards the shed. Grainger picked himself up and charged after her.

Millington raced inside the shed with Grainger hot on her heels. They stopped dead. The shed was empty. They turned only to see Mary slam the door shut on them. They stared at each other in horror. Now they were caught.

Outside, Norman and Mary grinned at Dennis. He had got to them just in time.

It had been a night to remember. A night where everything had turned out right in the end. But only just. Now they had some explaining to do.



The next day, the Wells Farm kitchen was packed with people. Amy was run off her feet, trying to keep everybody supplied with tea and toast.

"Lucky to be alive! All of them!" said Amy. She still hadn't recovered from the shock.

Vivienne Belling smiled. "They did a good job though. After all, they weren't to know that I was after Grainger as well."

Norman, Polly and Dennis were just a bit embarrassed. They had got it all wrong. Vivienne Belling wasn't a spy, after all. She was working for the Government, trying to track down people who were running the black market.

"And catching black marketeers is very nearly as good as catching a spy!" Belling told Polly.

Mike Johnson agreed. "They did a darn good job," he said.

It was true. They had done a darned good job. But now it had come to an end. Especially for Norman and Dennis. They were going home.

Their parents had decided that the countryside was too dangerous. It was safer in the city after all.

Mr Jenkins was taking Dennis back. And Mrs Starkey had come to collect Norman.

Only Mary was staying behind.

"I telephoned her parents and told them what had happened to her," Mr Jenkins said to Mike Johnson as he loaded Dennis's things into his car. "And they just asked me to find her somewhere else to stay." Mr Jenkins shook his head in wonder.

"I've told you, Cyril Jenkins. That girl's staying here with me and Polly," said Amy. Amy was in no mood for arguing. Mary needed looking after and she was going to do it.

Mrs Starkey climbed into Mike Johnson's jeep. It was time for her and Norman to go.

"Thank you for everything, Mrs Hobbs," she said to Amy.

"No thanks necessary," Amy was fighting back the tears. She grabbed Norman and Dennis and hugged them till they could barely breathe.

Norman climbed into the back seat of the jeep. Mrs Starkey sat in front. Mike Johnson started the engine. He pushed the gear lever forward and the jeep moved off across the farmyard.

Mary ran after them. "Norman, your gas mask!"

"Give it to Dennis," shouted Norman.

"Give it to the goat!" Dennis replied.

Everybody laughed. But behind the laughter there was sadness.

Norman looked back. Polly, Dennis, Mary and Amy were waving goodbye. Norman waved. And he kept waving until Wells Farm was out of sight.

It had only been his home for a few weeks. But he'd remember it for the rest of his life.