There was nobody under the lamppost. ‘Th–there was a man,’ he stammered, ‘acting funny. We tailed him. He was looking up at the window as well.’ He smiled brightly. ‘D’you want me to ring the bell, Mr Oswald, tell Grandad to draw the curtain?’

The constable shook his head. ‘That’s my job, laddie: your grandad won’t forget again if I tell him.’ He sighed. ‘What I want the four of you to do is go home. Stop tailing people. Forget about spies. Play with Meccano or bath your dollies or whatever it is you used to do before this lot started.’ He shook his head again. ‘I don’t know: everybody’s a ruddy spy catcher these days, except those who are spies themselves. Just go home.’ He set off across the road.

The friends watched him mount the library steps. ‘Keen, isn’t he?’ muttered Gary. ‘Poor old Grandad.’

Mary pulled a face. ‘That chap disappeared pretty smartly though, didn’t he? Not fond of policemen, I reckon.’

‘Spies aren’t,’ said Tom. He barked a short laugh. ‘They needn’t worry though, the spies: old