Somebody was coming up the stairs! We ducked down behind an old crate and waited. I could feel my heart thumping like crazy and my throat felt tight and dry with the dust… and with fear. What if we were caught? The strange girl glanced at me in the semi-gloom and grinned. I thought she was trying to be reassuring.

The door opened and we could hear someone coming in. There was a pause and then a torch flickered on. Its beam pierced the darkness, seeking us out, nosing into all the dark corners. I held my breath and tried to make myself as small as possible. After a few moments, the light switched off. Whoever it was stood quite still. We could hear breathing. Then the door shut and the footsteps went back down the stairs. I let out a sigh of relief

As we clambered out of the window and slithered down the wet roof, I was trying to remember how I had got into such a mess. It had only been half an hour ago when mum had sent me down to the chippie with a tenner and strict orders for no vinegar on her chips. When I reached the McDonald’s roundabout, I couldn’t help looking at the old house. It was ready for demolition, which was a shame because we had used the windows as target practice! It was then that I’d seen it. A light at the window. Then a face, mouthing something. I stood there staring. It was a girl mouthing a word. And the word was HELP.

That’s how it happened. I’d found a way in round the back through a broken window. Half a minute later and I’d found her, trapped prisoner in an upstairs room. She’d only just finished telling me that she was the American ambassador’s daughter Cindy Breakwell and about the ransom money when they had returned to move her to a safe house.

So there we were, balancing on the wall as if we were walking the plank. Five minutes later and we were back at Mum’s. “So, where’s the fish and chips?” she asked, eyeing Cindy suspiciously.

Half an hour later, Cindy’s Dad arrived in an embassy car. That was the talk of St Petroc's estate for weeks. And that night it wasn’t just fish and chips. He took us all out for a big meal. And the next day there I was. In the papers. A hero.

**Adventure at Cambury Park**

“Come on,” shouted Sal as she ran towards the river. Laughing loudly, Jazzy followed. The two girls stopped by an old houseboat and began to feed the ducks. “Hey, look at that!” exclaimed Jazzy, pointing at something bobbing in the dark water. It was a strange looking package, covered in yellow plastic. Jazzy tugged the plastic loose. What was inside? To their amazement, gold coins spilled out onto the towpath.

At that moment, a scruffy man appeared on the deck of the houseboat. As soon as he saw them, the man whistled. A terrier appeared and barked at the girls. The man’s eyes were dark and cruel. ‘Hey!” he called. Without hesitating, both girls ran back across the park, past the boatshed and towards the old warehouses.

“Quick! Let’s hide here,” shouted Sal, dashing through the open door. They ran across the warehouse floor towards some old machinery. They crouched down behind a large engine and waited. The darkness stretched into every dusty corner. At that moment, they heard a scratching, scraping noise. Something was coming towards them. They froze, hearts pounding. Who or what was it? Peering round, Jazzy saw a shadow lurking….

Suddenly there was a shout. ‘Here boy!’ whistled the man from outside. They heard the dog whining quite close to them but a moment later it turned and ran outside. As soon as it had gone, the girls dashed to the door. In the distance, they could see the man and his dog running in the opposite direction.

Ten minutes later, the girls were back home. At first, Mrs Jenkins didn’t believe them… But she soon did when Sal showed her the bag of golden coins. When the police arrived, the girls handed over the treasure. It turned out that the gold had been stolen only the day before from the local antique shop. Mr Carter, who owned the shop, visited them at school and gave both girls a reward.

Extract from The Creakers Tom Fletcher

**What silently waits in the shadows at night?**

**What's under your bed, keeping just out of sight?**

**What's patiently waiting while you’re counting sheep?**

**What never comes out unless you’re fast asleep?**

**What makes all the creaks, cracks and clangs in your house?**

**It isn't the cat, or your dog, or a mouse,**

**Those noises are made by mysterious creatures,**

**Read on if you dare and you might meet...**

**...the Creakers.**

Read more at https://www.penguin.co.uk/puffin/articles/2017/Mar/the-creakers-by-tom-fletcher/#jhSFOm7Dub7mP2vQ.99

  


