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In a trap

The voices outside the lorry were loud and angry. Maria began to cry. 'I'm frightened, Max,' she said.

Maxim put his arm around his younger sister and said, 'It will be okay.'

'What are they saying out there?' someone asked him.

Maxim could speak four languages, and French was one of them. 'There's trouble,' he said. 'Be quiet so I can listen.'

The Moldovan men, women and children lay quietly in the dark. They were under a false floor in the back of the lorry. Maxim put his ear against the side of the lorry and listened carefully.

'Well?' a voice asked out of the dark.

'We're turning back. We're going to have to try another way,' said Maxim. 'Another lorry off the Dover ferry was stopped. They found a group of people hidden behind bags of potatoes. The police are checking every lorry.'

'Ah,' said a different voice. 'So we are on the road to nowhere.'

Maxim thought, *Most of the Chinese people in the other lorry are dead. They were truly on the road to nowhere.* But he didn't tell the others. They were all in a trap and there was no way out.

Nick Bennett and his parents sat in the kitchen and ate their dinner silently. No one spoke at dinnertime except to say 'Pass the butter,' and 'Thank you'. Mr Bennett, Nick's father, liked to listen to the radio news.

Nick's dog Zip lay at his feet. The dog's tail beat against the leg of Nick's chair. Zip was hoping Nick would drop a piece of meat onto the floor for him.

The newsreader on the radio began another story: *This morning sixteen people were arrested by police in London and Kent. The police believe that they are people smugglers and have smuggled thousands of people into the United Kingdom over the last two years. The illegal immigrants were brought into the country by air, by sea and in vans and lorries. The people smugglers were arrested after thirty-six Chinese were found dead in a lorry on the Dover ferry yesterday.*

‘I hope those people smugglers get locked up for a long time,’ said Mr Bennett.

The newsreader continued with his stories. Mrs Bennett stood up from the table and went to make some tea.

Nick dropped some meat to Zip while his father wasn’t looking. The dog ate hungrily. Nick began to think of other things. There was a note in his school bag. Later in the year his class was going on a trip to France for two weeks. Nick really wanted to go, but he knew what his parents would say. Neither of his parents had ever been abroad. When they talked about travel, Mr Bennett always said, ‘There’s never enough money for things we need on the farm.’ Mrs Bennett always said, ‘Home’s best,’ but Nick sometimes saw her watching travel programmes on television.

The newsreader began another story: *Dairy farmers in the area continue to have problems. One farmer in Ashford, Clive Dunn, is selling all ninety-five of his cows.*

The voice of the farmer came over the radio: *There’s no money in dairy farming now. We farmers don’t get enough money for our milk.*

‘That’s one less dairy farmer,’ said Mr Bennett. ‘But not me. And not you, lad.’

Nick looked down at the table. ‘Yes, Dad.’

Mrs Bennett came in with tea and asked, ‘Have you got any homework, Nick?’

‘I’ve got lots,’ said Nick. He took his bag and opened it. ‘And



A visit from Mr Mason

Nick and his father milked the cows together the next morning. They didn't talk. They didn't talk at evening milking either.

Nick left the barn with Zip. He was walking towards the farmhouse when he heard an angry voice. 'Hey, young Nick, I want to talk to you.'

Nick turned and saw Fred Mason getting out of his car. Mason marched over to Nick, took his arm and shook him. 'You've been talking to the police, you young fool.'

Zip began to bark.

Nick said, 'Let go. You're hurting me!'

Mr Mason put his face close to Nick's and said quietly, 'Some of my friends aren't happy with you.'

Nick's father called from behind them, 'Fred, what's wrong?'

Mr Mason dropped Nick's arm quickly. 'I've been having a word with Nick,' he said to Mr Bennett. 'And now I'll have a word with you and Helen, if that's all right.'

Mr Bennett's face was suddenly angry. 'What's Nick done?'

'Can we go inside?' said Mr Mason.

They all took off their boots and walked inside in their socks. Zip followed them.

Mrs Bennett was cooking in the kitchen. 'Hello, Fred,' she said. 'We haven't had a visit from you for a long time.'

'Well, I'm always busy,' Mr Mason smiled at her. 'You know what that's like!'

'Sit down, Fred,' said Mrs Bennett.

The farmers sat down at the kitchen table. Nick stood.

'What's Nick done?' asked Mr Bennett again.

'I'm upset, Rod,' Mr Mason said to Nick's father. 'Nick has been telling stories to the police.'

‘It wasn’t a story,’ said Nick. ‘There was an accident.’

‘I don’t understand, Fred,’ said Mrs Bennett.

‘Nick found an empty van by the road last night,’ Mr Mason said. ‘He called the police and for some reason he told them a story about a group of illegal immigrants living on my farm. The police woke us up in the middle of the night. They searched my workers’ caravans and the old dairy. Jackie was very angry because she couldn’t get the twins to sleep again.’

‘Did they find anything wrong?’ Mr Bennett asked.

‘Of course not. All our workers have papers.’

I wonder who they bought them from, thought Nick.

Mrs Bennett said, ‘Why would Nick make up a story like that?’

‘I *didn’t*,’ said Nick.

‘He also told the police that I was smuggling people onto the beach by boat,’ Mr Mason laughed.

‘I saw you,’ said Nick.

Nick looked at his father, but Mr Bennett gave him an angry look and said, ‘That’ll do, lad.’ Then he turned to Mr Mason and said, ‘Fred, I’m sorry the boy’s been causing trouble. He won’t do it again.’

‘Would you like to eat with us?’ asked Mrs Bennett.

Nick said, ‘I have to do my homework.’

‘You’ll eat with us, lad,’ said Mr Bennett. ‘Sit down.’

Mrs Bennett said, ‘Lay the table first, please, Nick.’

Nick was angry, but he laid the table and sat down. Mrs Bennett brought out a big pie and some vegetables, and they all ate. Zip sat at Nick’s feet. Zip didn’t like pie nights.

‘You must be making some money from those daffodils, Fred,’ said Mr Bennett with his mouth full of pie. ‘I’m sure that new car of yours wasn’t cheap.’

‘Growing daffodils is good business, Rod,’ said Mr Mason. ‘The supermarkets can’t take enough of them. Have you thought of putting crops into some of your fields?’

Stone

After school on Friday Nick waited at the bus stop as usual. He tried not to think about the weekend – two days on the farm with his parents. He looked across the road towards Red Fox Travel. Suddenly the window above the travel agency opened and Nick saw the girl again. She started to climb out of the window. She reached across to the drainpipe that ran down to the ground.

That drainpipe isn't strong enough, Nick thought.

He was going to call out, 'Be careful!' but before he could, one of the other pupils said, 'Here comes the bus.'

Nick looked up the road to where the bus was coming. When he looked back, the girl had slid down the drainpipe to the street. Then the door of the travel agency opened and the large woman rushed out. The girl screamed and ran across the road in front of the bus. The bus suddenly came to a stop with a loud noise, hitting a parking sign at the side of the road. The pupils jumped back. At the same time the girl kept running, straight towards Nick. He caught her in his arms and said, 'Are you okay?' There was fear in her eyes.

'Hey, watch where you're going!' the bus driver shouted.

The woman from the travel agency was crossing the road.

'Here's your mother,' said Nick.

The girl whispered to Nick, 'She is not my mother. She is...I am her maid. I want to get away. I must find my brother.'

'Where's your brother?' Nick asked.

'On a farm,' said the girl. 'Bluebell Farm.'

'Are you Maria?' Nick asked. He couldn't believe he'd found the girl without trying.

'Yes.'

The driver climbed out of the bus and looked where the bus



Activities

Chapters 1 and 2

Before you read

A. Look at the picture on page 7 and circle the correct answers.

- Where is this?
a. on a farm b. in a city c. in a forest
- What is the young man wearing on his feet?
a. shoes b. Wellington boots c. slippers

B. Find these words in your dictionary. Use them in the sentences.

smuggle newsreader dairy farmer barn

- The _____ sent all the milk to the cheese factory.
- The animals in the _____ were warm and dry.
- The _____ read out the names of the injured people.
- People _____ cigarettes and alcohol across the border.

C. Listen to Track 3 on CD1 and answer these questions.

- How many languages could Maxim speak?
a. three b. four
- What were the Moldovan people hiding in?
a. a lorry b. a ferry
- Who were checking every lorry?
a. the police b. Chinese people

After you read

COMPREHENSION

A. Circle the correct answers.

- Where did Nick want to go for two weeks with his class?
a. China b. France c. Moldova
- What was the name of Nick's dog?
a. Zip b. Flo c. Jake
- Nick saw a boat at night. What was the boat full of?
a. fish b. nets c. people
- Who took the boat out to sea again?
a. the van driver b. Mr Mason c. Nick

Chapters 3 and 4

Before you read

A. Look at the picture on page 16 and circle the correct answers.

1. Where is this?
a. at a beach b. in a town c. on a farm
2. Who is looking out of an upstairs window?
a. a man b. a police officer c. a girl

B. Find these words in your dictionary. Use them in the sentences.

travel agency ambulance university central heating

1. Neil hoped to study dentistry at _____.
2. Our house is very cold. The _____ isn't working.
3. Joan went to the _____ to book a holiday in Canada.
4. Oh no! Peter's fallen off the roof! Call an _____!

C. Listen to Track 4 on CD1 and answer these questions.

1. Where was the voice shouting angrily?
a. upstairs b. downstairs
2. What had Nick been looking at?
a. buses b. brochures
3. What colour was the paper in the brochure that Nick held out to the woman?
a. yellow b. red

After you read

COMPREHENSION

A. Circle the correct answers.

1. What day was it when Nick went into the travel agency?
a. Monday b. Tuesday c. Wednesday
2. What was the name of the girl at the bus stop who Nick called out to?
a. Valda b. Maria c. Jenna
3. What did Fred Mason grow in the spring?
a. vegetables b. daffodils c. apples
4. What was the one word Maxim said to Nick after asking for help to find his sister?
a. 'sky' b. 'sea' c. 'stone'

ladder /'lædə/ <i>n.</i>	Leiter
lease /li:s/ <i>v.</i>	pachten
limp /lɪmp/ <i>v.</i>	humpeln
mattress /'mætrəs/ <i>n.</i>	Matratze
maid /'meɪd/ <i>n.</i>	Dienstmädchen
newsreader /'nju:z,ri:də/ <i>n.</i>	Nachrichtensprecher, -in
parent /'peərənt/ <i>n.</i>	Elternteil
paw /pɔ:/ <i>n.</i>	Pfote
people smuggler /'pi:pl 'smʌglə/ <i>n.</i>	Menschenhändler
pie /paɪ/ <i>n.</i>	Pastete
plaster cast /'plɑ:stə kɑ:st/ <i>n.</i>	Gipsverband
record /rɪ'kɔ:d/ <i>v.</i>	aufnehmen
recording /rɪ'kɔ:dɪŋ/ <i>n.</i>	Aufnahme
reverse /rɪ'vɜ:s/ <i>v.</i>	umkehren, wenden
scared /skeəd/ <i>adj.</i>	verängstigt
slid /slɪd/ <i>v.</i>	gleiten; schlittern (<i>past tense</i> von <i>slide</i>)
smuggle /'smʌgl/ <i>v.</i>	schmuggeln
steer /stɪə/ <i>v.</i>	lenken, steuern
torch /tɔ:tʃ/ <i>n.</i>	Taschenlampe
trailer /'treɪlə/ <i>n.</i>	Anhänger
trap /træp/ <i>n.</i>	Falle
travel agency /'trævl 'eɪdʒ(ə)nsi/ <i>n.</i>	Reisebüro
university /ju:nɪ'vɜ:səti/ <i>n.</i>	Universität
Wellington boots /'welɪŋtən bu:ts/ <i>n.</i>	Gummistiefel
whisper /'wɪspə/ <i>v.</i>	flüstern