

A Noise Downstairs

by Miriam Silver

From the window all that could be seen were shadows, figures crawling and the glint of something shining, he couldn't move, terrified he could hear something, downstairs. he tried to shout, the words wouldn't come.

"Wake up," his mother was shaking him, "you've had a nightmare," William was standing at his bedroom window.

"I saw it," he tried to explain but his mother wasn't listening

"You read too many comics, you were sleep walking, dreaming, back to bed now."

At breakfast he asked anyone who'd listen,

"Can dreams come true?"

"Probably ate too many stolen apples," this from an unsympathetic sister

"Bad dreams are for little boys who" Richard just managed to duck as William threw his toast, causing his brother to plead,

"Mother, please send him out," followed quickly by William's

"I'm not a little boy, I'm a"

“Will you all leave the table and let me finish my breakfast in peace,”
Their father had reached the end of his patience.

William left the room and the house,
“I only asked,” he shouted, “no one cares about me having a nightmare, though maybe,” he suddenly had an inspirational insider,

“It wasn’t a nightmare, I know I heard and saw something.” Which catapulted him off purposely in his best MI5 mode to find his gang Ginger, Henry and Douglas they’d be in their den, school holidays, they’d be ready for an investigation, even if no one else was.

“I’m sure I saw them, burglars, and they had a knife, I saw it I tell you”

“You only had a nightmare, I always have em’ special when I eat lots....” Douglas explained unsympathetically.

“No I didn’t, I’m going to look for clues, don’t bother, I’ll go on my own, don’t have to come, I’ll manage,” invitingly, knowing they loved a mystery and were bored.

“Come on” William shouted, “let’s find them, start over there,” pointing to the ditch “keep low”.

Progress was slow due to distractions concerning ownership to valuable findings, causing disputatious struggles in the mud.

“Look found something,”

“That’s only a dead frog,” sneered Henry narrowly missing Ginger’s missile.

The serious stuff started in the ditch opposite William’s bedroom when Ginger whooped,

“look here, cigarette ends” he had his Scouts badge for tracking.

“Don’t touch anything” Henry warned,

“S’all muddy anyway, won’t get fingerprints,” Douglas’s uncle was a policeman.

William's persuasive powers had energised them now, crawling along the ditch with their eyes firmly fixed on the ground beneath them, each wanted to be the one to find whatever it was that their leader had seen shining in the moonlight. Concentrating with enjoyment they didn't notice that they were in forbidden territory.

The Smiths their neighbours, already exasperated by William's badly aimed missiles and tired by a disrupted night, now caught sight of four boys crawling all over what remained of their vegetable garden.

The would-be detectives became aware they were being attacked, not by robbers but by something worse, exasperated adults who were requiring an explanation.

"We saw them, we've got something, I ..." William tried until the forbearing Mrs Smith spotted the thing in William's hand.

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"Where, what on earth are you doing with that?" she was pointing to a dangerous looking knife.

"I to'you, least I tol my mother I saw something last night."

"You must have frightened them off," Mrs.Brown explained.

It appeared that someone had tried to steal their neibours' prize vegetables last night.

Even William's father looked proud.

They didn't have to 'clean up' and were allowed to take their reward straight to the sweet shop.

