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Lost Words

by Miriam Silver

The prime minister must have known Richmal Compton's William, I mean just look at William's activities which he, together with his gang, Ginger, Henry, Desmond and occasionally Violet Elizabeth, the latter only because she was pushy and ignored William's nasty remarks, anyway this lot loved William's ideas, he was their leader.

Under his guidance they would listen to his lectures, which were always about the need to resist all bossy directions from both school and parents.

These meetings took place in in their secret den in the woods after school when detention permitted and at the weekend when they finished their homework. There he expounded on his ideas about a world where school, in his considered opinion, was totally unnecessary.

He was certain, he told them, no boy, (girls were excluded) could grow, develop or even have a good time when those inconsiderate adults were always interfering and making them learn stupid things.

If only they would listen to us, he would lecture, look at the mess we are in, no trips anywhere, beach all covered in barbed wire, their fault we're in such a mess.

I'm tired of the blackout, no birthday treats, sweets rationed he would mumble, knowing it was marginally unpatriotic to say these things. Couldn't even think about bananas and oranges.

One thing is sort of good is that we have lady teachers and they're easier to get on with, yer know, they don't use the ruler, don't even set so much homework as the men, I think they have a greater understanding of us like they set lines instead of detention, cos they have to get home, and then they don't really count the words, they trust us.

I know we did overdo the collecting of scrap metal, but how did we know the stuff we found in our old sheds was still being used. Should have been locked up then we wouldn't have given it to the collection. Anyway they can all get new stuff when the war's over.

We only found that unexplored bomb because we should have been at that awful, girls party. Couldn't go anywhere where that awful Hubert's boasting about the number of trifles he eats.

Even had to get out the night before when the siren went had to go to the air raid shelter with that Mrs. Whatsername who snores. Anyway we saw something sticking up when we left, went over, had a good look and told Mr. Leicester, the ARP man and all we got for our trouble was - "Get out of it, get away..."

Well of course we went, so unfair, we can't do anything right, never get praised. All they want us to do is go to school, go to bed, get out of the way, but they can't do it forever, one day we'll show 'em.

So said their leader as he went on his way, throwing a stick for Jumble, while searching the undergrowth for treasure and going in search of someone with spare sweet rations.