

“But I couldn’t charge them,” Ellen said.

“Charge? Oh, I see — trying to make some extra pocket money for Christmas, are we?”

“My friend Brenda’s having a party, and I haven’t any money for a present.”

“Well, you’ll get nowt from that stuck-up lot in number 3, and the rest of us are struggling as it is to make ends meet. But I’ve got a spare bottle of Evening in Paris scent. You’re welcome to it if you think your friend would like it.”

“That would be super, Mrs. Lumsden. Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’ll go and look for it.”

“Oh, thank you! I’ll wait out here for you,” Ellen said.

She watched Sally head back to number 6 with her bucket of water. The scent wouldn’t be as good as the Jo Stafford record, but it was better than nothing, and it was kind of Sally to offer.

Ellen plodded through the snow to the iron railing overlooking the gardens that belonged to Sally and Mr. Henderson. Beyond them, the River Wansbeck was a solid sheet of ice.

Every time Ellen looked through these railings she thought about Carl jumping over them. He’d managed to escape from Mavis’s dad and the Home Guard by running to the river and taking Sally’s old boat. Ellen had been so scared there’d be a

ruckus about the boat going missing, but when Sally complained everyone in the yard had just shrugged and said it was no surprise to them. Sally, who was known as Sloppy Sally to her neighbours, was careless with her things, so everyone assumed she mustn't have tied it up properly and it had just drifted off.

Someone had found it a couple of days later, wedged between two of the stepping stones further downstream, and returned it. Now it lay in the middle of Sally's garden, all covered with snow like a shrouded coffin.

Ellen was frozen and wished Sally would hurry up. Perhaps she should offer to help her find the perfume. She turned away from the railing and made her way to Sally's door — just as two men came out of Mr. Henderson's house.

Horrified, Ellen realized one of the men was Carl. She quickly turned her back to them, but as Carl walked by her he whispered, “We must talk — meet me at the clock tower at four tomorrow, *ja*? ” Before she could say anything, he was gone up the yard and out onto the street.

What did he mean they “must talk”? Didn’t he realize the danger he was putting her in? There was no way she was going to meet him — ever. If anyone saw her with him, dear knows what would happen to her. She’d lose all her friends, and her

mam and dad might disown her. And what would Mavis's dad do? She should never have helped Carl escape. She should have known he couldn't get back to Germany. Now what was she going to do?

Just then, Sally came hurrying out of her house. She was carrying a small dark blue bottle. "Here we are. I — whoops!"

Ellen watched in shock as Sally slipped on the icy pathway, tried to regain her balance, then fell, hitting her arm on the cement step. The bottle of scent went flying through the air into the snow.

"Are you all right?" Ellen rushed to help her. Sally took Ellen's arm and tried to get up, but she winced in pain and gasped, "Eeh, lass, I can't seem to get me breath."

"Stay still. I'll be right back," Ellen said. Then she ran, slipping and sliding, up the yard to fetch her mam.