

5: *Friday*

I CALL IT Friday because they left it so late. The clock was already well past midnight by the time Ellie's father finally heaved himself out of his comfy chair in front of the telly and went upstairs. When he came down again he was dressed in black. Black from head to foot.

"You look like a cat burglar," said Ellie's mother.

"I wish someone would burgle *our* cat," he muttered.

I just ignored him. I thought that was best.

Together they went to the back door.

“Don’t switch the outside light on,” he warned her. “You never know who might be watching.”





I tried to sneak out at the same time,
but Ellie's mother held me back with
her foot.

"You can just stay inside tonight,"
she told me. "We've had enough
trouble from you this week."

Fair's fair. And I heard all about it anyway, later, from Bella and Tiger and Pusskins. They all reported back. (They're good mates.) They all saw Ellie's father creeping across the lawn, with his plastic bag full of Thumper (wrapped nicely in a towel to keep him clean). They all saw him forcing his way through the hole in the hedge, and crawling across next-door's lawn on his tummy.

"Couldn't think *what* he was doing," Pusskins said afterwards.

"*Ruined* the hole in the hedge," complained Bella. "He's made it so big that the Thompson's rottweiler could get through it now."

"That father of Ellie's must have the most dreadful night vision," said Tiger. "It took him forever to find that hutch in the dark."

about it
Tiger
d back
I saw
e lawn
per
p him
his
, and
n his
g,"
ig







“And prise the door open.”

“And stuff in poor old Thumper.”

“And set him out neatly on his bed of straw.”

“All curled up.”

“With the straw patted up round him.”

“So it looked as if he was sleeping.”

“It was very, very lifelike,” said Bella. “It could have fooled me. If anyone just happened to be passing in the dark, they’d really have thought that poor old Thumper had just died happily and peacefully in his sleep, after a good life, from old age.”

They all began howling with laughter.

“Sshh!” I said. “Keep it down, guys. They’ll hear, and I’m not supposed to be out tonight. I’m grounded.”



They all stared at me.

"Get away with you!"

"Grounded?"

"What *for*?"

"Murder," I said. "For cold-blooded bunnicide."

That set us all off again. We yowled and yowled. The last I heard before we took off in a gang up Beechcroft Drive was one of the bedroom windows being flung open, and Ellie's father yelling, "How did you get out, you crafty beast?"

So what's he going to do? Nail up the cat-flap?