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## Nosy Neighbour

Ben couldn't help himself, and his eyes darted towards the window. For a brief moment he saw a dark figure wearing a strange hat peer through the dirty glass, and then quickly disappear out of view.

"There was a man peering in at the window," said Ben breathlessly.

"I know," said Granny. "I told you not to look."

"Shall I go out and see who it was?" said Ben, trying to hide the fact that he was more than a little frightened. Really, he wanted Granny to go

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out and see who it was.

"I bet it was my nosy neighbour, Mr Parker. He lives at number seven, he always wears a pork-pie hat, and he keeps spying on me."

"Why?" asked Ben.

Granny shrugged. "I don't know. I imagine he has a rather cold head, or something."

"What?" said Ben. "Oh. No, not his hat. I mean, why does he keep spying on you?"

"He's a retired Major, and now he runs the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Grey Close."

"What's Neighbourhood Watch?" asked Ben.

"It's a group of local people who keep an eye out for burglars. But Mr Parker just uses it as an excuse to spy on everyone, the nosy old git. I often come back from the supermarket with my bag of cabbages and see he's hiding behind his net curtains spying on me with a pair of binoculars."

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“Yes?” said Ben in a squeaky high voice.

“Can I help you?”

Mr Parker put his foot inside the bungalow so the front door couldn't be closed on him.

“Who are you?” he barked, nasally.

He had a very big nose, which made him

seem even nosier than he was, and he already seemed extremely nosy. Because he had a big nose he also had a very nasal voice, which made everything he said, however serious, seem a little bit absurd. But his eyes shone red like a demon.

“I am Granny's friend,” spluttered Ben. *Why did I say that?* he thought. In truth, he was in a terrible panic, and his tongue was running away with him.

“Friend?” snarled Mr Parker, pushing open the front door. He was stronger than Ben, and soon forced his way inside.

“I mean grandson, Mr Parker, sir...” said Ben, retreating back towards the living room.

“Why are you lying to me?” he said, taking several paces forward as Ben took several paces back. It was if they were dancing the tango.

“I am not lying!” cried Ben.

They reached the living-room door.

"You can't go in there!" yelled Ben, thinking of the jewels still scattered all over the carpet.

"Why not?"

"Erm... umm... Because Granny is doing her naked yoga!"

Ben needed a dramatic excuse to stop Mr Parker barging through the door and seeing the jewels. He was pretty sure he had hit the jackpot as Mr Parker paused and furrowed his brow.

Sadly, the nosy neighbour was not convinced.

"Naked yoga?! A likely story! I need to talk to your grandmother right away. Now get out of my way, you nasty little worm of a boy!" he said as he shoved the boy aside and opened the living-room door.

Granny must have heard Ben through the door because when Mr Parker burst into the room she was standing in her bra and knickers in a tree pose.



"Mr Parker, do you mind?" said Granny, in mock horror that he had seen her in a state of undress.

Mr Parker's eyes spun around the room. He didn't know where to look, so he fixed his glare on the now bare carpet. "Excuse me, Madam, but I need to ask you, where are those jewels I saw a moment ago?"

Ben spied the Silver Jubilee biscuit tin poking out from behind the sofa. Surreptitiously he edged it out of view with his foot.

"What jewels, Mr Parker? Have you been spying on me again?" demanded Granny, still in her underwear.

"Well, I, err..." he spluttered. "I had good reason. I was suspicious when I saw a young gentleman enter your property. I thought he might be a burglar."

"I let him in through the front door."

"He might have been a very charming burglar. He might have weaselled his way into your confidence."

"He's my grandson. He stays every Friday night."

"Ah!" said Mr Parker, triumphantly. "But it's not Friday night! So you can see why my suspicions were raised. And as head of Grey Close's Neighbourhood Watch I must report anything suspicious I see to the police."

"I've got a good mind to report you to the police, Mr Parker!" said Ben.

Granny looked at him curiously.

"Whatever for?" said the man. His eyes narrowed. They were now so red it was like there was a fire in his brain.

"For spying on old ladies in their underwear!" said Ben triumphantly. Granny winked at Ben.

"She was fully clothed when I looked through the window..." protested Mr Parker.

"That's what they all say!" said Granny. "Now get out of my house before you are

Gangsta Granny

arrested for being a Peeping Tom!"

"You've not heard the last of me. Good day!" said Mr Parker. With that, he spun on his heels and left the room. Granny and Ben heard the front door slam behind him and they ran over to the window and watched him scuttle back to his bungalow.

"I think we frightened him off," said Ben.

"But he'll be back," said Granny. "We have to be very careful."

"Yes," said Ben, more than a little alarmed.

"We'd better hide this tin somewhere else."

Granny thought for a moment. "Yes, I'll put it under the floorboards."

"OK," said Ben. "But first..."

"Yes, Ben?"

"You might want to get dressed."