

## Wisplurkers

### Episode 018. "You mustn't say a word to anyone."

Toby had completely recovered from his scare. A copper. Detective! This was more like it. "So, you think the Grimleys have been murdered then?" he asked.

Inspector Dalrimple shook his head.

"Now where did you get such an idea? OK Alf and Betty Grimley have disappeared in unusual circumstances, but that doesn't mean they've been killed. It's an ongoing investigation and that's all I can say at this stage—."

"Same thing," stated Toby stubbornly. "I'm looking into their murders myself." He said feeling suddenly very important.

"Toby Dodd thinks he's going to be a private investigator," explained Kylie, then added unkindly. "That's when he grows up."

Inspector Dalrimple looked amused. "Really?"

Toby chose to ignore the remark

"Hey inspector, we could even work this case together," he'd heard them talk like that in films. "You tell me what you know and we'll compare notes."

Ernie Dalrimple slowly shook his head.

"Thanks for your help, but no thanks. Police work can be dangerous and anyway, you kids shouldn't be here."

He sighed and gazed back, in disbelief, at the house, "Look at that. Vandalism. Someone has been smashing the windows." He looked closely at the four standing before him, "Now you lot wouldn't know anything about that, would you?"

They shook their heads, looking the picture of innocence. Toby couldn't stop his cheeks reddening and he stared at his feet and avoided Kylie's angry nudge with her elbow. The inspector didn't notice.

Getting no answer he said, "Yes well, I'll have to do something about that."

He muttered more to himself than the others. "I'll have to get someone to board up those windows. I don't suppose any harm has been done." He glanced at the sky, shading his eyes with his hand. To the west a bank of clouds was forming, but as yet was too far away to cover the sun.

"It's not safe here," Dalrimple stated.

"You mean, the criminals could be hanging around ready to strike again?" asked Toby.

"I mean I want you four to go home. This is a police matter and so serious, it could affect us all." He stopped suddenly, maybe realising he'd said too much already.

"What do you mean?" Toby could hardly hide his keenness.

Inspector Dalrimple was firm. "This is a warning. I don't want to see any of you near this house again. Understand?"

"Come on," said Lloyd starting towards the street. He was bored and wanted to get home to *The Granite Warriors* game. Matt and Kylie followed him down the alleyway. They didn't want to get into trouble with their parents, if they got to hear about all this. Lloyd could already hear his Dad, "You were trespassing. You had a warning from the police. Right. No more computer games, and you're grounded for a month."

The twins knew their mother, who had enough worries without them adding to them, would be upset if the police came to the house to complain about her children. It was wiser to go home, and hope this inspector didn't call at their house with any complaints.

Only Toby wasn't going to be put off that easily. He wanted to know more. A good private eye. wouldn't just give up!

He stood firm. "What's in the house?" he asked.

The inspector had already forgotten them and was examining the door frame. He turned suddenly to face Toby. "Nothing."

He watched as the backs of the other three slowed with curiosity, at the corner of the house. They hesitated in case they missed anything. Dalrimple sighed.

"OK. If it'll stop you kids from coming anywhere near here again. I'll tell you what I know, but you mustn't say a word to anyone. Promise?"

"And you'll not tell our folks --," asked Lloyd.

"No."

They moved closer.

"Is it ghosts?" asked Matt nervously.

Inspector Dalrimple didn't even snigger at such a stupid idea. He was very stern.

"No much worse," now he had their full attention.

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Wisplurkers. By Maggie C.

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