I don’t remember what happened, exactly. The bits I do remember are a bit of a blur. Lots of colours and shouting. Strong hands and loud voices. I was just on my way to school, as I always did. I was running a little bit late because Daddy had misplaced my homework book. To save time, I had taken a different route to normal, going down the back of the shops rather than along the main high street. That was my first mistake. I didn’t normally go that way. But I did. I walked the shortcut. I was rushing so I didn’t hear the car come up behind me. If I did, then I ignored it. The dark green car pulled up behind me. I didn’t hear it. Two men got out of the car and walked towards us. I didn’t hear them. One put his hand around my mouth, the other lifted me off the ground, bundling me into the back of the car. I screamed. No one heard me.

The next thing I remember was waking up in this house. I was laid on the hard, wooden floor. I could feel the splinters digging into my palm of my hand. Turning my head, I opened one of my eyes, the light was streaming in through the window. Tatty curtains hung in front of the windows, decorated in delicate cobwebs, like the jewels that Mummy wears when her and Daddy go out. Every part of my body hurt, from my nose to my toes. Rubbing my head, I sat up, looked around the room and realised I was on my own. I didn’t recognise the room I was in. It appeared that no one had lived there for some time. Dust danced in the sunlight.

Time passed. I had no idea how long I had been there. Each day the strange men came to bring me food and water, staying no longer then they needed. One day, they told me they had spoken to my dad and were just waiting for him to drop off the money so I could go home. I knew then I was in trouble.

The next day, I stood at the window. I saw a boy walking down the street. Many people had walked down the street and I played a game by myself – who are they and where are they going. I guessed he was a bit of a swot, judging by his clothes, and he was going to the library. Suddenly, he stopped, turning to look at the house. I don’t know what I was thinking but I pressed my hands to the window and started to call help. A noise down stairs told me the men were still here. Silently, I called for help, praying the boy would come. He did, running through the woods to the house.

The next thing I knew, he was in the house – he told me he had climbed through the back window. I explained who I was, when suddenly footsteps could be heard. We darted behind a dusty, wooden crate. A flash light darted over the top, searching for us. I pretended to snore so that the owner of the footsteps thought I was asleep. The footsteps receded from the room. Now was our chance.