

IN THE TUNNEL

BILLY

'Ello. I'm Billy. Can I come and sit with you for a bit? Me mam's over there but I can't stay wiv 'er. She's got a baby in 'er belly and I fink it's moving about too much cos me mam's moaning and crying and stuff. I fink it was the air raid sirens wot woke 'im up. They woke *me* up anyway. They been going off almost every night now for nearly two weeks and me mam says she's getting pissed off wiv it all. She says it's that mister 'itler dropping bombs again and that 'e ain't got no respect for a lady wot's expectant.' I dunno wot that means but maybe it means a lady wot's shouting all the time. Or crying. She does that a lot. The other day she was crying cos I'd made 'er a cuppa tea and I put all the sugar ration in it. but I was only trying to cheer 'er up a bit! Our neighbour, Missus Weedon says there ain't nuffink wot can't be 'elped wiv a cuppa sweet tea, but she was wrong cos it dint seem to 'elp me mam none.

I was finking about that mister 'itler and wondering why 'e's always waking us up and dropping bombs! I heard old missus Weedon t... so angry all the time. But see... s well, and me pogo stick, and me scooter. But I don't go around making people cry, do I? And at least 'e's got a ball. After wot 'e done, I ain't got *no* balls, not now anyway! I got me marbles though cos I keep them in me pocket, not in the shed, so I'm luckier than Mister Weedon 'cos Missus Weedon says 'e lost 'is marbles bloody years ago. But me mam says I'm not to keep saying that cos it's a bad word.

Me mam's alright really. She works 'ard trying to keep 'er body and 'er soul together. They must be loose or somfink. She's always sewing so maybe that's 'ow she joins 'em up? At least she don't 'it me, like the woman across the road 'its 'er kids. I feel sorry for 'er kids, I do. Me mam calls the woman an old cow, and sometimes she gives the kids a bit of bread and dripping, so she's nice and kind don't' cha fink? But I fink she might be in trouble. See - when the air raid went off earlier, she was already moaning and crying and then she couldn't walk proper to get 'ere. She was bent over and holding her belly. She said the baby wanted to come out, but I don't know how. She said she 'ad a special door for it to come out of, but I fink the lock might be broken cos it ain't come yet. Then as usual, by the time we got 'ere it