

Chapter 1 - The Bomb

I had heard a rumour that moles were nearly blind creatures that could only see as far as the next available worm, or from the mole's point of view - lunch.

Of course, this rumour has since proved to be absolutely correct. However, Medwyn, who had invented the mole's patent pending electronic goggles, that featured amazing technical wizardry for all your mole eyesight needs, forced the worms to rethink that old worm joke,

"How do you avoid being eaten by a mole? Just stand there, he'll never see you!"

Medwyn, to the outside eye is a normal looking mole, with smooth, silky, shampooed under a waterfall, grey fur - he likes to keep clean. He also has very sharp claws, which are incredibly good for digging perfectly round tunnels underground. His claws are also feared by every slimy creature within his sight, that even Medwyn, himself, is careful when he needs to scratch his tummy.

It was a complete accident that he became a detective.

It was because he had invented a new attachment to his goggles to track even the slightest wriggle in the mud, that he accidentally found the infamous Jam Mole, official thief of the most luscious worms. The Jam Mole thought that if he covered himself in blackcurrant jam, the worms would just stick to his fur as he tunneled his way through Mouldy Mole's Worm Shop. Unfortunately for the Jam Mole, Medwyn's tracking device picked up his sticky trail and before he could say worm sandwiches, old Jam Mole was locked up behind bars for being far too sneaky for his own good.

From then on, Medwyn was hooked and was determined to become the best mole detective, feared by all mole criminals, in the whole of Wales. Oh, yes, he really did enjoy the job. Nothing better than chasing bad moles, sniffing for clues and having a complementary biscuit and cup of milk for each crime he solved. He even had his picture on the front of the Mole Times once for catching the evil worm that turned.

Apart from the worms and the biscuits, Medwyn loved gadgets, and after reading just twelve issues of "Machine Building for the Truly Silly," (Mole Edition), Medwyn had built his own sub terrain vehicle capable of digging through earth as if it was made of powder.



For you see, Moles are not exactly the most imaginative of mammals to be found on or in planet earth. They are most famous for having fur the same colour as mud and once they find that certain mud that matches their fur exactly, they tend to spend the rest of their lives rolling around in the greyest of grey mud from the time they get up to the time they go to bed with only a rest to make large earth mounds to annoy gardeners and farmers.

Medwyn did not understand this. The whole reason he had built this wonderful sub terrain machine was to try and show the Moles that there was more to life than gossiping about whether mud is better sticky or powdery or whether worms are tastier fried or boiled. He would cook exotic recipes on his hot sub terrain engine using not only earthworms but also flatworms, curly worms and even the Gobble Worm, who always thought that it would never get caught until Medwyn came on to the scene with his wonderful sub terrain Gobble Worm Catching Net. Medwyn even took a picture of the Gobble Worm before he ate it otherwise no-one would have believed him.

It was on a bright Spring day, whilst all of the other moles were lazing deep under the warm earth, that Medwyn decided to hunt down the slimiest of worms he had heard were under the earth just outside Swansea's city centre. The rattling engine of his sub terrain had achieved an almost perfect melody; in A minor of course, the worst of all keys, at least for Medwyn, as he felt himself start to doze off. Suddenly, he hit something - something solid. His sub terrain stopped dead and would not restart no matter how many times he turned the key.

He opened the glass dome roof and leapt off his seat to walk over to the obstruction. It was definitely metal and had been lodged deep under the ground, as if it had been thrust down by a great force.

Medwyn jumped onto the top of his sub terrain and felt the ground above him. There wasn't anything blocking him there, so he decided to dig upwards with his claws, following the side of the metal thing that was blocking him.

He wasn't sure if he was still underground or aboveground when he stopped digging upwards. It was so dark that even the cats were having difficulty seeing the mice dash between the dustbins.

He adjusted the lights around the rims of his goggles to full beam until he could finally see where he was. He saw that it had been snowing and that there were posters on the wall saying, "Hitler will not give any warning" and "Be sure to keep your gas mask with you at all times!"



But where was he? And also, what was that metal obstruction that stopped him in his tracks?

Scrambling out of his hole, he noticed that the metal thing actually had a shape. If he didn't know better, he would have said that it looked like an unexploded bomb!

Oh dear.....

Medwyn stepped back, no sudden moves, no sounds, he knew, all it took, was that one.... little.... movement...and the bomb would go off....

He also knew that it was vital that the police and the fire brigade should be told about this bomb. He was quite surprised that they weren't there already. Suddenly, he heard running footsteps.

"That must be the them," he thought.

He thought wrong because running towards him were three children - two girls and a boy all looking completely terrified! They also happened to be running directly towards him.

"They can't come here," thought Medwyn, because he knew that any sudden movement near this unexploded bomb would mean not only the end of him, but the end of the children too. He looked around quickly, but the bright beam of light shining from his goggles only revealed destroyed houses, large fires burning, broken glass from blown out shop windows and huge piles of rubble thrown across the road. The ever growing noise of the running came closer and closer.

Medwyn looked around in desperation, there must be something he could do!

A deafening whining sound of a siren hurt his ears. Covering his little ears with his paws he was surprised to see that the children were still running towards him. Surely that noise meant that there was danger? Medwyn knew there would be even more danger if the children got any closer to the bomb. He had to stop them!

He stared at the bomb then back to the children, coming ever closer. The light from his goggles shone on an old wooden wardrobe perched precariously on top of a large pile of stones and bricks. It must have survived a direct hit on the house from another bomb that had fallen that night. What on earth was going on? Either war had broken out in Swansea within the time he had left that morning, or he had somehow dug back in time to World War 2.



He rushed over to the rubble as quietly and as gently as he could and started to push with his entire body until the wardrobe came down with a terrible thud on the road. Thank goodness it hadn't shattered. Luckily, the idea had worked as the clattering wardrobe stopped the children in their tracks. Medwyn motioned to them to quickly hide in a nearby alley.

Unfortunately, the thud of the wardrobe hitting the ground had suddenly activated the large shiny object stuck upside down in the ground. Medwyn hadn't thought of that! He stood frozen and stared, and, as if in a trance as he heard the tick, tick, tick of the bomb. He was powerless. He knew that he wouldn't be able to run away fast enough. What should he do? He estimated there were about 10 seconds before the bomb would detonate...

10... his sub terrain had conked out, so he couldn't use that to escape....

9... 8.... the children were safe, he could see them hiding far enough away to avoid the blast....

7...6...5... he looked down, saw the wardrobe and thought....

4.... It was quite sturdy...

3.... It had survived one bomb blast.....

2....why not another...?

1....Medwyn jumped inside the wardrobe and slammed the door sealing him inside.....

Zero....!!!!

The bomb exploded with a force that would knock the teeth out of a donkey, maybe a donkey that only brushed his teeth once a day instead of twice, and only flossed maybe in January, but it was still quite a force.

Even though it wasn't the most powerful of explosions, it still managed to hurl Medwyn through the air, inside his wardrobe, at full speed into the wall.

The wardrobe fell to the ground with a splintering bang.

The children came out of their hiding places, looking around in a daze. They cautiously approached the wardrobe. Suddenly, the door opened and a small mole rolled out and looked at them with sheer relief in his goggle eyes. He dusted himself down and, rearranging his goggles to be able to see properly, he said,

"Hello, I'm Medwyn, when am I?"

The children stared at this mole, sorry, talking mole, who had saved them from certain doom.

"Don't you mean, where am I?" asked Suzie, the oldest of the three.

Medwyn looked around. When he boarded his sub terrain, he was in Swansea, present day and had it had been a bright spring day. He could not have been tunnelling for more than a mile from the city centre, yet, this was not Swansea...

"Perhaps I do," said Medwyn, " because I thought I was in Swansea."

"You are in Swansea," said Joseph, who seemed to be the youngest, although, the one in the middle, whose name is Elizabeth by the way, seemed to be of a similar age, perhaps they were twins, thought Medwyn.

"This is not Swansea," said Medwyn, getting up and brushing the bits of wardrobe from his fur. "I know Swansea, and what I see here is.... well... different."

"A lot of things have changed since the war," muttered Elizabeth to herself.

It was as if the bombing had turned her into a robot.

"War..." said Medwyn, looking around again and at last piecing it all together.

"Is this 1941?" asked Medwyn, hoping that any minute now he'd wake up and find that it was all a dream.

" Yes" said Suzie, "February 21st 1941"

Of course, thought Medwyn, even though the war had started in 1939 Swansea wasn't bombed until 1941. This was not a dream!



"Right.." said Medwyn, "time to get you children home." The children gave the floor a good stare.

"Your parents must be worried..." he said, looking at them all.

Suzie put herself forward.

"Our house was bombed while we were at school rehearsing for a concert and..."

She forced herself not to cry by hugging Elizabeth too tightly.

"What happened to your parents?" asked Medwyn.

"Our mother has been in hospital for some time now, because she has a very bad illness called TB," said Joseph, "and our father is a soldier fighting the Germans somewhere but we don't know where."

Elizabeth added, "We are supposed to be staying with our aunt who lives nearby, but her house isn't here any more and we don't know where she is."

"Don't you have anywhere else you can go?" asked Medwyn.

"We found a safe place last night, no one knows that we're there, well not yet anyway..." ventured Joseph, looking for approval.

"Where...?" asked Medwyn.

The children led the way through the deserted streets to their new home. They stopped in front of a large white Roman looking building with four thick columns in front.

"This is Swansea Museum," said Medwyn.

"Yes, it's really good, we played hide and seek here last night before going to sleep and Joseph hid in the mummy's tomb!" said Elizabeth.

Medwyn found himself chuckling to himself.

"We sneaked in before the caretaker locked up and we left this morning just after he'd opened up," said Suzie.



Suzie looked up at the first floor windows of the museum and saw the caretaker pull the large heavy blackout curtains to keep the light from shining out.

"Come on, everybody, if we don't go in now, we'll be locked out all night," said Suzie, pushing her brother and sister up the steps. Medwyn followed quickly behind, however before they could reach the top of the stairs a man, dressed entirely in black was standing at the doorway, blocking them from going in.

"I must apologise for this intrusion..." said the man.

The children were holding onto each other, frightened. Medwyn turned to them,

"Was this man the reason you were running when we met?" asked Medwyn, the children nodded together, they daren't look at the very serious looking man.

"I really must apologise for this act of rudeness on my part," he said, "but I am afraid that the children are in great danger." The man was rubbing his black gloves together as he spoke and underneath his hat, you could see a sly smile.

"Danger! In danger of what, exactly?" asked Medwyn, who had now stepped in front of the three terrified children.

"Please, I don't have to explain myself to a silly looking mole even if does speak English rather well."

"I think you do," said Medwyn, waiting for an explanation.

"Work it out for yourself," said the man. He had now lost patience and had turned nasty.

"Well, thank you, I think I will," said Medwyn. "You are wearing black clothes in a blackout, suggesting you don't want to be seen. You speak quietly suggesting you don't want to be heard, you haven't resorted to violence but I'm guessing that you will use it as your last option." said Medwyn, trying to urge the children to run.

"Then what am I doing here, clever mole...?" The man was now kneeling so that he was eye level with Medwyn. They stared at each other, neither willing to give in and look away. Medwyn was the first to speak.

"The children, one of the children has something that you want, but what?"

The man smiled in a sinister way.

"Why don't you turn around and look..." he said, now grinning.

Medwyn turned around and saw that Joseph was no longer holding onto his sister, but was holding a small, folded piece of paper tightly in his hand.

"Joseph, what's that...?" Medwyn asked, seeing the tears in Joseph's eyes, but before he could answer, the man shouted,

"What it is, mole, is the end of this conversation..." and he jumped up violently towards Joseph, trying to grab the paper. The two girls tried to pull the man away but he was too powerful.

Medwyn jumped onto the man's back and bit hard into his neck making him scream in agony. He tried to grab Medwyn, but Medwyn was already moving fast towards his leg, which then received the second batch of mole teeth marks.

Medwyn looked for Joseph, but all he saw was a small figure running away into the darkness and smoke, followed swiftly by his sisters. What on earth was going on? This wasn't a dream, this was a nightmare!

The man dressed in black was now starting to run too but couldn't go very fast because Medwyn was still stuck to his leg.

"Where did they go, mole!?" screamed the man through his teeth.

"I wouldn't shout if I were you, you could wake up the Egyptian mummy."

"The mummy can't do anything to me, you silly creature," the man shouted.

"No, I know," said Medwyn, "but I can," and with that he turned the light on his goggles to full beam and shone it straight into the nasty man's eyes blinding him for a moment which gave Medwyn enough time to escape and run after the children.

By the time the man could see clearly again, all he could see was a small mole running quickly into the darkness and smoke.

Once Medwyn was convinced that he had lost the sinister man, he started to look for the children. He didn't have to look far to find the two sisters as Suzie and Elizabeth had not run far at all. They were hiding behind the steel bins in the back of the museum.

"Medwyn!" shouted Elizabeth, jumping out to hug him.

"Keep your voice down!" Suzie whispered, pulling Elizabeth back to her.

"You don't want that awful man to find us!" Elizabeth curled herself up next to her older sister, who was trying to be brave even though her hands were shaking.

"Did you find Joseph, Medwyn?" asked Suzie.

"I think I ran the whole of Swansea trying to lose that man, but I didn't see Joseph." said Medwyn, trying to catch his breath.

"We have to find him, before the sun comes up," said Suzie.

"Why before the sun comes up?" asked Elizabeth.

"Because you it's far more difficult to hide in daylight," said Medwyn.

"Listen, does Joseph have a favourite place that he likes to play?"

"He used to play in the back garden, but it's not there any more," said Elizabeth matter of factly.

"What about somewhere you used to go with your parents?" asked Medwyn.

Although he had a thousand other questions, such as, who was that man, what was on that piece of paper, how did Joseph get it, and how in the world was he in 1941?

All of those questions would have to wait because the most important thing now was finding Joseph and making sure that the children were safe.

"Elizabeth, you said that you liked playing hide and seek in the museum," Medwyn said excitedly.

"Yes, Joseph always hid in the mummy's tomb," she said.

"Do you think that he might have gone there?" asked Suzie.

" Only one way to find out," said Medwyn, hoping he was right.

Luckily, the caretaker hadn't locked up yet and the door was still unlocked. Medwyn and the girls pushed the heavy door open and crept upstairs to the Egyptian mummy room. The caretaker was in the kitchen making himself a cup of coffee made from roasted dandelion roots. It was very dark because the black out curtains not only stopped the light shining out but they also stopped the light getting in too.

Medwyn adjusted his goggles to dipped lights and slowly led the way up the stairs. Following the signs on the wall he found the mummy easily. He cautiously walked up to the large colourfully painted sarcophagus and shoving his fearsome claws into the grooves, lifted the lid. The squeak of the dusty, dry wood didn't wake the mummy, thank goodness but unfortunately, Joseph was not in there. When Medwyn looked closer he saw that the mummy was holding a piece of paper in its hand. Medwyn took it and let the lid fall back down quietly and gently. Medwyn read the note -

Sorry everyone for running off like that but I was sure that the horrible, nasty man was going to hurt me, and he has good reason to as well, but I know what I did was right.

I won't say here what I've done, but I can't stay in Swansea. Do you remember what Mam told us about Uncle Jack, about where he went? I hope to see you all soon, love, Joseph.

Medwyn showed the note to Suzie and Elizabeth.

"Of course!" Suzie said.

"What, what?" asked Medwyn. "Do you know where your Uncle Jack lives?" he said with a nervous twitch in his whiskers.

"He moved to Carmarthen just before the war started." said Elizabeth with a smile.

"Well then, it seems that we are going to Carmarthen..." said Medwyn.