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Opening extract from

The Official Spy's Handbook

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Passing secret messages

A Good Spy and his Contact know how to exchange messages secretly. They may need to pass on information about Enemy plans (this sort of message is usually written in secret code). Or they may need to arrange secret meetings or pass on warnings of dangers or emergencies.

Spy messages should never be exchanged openly. It is dangerous to meet your Contact often, or to be seen exchanging papers. Remember: you never know when the Enemy may be watching...



This picture gallery is really a place where spies rendezvous (meet by arrangement).



They pretend they have come to see the pictures – hoping to put the Enemy off the scent.



If they think they are being watched, they put emergency plans into operation . . . .



. . . and secretly exchange their messages without even showing that they know each other.

Good Spies exchange messages so secretly that Enemy Spies never see them do it — and may not even suspect that they know each other. Below you can see some of the ways they work together.

If you set up a spy ring (a group of spies who work together) it is a good idea to work out several plans like this, as well as emergency signals for a quick change of plan. Later in the book you'll find hints on how to do this.



This spy never meets his Contact, but he often goes to the library that his Contact uses.



The librarian is really a letter box (someone who keeps messages for spies). She passes on the message.



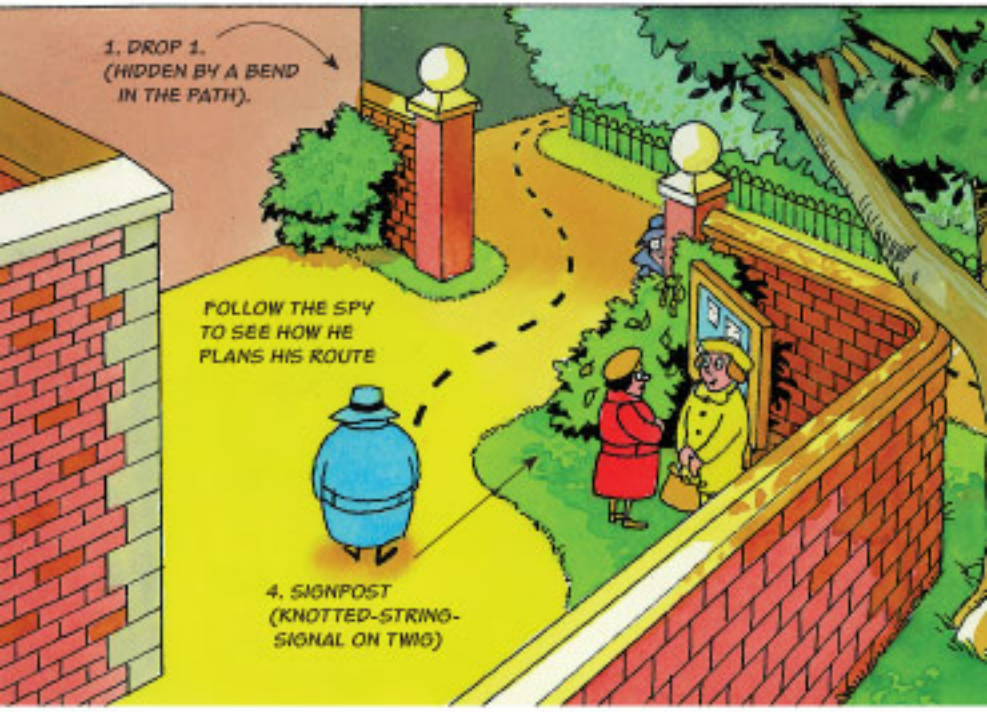
This spy never meets his Contact. He leaves him messages at a spot they have agreed on.



In spy language this is called a 'drop'. Later his Contact visits the drop and collects the message.

Using drops

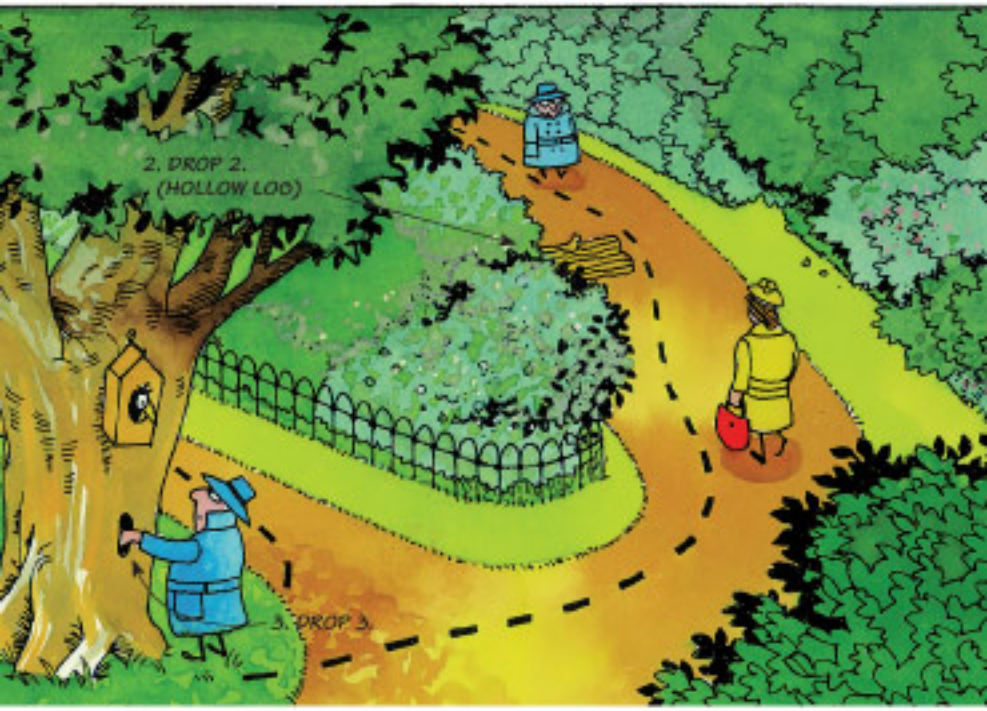
You must have several drops in case one is found by an Enemy. You also need another spot, or signpost, to leave your Contact a signal saying which drop you've used. Each should be out of sight of the others, so the Enemy can't watch them all at once.



Choosing a drop

Find a spot where you can be hidden from view for a short time, without looking suspicious. Look carefully, watching how people come and go, and what happens at different times of the day. Approach your drop from all directions, to work out when and how a passerby might catch a glimpse of you. Will you see them coming? What can you do to avoid them? Then find a good hiding place there. See pages 22 and 23 for more ideas.

When leaving a message, plan your route so that if one drop looks risky you can go to the others. Walk slowly, stopping to look at the flowers or birds, in case you are being followed. Go to the signpost last, and leave a signal to show where the message is.



Using a signpost

Decide with your Contact on a few simple signals to leave at the signpost to tell him which drop you have used — perhaps a chalk mark or a coded matchstick. Pages 14-15 show lots of signals which the Enemy may never even notice. Your Contact must always remove the signal at the signpost before he collects the message at the drop. To find out if he has got the message, walk past the signpost and check if your signal has now gone.