



The Spitfire Fund

Chapter 5

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Written for children aged 7+

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The children are surrounded by an angry mob of Londoners who have taken them to be German spies after they were overheard talking about the Nazi invasion of Britain. Their hands are held behind their backs, so they can't take off their Spitfire Fund badges and return to 2020. And now – coming across the park – are three men in uniform. What will they do with the children?

'They even look like spies,' a man growled.
'Look at that boy. Look at his blond hair and blue eyes - he's German. I bet he's Hitler Youth. Sprechen sie Deutsch?'

'He's not German,' Yusra defended Danny. 'He's English.'

A woman's voice next. 'Well you don't even look English. Where are you from?'

Yusra was used to this and reeled off. 'I am English. I was born in Syria, but my mum and dad came over here and we're all British citizens. All of us. They work for the NHS!'

'NHS? Syria? Never heard of them. And you could be a German, too.'

Lily was watching the soldiers approaching as she listened to her friends being interrogated. And now they had arrived, the crowd of people, divided, letting them through.

'Got you some German spies,' a man shouted out.

But Lily heard another man say 'Go easy. They're children. Let's all calm down now, shall we?'

Yusra looked up and scowled at the man in charge to realise from his blue uniform that he wasn't a soldier: he was an airman.

'Now then, kids,' he said. 'It's good to see you again.'

The airman eased the hands away from each of the men holding the children. He was one of the pilots from the airfield. Yusra beamed, thrilled to see that he had survived the air battles.

'It's all good,' the pilot addressed the crowd. 'I know these kids. They're no spies. They're heroes in my eyes.'

Danny rubbed his face.

'I'm Flight Lieutenant Jack Whittaker,' recently transferred to Hendon Airfield. 'And I can vouch for these children 100%.' Whittaker knelt between the three children. 'You're safe now,' he said. 'We'll get you back to Hendon. Have some more of those tasty sandwiches, yes?'

The crowd dispersed, the young men and the hissing woman coming over to apologise to the three children.

'We got carried away,' one said.

'By the febrile atmosphere,' the woman added. 'Please accept our apologies.'

The children understood and shook hands with the adults, remembering to look up what febrile meant the next time they got a chance.

After jam sandwiches, the children and pilots looked south to London. There were no Spitfires or German bombers now. No Hurricanes either.

'Looks like Hitler's given up,' Whittaker offered.

'He has,' Yusra grinned. 'His soldiers will be all heading to Russia. Thanks to you and the rest of the RAF, we've seen him off.'

The pilots looked at each other and grinned. 'We'll take your word for that. Smashing news. Thank you children.'

'You're welcome,' said Danny. 'And thank you,' he added. 'For everything you are doing.'

'For being the Few,' Lily added.

Later, having taken their Spitfire Fund badges off and put them safely away, the children walked through the gates of the RAF Museum, London.

'I love it that it's free to get into the Museum,' Yusra said. 'I mean, you can make a donation, but you don't have to. Anyone can come.'

Lily smiled and pointed at the two planes in front of the gates into the Museum.

'Look at that one,' she said. 'The Hurricane is a replica of the one that pilot – Ray Holmes – used to stop that bomber crashing into Buckingham Palace. Imagine if he hadn't succeeded!'

The children spent a few moments thinking about the Hurricane and its pilot. Then they headed back to the Museum's café.

In front of them they had three full collection boxes and no Spitfire Fund pins left, except their own.

Then a voice. A familiar one.

'My dear children. How did you get on with your collecting?'

It was the lady who sounded like the Queen, wearing the same hat and jacket and holding her usual collection tin.

Yusra pushed their collection of tins towards the woman. 'Full to the top,' she said.

'Thank you,' the woman beamed a beautiful smile. 'You have done well.' She looked at her watch. 'I think you should go and look at the Spitfire Mk 1 where we first met. It entered service in October 1940. It helped shoot down a German bomber that was going to do all sorts of damage.'

'We will,' Lily said.

'Do. Please,' the lady went on. 'The money that paid for it came from the Spitfire Fund. So, it should make you feel proud.'

Lily, Danny and Yusra rushed back to the Spitfire where their adventures had begun.

'It looks amazing,' Danny gushed.

'Not as amazing as when we saw the Spitfires in flight over London,' Lily said.

'Amazingly amazing,' Yusra laughed.



They studied the plane. It's dark propeller and rounded wings, looking carefully to spot the eight machine gun holes covered with red tape built into the wings and the exhaust stubs that stuck out either side of the nose.

As they looked, each of them picked their Spitfire Fund pin badge out of their pockets and held them.

'Mine's warm,' Lily said.

The other two nodded: theirs were too.

'And can you hear that sound?' Danny added.

They listened. Above the sound of families, children laughing and Museum staff chatting to visitors, they could hear the low drone of a Spitfire.

'So, what now?' Lily asked.

'The Museum shop? Danny suggested. 'Buy a book on Spitfires. Or a mug.'

'Or a model to make,' Yusra added.

The children laughed together as they walked to the bright lights of the RAF Museum shop, knowing that when it comes to museum trips, you couldn't really have a better experience than visiting the RAF Museum, London or Cosford.



Tom Palmer is proud to be the RAF Museum's Children's Author in Residence. He has written several First and Second World War children's books, including the Wings series that he wrote with the help of the RAF Museum, featuring stories about the Sopwith Camel, Spitfire and Typhoon.