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Billy sample
NOT FOR SALE

BILLY

Level 3 - A2/B1 Intermediate (1) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

Copyright

Billy

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ISBN: 978-4-910971-26-1

Publisher: I Talk You Talk Press

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Chapter One

Billy Smith grew up in a home for children with no parents. The orphanage was called St Mary's Home for Children.

The children came to the orphanage when their parents died and there was no one to look after them. Some of them could remember their parents and they all had real names. The office kept records about where they were born, their parents' names and when their parents had died.

Billy was different. Early one morning, eighteen years before this story begins, Helen Blackmore, who worked at the orphanage, opened the front door. She found a tiny newborn baby in a basket on the steps. He was wrapped in a blanket. No one knew who he was or where he had come from.

The police tried to find out more about the baby, but they couldn't find a mother or any information about him.

Helen said to the manager of the orphanage, "What shall we call him? We must give him a name."

The manager's name was Mrs Norton. "You found him on a Wednesday. So I think we will call him William. That's a good name."

"But he must have a family name too," said Helen.

"Smith is a very common name in England," said Mrs Norton. "We will call him William Smith. Please do all the paperwork. Our unknown baby will be called William Smith. Maybe one day his mother will come to find him. Then we can change his name."

Helen thought it was very sad. She went to the nursery and talked to the tiny baby.

"You are so cute!" she said. "We will look after you very well. William is a nice name, but I think I will call you Billy."

Billy had a happy life at St Mary's Home for Children. There were always other children to play with and the staff were very kind.

The orphanage had a school for younger children, but when they were older, they went to local high schools. Most of his friends wanted to leave school when they were sixteen. The staff at St Mary's found them places to live and jobs.

But Billy didn't want to leave St Mary's – it was his home. He stayed at high school. Billy was smart. He was very good at maths. "You could go to university," said his teachers.

"I don't want to go to university," said Billy. "I don't want to go away. I want to stay here."

Mrs Norton had retired, and Helen Blackmore was now the manager of the orphanage. She was worried about Billy.

One day, Helen called Billy to her office.

"Sit down Billy," she said. "We have to talk."

Billy sat down and waited. "This is very difficult," said Helen. "In two weeks you will be eighteen. A few weeks after that, you will finish high school. Then you will have to leave here."

"But I don't want to leave," said Billy. "This is my home."

"I know," said Helen. "But there are rules. I have found you a workers' hostel to live in, and I have found you a job. I think you will like it. It's in a music shop. They sell old records and CDs. The owner is a friend of mine. The day after you finish high school, you will go to the hostel in the city. It's a nice place and the food is very good. There will be young men the same age as you. You will make friends."

Billy felt very bad about the news, but he understood.

"OK, Miss Blackmore. I know I have to go. Thank you for arranging everything for me."

The day before Billy left St Mary's, they had a party. Billy was very popular. He was very kind to the younger children, and many of the staff had known him since he was a newborn baby.

After the party, Miss Blackmore asked Billy to come to her office to say goodbye.

"Thank you for everything, Miss Blackmore," said Billy. "I will miss you."

Miss Blackmore laughed. "You are an adult now. Please call me Helen. We will miss you too. Please come back and visit sometimes."

"I will," said Billy. He thought, *But it will never be the same.*

"You know that I was the one who found you outside the front door eighteen years ago?"

Billy knew why his name was William and why he was given the family name 'Smith'.

"Yes. I know," he said.

Helen got up from behind her desk and went to a large cupboard in the corner of the office.

"All the children I have looked after here had real names and family histories. You only have a name that Mrs Norton gave you, and you have no history. But I want to give you this," she said.

She opened the cupboard and took out a small box. "You were dressed in beautiful handmade baby clothes and wrapped in a blanket. You were in a basket. I couldn't keep the basket, but I kept the clothes and the blanket. You don't have a name or a family history, but I want you to have the clothes and the blanket."

Billy took the box. "Thank you," he said.

"There's one more thing I want to tell you," said Helen.

"The basket was very special. My aunt had one that was the same. I knew who made it and where they lived. The man who made it died before I found you, but he lived in a village called Corphingfield. I told the police. They went to the village, but they couldn't find any information. No one knew who bought that basket. Please keep these things. They are the only family history you have."

-----END OF SAMPLE-----