

## Prologue - Never Play with Fireworks

### Questions about the prologue:

The prologue to Dotty and the Calendar House Key takes place on bonfire night:

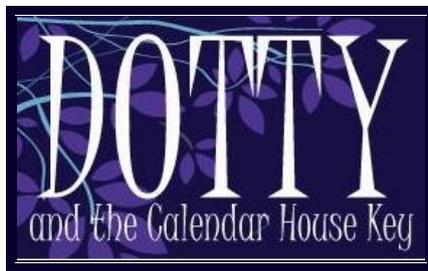
1. Traditionally, on which night of the year is bonfire night celebrated?
2. By what other name is bonfire night traditionally known?
3. Why is this event celebrated in the UK?
4. Why do people set off fireworks on bonfire night?

Looking at the story:

5. Why was Mrs Davis concerned about Dotty and Sylv's use of sparklers?
6. What precautions could have been taken to ensure their safe use?
7. Mr Davis could be said to have broken the most important rule of firework safety. What is it?
8. Can you name five rules of firework safety? Make your own firework safety poster, clearly illustrating those rules you consider most important.

### Creative Writing Exercise:

In no more than 500 words, write your own ending to Dotty's story. How might it have ended differently? You decide!



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### Teacher Notes

1. 5<sup>th</sup> November
2. Guy Fawkes' Night
3. It is celebrated to commemorate the discovery of a plot to murder King James I in 1605.
4. Fireworks are made from gunpowder. It therefore seems fitting to set off these beautiful but dangerous spectacles in commemoration of the ill-fated plot to blow up parliament with 36 barrels of gunpowder.
5. Sparklers are dangerous! Did you know that three sparklers burning together generate the same heat as a blow torch?
6. Always wear gloves when handling sparklers. Hold your sparkler at arm's length. When your sparkler goes out, don't touch it: it could still burn you. Put used sparklers in a bucket of water.
7. Never go near a firework that has been lit, even if it hasn't gone off: it could still explode.
8. Suggested poster bullet points:
  - Never play with fireworks
  - Only adults should light or hold fireworks
  - Stand well back when you are watching fireworks
  - Never approach a lit firework.
  - Pets are afraid of fireworks, so keep your pets safely indoors.

## **General**

### **What was the Gunpowder Plot?**

In 1605 a man named Robert Catesby led a group of men in a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London. Their plan was to kill King James I and all his advisors at the next opening of parliament.

### **Why did they do it?**

When Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne of England she made some laws against the Roman Catholics. Catholics had to practice their religion in secret. There were even fines for people who didn't attend the Protestant church on Sunday or on holy days.

Robert Catesby and his crew were Roman Catholics. They felt that the government was treating Roman Catholics unfairly. They had hoped that King James I would change the laws when he came into power, but he didn't. Instead James I passed more laws against Catholics when he became King.

### **What was the role of Guy Fawkes in the Gunpowder Plot?**

Then men bought a house next door to the parliament building. The house had a cellar which went under the parliament building. They planned to put gunpowder under the house and blow up parliament and the king.

Guy Fawkes was given the job to keep watch over the barrels of gunpowder and to light the fuse. On the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> November, soldiers discovered Guy hidden in the cellar and arrested him. Guy Fawkes was taken to the Tower of London and questioned about the plot. Initially he said nothing, but later he gave up the names of his co-conspirators under torture. Guy Fawkes and his associates were all sentenced to death, Guy himself being hung, drawn and quartered for treason.

### **Why do we celebrate Guy Fawkes' Night now?**

In celebration of the timely discovery of the plot against parliament, King James ordered that the people of England should hold a great bonfire on the night of 5<sup>th</sup> November each year. The celebration was made law in the Thanksgiving Act of 1606, which remained in force until March 1859. However, the event is still traditionally commemorated annually in England on 5<sup>th</sup> November by fireworks and burning 'guys' on bonfires.

### **About fireworks:**

- It is thought that the first fireworks were made in China, around 2000 years ago.
- The first record of fireworks in England was at the wedding of Henry VII in 1486. Over the next 100 years fireworks increased in popularity and by the time of Elizabeth I the queen appointed the first 'Firework Master'. He was in charge of organising firework displays for state occasions.
- Fireworks can be great fun, but sadly every year people get hurt because they do not use fireworks in the right way.
- Last year over 900 people required hospital treatment from accidents involving fireworks.
- Statistically, half of all firework accidents happen to children under the age of 16.