



*Anna and Alex take on the banknote forgers*

Anna and Alex are classmates and really good friends. They are always getting caught up in hair-raising adventures, and lots of exciting things have happened to them. Between them, they have quite a bit of experience!

Anna: *"Alex, stop! Look over there. I think Philip is in trouble."*

Alex: *"Yeah, you're right. It looks like he's got a problem with the police."* They watch what is happening from across the street. Philip doesn't seem to have a clue what is going on and is saying to two police officers, *"But, I'm telling you the truth. Someone gave me this money and I used it. I didn't suspect anything."*

This time, it looks as if they are about to get involved in something serious. Anna mutters, *"Something's up.*

*I think we should go over and find out what's happening. It looks like the shop assistant from the electronics store is getting involved. I bet it was him*

*that called the police. Do you think Philip has been caught stealing?"*

Alex: *"Something's definitely up. But I think it's the banknotes that are the problem, because the police officer is examining them against the light. I hope Philip didn't buy anything using fake banknotes. Let's try and have a word with him."*





*Philip: "You've got to help me! I've no idea what's going on. My parents are going to kill me if they find out that I'm in trouble with the police. But I didn't do anything dodgy! Billy Foxham gave me some cash and asked me to do some shopping for him. Billy's a friend of mine. I met him on the internet. He's really nice. I'm helping him find his way about town, as he isn't from around here."*

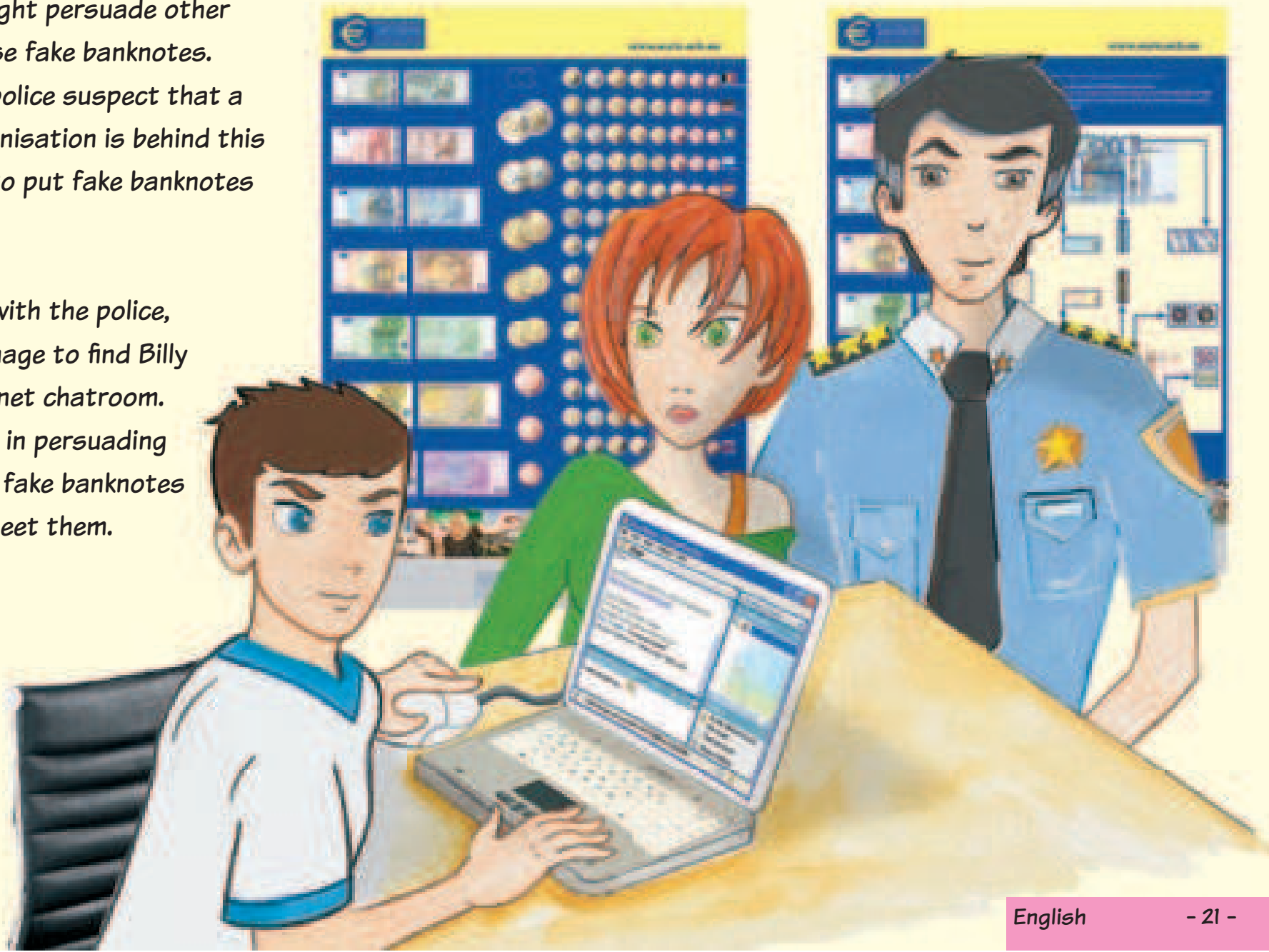
*Anna is speechless for a second or two, and then bursts out, "What on earth are you talking about, Philip! Didn't you find it a bit weird that a total stranger just gave you money like that?"*

*Philip: "No, why should I have? I did him a favour and he was going to pay me. I only did it once, and I didn't think it would be dangerous. Billy gave me two €50 notes to buy him an MP4 player. All I had to do was bring him back the MP4 player and the change. In return, he promised to pay me €5."*

Anna and Alex explain to their friend that he has been taken for a ride, as the banknotes must be fake. It was a cunning plan: in exchange for the fake banknotes, Billy Foxham would receive genuine euro notes and coins as change, not to mention an MP4 player! Anna and Alex can see that Philip is in a sticky situation and decide to come to his rescue.

With the help of the police, they prepare a trap for Billy Foxham, because they are worried that he might persuade other young people to use fake banknotes. What's more, the police suspect that a large criminal organisation is behind this use of teenagers to put fake banknotes into circulation.

Working together with the police, Anna and Alex manage to find Billy Foxham in an internet chatroom. He wastes no time in persuading them to spend his fake banknotes and arranges to meet them.



When Anna and Alex meet up with Billy, he asks them to buy something for him and gives them some money. Instead, Anna takes a genuine banknote out of her purse and compares it with the ones he has given them.

*"But these are fake!",* she exclaims. Billy Foxham realises that he has been tricked and runs off.



Fortunately, the police are nearby. They leap into action and chase after him. There is a scuffle when they catch him. Anna and Alex breathe a huge sigh of relief as the police handcuff him.





After this adventure, Anna and Alex are awarded a prize by the European Central Bank.

Anna: *"Thank you very much, but it was the police who stopped the counterfeiters. We just set them on the right track."*

Alex: *"Most of all, we wanted to help Philip, who had been taken in by Billy Foxham's plotting. As for him, thankfully, he's behind bars now."*

Following the award ceremony, Anna and Alex catch up with Philip at the exhibition on euro banknotes and coins organised by the European Central Bank.

Philip: *"Thanks again. You're real mates! I heard that Billy Foxham confessed to everything and that the illegal printing works producing the fake banknotes has been closed down."*

Anna: *"Wow! That's big news! I'm going to write about it in the school magazine."*

Alex: *"You know, Philip, it was really stupid of you to get involved in such an idiotic crime. It's really easy to spot a counterfeit euro banknote. What's more, you should have been more wary of Billy Foxham. Sometimes you can meet bad people on the internet. Everyone knows that!"*

Anna: *"Don't be so unfair, Alex. We all make mistakes."*

Philip: *"Yeah, that's for sure. I learned the hard way that using fake banknotes is against the law and can be dangerous!"*



After reading the information on the euro banknotes and coins displayed at the exhibition, Anna says, "Look! It's easy to tell whether or not a euro banknote is genuine. You just have to check three security features. You can't go wrong! You start by feeling the banknote. It must have a crisp texture and be thicker in certain places. Next, you check the watermark, and then the hologram."

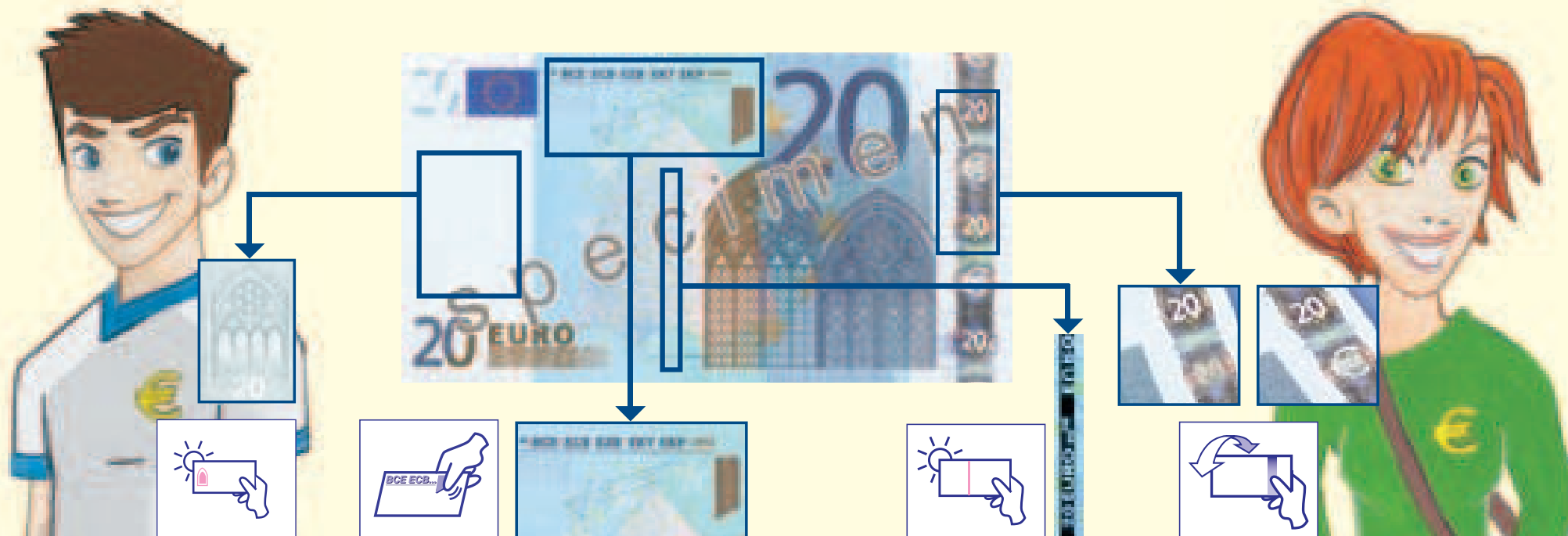
Alex: "Anna, stop talking to us as if we were experts. Can you explain that gobbledygook in English, please? How did you tell that Billy Foxham's banknotes were fakes by holding them up to the light?"

Anna: "I was checking the watermark. Watermarks have been used for a long time in the white part of banknotes. Look closely. When you hold it up to the light, a ghost image of the main design on the banknote and the value of the banknote appear. For example, when you hold a €50 note against a light source, you can see a Renaissance-style window and the figure 50."

Philip: "Cool! Quite the private detective, aren't you! But what's with all this 'Renaissance' stuff?"

Anna: "Oh, sorry. I forgot to mention that all seven euro banknotes feature different European architectural styles from ancient times through to today."

Alex and Philip: "You've gone way over our heads, now!"



#### Watermark

A shadow-like image and the value become visible.

#### Feel of the paper

The paper feels crisp, firm and thicker in some parts.

#### Security thread

A dark line becomes visible.

#### Hologram

The value and the "€" symbol or a window appear.

Anna: "Oh, come on! It's a piece of cake to check these banknotes. You look at the main design on the note and check to see whether it is repeated in the watermark."

Alex: "And what about the hologram?"

Anna: "Have you noticed the shiny, silver-coloured part of the note? That's the hologram. Watch what happens when you tilt the banknote back and forth a few times. No, not like that! Don't wave it all over the place - do it gently! Can you see how the picture shifts between the "€" symbol and the value of the banknote?"

Philip: "Oh yeah! I reckon that, after this little adventure, I'll also be paying a lot closer attention to euro banknotes! It's not that hard, after all."

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